

Kathleen Doherty

Ethno-religious conflict in Northern Ireland

Appalachian State University

Abstract

The Troubles, is an ethno-religious conflict within Northern Ireland that occurred from 1968 to 1998. During this conflict, the constitutional status of Northern Ireland was questioned—will it remain with the United Kingdom or finally become a united Ireland? Many scholars in political science discuss the roots of this conflict as an ethnic divide, citing anti-Irish discrimination and the perpetuation of ethnic stereotypes for centuries. However, scholars within this field fail to acknowledge the strong religious identities and anti-Catholicism. Without divulging and understanding each identities' religious beliefs, scholars fail to understand how each identity sees not only themselves, but also others. I argue that the Troubles is not an ethno-national conflict, but an ethno-religious conflict that promoted two extreme forms of nationalism--the same pattern that has been present for centuries. The presence of paramilitary groups and discrimination within the political system divided these two groups even further. The Good Friday Agreement in 1998 led to the official end of the conflict, and promoted peace and stability in Northern Ireland. With the recent controversy of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union, the question of Northern Ireland's constitutional status is back on the table.

David Trimble once said, “There are two traditions in Northern Ireland. There are two main religious dominations. But there is only one true moral domination. And that is peace.” Trimble, who was a British politician and the First Minister of Northern Ireland, and many others were witnesses to one of the most controversial and violent ethnic conflicts in the Western World, The Troubles. The Troubles was an ethnic conflict that occurred in a highly developed country with a relatively stable GDP, which is unique because extreme forms of ethnic conflict do not normally occur within advanced and stable economies.¹ The violent conflict took place from 1968 to 1998, and it divided the majority population from the minority population in Northern Ireland.² The nation was in disagreement on the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, whether it should remain under the United Kingdom or join the Republic of Ireland. This conflict was an extension of the earlier conflict of Irish Independence, which led to the creation of the Republic of Ireland in 1922. The conflict of Irish Independence was a territorial dispute between Irish and British nationalists over the entire island of Ireland. This instance of ethnic conflict continued decades later, but the later dispute was over the northern six counties (Northern Ireland). Although this paper will be a case study of Northern Ireland, it is crucial to mention the role of the Irish Independence movement and how it was a previous example of ethnic conflict between these two groups. Overall, The Troubles claimed about 3,600 lives, injured over 50,000 people, and pushed the region into a horrific international spotlight.³

¹ MacLeod, Alan. *International Politics and the Northern Ireland Conflict: The USA, Diplomacy and the Troubles* (1). London, GB: I.B.Tauris, 2016. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 27 October 2016.

² <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/troubles>

³ *Human rights in Northern Ireland: Rights & wrongs—human rights television* [Video file]. (1994). Retrieved October 27, 2016, from <http://0fod.infobase.com.wncln.wncln.org/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=106626&xtid=53132>

The purpose of my research is to apply theories on ethnic conflict to the case study of Northern Ireland. The specific case of Northern Ireland is discussed among scholars who study ethnic violence, and it is beneficial to examine how the different theories are applied. Northern Ireland is a particularly interesting case study to examine because it is the last *official* example of conflict between the Irish and British identities, which have had numerous conflicts against each other for centuries. Also, the role of paramilitary groups, specifically the IRA, have had a heavy influence on present-day terrorist groups and their tactics—it is important to note that these terrorist groups are actors in their own cases of ethnic conflict as well.

Some of the patterns I found while researching this topic is that not enough scholarship acknowledged the religious undertones within this ethno-national conflict. Much of the scholarship within the political science field maintains that anti-Irish sentiment is the driving force for discrimination against the minority group, which identifies as Irish. This is partly true, but the minority population was predominately Catholic and the majority predominately identified as Protestant. Given the long history of ethnic violence between the Irish and British, anti-Catholicism was a driving force, why does scholarship only acknowledge the problems between conflicting ethnic identities? The actual conflict was territorial and based on the nation's identity and status, but many scholars have ignored the religious undertones that clearly shaped the ethnic identities in Northern Ireland. By not acknowledging that anti-Irish sentiment has an anti-Catholic component, one cannot understand the totality of the conflict or address how the in and out groups understood themselves and their perception of the other. The violent actions taken by both sides are not only ethnically motivated, but they are driven by religion as well. The most important part of my research is that I argue that The Troubles is an ethno-religious

territorial conflict, not simply an ethno-national conflict. The clash between the Irish and the British identities have always been considered ethno-religious, so why should the conflict in Northern Ireland be different? The religious undertones and discrimination were not solved prior to the conflict in Northern Ireland, but religion remained an important part of differentiation between the two groups. My research will also examine how the broken political system of Northern Ireland played a huge role for why The Troubles lasted as long as it did. The political system was unjust and not representative of its citizens, which caused the divisiveness to worsen between the two ethno-religious identities.

Before defining ethnic conflict and discussing the applicable theories to the case of Northern Ireland, it is necessary to explain each of the ethno-religious identities involved. This conflict is complex because it is motivated by nationalism and socio-economic imbalances of the two major ethnic groups in the region, which are additionally defined through religious identification. According to multiple scholars, it is very common for “ethnicity and religion to appear to coincide with populations essentially coinciding ethnic cleavages.”⁴ This directly applies to the case of Northern Ireland, given that the two identities can be described as the Catholics and Protestants. I will also discuss later how the two identities are defined through their differences in lineage and bloodlines.

The majority group, or in-group, in The Troubles is the unionists, who also align themselves with the Protestant community and British heritage. The Protestant community represents about 48% of the present-day population, which is a decline from the past 55%.⁵

⁴ Ruane, Joseph, and Jennifer Todd. 2010. "Ethnicity and Religion: Redefining the Research Agenda." *Ethnopolitics* 9, no. 1: 1-8. *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 23, 2017).

⁵ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-irish-demographics-idUSBRE8BA0HN20121211>

There are some discrepancies when defining identities in this region because not every single Protestant aligns with the unionist cause or of British heritage. However, most of them do, so for the case of my research when I refer to the Protestant community, I am referring to the unionist cause with British heritage. Unionists believe the status of Northern Ireland was resolved at the end of the Irish Independence movement, and the nation should remain a part of the United Kingdom as it has for centuries. Unionists in Northern Ireland have clashed with the past and present instances of Irish nationalism, and they conclude that Irish nationalism is a direct threat to Northern Ireland's state sovereignty. The in-group has also come to terms with the birth of the Republic of Ireland and view that Irish nationalism should have ceased with the birth of the Irish state.⁶ The political parties that represented their interests in The Troubles were the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and the Unionist Party of Northern Ireland.⁷

In contrast, the minority population in The Troubles were the nationalists or republicans. The nationalist minority was also predominately Catholic, in contrast to the Protestant majority. Today, the Catholic population has risen to 45% of the present-day population, which could eventually lead to a transfer of political power.⁸ The republican identity is not a point on a political spectrum, but in reference to being pro-Republic and wanting Northern Ireland to unite with the Republic of Ireland. Most Catholics aligned with the nationalist cause of uniting Ireland,

