# Group Identity

Psychologists have long been interested in the conflict in Northern Ireland, investigating both the mental health impacts of the conflict on individuals, and the role of group identity and dynamics in sustaining conflict.(Cairns, 1994) Sectarianism has been described as an empty discourse of signs with real and measurable social and geographical consequences.(Stainer, 2006) Both important parallels and difference between the religious sectarianism of Northern Ireland and racism have been noted, with both race and religious identity operating as visible social markers, and the colonial heritage of the island of Ireland leading to a concentration of industrial development, wealth and economic opportunity within Protestant regions in the North East of the island.(Brewer, 1992) An important aspect of conflict resolution and negotiation in Northern Ireland has been the need to encourage groups to move beyond a zero-sum game mentality in the contestation of territory, and instead to think of space as a mutable resource, and to reach agreement on the minimum resources needed by each side.(Cohen and Frank, 2009) Social psychologists have constructed a multi-factor model of Northern Irish social identity, and found Catholics expressed greater stability and identification with their group identity than did Protestants. (Niens and Cairns, 2002)

Although the practices and attitudes within either Northern Irish Protestantism and Catholicism are not monolithic, and so differences within either group can be overstated,(Livingstone et al., 1998) in Northern Ireland Catholic and Protestant religious identities are so entwined with broader cultural and political identities that no long-term solution to political problems can neglect the issue of religion.(McAllister, 2000) Not all religious people in Northern Ireland are Protestant or Catholic, and such ‘religious independents’ have been shown to have views on a wide range of social and political issues that are different from Protestants and Catholics.(Hayes and McAllister, 1995) Analysis of attitudes of over 200 students in Northern Ireland in the late 1990s found national and religious identities not to be salient in how students saw themselves.(Cassidy and Trew, 1998) As religion became less of a defensive social identity, so there may have been more willingness amongst Catholics to address injustices committed within the Catholic church, such as the sexual abuse of children.(Smyth, 1995)

## Group Leadership [270]

The relative influence of key individual leaders in the face of long-standing communal animosity and other structural factors, and the interactions between local actors and international actors in the conflict, has been considered in some detail. (Grove, 2001) The prominence of religious identity in sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland means religious agents need to be recognised as having an important role to play in conflict transformation. (AHU SANDAL, 2011)

A social psychological quantitative content analysis of events and speeches by leaders of unionist and nationalist factions in Northern Ireland found that the rhetoric employed by leaders on one side of the sectarian divide, in terms of both how their own side is represented (in-group inclusiveness) and the out-group is represented (out-group inclusiveness), appeared to affect group behaviours including intra-group cohesiveness, and inter-group conflict and cooperation.(Sylvan et al., 2005) It has been argued that religion is more likely to become a prominent element of conflicts when religious leaders can benefit from and need to compete over adherents. In particular, where religious identities are somewhat fragmented rather than homogenous in a region strategies of foregrounding religion may be more effective as strategies of recruitment to a cause. Time series analysis of use of religious rhetoric in many regions finds some support for this theory.(Isaacs, 2017)

Former prisoners and combatants involved in paramilitary activity in Northern Ireland can be effective leaders in conflict transformation.(McEvoy and Shirlow, 2009) The re-invention of individuals, formerly active in paramilitary organisations and convicted of terrorist offenses, as non-state actors promoting peace in Northern Ireland raises a number of ethical concerns, and affords opportunity for the perpetuation and legitimation of terroristic narratives that helped initiate and perpetuate the conflict.(Edwards and McGrattan, 2011)

## Religious Identity as Marker for Group Identity

Religion has been considered to possess a dual function for individuals, cementing individuals both in a social identity and providing a belief system with which important epistemic and ontological issues may be addressed with greater certainty. While these factors may help to increase wellbeing, it can also have negative individual and social impacts by fomenting intergroup conflict.(Ysseldyk et al., 2010) An international survey on religious and political outlook in people in eight countries in the early 1990s, including Northern Ireland, found evidence that non-religious people also tend to have less faith in political institutions.(Hayes, 1995) It has been argued that religion relates to nationalism in Ireland by serving three distinct roles: operating as an ‘ethnic marker’; by providing a belief system; and by providing a social organisation, facilitating group solidarity.(Coakley, 2011) It has been noted that the Northern Ireland conflict, being between two ‘white Christian’ ethno-religious groups, undermines the grand narrative provided by Huntington in the Clast of Civilizations.(Ganiel and Dixon, 2008)

Loyal Order Protestant parades in Northern Ireland have been used as a case study in how one group’s shared identities, world-views, contested claims and grievances towards another group can be repeated and reinforced through collective displays termed ‘psychocultural dramas.’(Ross, 2001) Sectarian parades passing through contested streets can be nucleation sites for violent conflict. The Protestant Apprentice Boys of Derry, for instance, parade twice yearly through a route that includes some Catholic neighbourhoods. It has been argued that these parades exist to claim symbolic victory over Catholics and their territory, and that such symbolic claims are the raison d’etre of the organisation.(Cohen, 2007) As part of the GFA, an Independent Parades Committee (IPC) was set up in 1997. Delegation of this duty to an independent body aimed to increase both the apparent legitimacy both of the process and the outcome of parade-granting decisions, but both the process and decisions made by the IPC have still been contested in the years since its establishment, in particular by unionist politicians and the Loyal Orders.(Walsh, 2015)

Social identity theory posits that group members aim to positively differentiate their own group from relevant out-groups to achieve a sense of positive identity.(Tajfel and Turner, 1986) Preventing the re-emergence of boundaries between groups may involve first the establishment of interpersonal links between individual in-group and out-group members (interpersonal friendship processes) then the establishment and maintenance of activities involving multiple members of both in-group and out-group (intergroup friendship processes).(Davies and Aron, 2016)

A 1992 paper used Identity Salience Theory to argue that “Whether they are Catholic or Protestant, people in Northern Ireland use the symbols of religious affiliation to form a major public identity”, and that “symbols of religious affiliation based on stable structural forces [sustain] the conflict” [p. 220]. From this theory they hypothesised firstly that levels of religious orthodoxy in Northern Ireland can be expected to be high, and secondly to be largely independent of other demographic attributes; they found strong empirical support of the first hypothesis, and fairly strong but more mixed evidence for the second hypothesis, with indications that religious orthodoxy reduces with education, employment and income.(Benson and Sites, 1992) The term ‘competitive victimhood’ describes the phenomenon whereby members of groups involved in violent conflict seek to establish that their group has suffered more than the other group as a result of the conflict.(Noor et al., 2012) Mutual recognition and respect for the two cultures in Northern Ireland has been a focus of the Northern Irish Community Relations Council.(Nash, 2005)

# Group Relationships

Analyses of levels of ingroup affect and outgroup affect in 2000 and 2001 found both Catholics and Protestants expressed higher affect for their ingroup than for the outgroup, and that differences between outgroup and ingroup affect were somewhat greater for Protestants than for Catholics.(Cairns et al., 2006) Two methods for assessing levels of altruistic behaviour towards either in-groups or out-groups include asking people to donate to charitable organisations identified either as in-group or out-group affiliates; or to use Milgram’s ‘lost letter’ approach, in which individuals are presented with an opportunity either to post or not post a letter, left in a public place, to either an in-group or out-group affiliate.(Silva and Mace, 2014) One hypothesis tested in Northern Ireland using such methods is that in-group altruism and out-group altruism are mutually exclusive, and that greater perception of out-group threat will lead to both substantial falls in out-group altruism and commensurate rises in in-group altruism. Instead, though researchers found out-group altruism to fall sharply with out-group threat, rates of in-group altruism rose only slightly; there was also a slight fall in altruistic behaviour towards neutral parties (a charity identified neither as Catholic nor Protestant), also possibly suggestive of the secondary transfer effect.(Silva and Mace, 2014) The same group of researchers repeated their analysis after an outbreak of sectarian violence (a series of riots) in 2012, and found that during this event charitably donations fell amongst both groups, and towards in-group and out-group organisations; after the event charitable donation rates increased again, but faster for donation to in-group organisations than out-group donations.(Silva and Mace, 2015) Implicit and automatic biases towards in-group and out-group in Northern Ireland are not necessarily mutually exclusive or commensurate, with recent assessments finding high levels of in-group favouritism often in the absence of out-group derogation.(Hughes et al., 2017)

Both closeness and frequency of outgroup contacts are found to affect intergroup relations, with closer out-group contacts (friends and family) associated with greater out-group trust than more distant out-group contacts (neighbours and work colleagues).(Tausch et al., 2011) Outgroup trust has been found to be an important mediator of intergroup contact in Northern Ireland, more so than perceived outgroup ‘likeability’.(Tam et al., 2009) The extent to which members of the in-group and out-group are ‘humanised’ may be a highly unconscious process, of which many people are unaware, and so careful experimental methods may be required to assess the degree of unconscious bias people hold both towards their own group and towards out-groups.(Capozza et al., 2017) Sporting activity may be one means by which separate Protestant and Catholic identities can be sublimated under a shared ‘Northern Irish’ identity.(McGinley et al., 1998) A social psychological study on interpersonal interactions between Protestants and Catholics found that differences in micro-behaviours in a particular context – such as sitting next to a member from the outgroup – was not indicative of attitudes towards the outgroup overall.(McKeown et al., 2012)

## Health Effects of Group Relations

Lack of contact between groups can be self-sustaining, as a precondition for increased intergroup contact may be reduced intergroup anxiety; anxiety and lack of contact can therefore be mutually reinforcing, and poor quality contact may further increase anxiety, as well as relative intergroup status – meeting on equal terms – which can further increase intergroup anxiety and reduce positive contact.(Tausch, Hewstone, et al., 2007) The perception of threat posed by the other group, as well as anxiety towards that group, predicted the quality and quantity of intergroup contacts in two studies of group relations in Northern Ireland.(Tausch, Tam, et al., 2007) The process of intergroup contact in Belfast can be anxiety-producing for residents of increasingly mixed areas of Belfast, and requires the adoption of a shared communal identity.(Stevenson and Sagherian-Dickey, 2016) Strong sectarian identity may have a protective effect on the emotional impact of experiencing sectarian antisocial behaviours within adolescents, in particular for Protestants.(Merrilees et al., 2014) There is evidence that greater intergroup forgiveness is associated with a smaller impact of victimhood on psychiatric morbidity.(Myers et al., 2009) Developing friendships with members of the other group in Northern Ireland has been shown to reduce anxiety about encounters with outgroup members and prejudice towards them, in both samples of university students and the general population. (Paolini et al., 2004) Theories of conflict management include both resolution-based approaches, emphasising the development of shared understanding and relations between groups, and settlement-based approaches, emphasising negotiation and bargaining for resource between groups, though such approaches are not mutually exclusive.(Bloomfield, 1995)

## Contact Theory

A meta-analysis of over 500 studies on intergroup contact theory suggests that benefits of intergroup contact are found even when the four originally proposed conditions for optimal contact – equal status, common goals, no intergroup competition, and authority sanction – are not met; and that there tends to be generalisation of positive attitudes beyond the immediate outgroup in the members of the situation (the secondary transfer effect).(Pettigrew et al., 2011) Statistical analysis of intergroup contact theory finds that increased knowledge about out-groups is less effective in encouraging contact between groups than inter-group empathy and perspective taking.(Pettigrew and Tropp, 2008) Anger and a sense of dehumanisation towards another group can reduce intergroup forgiveness, and intergroup contact is considered important for reducing both attributes.(Tam et al., 2007) Contact with out-groups exists on a number of distinct affective levels, ranging from acquaintances to friendships. As might be expected, amongst a representative sample of the Northern Irish population, out-group friendships were found to have a stronger influence on out-group forgiveness than weaker forms of out-group contact.(Voci et al., 2015) There may be diminishing marginal returns in the reduction of out-group prejudice as a function of the number of existing out-group contacts, with the first contacts having the greatest marginal reductions in prejudice.(Al Ramiah et al., 2013) The distinction between (intergroup) ‘bridging’ and (intragroup) ‘bonding’ forms of social capital proposed by Robert Putnam has been considered in the context of Northern Ireland, and the argument made that sectarian conflict may have increased ‘bonding’ capital within either group at the expense of ‘bridging’ capital between the groups. (Leonard, 2004)