⁶ Ó Dochartaigh, N. (2015). The Longest Negotiation: British Policy, IRA Strategy and the Making of the Northern Ireland Peace Settlement. *Political Studies*, 63(1), 202-220.
doi:10.1111/1467-9248.12091

⁷ <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ira/conflict/civil.html>

⁸ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-irish-demographics-idUSBRE8BA0HN20121211>

which was attempted during Irish Independence, but failed. Prior to The Troubles, the Catholic minority grew tired of discrimination and unfair treatment by the Protestant-dominated government. The political parties that represented their interests were the Nationalist Party (which turned into the Irish Independence Party), Sinn Fein (the political wing of a nationalist terrorist group known as the Irish Republican Army), and the Social Democratic and Labor Party (SDLP).⁹

Now that I have explicitly defined the two ethno-religious identities in the region, I will discuss the definition of ethnic violence. According to Kiper and Sosis (2016), the definition of ethnic violence “is a form of intergroup conflict that, in turn, is shaped by coalitional aggression, parochial altruism, and revenge, and these underlying behavioral propensities are adaptations.”¹⁰ They go on to state,

There are three minimal requirements for ethnic violence: 1) the inculcation of an ethno-religious identity, 2) groups banding together to cooperate and coordinate the execution of violence, and 3) indiscriminate violence against an out-group that is widely legitimated among the in-group.¹¹

Clearly the definition presented applies to the case of Northern Ireland and its diverging ethnic identities. Applying the definition to the ethno-religious identities, the political domination of one ethno-religious group led to systemic discrimination and policies that undermined the minority Catholic community. These communities grew resentful and began to

⁹ Brewer, J., & Higgins, G. (1999). UNDERSTANDING ANTI-CATHOLICISM IN NORTHERN IRELAND. *Sociology*, 33(2), 235-255. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.proxy006.nclive.org/stable/42857929>

¹⁰ Kiper, Jordan, and Richard Sosis. 2016. "Shaking the tyrant's bloody robe." *Politics & The Life Sciences* 35, no. 1: 27-47. *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 23, 2017).

¹¹ Kiper, Jordan, and Richard Sosis. 2016. "Shaking the tyrant's bloody robe." *Politics & The Life Sciences* 35, no. 1: 27-47. *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 23, 2017).

form coalitions and networks to organize for more rights and better representation in the Northern Irish government. Another point that many scholars point out is that in extreme cases ethnic violence can lead to the rise of terrorism, when all other political reform remedies are exhausted.¹² This is a popular concept in extreme cases of ethno-religious violence and other examples include the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE), Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and the ETA in the Basque country.

Another critical aspect of The Troubles is the results. The negotiation and peace process, which occurred over the span of several decades, demonstrated innovative ideas, in regards to solutions to ethnic violence, and brought more stability to Northern Ireland. Negotiations included the governments of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, but also direct litigation and consultation with the terrorist groups involved. The Good Friday Agreement (1998) was revolutionary at the time because negotiations for secessionist movements and/or ethno-religious conflicts do not usually consult terrorist groups. While it is important to acknowledge the atrocities each side committed, it is also crucial to consult all groups involved to ensure a permanent solution and to validate the documents that can lead to peace within the region. The peace process within Northern Ireland can be somewhat utilized as a model for similar conflicts around the globe because it is a step in the right direction for solving ethnic conflict. Reintegration, fair political and social reforms, and disarmament of terrorist groups were all incorporated into the Good Friday Agreement (1998).

Scholars who have studied the negotiating process and the Good Friday Agreement have conflicting views on why the time was “ripe” for peace within Northern Ireland. The differing

¹² Ruane, Joseph, and Jennifer Todd. 2010. "Ethnicity and Religion: Redefining the Research Agenda." *Ethnopolitics* 9, no. 1: 1-8. *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 23, 2017).

stances of scholars on why the Good Friday Peace Agreement was successful are: it was the right political timing due to domestic politics; the Agreement was sufficient for all the parties involved; the lack of spoilers; and the introduction of new brokers to the negotiating table.¹³ I will discuss each of these theories in detail along with the peace process.

My paper is chronologically organized and begins with two historical background chapters: the first chapter explains the historical events that led to Irish Independence, and the second examines the aftermath of Irish Independence and The Troubles. It is fundamental to understand the historical roots of the conflict before addressing the specific socio-economic divides that resulted in terror and bloodshed. It is also necessary to address the major events during The Troubles and the multiple efforts in striving for peace. The following chapter will address how the role of paramilitary groups was an extreme product of ethno-religious conflict. Finally, I will sum up my research and discuss the future of Northern Ireland's status given the process of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union.

Historical Background (Early British rule -1922)

The Troubles is commonly referenced among scholars as a "generational conflict," but I would strongly disagree. The roots of this conflict go back for several centuries specifically with English domination and discrimination toward the Irish people. Frustration and ethno-religious conflict between the Irish and the British has taken place since the origins of British rule and the establishment of Ireland as a British territory. It is critical to address the long history between these two groups because it helps us understand the roots of ethno-religious violence within the

¹³ GODDARD, STACIE E. 2012. "Brokering Peace: Networks, Legitimacy, and the Northern Ireland Peace Process" *Brokering Peace: Networks, Legitimacy, and the Northern Ireland Peace Process.* *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 3: 501-515. *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 23, 2017).

region—and it is important to understand that the same pattern has been present in the region for centuries. As previously mentioned, I argue that religion is a significant part of each group's identity—religion coincides with ethnicity in Northern Ireland. For the most part, Protestants (or unionists who identify as British) and Catholics (or nationalists who identify as Irish) have historically been separated and have always identified as different sets of people within Ireland and Great Britain. Given the long history of discrimination against Irish Catholics and British dominance, these two groups have had consistent ethno-religious cleavages within their societies. This raises important questions such as when did these stereotypes form? If there was a pattern of ethno-religious conflict, why has it persisted for so long? In addition, how does this explain the content of The Troubles? Given these questions, it is necessary to explain the history of how each of these ethnic stereotypes were formed in Northern Ireland, the role of Irish Independence, and the systemic discrimination toward a minority group by the British government.

The entire island of Ireland was subject to differences in identity since the birth of British rule over Ireland. Before the Irish won their independence over the British in 1922, the entire island of Ireland was subject to British rule and invasion for over 800 years.¹⁴ In other words, the Irish had not ruled themselves or their territory for under a millennium. Again, the Irish and British were originally two separate ethnic identities with their own linguistics, culture, and religious ideologies. Given that the English maintained a dominant world empire, the Irish were consistently on a lower socio-economic class and were highly dependent on agriculture to make a living. The Irish were also linguistically diverse before British rule, and they have Celtic links

¹⁴ <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ira/conflict/civil.html>

in heritage.¹⁵ In contrast, the British derive from a mostly Anglo-Saxon heritage, were mostly Protestant after Henry VIII, and more advanced economically than the Irish.¹⁶ The British had a more industrialized society than the Irish because of its dominant role in the world for a long period of time.