## Secondary Transfer Effects

There is some evidence that the beneficial effects of positive contact on inter-group attitudes may generalise beyond the most salient outgroup (the ‘primary outgroup’), reducing prejudice towards other outgroups as well, a phenomenon known as the ‘secondary transfer effect’. (Tausch et al., 2010) In research on the perception of Polish migrants, Northern Irish Protestants were found to be less welcoming of migrants when the migrants’ Catholic religious identity was emphasised than when other attributes were emphasised.(van Rijswijk et al., 2009) The conflict and its revolution may have affected broader social attitudes held by prominent individuals in the region, such as attitudes towards homosexuality.(Ashe, 2009b) Analysis of data from 1989 and 1991 found that contact between groups in Northern Ireland was associated with more positive attitudes to denominational mixing, intergroup forgiveness, perspective taking and trust.(Hewstone et al., 2006) Research assessing the extent of secondary transfer effects (STEs) suggests that the effects of positive contact on attitudes to secondary groups may be stronger in Northern Ireland than in Germany.(Schmid et al., 2014) As well as the secondary transfer effect, exploring whether the effects of direct contact towards the primary outgroup reduce antipathy towards secondary outgroups, social psychologists are also interested in the effects of indirect contacts (being friends of someone who has a direct contact with an out-group member) on such outcomes.(Vezzali et al., 2014)

There are complex relationships between national and religious identity, with Polish national identity long considered synonymous with Catholic religious identity, for example, while in Northern Ireland a Catholic religious identity is more likely to confer a pan-Irish rather than Northern Irish national identity.(DEMERATH, 2000) Catholicism may therefore operate more as a distinct and different ‘cultural religion’ linked to different secular identities in Northern Ireland than Poland,(DEMERATH, 2000) and so any headline statistics comparing the Catholic population of Northern Ireland over time may need to consider Northern Irish Catholics and other European Catholics as distinct populations with different implications for further conflict in Northern Ireland. The linkage between religious, national and ethnic identity has been explored through examination of the ‘Ulster-Scots’ identity in Northern Ireland.(Wilson and Hay, 2013)

## History as a contested narrative

The history and sensitivity of the conflict in Northern Ireland particular challenges for the teaching of citizenship classes in secondary schools in the region, where issues of national identity and causality in the conflict may be inherently contested; such challenges may be similar to those facing Israeli citizenship classes.(Hanna, 2017; Niens et al., 2013) Attempts to present a standard historical account of Northern Irish history in both Catholic and state schools have been underway since the early 1990s.(Fischer, 2011) Commemoration and remembrance of the First World War differs substantially between Republicans and Loyalists in Northern Ireland.(Grayson, 2010) It has been argued that an effective understanding of the conflict in Northern Ireland needs more than just a knowledge of facts, but also a willingness to try to see the conflict from the perspective of different groups through role-playing exercises.(Belloni, 2008) Qualitative interviews with teenagers in working class Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland found that many of the stories individuals on both sides told about the other were not based on first hand experience of contacts, but were second hand or ‘collective’ (unattributable) narratives about the other group.(Leonard, 2006)It may be attempts to gather ‘truths’ from victims on both sides of the conflict may not be completely compatible with reconciliation between the two groups, given the validity of such truth-making claims may not be universally agreed upon.(Lundy and McGovern, 2006)

Concerns about physical or professional reprisals to unwelcome reporting may have led journalists based in or covering Northern Ireland to be selective in what they report about the conflict. (O’Farrell, 1998) The historical overtones of sectarian conflict mean that historians’ accounts of the past can be deeply contested.(MALCOLM, 2007)Amongst individuals involved in paramilitary activities, there are indications that even attempts to set up ‘truth commissions’ to collect accounts of activity may be considered a partisan political act, particularly amongst loyalists who do not consider their actions akin to those of republican paramilitaries. (Rolston, 2006) The setting up of a ‘Legacy Commission’ to record accounts from both sides of the conflict has been opposed by elite political and civil actors from both sides of the conflict.(Lawther, 2011) The lack of a formal truth-recovery process to address historical injustices relating to the conflict means that the Court of Appeal in Northern Ireland is sometimes used as a proxy for addressing the role of the state in the conflict, in addition to addressing individual injustices.(Quirk, 2013) A 2011 survey of social and political attitudes in Northern Ireland found marked divisions in relation to the process, benefits and mechanisms of truth recovery for victims of political violence during the conflict. In particular, victims within the Catholic community were found to be more supportive of formal truth-recovery mechanisms than victims in Protestant communities or non-sectarians.(Brewer and Hayes, 2015)