Under British domination, revolts and riots were common, which was mostly due to differences in identity and frustrations with British rule over land that was never technically theirs. One of the first key historical events is the English Reformation, when Henry VIII decided to part ways with the Roman Catholic Church and created the Church of England, which was Anglican—a branch of Protestantism. The creation of the Church of England enabled fear among Catholics within both ethnic groups because in order to achieve a widespread embrace of the new church, Henry VIII established harsher policies against Catholics, demanded a divorce from his Catholic wife, and encouraged his territories to break off any ties with the papacy.¹⁷ This event marked the beginning of the heightened religious and ethnic differences between Irish Catholics and Protestants.¹⁸

In order to maintain stability in Ireland, King James I had developed a plan to further British domination in Ireland by organizing a mass colonization of Ulster, which is known as the

¹⁵ Cohrane, F. *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*. Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40>

¹⁶ Kaufmann, E. (2011). Demographic Change and Conflict in Northern Ireland: Reconciling Qualitative and Quantitative Evidence. *Ethnopolitics*, 10(3/4), 369-389. doi:10.1080/17449057.2011.596117

¹⁷ Cohrane, F. *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*. Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40>

¹⁸ Nash, C. (2005). Local Histories in Northern Ireland. *History Workshop Journal*, (60), 45-68. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.proxy006.nclive.org/stable/25472815>

Plantation of Ulster.¹⁹ Ulster, is presently known as Northern Ireland, consists of the six most northern counties of Ireland. The Plantation of Ulster began in 1609 and resulted in wealthy, English landowners establishing themselves and infiltrating native (Irish Catholic) land. Before the Plantation, these six northern countries were known as “the most Gaelic part of Ireland” and King James I intentionally colonized this region in order to “civilize and pacify” the Irish.²⁰ As a result, the Irish Rebellion of 1641 marked the massacre of these Protestant settlers by rebel Catholic natives. Because of the Ulster Plantation, the Irish were economically disparaged, kicked off their own lands, and essentially saw an opportunity to try to “overthrow the Protestant regime in Ireland.”²¹ The Irish Rebellion of 1641 was followed by the rise of Oliver Cromwell and his Irish invasion in 1649. Oliver Cromwell, who was a controversial English military and political leader, invaded Ireland in response to the rebellions, and massacred Irish Catholics across the region. The British applauded Cromwell’s acts in Ireland at the time, but many scholars have concluded that this invasion was the calculated genocide of the Irish Catholic community.²² Before I move on, it is important to note that each of these events have had lasting impacts on both sides. The British felt they had a rightful claim to this area because they already ruled over the Irish and if English landowners wanted to settle and have preference, they could. In addition, rebellious natives murdered many English settlers, and they felt that the Irish were

¹⁹ Ó Dochartaigh, N. (2015). The Longest Negotiation: British Policy, IRA Strategy and the Making of the Northern Ireland Peace Settlement. *Political Studies*, 63(1), 202-220. doi:10.1111/1467-9248.12091

²⁰ Ó Dochartaigh, N. (2015). The Longest Negotiation: British Policy, IRA Strategy and the Making of the Northern Ireland Peace Settlement. *Political Studies*, 63(1), 202-220. doi:10.1111/1467-9248.12091

²¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/plantation/planters/es10.shtml>

²² <http://bcw-project.org/military/third-civil-war/cromwell-in-ireland/>

colonists acting out against a more advanced group of people. In contrast, the Irish wanted to rule themselves and continue to have claims over their own land ever since the birth of British rule. The Irish have resented the British because of consistent discrimination, the taking Irish lands, and the centuries' worth of Irish Catholic dissenters being killed for speaking out.

Cromwell encouraged further English settlement of Ireland, which led to many Irish Catholics getting sent out of the country as indentured servants or being executed.²³ In addition, Cromwell also established controversial Penal Laws that explicitly “marginalized Catholic communities by taking away their rights as citizens within their native land.”²⁴ Only a couple of decades later in 1690, the Battle of the Boyne marked a change in English leadership with William of Orange.²⁵ This leadership change is directly tied to the roots of the Orange Order and the birth of extreme loyalists to the British crown in Northern Ireland, but it also marks the substantial escalation of Protestant influence over the entire island.²⁶ According to Feargal Cochrane in *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*, the Battle of the Boyne was damaging to the Catholic population and helped ensure that Ireland would remain under Protestant control until Easter Rising.²⁷

Similar patterns of ethnic violence and uprising occurred in the 19th and 20th centuries, and consisted of Irish pressures to obtain home rule, which would allow the Irish to govern

²³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/plantation/planters/es10.shtml>

²⁴ Ó Dochartaigh, N. (2015). The Longest Negotiation: British Policy, IRA Strategy and the Making of the Northern Ireland Peace Settlement. *Political Studies*, 63(1), 202-220.

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²⁵ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/events/battle_of_the_boyne

²⁶ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/events/battle_of_the_boyne

²⁷ Cochrane, F. *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*. Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40>

themselves but would still be recognized under the United Kingdom (i.e. the modern day political system in Northern Ireland or Scotland).²⁸ Each of these demands for home rule were denied by the British Parliament. A significant historical event during this period was An Gorta Mor, or anglicized as The Irish Potato Famine, in 1849.²⁹ In part, the famine was due to the socio-economic disparagement of Irish Catholic communities by the British, which led to an Irish dependency on potatoes for food and profit.³⁰ The aftermath of the famine led to the mass migration of Irish citizens to the United States, and these new Irish-Americans would send money home and eventually would sympathize with Irish discontent and their claim for independence.

Also during this time, the roots of paramilitary groups that are present in The Troubles are born. On the nationalist (or Catholic side), the Young Irelanders and the United Irishmen were some of the first Irish paramilitary groups that helped form the Irish Republican Brotherhood in 1858. Each of these groups were secret organizations that were extremely influential in establishing networks across Ireland that would contribute to obtaining independence from England. The Irish Republic Army and the Irish Army for the Republic of Ireland were the direct successors to the Irish Republican Brotherhood—which was a key actor in Irish Independence and The Troubles. Each of these groups also had ties to the United States, which has a large population of Irish immigrants and Irish-Americans. The influence of Irish-Americans on the independence movement was significant because many sympathized with the

²⁸ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/home_rule_movement_01.shtml

²⁹ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/famine_01.shtml

³⁰ Cochrane, F. *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*. Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40>

Irish cause and collected money in the streets of New York and Boston.³¹ Relating this back to scholastic work on ethnic conflict, one expert states:

[that in cases of ethnic violence] a broad conscience of religious and ethnic distinction disguises intense intra-group variation and contention over the nature of the distinctions...whether religious or secular clusters take the lead in mobilization and representation is a major political import, with implications that spread well beyond the conflict zone itself into the mobilization of ethnic (or ethno-religious diasporas and regional or global religious communities).³²

On that point, this ethnic conflict theory states that Irish Catholic Diasporas would eventually support sentiment supporting the Irish cause elsewhere—which clearly was the case. You could also argue that the involvement of President Clinton and George Mitchell in implementing the Good Friday Agreement was due to pressures from Diasporas from both sides of the conflict.

Before Irish Independence (and during The Troubles), Protestant and Catholic communities were segregated through labor, education, and neighborhoods.³³ Under British rule, Catholics and Protestants were often educated through their respecting parochial school or even churches. Many Catholic communities had to hide the depth of their education—even educating

³¹ Interview.

³² Ruane, Joseph, and Jennifer Todd. 2010. "Ethnicity and Religion: Redefining the Research Agenda." *Ethnopolitics* 9, no. 1: 1-8. *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 23, 2017).

³³ Ó Dochartaigh, N. (2015). The Longest Negotiation: British Policy, IRA Strategy and the Making of the Northern Ireland Peace Settlement. *Political Studies*, 63(1), 202-220. doi:10.1111/1467-9248.12091

children in the basements of Catholic churches to teach Gaelic and pass on ancient Catholic traditions.³⁴ My own great-grandmother, who was an immigrant to the United States, was educated in both English and Gaelic in the basement of the local Catholic Church in Galway in order to further her own education, even though she only completed the sixth grade.

Additionally, my great-grandmother's childhood priest, Father Michael Griffin, was murdered by Black and Tans soldiers in 1920, which left a mark on my great-grandmother for the rest of her life.³⁵ Many Catholic communities remained disproportionately uneducated compared to Protestant communities due to their dependence on agriculture to make a living.

After three failed attempts at home rule legislation being passed, the Irish took matters into their own hands in 1916, and organized an uprising in Dublin, and claimed a free Irish state.³⁶ The main groups responsible for this uprising were the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) and Irish Republican Army (IRA). Also known as Easter Rising, the attempt was unsuccessful but the roots of Irish nationalism were strengthened, which led to the later partition of Northern Ireland in 1921 and the Irish Free State in 1922.³⁷ The main individuals who were involved in the Irish Independence movement were Eamon De Valera, the political leader, and Michael Collins, the military leader. De Valera went on to become the first Irish Prime Minister and had a huge political influence on Ireland for several decades. And Michael Collins was the hero who forced the hand of the British, and also became an innovator for modern terrorism

³⁴ Interview.

³⁵ Interview.

³⁶ Cochrane, F. *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*. Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40>

³⁷ <http://www.theirishstory.com/2012/09/18/the-irish-war-of-independence-a-brief-overview/#.WP0rDBZbxUM>

tactics that are still followed today.³⁸ Northern Ireland was created in 1921 through the Anglo-Irish treaty, which was the agreement by which Great Britain would acknowledge and accept Irish Independence, but the six most northern counties (known as Northern Ireland) would remain a part of the United Kingdom.³⁹ After the creation of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, a brief Irish Civil War divided the camps of Collins and De Valera. De Valera's side won the civil war, and De Valera would become the President and Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland. The status of Northern Ireland became relatively stable over the next few decades until 1968. But the political system within Northern Ireland had serious problems because it was not representative of its constituency.

Aftermath of Irish Independence and The Troubles (1922-1998)

Discrimination

The aftermath of the war of independence and the Irish Civil War led to the creation of Northern Ireland and a political system that was controlled by the majority Protestant population. The Protestants decided to utilize their numbers politically, socially, and economically, due to the opportunity of controlling territory under United Kingdom rule. Also, the majority population was threatened after the war because of fragile post-war relations and Northern Ireland, the six northern counties, was considered a hotly contested region during the war for independence. In order for the Protestant majority to ensure their power and remain loyal to the crown, the

³⁸ Cohrane, F. *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*. Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40>

³⁹ Kelly, Stephen. *Fianna Fail, Partition and Northern Ireland, 1926-1971*. Portland, US: Irish Academic Press, 2013. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 27 October 2016.

majority's political party, the UPP, enforced policies that would benefit their own in-group and disenfranchise the out-group, which was the Catholic population.⁴⁰

According to one scholar, “the increasing visibility and status of Irishness is interpreted by some unionists as a willful removal of Britishness from the province.”⁴¹ Therefore, many unionists and Protestants felt that their identity was withdrawn from the Republic after the war and they needed to maintain their culture and identity within the realm of their new state, Northern Ireland. The Protestant majority exercised this by dominating the political system and promoting traditionally Protestant policies (i.e. education). Since the Irish War for independence is viewed as a “Celtic revival,” the loss for the British nationals in the war equated the need to have a political and cultural stronghold in the North.⁴² Pearse, Clarke, Connelly, and others led the Celtic revival prior to the English rebellion. On that note, it is important to acknowledge that these leaders during the Easter Rising rebellion were executed and the Celtic revival movement had to transform their ideas and develop new leaders.

The political system in Northern Ireland from 1922 until 1972 was known as the Stormont government. During this time, the Stormont government represented the domination of the Protestant majority and their respective political parties—which allowed the Protestants to execute public policies that were favorable to their community. Overall, the state government reflected “the overrepresentation of Protestants and the underrepresentation of Catholics and the

⁴⁰ Kelly, Stephen. *Fianna Fail, Partition and Northern Ireland, 1926-1971*. Portland, US: Irish Academic Press, 2013. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 27 October 2016.

⁴¹ Cochrane, F. *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*. Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40>

⁴² Cochrane, F. *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*. Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40>

hegemony that occurred intensified ethnic polarization between overlapping Catholic/Irish/nationalist and Protestant/British/unionist identities.”⁴³ The policies the government enforced were discriminatory towards the Catholic community, specifically in housing allocation, education choice that heavily influenced curriculums, and employment opportunities.

According to C. Nash, “the exclusionary political arena brought about ethnic polarization and ethnic exclusion which fueled the risk of civil war.”⁴⁴ The systemic discrimination by the government in Northern Ireland divided the ethnic cleavages within its society even further.

The Troubles (1968-1998)

The Troubles began in 1968 as a civil rights movement based on the discriminatory policies created by the Stormont government. The movement started by the Northern Irish Civil Rights Association (NICRA) and was initially a peaceful protest, which demanded equality in public housing in Londonderry, or Derry.⁴⁵ Hancock states that the purpose of the civil rights movement “was unlike prior rebellions and the goals of the NICRA were to improve the civil rights of the working class and poor through the use of nonviolent marches, demonstrations, sit-ins, and other acts.”⁴⁶ But from the Protestant perspective, the movement was a sign that the

⁴³ Ó Dochartaigh, N. (2015). The Longest Negotiation: British Policy, IRA Strategy and the Making of the Northern Ireland Peace Settlement. *Political Studies*, 63(1), 202-220. doi:10.1111/1467-9248.12091

⁴⁴ Nash, C. (2005). Local Histories in Northern Ireland. *History Workshop Journal*, (60), 45-68. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.proxy006.nclive.org/stable/25472815>

⁴⁵ Hancock, Landon E. 2014. "Narratives of Identity in the Northern Irish Troubles." *Peace & Change* 39, no. 4: 443-467. *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 23, 2017).