# History

A series of errors in the British Army’s deployment to Northern Ireland between 1969 and 1972 have been identified as important in making the situation much worse, and turning the initially envisaged task of ‘peace support’ into one of fighting an insurgency.(Thornton, 2007) The lack of effective military intelligence in Northern Ireland between 1969 and 1975 is considered to have had a detrimental impact on security and violence reduction and containment in the region.(Sanders, 2011) The post-War background to the Northern Ireland conflict has been summarised as follows: in the late 1960s a Catholic protest movement emerged, inspired by the civil rights’ movement in the United States, prompting an often violent Protestant counter-movement opposed to Catholic marches, leading to widespread clashes between sides. By 1969 such clashes could not be controlled by the police forces in Belfast and Londonderry (numbering around three thousand full time officers and ten thousand reservists), and around 2,500 troops from the British Army were mobilised. Though the forces were somewhat successful at containing violence by keeping the sides separate, large amounts of Catholic property – including homes – were still damaged, and little guidance was provided about how the Army should operate, and strategies and tactics developed for the containment of insurgencies in British colonies, such as Malaya in the 1950s, may have been applied. In 1969 and 1970, the Army was considered relatively effective in protecting Catholics from Protestant attacks, and restrained in its response to violence, and so resistance to the Army from the IRA remained limited, as were IRA reprisal attacks on Protestants. The IRA was conflicted in its response to both the Army presence and Protestant reprisals, however, and in 1969 split into the less-militant Official IRA (OIRA), and the more militant Provisional IRA (PIRA). The Army, the OIRA and the PIRA then each competed to win favour and appear legitimate from the perspective of Catholic communities, with the PIRA to some extent hoping and goading the Army into behaviours which would de-legitimise the Army’s presence in these communities, in particular through their handling of sectarian tensions during marches. Examples of subsequent Army mis-steps included: the deployment of the Protestant-sympathising Scots Guards in 1970; and deploying too few troops for peaceful containment (‘minimal force’) strategies to be effective. This lack of numbers possibly led to excessive use of CS gas in riots which lasted for many days in Ballymurphy, the creation of Army ‘no go’ areas and so a power vacuum which the PIRA was able to fill, and being unable to properly defend the Catholic Short Strand enclave against Protestants in June 1970. Army attempts to disarm Catholic communities, combined with a lack of success defending them on all occasions, further acted to delegitimise the Army amongst affected Catholic communities. With reduced support for the Army in Catholic communities, the PIRA then began attacking the Army in 1971; worsening Army-PIRA relations led the Army to publicly name IRA leaders on 5 February 1971, swiftly followed by the first killing of a British soldier by the IRA the following day. Internment, i.e. indefinite detention without trial of suspected Republican paramilitaries, then swiftly followed, and on a large scale; on 9 August 1971, 342 people were arrested (of which only 55 were PIRA members), leading to protests over the following days in which 23 people died, including a Catholic priest. Army troop numbers increased by around a quarter within the year, reaching nearly 16,000 by October, and PIRA bombings and killings intensified. The effect of internment was to bring an end to Army-IRA relations in 1971; amity was then further increased through the deployment and actions of the Parachute Regiment (‘the Paras’), who were more inclined to use deadly force than existing forces. It was the Paras who faced a 7,000-strong Catholic civil rights march on 13 January 1972, ‘Bloody Sunday’, and shot dead 14 people later found to be unarmed, further delegitimising the Army and legitimising PIRA within many Catholic communities. This event, more than any other, can be seen to have ignited the decades of sectarian conflict that followed.(Gerike et al., 2016)

Paramilitary ceasefires in late 1994 were identified near the time as important developments in the peace process, and the best hope for resolution of the conflict for over twenty five years.(Boyle and Hadden, 1995) Paramilitary operations by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) officially ended on 31 August 1994; six weeks later, on 13 October 1994, a cessation of violence was announced by Loyalist forces, leading to a situation described in 1995 as a ‘cold peace’.(O’Leary, 1995) A resumption of IRA violence occurred on 9 February 1996, marked by the bombing of Canary Wharf in London.(Kyle, 1996)

## Cliometrics

The Northern Ireland Research Initiative (NIRI) has compiled a database of events in Northern Ireland over 1968 to 1998, to test theories of conflict and violence that occurred in Northern Ireland over this period. This database includes not only deaths and violent acts attributable to the conflict, but also other politically contentious acts such as protests, strikes, surveillance activities and policing behaviours, and includes more than seventy distinct event types. A particular interest amongst the researchers was on the relationship between conflict and political repression in the region. The researchers identified two key phase shifts in the nature of activities amongst actors in Northern Ireland up to the mid 1970s; the first of these was defined by the introduction of interment, beginning August 1971; and the second by Operation Motorman, given to military efforts to reclaim ‘no go’ areas in Belfast, Derry and other towns, which began in July 1972. Both phases were marked by actions initiated by the government, which then led to adaptation in response and tactics employed by the IRA.(Loyle et al., 2014) Statistical analyses of killings by both PIRA terrorists and in counter-terrorist operations, in Northern Ireland over the period 1970 to 1998, found that the killing of PIRA militants by counter-terrorists did not affect the rate of PIRA bombings, and that the indiscriminate or accidental killing of the broader Catholic community in counter-terrorist operations led to PIRA bombings both increasing, and being increasingly used to target civilians.(Gill et al., 2016) Analysis of a database of more than a thousand individuals involved in PIRA found the members when committing their first identifiable PIRA-related activity was 25 years, the same age as Jihadi recruits in more recent conflicts.(Gill and Horgan, 2013) The average age of recruitment was around three years younger, and increased as the conflict progressed.(Gill and Horgan, 2013) As the average of recruits increased, violence decreased.(Gill and Horgan, 2013)

# Conflict as a Complex System

The Northern Ireland conflicts involved multiple interacting elements, and it has been argued these elements should be modelled as a complex social ecology or system, incorporating positive and negative feedback between elements, rather than as a simple regression, in order to appropriately model the kind of ‘lock-in’ in rates of violence which emerge after initiating events.(Wright, 2006) Events and actions which have been included in a complex ‘systemogram’ modelling deaths through violence in Northern Ireland include the searching of vehicles and houses, deaths of civilians, the use of CS gas, the internment of republicans, the deaths of military personnel, and the number of bombs exploded in a given month, each of which is measureable and can be seen to have an influence on the likelihood of over events in later time periods.(Wright, 2006) A paper describing an agent-based model of processes and dynamics of civil war emphasises the punctuated equilibria – sudden increases in violence punctuating longer periods of relative calm – can be expected in such complex systems, and that it is important to consider the ways that agents involved in war adapt over time in their attitudes and behaviour.(Findley, 2008)

# Demography

Catholics in Northern Ireland had disadvantaged class positions relative to Protestants for much of the period 1922 to 1972, but these inequalities had sharply reduced by 1996. (Breen, 2000) Structural inequalities – perceived or real – that exist between groups can affect both rates and quality of inter-group contact, as well as negative outgroup attitudes.(Kauff et al., 2016) The Catholic share of Northern Ireland’s population has been steadily rising throughout the 1970s and 1980s.(O’Leary, 1995) Catholics have higher mortality rates than non-Catholics in Northern Ireland, but such differences appear to be explained by differences in socioeconomic status.(O’Reilly and Rosato, 2008) Differences in behaviour and lifestyle associated with different religious denominations in Northern Ireland mean religious identity is predictive of differences in population health.(O’Reilly and Rosato, 2008) The role of the Irish diaspora, and in particular on Americans of Irish descent, on bringing international attention and support to peace-building in the region is important to consider.(Cochrane et al., 2009)