⁴⁶ Hancock, Landon E. 2014. "Narratives of Identity in the Northern Irish Troubles." *Peace & Change* 39, no. 4: 443-467. *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 23, 2017).

Catholic minority did not acknowledge the Stormont government as legitimate and the movement could be the start of another bloody rebellion to unite Ireland. Historically speaking, the backlash from the Protestant community was not necessarily wrong—rebellions in the past have turned violent quickly. However, the conflicting views of ethno-identity has led to a severe misunderstanding of the Catholic minority and their demands for political, social, and economic equality. Initially, the Catholic minority was marching for more rights and recognition under the British government. They would even yell, “British rights for British citizens.”⁴⁷ Certain scholars argue that the conflicting identities caused miscommunication and misunderstanding about what exactly the civil rights movement would mean for the political future in Northern Ireland. This situation also represents complications within a power struggle. There is a majority, who politically dominates another, and the in-group is threatened when the amount of power they control is put into question. The in-group reacts, and declares that the out-group does not even consider the government in Northern Ireland legitimate, even though the out-group is hardly represented.⁴⁸ On the other hand, the out-group has no political leverage and is marching to promote political change in order to have a stronger voice. The out-group has nothing to lose because they do not possess any real political power. The Catholic minority and the NICRA developed their peaceful protests based on the civil rights movement in the United States. The

⁴⁷ <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ira/conflict/civil.html>

⁴⁸ Sturgeon, B. (2011). *Anti-social Behaviour in Northern Ireland*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing

movement in the United States eventually saw considerable success, and the Catholic minority was hoping to get the same results in a similar amount of time.⁴⁹

On October 5, 1968, in Derry, the movement became violent. A civil rights march was planned in Derry, but the Northern Irish government ruled that the protests were illegal. These activists marched anyway but were greeted by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), the police, and the protesters were subject to police beatings. Dozens were injured and the entire incident was filmed on television.⁵⁰ After the incident in Derry, protests grew from the Catholic minority and the backlash against the protesters only increased along with the number of protests. The Royal Ulster Constabulary was predominately Protestant and many extreme loyalists would come to the protest to disrupt them.⁵¹ Only a couple months later, a student-led group called the People's Democracy organized another civil rights protest. The protest organized was "a four-day walk from Belfast to Derry. But this time a loyalist counter-demonstration was ready for them, and on the final day, the initial march was attacked outside of Derry and riot ensued."⁵² Cochrane also goes on to state that this marked a turning point in the conflict because every protest from each side allowed for a counter-protest to take place. The RUC was biased towards

⁴⁹ <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ira/conflict/civil.html>

⁵⁰ Cochrane, F. *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*. Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40>

⁵¹ O'Brien, John. *Discrimination in Northern Ireland, 1920-1939 : Myth or Reality?* (1). Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UNITED KINGDOM: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 27 October 2016.

⁵² Nash, C. (2005). Local Histories in Northern Ireland. *History Workshop Journal*, (60), 45-68. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.proxy006.nclive.org/stable/25472815>

the loyalist or unionist cause, and the government did not say or do much to prevent the violence between both sides from happening.

A similar situation happened in the Battle of Bogside in August 1969, when a riot took place after a unionist group was parading through a Catholic neighborhood, with unionists and the police rivaling with the Catholic side.⁵³ Shortly after, the violence began to escalate and the conflict hit a low point with the suspension of the Stormont government and the establishment of direct rule from Westminster. The British Parliament concluded that the Stormont government could not effectively run the country nor gain control of the escalating situation.⁵⁴ The most complex part about this conflict is that Catholics and Protestants often lived next to each other but never interacted with the other. This conflict would eventually lead to cities like Derry and Belfast being separated by physical barriers, such as walls, and the presence of British troops in local neighborhoods and cities. Arson was also fairly common, and according to Cochrane, “over 170 homes had been burnt down and nearly 500 more had been damaged by arson, most of them owned by Catholics.”⁵⁵

The rise of terrorism

The aftermath of the Battle of Bogside marks an extremely violent period but it also marks the rise of paramilitary groups within this conflict. The ties to terrorism in Northern Ireland have roots in the formation of paramilitary groups from the previous century and the struggle for Irish Independence. Although briefly mentioned, the paramilitary groups were extreme extensions of the conflict and like the population, were divided by culture and identity.

⁵³ http://news.bbc.co.uk/panorama/hi/front_page/newsid_7968000/7968707.stm

⁵⁴ Cochrane, F. *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*. Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40>

⁵⁵ Cochrane, F. *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*. Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40>

They were also divided by long-term goals. The IRA was motivated to keep the conflict going as long as possible in hopes to cripple the British government and force their hand. The groups on the other side, the UDA and UVF, were motivated to end the conflict as quickly as possible. The more power and leverage the IRA had, the less the other side had. The rise of paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland was not only influenced by a history of unstable relations between Irish Catholics and British Protestants, but also by the frustrations of a minority Catholic population after Northern Ireland officially became a part of the United Kingdom. Due to this, paramilitary actors enhanced the initial political and social causes of the civil rights movement furthered instability in Northern Ireland.

Specific paramilitary groups involved were the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the Provisional Irish Republican Army (Provisionals), the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), and the Ulster Defence Association (UDA).⁵⁶ The Irish Republican Army and the Provisional Irish Republican Army represented the frustrations of the Catholic minority and turned the need for reforms into a desire for Ireland to unite and cut ties with the United Kingdom. In 1969, the IRA split into two factions, the Official Irish Republic Army and the Provisional Irish Republican Army.⁵⁷ The split was due to the Official IRA wanting to remain generally non-violent throughout the Troubles and the Provisional IRA deeming violence as absolutely necessary in order to obtain a united Ireland. The Provisional IRA, the UVF, and the UDA were all involved

⁵⁶ MacLeod, Alan. *International Politics and the Northern Ireland Conflict: The USA, Diplomacy and the Troubles* (1). London, GB: I.B.Tauris, 2016. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 27 October 2016.

⁵⁷ Cochrane, F. *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*. Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40>

in illegal arms trafficking, which made the Troubles even worse.⁵⁸ By buying and selling illegal weapons on the black market, these groups to thrive monetarily while having the machinery to keep the conflict going for as long as it did. The rising influence of the paramilitary groups involved is important to mention because most of the violence that occurred was at the hands of these groups and the attacks tend to get bigger and bolder as the conflict goes on.