After long being ethnically homogenous, between 2001 and 2011, the number of people of Indian ethnic origin in Northern Ireland more than tripled, and many other ethnic groups’ populations also increased sharply. A sharp increase in crimes and incidents targeting ethnic minorities followed. Explanations for this include the transference of sectarian thinking to ethnic minority populations (‘sectarianism as racism’); the perception that ethnic minorities pose a threat to the economic self-interest of existing groups (‘economic self-interest’); and a lack of existing social contact between extant in-groups and nascent out-groups (‘social contact’). Analyses of social attitudes in Northern Ireland finds support for all three theories.(McKee, 2016) There is evidence from a representative survey that Protestants/unionists tend to express higher levels of anti-immigrant sentiment, and more negative attitudes to immigrants and ethnic minorities, than do Catholic/nationalist communities. This has been attributed to differences in perceived ‘cultural threat’, defined as the sense that the out-group risks somehow obstructing or diluting in-group values, identity or traditions.(Pehrson et al., 2012)

# Terrorism and counter-terrorism

The conflict in Northern Ireland is included as one of many examples of an ‘ethnic challenge to government authority’, and included in an international database bearing this name. This database grouped conflict prevention measures into two broad categories – peaceful measures and coercive measures – each containing a number of subcategories. It found nearly 95% of measures (729/780) were peaceful, with a disproportionately high share of the coercive measures being applied in Northern Ireland.(Öberg et al., 2009) Additional terrorist legislation was developed throughout the Troubles to try to make it easier for those involved in terrorism to be prosecuted.(Walker and Reid, 1993) The approach taken to the British government to international terrorism threats abroad after September 11 2001, and terrorist threats in Northern Ireland, have been systematically different, if not contradictory.(Blackbourn, 2009) It is suggested that an important lesson of the Northern Ireland peace process is that engaging in talks with ‘terrorist’ groups is important as a means to transform a conflict away from violence.(Toros, 2008)

It has been argued that the role of the IRA in tit-for-tat sectarianism is overstated, and that instead they should be considered a guerrilla army engaged in a strategic military campaign.(White, 1997) Loyalist terrorism has been labelled ‘pro-state’ terrorism, in which perpetrators act believing they are carrying out the state’s duties in eliminating security threats.(Drake, 1996) In the conflict in Northern Ireland, the distinction between ‘combatants’ and ‘non-combatants’ was often fuzzy, meaning incidental or intentional targeting of non-combatants by either side may have been commonplace.(Johnson, 2000) The boundary between such forms of terrorism and vigilantism is thus porous. Terrorist actions invariably rely on some level of constituent (‘grass roots’) support from the communities in which they are based. Four types of such support have been identified: behavioural support, constituting active and passive population assistance; induced support, in which populations respond to incentives provided by terrorist organisations; impelled support, in which populations actively contribute to such organisations; and auspicious support, in which populations sympathise with the goals (if not the means) of terrorist groups, but do not contribute actively towards them. Such forms of support can often be further divided into more passive or active, and more coerced or enticed, forms.(Boylan, 2015) Much of the resource from terrorist groups in Northern Ireland was drawn from the black economy, including activities such as fraud, extortion and racketeering.(Maguire, 1993) Counter-insurgency strategies practices in Northern Ireland during the conflict did not display great commitment to human rights, and because of this may have prolonged rather than shortened the conflict.(Dickson, 2009)

The Provisional IRA has been considered in depth a case study in power, in the various ways terrorist groups must develop and manage multiple forms of power and authority – including physical power, resource power, position power – to resource and sustain a campaign of violence for many decades, and in the tactics and considerations given to these issues within the Green Book, a key IRA training manual.(Silke, 2000) Using the term ‘paramilitary’ to refer to the IRA may underplay the close links between the organisation’s military and civil activites.(Scobell and Hammitt, 1998) Debates are ongoing as to whether the Provisional IRA’s paramilitary campaign should be considered sectarian.(Patterson, 2010)

## Homicide Trends

A total of 3598 deaths were attributed killings in the conflict between 1969 and 1998. A breakdown of these deaths by age group indicates one quarter of these deaths occurred in people aged 18-23, with attributed killings then falling with age.(Smyth, 1998) Unlike many conventional wars, however, children aged 12-17 also died in large numbers.(Smyth, 1998) The conflict is estimated to have cost nearly 3,700 lives.(McDowell, 2008) It has been estimated that 3740 people have died directly as a result of the troubles between 1969 and 1999.(Curran, 2001)

In both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, where rates of homicide and other indictable crimes increased over the period 1950 to 1990, rates of suicide increased as well, suggesting that both causes of death could be considered indicators of a more general societal disorder.(McKenna et al., 1997) Analysis of deaths through civil unrest and suicide in Northern Ireland between 1965 and 1997 concluded that the two causes were negative correlated over the period.(Lester, 2002) Rates of completed suicides halved after 1969, supporting a long-standing hypothesis that homicide and suicide rates tend to be inversely related.(Curran, 2001; Durkheim, 1951) Levels of psychiatric morbidity are not dissimilar in Northern Ireland to elsewhere in the UK.(Curran, 2001) A studiously collected record of deaths due to the conflict, published in 1994, suggests that in most years Republicans were responsible for more killings than any other military or paramilitary faction, peaking at over 250 deaths in 1972, before levelling off to around 50 killings per year throughout the late 1970s and 1980s. Loyalist killings rose to over 100 in the mid 1970s, before falling to around 10 killings per year in the 1980s, then rising again in the early 1990s.(Sutton, 1994)