Not only did the presence of the British troops complicate relations between the two conflicting ethnic groups, but a new British policy of internment created in 1971 intensified the conflict. According to the Protestant community, the use of British troops were needed due to tensions getting exponentially worse and lives were lost. This is absolutely true, but the Catholic (or nationalist) side argued that the British troops were biased and clearly “pro-unionist.”⁵⁹ The policy of internment “allowed for the indefinite detention of anyone considered to be a threat to public order; and out of a total of 1,981 people detained; 1,874 were Catholics and 107 were Protestants.”⁶⁰ One scholar tries to interpret these initial events in terms of social theories on ethnic conflict stating, “loyalist communities, moreover, see these gains as zero-sum and tend to focus on their own relative loss in comparison with the gains of the others. This sense of zero-sum gain is one that has a deep history and is embedded in the province’s narratives.”⁶¹ One

⁵⁸ Ó Dochartaigh, N. (2015). The Longest Negotiation: British Policy, IRA Strategy and the Making of the Northern Ireland Peace Settlement. *Political Studies*, 63(1), 202-220. doi:10.1111/1467-9248.12091

⁵⁹ Kelly, Stephen. *Fianna Fail, Partition and Northern Ireland, 1926-1971*. Portland, US: Irish Academic Press, 2013. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 27 October 2016.

⁶⁰ Cochrane, F. *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*. Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40>

⁶¹ Ruane, Joseph, and Jennifer Todd. 2010. "Ethnicity and Religion: Redefining the Research Agenda." *Ethnopolitics* 9, no. 1: 1-8. *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 23, 2017).

could also apply this quote to the extremes of both ethnic identities—extreme loyalists and nationalists. Both sides were not willing to give the other anything in return, because they both felt that their livelihood depended on maintaining a strong sense of identity. Protestants did not want to give Catholic minorities more political power, or equality, because they have tried to rebel before and the Irish Catholic community eventually fought for the Republic—and won. In contrast, the Catholic community felt that the internment policy was biased and British troops were not helping the Catholic community enough in attacks and riots.

In January 30, 1972, one of the deadliest attacks throughout the conflict occurred, also known as Bloody Sunday.⁶² It also took place in Bogside, Derry, Northern Ireland, and British soldiers fired upon a peaceful protest that was marching against the internment policy. Fourteen people died and the result of this massacre was to empower the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) and its cause. An independent investigation was conducted decades later, and Prime Minister David Cameron apologized for the incident.⁶³ The response from the Provisional IRA was also deadly, when they attacked members of British security forces and created a bombing campaign on public places or at public events. Bloody Friday, which occurred just months later in 1972, was seen as a retaliatory attack from the IRA against the British.⁶⁴ It was 22 car bombings that went off in Belfast; nine were killed and over a hundred people were injured.⁶⁵ Shortly after these violent events, moderate Northern Irish political parties, the British

⁶² Cochrane, Feargal. 2012. "From Transition to Transformation in Ethnonational Conflict: Some Lessons from Northern Ireland." *Ethnopolitics* 11, no. 2: 182-203. *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 23, 2017).

⁶³ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/jun/15/david-cameron-bloody-sunday-apology>

⁶⁴ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/events/bloody_friday_belfast

⁶⁵ Ó Dochartaigh, N. (2015). The Longest Negotiation: British Policy, IRA Strategy and the Making of the Northern Ireland Peace Settlement. *Political Studies*, 63(1), 202-220. doi:10.1111/1467-9248.12091

government, and the government of the Republic of Ireland negotiated a deal that would reform the political system in Northern Ireland. This deal is known as the Sunningdale Agreement in 1973 and it allowed for a power-sharing agreement, which would allow the Irish Catholic minority to have a quota-type system implemented in the government.⁶⁶ There would also be cooperation. This agreement failed due to backlash from both sides of the conflict, the IRA and unionists. The IRA would not be truly happy unless Ireland finally united and unionists were upset because the agreement gave in to original Catholic demands about more representation. This backlash resulted in unionists forming the Unionists Workers Coalition and striking until the deal was reconsidered. The Unionists Workers Coalition completed a pretty successful protest, which allowed the deal to fail.⁶⁷ Throughout the 1970s, there were secret talks on both sides, all of which obviously failed to get anywhere. There were certain proposals made from both sides, but almost always, each side would outright refuse the proposal from the other. This is evident in ethnic conflict, because both sides think they are the self-righteous victims who have been subject to wrongdoing. The 1980s marked a plethora of hunger strikes, mostly from the Irish Catholic side. Many people died during the hunger strikes, which caused outrage locally and internationally.⁶⁸ Also during the 1980s, the IRA had a huge boost in their gun business from

⁶⁶ GODDARD, STACIE E. 2012. "Brokering Peace: Networks, Legitimacy, and the Northern Ireland Peace Process I Brokering Peace: Networks, Legitimacy, and the Northern Ireland Peace Process." *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 3: 501-515. *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 23, 2017).

⁶⁷ Cohrane, F. *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*. Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40>

⁶⁸ MacLeod, Alan. *International Politics and the Northern Ireland Conflict: The USA, Diplomacy and the Troubles* (1). London, GB: I.B.Tauris, 2016. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 27 October 2016.

Muammar Gaddafi, due to strained British-Libyan relations. One of the most important events was the Brighton Hotel Bombing, which killed a British politician, and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had to be evacuated from the hotel.⁶⁹

Peace Process

The peace process within Northern Ireland spanned a tumultuous two decades, beginning in the 1970s and ending in 1998. The process for obtaining peace was consistently stalled and negotiations were extremely complex because state and non-state actors were involved—and the non-state actors (mainly paramilitary groups) had tremendous leverage over negotiations. Informal talks of peace, often in secret, behind closed doors, took place decades before the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.⁷⁰ These informal talks repeatedly failed due to the extremities of the ethnic cleavages in the Northern Irish society. The first agreement was made between the British Government and the Republic of Ireland called the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985.⁷¹ The Anglo-Irish Agreement allowed the Republic of Ireland to have a consultative role to the Northern Irish government but it failed to acknowledge the constitutional status of Northern Ireland.⁷² In the

⁶⁹ MacLeod, Alan. *International Politics and the Northern Ireland Conflict: The USA, Diplomacy and the Troubles* (1). London, GB: I.B.Tauris, 2016. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 27 October 2016.

⁷⁰ Nash, C. (2005). Local Histories in Northern Ireland. *History Workshop Journal*, (60), 45-68. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.proxy006.nclive.org/stable/25472815>

⁷¹ Ó Dochartaigh, N. (2015). The Longest Negotiation: British Policy, IRA Strategy and the Making of the Northern Ireland Peace Settlement. *Political Studies*, 63(1), 202-220. doi:10.1111/1467-9248.12091

⁷² Sturgeon, B. (2011). *Anti-social Behaviour in Northern Ireland*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

agreement, there would be a constitutional referendum to determine Irish unification, given a majority. This agreement was a failure because it failed to gain support from prominent political parties and paramilitary groups within the region. Many ceasefires occurred throughout the conflict, but failed due to the increased tensions between the groups and lack of communication for future progress in negotiations. The peace talks began to make headway in 1996 when President Clinton of the United States called upon George Mitchell, a U.S. Senator, to head the peace talks as a third-party consultant.⁷³ The Good Friday Agreement in 1998 officially brought an end to The Troubles and established joint policing, political reform, and disarmament.⁷⁴

Many scholars in political science have studied the Northern Ireland peace process, and they have conflicting theories on why the Good Friday Agreement was successful and why other attempts at agreement were not. First, one theory argues that the domestic political environment was more conducive for peace than during the earlier attempts. These scholars argue that the “spoilers” in the region, which would be the paramilitary groups and extremist political parties, were more compliant in these negotiations than the others.⁷⁵ Although this is true, violence did occur through the Good Friday talks and after, so this explanation does not capture the full explanation of why the Good Friday Agreement was successful and the others were not. Second, a group of political scientists argue that the content in the Good Friday Agreement was more substantial than the content in previous peace agreements.⁷⁶ This is true in some aspects: the

⁷³ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/events/good_friday_agreement

⁷⁴ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/events/good_friday_agreement

⁷⁵ Cochrane, F. *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*. Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40>

⁷⁶ GODDARD, STACIE E. 2012. "Brokering Peace: Networks, Legitimacy, and the Northern Ireland Peace Process" *Brokering Peace: Networks, Legitimacy, and the Northern Ireland Peace*

integration of the police force (RUC), new education policies, and disarmament of paramilitary groups were all revolutionary aspects of the Good Friday Agreement. But, these aspects were all secondary to the political reforms and the constitutional status of Northern Ireland. These new ideas were brought to the forefront after the political reforms and the process of the constitutional status were agreed upon. Much of the content in the Good Friday Agreement was based on previous agreement attempts, the Sunningdale Agreement in 1973 and the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985.⁷⁷

Third, theorists argue that the Good Friday negotiations took place at the right time, given changes in leadership within political parties, the changing rhetoric and outlooks of paramilitary leaders, and the influence of external actors, such as President Clinton and Senator Mitchell. Again, this theory is partly true but what makes “timing” ripe?⁷⁸ In this sense, could political actors or popular opinion ripen peace agreements at any time throughout the conflict? Popular opinion in Northern Ireland consistently wanted to see peace agreements since the 1970s, but it was finally obtained in 1998.⁷⁹ Finally, a recent theory proposed by Stacie E. Goddard, states

Process." *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 3: 501-515. *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 23, 2017).

⁷⁷ Ó Dochartaigh, N. (2015). The Longest Negotiation: British Policy, IRA Strategy and the Making of the Northern Ireland Peace Settlement. *Political Studies*, 63(1), 202-220. doi:10.1111/1467-9248.12091

⁷⁸ GODDARD, STACIE E. 2012. "Brokering Peace: Networks, Legitimacy, and the Northern Ireland Peace Process" *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 3: 501-515. *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 23, 2017).

⁷⁹ GODDARD, STACIE E. 2012. "Brokering Peace: Networks, Legitimacy, and the Northern Ireland Peace Process" *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 3: 501-515. *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 23, 2017).

that the presence of new “brokers” at the negotiations allowed for a more legitimate settlement to take place because these individuals “had a new capacity to frame settlements in a way that they appeared consistent with values held by multiple coalitions.”⁸⁰ This theory is particularly interesting, because Goddard points out David Trimble, John Hume, and Gerry Adams, as the critical brokers who “bridged coalitions that otherwise remained isolated.”⁸¹ Goddard argues that these individuals, among others, are the critical reason for why the Good Friday Agreement was successfully enacted and accepted. She argues that based on social networking theory, these brokers provided a sense of legitimacy to the agreement that was not present in past agreements. This is absolutely true, but one cannot negate the other theories in turn to prove her own. My argument is that all of these political scientists are correct in their own respects, and not one theory or explanation can explain why the Good Friday Agreement was successful. It was a combination of different factors, not one factor prevailing over the other. The negotiations were complex for a very long time, so why would one theory based on one specific factor be representative of the success obtained?

Sunningdale Agreement (1973)

The Sunningdale Agreement was the first attempt at peace in Northern Ireland and it paved the way for a power-sharing political system. However, before the Sunningdale

⁸⁰ GODDARD, STACIE E. 2012. "Brokering Peace: Networks, Legitimacy, and the Northern Ireland Peace Process" *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 3: 501-515. *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 23, 2017).

⁸¹ GODDARD, STACIE E. 2012. "Brokering Peace: Networks, Legitimacy, and the Northern Ireland Peace Process" *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 3: 501-515. *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 23, 2017).

Agreement in 1973, Northern Ireland was experiencing unrest and constant instability. In 1972, Great Britain established direct rule, which suspended the Northern Irish government and created authority straight from Westminster. According to Feargal Cochrane, the establishment of home rule had substantial implications because it made the British government in charge of the political workings of Northern Ireland.⁸² One of the consequences was the IRA expanded its terrorist attacks to Great Britain due to the new government control. . Three political parties in Northern Ireland proposed the Sunningdale Agreement, but the dominant political party, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) did not want any part of the agreement.⁸³ The agreement would allow for a power sharing role between the Protestant and Catholic political parties, and it would create the Council of Ireland. The Council of Ireland was meant to encourage cooperation between the Republic of Ireland and the Northern Irish Parliament. Ultimately, the power-sharing agreement could not be passed through Parliament, which was the key aspect of the entire agreement. Boycotts had ensued from loyalist paramilitaries and political parties—which led to a strike contrived by the Ulster Workers' Council.⁸⁴ The strike was successful and

⁸² Cochrane, F. *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*. Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40>

⁸³ Ó Dochartaigh, N. (2015). The Longest Negotiation: British Policy, IRA Strategy and the Making of the Northern Ireland Peace Settlement. *Political Studies*, 63(1), 202-220. doi:10.1111/1467-9248.12091

⁸⁴ Cochrane, F. *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*. Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40>

essentially drove the agreement to failure. After the Sunningdale Agreement, violence continued and the negotiations had to start from scratch due to the backlash.

Because of the failure of the Sunningdale Agreement, direct rule from London continued which left political parties in Northern Ireland with no control and unelected officials making all of the decisions.⁸⁵ According to Feargal Cochrane, “this contributed further to the political malaise in the region, reduced the practical relevance of the main parties and increased the gap between the formal political process in Northern Ireland and of the people who lived there.”⁸⁶ This also revitalized the IRA’s campaign for making themselves out to be ‘political prisoners.’ Due to direct rule, the people—especially Irish Catholics, did not have a voice in determining what would happen within their own communities. But,

it also helped them to cross over into international legitimacy, as the Provisional IRA sought to ally itself with other liberation movements that it helped influence, such as the African National Congress in South Africa and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the Middle East. This helped the IRA to maintain political support for its actions both internally and among international sympathizers in America and elsewhere.

⁸⁵ GODDARD, STACIE E. 2012. "Brokering Peace: Networks, Legitimacy, and the Northern Ireland Peace Process1 Brokering Peace: Networks, Legitimacy, and the Northern Ireland Peace Process." *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 3: 501-515. *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 23, 2017).