## Suicide Trends

Suicide rates in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland tended to be less than half those in England & Wales and Scotland in the 1960s, more than doubling during the 1970s and 1980s, but not to levels greatly above those in England & Wales, and remaining somewhat below those in Scotland.(Lester et al., 1997) Suicide rates amongst the elderly in Northern Ireland tend to be lower than in other parts of the UK.(Shah and Coupe, 2009) Suicide rates have tended to be higher in Ireland than in the UK since the early 1980s, at around 14 per 100,000 through most of the 1980s, and 16 per 100,000 thereafter. In Northern Ireland, rates in this age group increased from around 9 per 100,000 from 1982 to 2004, to reach similar levels to Ireland, around 16 per 100,000, from 2008 onwards. These rates are somewhat higher than in Scotland (around 14 per 100,000), and around twice those as seen in England & Wales (which trended down from around 12 per 100,000 in 1982 to around 8 per 100,000 in 2010).(Murphy et al., 2015)

A review of completed suicides over one year in Northern Ireland found the majority (86%) had previously presented with clinical syndromes, and that males who completed suicide tended to have longer periods of contact with health care professionals than females.(Foster et al., 1997) Half of those who complete suicide in Northern Ireland had a known mental health disorder; hanging is the most common method. (O’Neill et al., 2016)

# Mental Health Effects

Direct experience of terrorist incidents can have lasting psychological effects, including PTSD.(Daly and Johnston, 2002) Victims of terrorism, in Northern Ireland as elsewhere, face increased risk of PTSD and related mental disorders, such as depressive and anxiety disorders and grief, and benefit from treatment with trauma-focused CBT.(Paz Garcia-Vera et al., 2016) At least one individual who served in armed forced in Northern Ireland during the Troubles has experienced post-traumatic stress disorder from a terrorist attack he did not experience directly, but believed he did.(Neal and Rose, 1995) PTSD caused by terrorism and civil conflict in Northern Ireland can require early intervention with weeks of cognitive therapy to treat effectively.(Duffy et al., 2007)

The lifetime prevalence of traumatic stress and exposure to traumatic events is high in Northern Ireland, with a representative survey of the Northern Irish finding over 60% of respondents had experienced a lifetime traumatic events, of which around two thirds were presumed to be conflict related, and men significantly more likely to experience such events than women.(Bunting et al., 2013) Around 46% of men and 56% of women how experienced a traumatic event experienced a mental disorder at some point on their lifetime, compared with 27% and 31% of those without traumatic event exposure.(Bunting et al., 2013)

Despite the conflicts, rates of psychiatric morbidity, assessed using the GHQ-12 instrument in the British Household Panel Survey, are similar in Northern Ireland to other parts of the UK, and somewhat lower than in Wales.(Murphy and Lloyd, 2007) Region accounted for less than 1% of variation in GHQ-12 scores.(Murphy and Lloyd, 2007) The non-elevated rates of reported psychiatric morbidity in Northern Ireland over a period of chronic sectarian strife has led to an interest in the development of psychological coping strategies amongst Northern Irish communities.(Spilerman and Stecklov, 2009)

## Gender differences and roles

The effectiveness of community-based restorative justice schemes in Northern Ireland may be strongly mediated by the gender of participants.(Ashe, 2009a) The role of women in demilitarising conflict in Northern Ireland up to and beyond the GFA may be under-appreciated in dominant political narratives.(Ashe, 2015) Amongst women in Northern Ireland, the dominant predictors of social identity differed between Catholics and Protestants. Amongst Catholics, stronger in-group identity was positively linked to both attendance of church and experienced of sectarian conflict; while amongst Protestants, stronger in-group identity was associated with greater labour market and political status satisfaction, i.e. to lower relative deprivation.(Goeke-Morey et al., 2015)

# Economic Regeneration

Sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland has implications for effective communication in the workplace, creating the need for employers to adopt effective communication strategies to appropriately address an additional layer of contentious issues.(Hargie et al., 2003) The conflict is estimated to have reduced GDP per capita in Northern Ireland by up to 10%.(Dorsett, 2013)

An economic resurgence followed the GFA, with important implications for migration, with the region changing from experiencing net out-migration to net in-migration, drawing migrants – as with much of the UK – from predominantly former Eastern bloc countries.(Geoghegan, 2008; Jarman, 2006) Increased exposure to a greater diversity of ethnicities and cultural backgrounds led to an increased focus on acts of racism and anti-racism in the region. It has been argued that even statements of anti-racism, such as those presented on public murals, still employ sectarian narratives.(Geoghegan, 2008) The apparent stability of peace in Northern Ireland since the Good Friday Agreement has allowed for a greater focus on economic regeneration in Belfast.(Ellis and McKay, 2000) Infrastructure which emerged during the conflict – such as military installations and sectarian street murals - are now being promoted as tourist attractions.(McDowell, 2008)

# European Union

The EU has been seen as important to conflict resolution and facilitating British-Irish cooperation in Northern Ireland.(Tannam, 2012) It has been suggested that the European Commission’s approach to conflict resolution in Northern Ireland altered from the late 1980s due both to greater analytical understanding, and changes to the situation in Northern Ireland resulting from successful British and Irish negotiations.(Tannam, 2007) The EU may also have been encouraged to take a more pro-active role in the region due to a perceived failure at ethnic conflict mitigation in the Balkans in the early 1990s.(Tannam, 2007) It has been suggested that the EU can affect border conflict through four mechanisms: compulsory impact, in which borders have to be removed or reduced to meet EU treaty obligations; enabling impact, in which actors in specific parties to the dispute link their political agendas to the EU; connective impact, in which the opportunities and challenges posed by greater EU membership are recognised as requiring cross-party collaboration; and constructive impact, in which the group identities of antagonistic parties become re-written under a broader European identity.(Diez et al., 2006) It has been argued that, whereas ethno-national conflict since the establishment of Northern Ireland in 1921 sharpened the border with the Republic of Ireland, the European Single Market made it more permeable, highlighting the influence that global factors can have on the region.(Anderson and O’Dowd, 1999)

The European Commission invested over £80 million into district partnerships in Northern Ireland, through its Peace and Reconciliation Special Support Programme by the end of 1999.(Williamson et al., 2000) EU Peace Programmes for Northern Ireland and the Border Counties began in 1995 with the Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (Peace I) which provided €500 million in structural funds to the region, supplemented with an additional €167 from government; followed by the Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (Peace II), which provided €531million via the EU and an additional €304 from national governments between 2000 and 2004.(Buchanan, 2008) Most of this money was spent on projects focused on economic renewal and local regeneration rather than those explicitly addressing social integration, though it is argued the former aims facilitate the latter, with the Community Relations Council arguing that on the Irish border violence promotes poverty and poverty promotes violence.(Buchanan, 2008) Such programmes were considered distinct from national government-led peace promotion efforts in their involvement of grass-roots community organisations in bidding for grants and implementation of initiatives.(Buchanan, 2008) The third phase of the EU programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland took place over the years 2007 to 2013. Community group leaders considered it largely successful at promoting cross-community contact and reconciliation, but bureaucratic.(Karari et al., 2013)

Interviews with nearly 100 community group leaders involved in EU-funded economic development programmes in Northern Ireland and the Border regions (the Peace II programme) suggested that most believed the funds had had a positive impact on the region in terms of cross-community contact and reconciliation; however there were concerns that the region should not become too dependent on such initiatives to maintain peace and further economic development.(Byrne et al., 2009) Qualitative research investigating the opinions of key stakeholders on both sides of the sectarian divide in Northern Ireland pointed out that simply investing large amounts of money into the region through the Peace and Reconciliation Special Support Programme does not necessarily lead to a reduction in sectarian conflict; indeed attempts to access such new resource could create a new opportunity for the escalation rather than the diffusion of such conflicts.(Byrne and Irvin, 2001) The importance of voluntary organisations, in particular women’s organisations, for reducing sectarian animosity should be recognised along with state-led initiatives.(Side, 2005) A lack of systematic documentation and evaluation of ‘bottom-up’ efforts to reduce sectarian divisions in Northern Ireland means the effectiveness of many interventions is uncertain.(Kelly and Braniff, 2016)

# Urban/Rural Differences / Neighbourhood Effects [227]

Conflict and contestation over space is not confined in Northern Ireland to urban areas, and is also observed in rural communities and villages.(Murtagh, 1998)The built environment in Belfast city centre has changed rapidly in recent years, and efforts have been made to normalise both the physical geography and psycho-geography of this area.(Switzer and McDowell, 2009) The political role played by murals in Northern Ireland may have reduced levels of street graffiti in the region overall compared with other regions in North America and Europe.(Bush, 2013) Ethnographic research into the use of space in Belfast city centre, since the GFA and subsequent economic development, has argued that peacebuilding has successfully generated ‘deterritorialised spaces’ within the city.(Mitchell and Kelly, 2011) A survey of Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland found that Catholic nationalists and residents of Belfast city were less likely to perceive physical separation of communities as negatively impacting the peace process than other respondents.(Fissuh et al., 2012) The city of Belfast is not just interpreted along sectarian lines, and the importance of identifying and promoting ‘disruptive’ narratives of the city for moving to a non-sectarian future has been recognised.(Stainer, 2005) Compared with people living in segregated neighbourhoods, people living in mixed neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland tend to have lower ingroup bias and have lower tendency to take offensive actions to outgroups, but are also more exposed to political violence and perceive a greater threat to their physical safety.(Schmid et al., 2008) Interviews with Catholic adolescents near the Northern Irish border found those living in Northern Ireland were keener to emphasise their ‘Irishness’ than those living in the Republic of Ireland.(Stevenson and Muldoon, 2010)

# International Comparisons

Comparisons have been made between Northern Ireland and South Africa in regards to the role and opportunities for victims of political violence and oppression to tell their stories in informal and official forums, suggesting that unless victim accounts are given official recognition they can be marginalised and lack wide legitimacy.(Hackett and Rolston, 2009) Ethno-religious conflict in South Africa, Northern Ireland, and Israel/Palestine were long considered similar in their apparent intractability, but have been considered resolved in South Africa and at least largely stabilised in Northern Ireland.(Jung et al., 2005) It may be that Northern Ireland has not been analysed as rigorously as a case study of conflict as other civil wars in perhaps less affluent regions.(Smith, 1999)

# The Good Friday Agreement [386]

Up to seven prior attempts at bringing peace to Northern Ireland were made between 1969 and the Belfast Agreement of 1998, including the Sunningdale Agreement of 1973. It has been argued that what made the Belfast successful was the presence of key individuals acting effectively as ‘brokers’ in the complex social networks which had to be negotiated at the time.(Goddard, 2012) It has been argued that there were enough exceptional factors behind the Good Friday Arrangement that it is unlikely to be an effective and transferrable blueprint for constitutional conflict resolution elsewhere; amongst other factors listed was the fact that demographic change had meant that Protestants had become only a small rather than overwhelming majority of the population. (HOROWITZ, 2002) It is argued that the Northern Ireland Peace Process was largely a top-down initiative, focused on engagement with key political figures and organisations rather than local communities.(Hancock, 2008) One reason attributed to the success of the Good Friday Agreements is the inclusion of ‘militant nationalists’, the extreme ends of the political continuum, who if excluded could have acted to spoil the negotiations; (Maney et al., 2006) another reason was the use of external and neutral actors or agencies to the negotiations. (Maney et al., 2006; McGarry and O’Leary, 2006) Interviews with 117 14-15 year olds in Northern Ireland showed attitudes to the inevitability of conflict fell sharply after the 1994 ceasefire announcements.(McLernon et al., 1997)

During the 1980s and early 1990s, the main police force in Northern Ireland, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), was drawn disproportionately from Protestant rather than Catholic populations, with evidence that Catholics working in the RUC faced cultural detachment from the broader Catholic community.(Mapstone, 1992) The RUC was disbanded in 2001, and was often seen as biased against Catholics, meaning even the commemoration of officers killed in the RUC has been considered a political act.(Switzer and Graham, 2009) The role of the RUC as the sole agents of social control and managing crime was contested in many parts of Northern Ireland, leading to the growth of informal or ‘popular’ forms of crime management and social control instead; it has been argued that political violence from groups engaged in such activities may have had a positive effect on crime management.(Brewer et al., 1998)

The power sharing arrangement following the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) has been described as an example of ‘consociationalism’, a system of government in which coalition by both Republicans and Loyalists is mandated; this arrangement was for many years abided to by both sides to avoid either ‘direct rule’ from London (unacceptable to Republicans) or ‘joint sovereignty’ with the Republic of Ireland (unacceptable to Loyalists).(ANDERSON, 2008) Questions have therefore been raised about whether the GFA represents or helps to bring about conflict *resolution*, or is simply conflict *management* (or more pessimistically conflict deferment).(ANDERSON, 2008) Consociational governments have their origins in the Dutch experience of managing ‘plural societies’, and based around four prescriptions for political process: grand coalition; proportional representation; mutal veto; and autonomy. It is argued that such arrangements are somewhat segregationalist rather than integrationalist by design.(Dixon, 2011) The consociational arrangement following the GFA has led to little change in the ethno-sectarian identity focus of any of the main parties within Northern Ireland. Indeed, the political success of Sinn Fein at the expense of the more moderate Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) in capturing the Irish Nationalist voting block after the GFA suggests sectarian identity may have come to matter more, not less, to voting intentions following the GFA.(McGlynn et al., 2014) Cross-ethnic political parties have seen only limited success after the GFA compared with sectarian political parties, and this lack of success has been attributed to the consocational institutions established in the wake of the GFA to accommodate (rather than attempt to blend) rival identities.(Murtagh, 2015)

## Legislative Developments [133]

It has been argued that British policy towards Northern Ireland did not change substantially from 1972, even with large changes in the head of government and the dominant party in Westminster. (Dixon, 2001) The number of MPs from Northern Ireland increased from 12 members to 17 in 1978-9.(Walker and Mulvenna, 2015) The introduction of a proportional representation (PR) voting system using the Single Transferrable Vote (STV) in Northern Ireland in 1997, as part of devolution agreements, led to a reduction in the number of terrorist attacks in the region; a similar effect of PR on terrorist activity was also found in Algeria and other regions affected by terrorism.(Qvortrup, 2015) Such effects have been attributed to the ‘democratic deficit’ apparent for minority groups and causes when majoritarian government voting systems (like first past the post, FPTP) are in place.(Qvortrup, 2015)

# Child Development

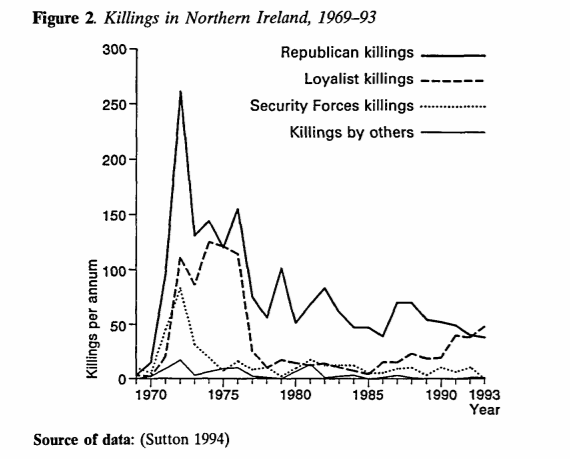
The role of parents and family, and broader socialisation processes, in establishing national identity in young people near the Northern Irish border has been explored through textual analysis of essays written by young people on the subject; national and religious identity were believed to overlap strongly, and religion was recognised both to have the potential for promote tolerance as well as fuel hostilities.(Muldoon, McLaughlin, et al., 2007; Muldoon, Trew, et al., 2007) Issues of child development and socialisation, contact theory, and Bourdieu’s concept of habitus have been linked in research on pre-adolescents in both Northern Ireland and Macedonia.(Misoska, 2014) Adolescents in family environments that experienced high conflict tended to have poorer educational outcomes.(Goeke-Morey et al., 2013) Amongst adolescents living in Belfast, exposure to both sectarian antisocial behaviour was associated with increased general and sectarian aggression within twelve months.(Merrilees et al., 2013)

## Educational Segregation [807]

Secondary schools in Northern Ireland have been categorised as either segregated, mixed, or integrated, with pupils attending mixed and integrated schools tending to express more positive attitudes to intergroup mixing and contact more generally.(Stringer et al., 2010) Catholic and Protestant children the educational system is segregated, with Catholics and Protestants often taught in separate schools. According to the contact hypothesis, if people from opposing groups are brought into contact with each other under certain optimal conditions then conflict between groups can be reduced.(Allport, 1954) The four proposed conditions for effective contact include: that members of both groups are treated with equal status; that situations should necessitate cooperation between members of the different groups; that opportunities for competition between groups be minimised; and that the situation of contact should be perceived as legitimate through institutional support. Integrated schools therefore provide great potential for reducing group conflict through effective and supervised contact, so long as effective solutions for avoiding situations of intergroup conflict are found.(Niens and Cairns, 2005) An outcome of the Northern Ireland peace process may have been to reduce earlier trends towards integrated education, in order for the agreement to be mutually acceptable by both nationalists and unionists.(Nolan, 2007)

Integrated schools were established in Northern Ireland in the early 1980s. Their perceived legitimacy amongst parents may depend more so on the level of trust parents have in head teachers than amongst other school types.(Donnelly et al., 2016) Amongst children in integrated and segregated schools in Northern Ireland, cross-group friendships and extended out-group contact had somewhat different positive effects on intergroup relations, with the former leading to better intergroup relations through increased self-disclosure and outgroup empathy, and the latter leading to improved perceived peer norms towards the out-group.(Turner et al., 2013) Even within integrated schools, there are still opportunities for students to self-segregate, such as by choosing to sit with people from the same religion within classrooms, creating a conundrum for teachers about whether to enforce greater integration through seating plans.(McKeown et al., 2016) Within schools pupils often self-segregate by gender, potentially meaning masculine sectarian identities can develop differently to feminine sectarian identities.(Sherriff, 2007)

The benefits of intergroup contact for reducing out-group prejudice amongst school children has been found in all school types (segregated, mixed and integrated).(Hughes et al., 2013) Segregated schools appear to contribute to in-group bias and out-group prejudice amongst school children, with broader political ramifications.(Hughes, 2011)



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