⁸⁶ Cochrane, F. *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*. Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40>

It also helped finance the armed struggles and procure the necessary weapons and explosives.⁸⁷

After the Sunningdale Agreement, the Unionist and Nationalist political parties did not entertain peace talks with each other for the next fifteen years.⁸⁸ But the Sunningdale Agreement did create the foundations for a power-sharing government in Northern Ireland and for establishing the relations between Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and the United Kingdom.

Anglo-Irish Agreement (1985)

Before the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985, the beginning of the 1980s saw a rise in the political and self-imposed struggles of the Provisional IRA. The Provisional IRA broadened their outlook and decided that violence through bombings was not the only answer to get their points across. Hunger strikes were popular among IRA prisoners during this time, because it got international attention and made the British government rethink their positions with the IRA. In 1981, the second hunger strike began on March 1, when Bobby Sands refused to eat in prison.⁸⁹ He, and other prisoners, starved themselves from March to October, which ended with ten IRA prisoners dying. The two most popular prisoners were Bobby Sands and Kieran Doherty, who were elected into the Westminster and Irish parliaments while they were in prison.⁹⁰ Both of

⁸⁷ GODDARD, STACIE E. 2012. "Brokering Peace: Networks, Legitimacy, and the Northern Ireland Peace Process1 Brokering Peace: Networks, Legitimacy, and the Northern Ireland Peace Process." *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 3: 501-515. *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 23, 2017).

⁸⁸ BEGAN, 1921–72. In *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace* (pp. 31-66). Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.proxy006.nclive.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40.10>

⁸⁹ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/events/republican_hunger_strikes_maze

⁹⁰ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/events/republican_hunger_strikes_maze

which died at the end of the hunger strike. Massive funerals were held for both men, which helped the IRA's political campaign because their previous acts of violence were causing public support to linger.

Also, the IRA, loyalist paramilitaries, and the British government all realized during the 1980s that there was no way for anyone to come out as winner, in the military sense. This war could not be won militarily, but only through politics and the voice of the people. Even though all sides refused to falter in their positions, they were aware of reality and that this conflict could not end by military force.

In 1985, British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, and the Irish Prime Minister (A Taoisigh) Garret Fitzgerald signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement.⁹¹ The Anglo-Irish Agreement would allow the Republic of Ireland to play an advisory role in the Northern Irish government, but no power-sharing or constitutional changes would occur. Both the unionist and republican communities were up in arms over the agreement, and it was deemed a failure. Specifically, the constitutional status of Northern Ireland would not change unless a referendum led by a majority of the people to vote for a change in the nation's status as being a part of the United Kingdom. The agreement also created the idea of the Republic of Ireland playing an advisory role to Northern Ireland.⁹²

Good Friday Agreement (1998)

⁹¹ <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/aia/sum.htm>

⁹² <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/aia/sum.htm>

Secret talks of exploring peace between the IRA and the British government took place from the late 1980s until the ceasefire of 1994.⁹³ One of the main problems with secret talks among the different political actors within the region is that it created a widespread of miscommunication and confusion. Due to the secret talks, accountability and responsibility for keeping agreements was hardly met, and different parties would not keep up their end of a spoken agreement. According to Cochrane, “[the secret talks] resulted in progress of sorts, but it also created bedroom-farce diplomacy, confusion over who knew what, and a profound mistrust among those involved.”⁹⁴

In August 1994, the IRA and loyalist paramilitaries announced a ceasefire that ultimately did not hold up. Talks for the Good Friday Agreement began in September 1997, and three main points were deemed the most important to reach an agreement on how to have a more inclusive political system, how to define the roles of the UK and the Republic of Ireland, and how to determine the border of Northern Ireland and Ireland.⁹⁵ Negotiations began in 1996, with President Bill Clinton being influential by appointing George Mitchell, a U.S. Senator, to chair the peace talks. Mitchell also worked on the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.⁹⁶ The Good Friday Agreement in 1988 established a power-sharing government, which allowed Catholic or republican political parties to be represented at an equal level. It also led to paramilitary groups

⁹³ Cochrane, F. *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*. Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40>

⁹⁴ Cochrane, F. *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*. Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/j.ctt32bv40>

⁹⁵ <http://peacemaker.un.org/uk-ireland-good-friday98>

⁹⁶ <https://www.usip.org/public-education/educators/george-mitchell-building-peace-northern-ireland>

on both sides disarming and abandoning their illegal gun-trafficking businesses. Finally, it consisted of a mandatory reform and integration of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, which increased Catholic representation on the force from 8% to 30% over the next five years.⁹⁷

Aftermath of the Good Friday Agreement

I had the opportunity to conduct an interview with Jane Morrice, a politician within Northern Ireland who was present during the Good Friday Agreement. Previously, Morrice was Head of the European Commission Office in Northern Ireland and she entered Northern Irish politics through the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC). Morrice stated that one of the greatest benefits that came out of the Good Friday Agreement was an increased pressure for integrated education—the NIWC actually pushed for integrated education to be added to the Agreement during the final stretch of negotiations. According to Morrice, integrated education is still a huge problem today with only 10% of schools in Northern Ireland being integrated between Protestant and Catholic communities.⁹⁸ Scholarship on ethnic conflict backs these claims up as well, claiming that education is a clear stepping-stone for moving forward after long instances of ethnic violence. Hayes and McAllister reference contact theory, which “argues that increased contact between social groups will help reduce prejudiced attitudes and alleviate racial and ethnic divisions.” Integrated education is still a huge problem today in Northern Ireland, but Morrice states that the Good Friday Agreement helped acknowledge the problem and advocated for changes within the educational system to promote peace.

A related aspect of the Good Friday Agreement is that Northern Ireland still has problems with today with the segregation of neighborhoods. According to Claeson (2014), “prior to the

⁹⁷

⁹⁸ Interview.

start of the conflict, 69 % of Protestants and 56 % of Catholics lived in streets where their community was the majority. By 1972 those proportions had increased to 99 % of Protestants and 75 % of Catholics (Wright 1988, 205).” During The Troubles, walls and other barriers separated communities in Northern Ireland. Today, most of the barriers are psychological—the neighborhoods within many communities are still divided by ethnicity. Safety is still the primary reason for why communities remain segregated because the violence and harassment, at a smaller scale, is still present today. For example, in 2001, a homemade bomb was detonated among young Catholic girls and their police escorts when they were walking to their elementary school in North Belfast (NYT). Their school happened to be slightly beyond the peace line between the Protestant and Catholic communities, but located on the Protestant side. Protestant paramilitary groups claimed responsibility for the attacks and prior harassment of young children. But, most Protestants regarded the attack as vile and expressed sincere sympathy for the trauma the children and their families had to go through to get to school. There have also been traumatizing attacks on the Protestant community, often during parading season (a Protestant tradition) and at random. It is important to note that extremities of both Protestant and Catholic communities promote segregation and violence. One important event to mention is the issue of the parades conducted by the Orange Order. These parades are held by Protestant groups, which celebrate the mass murder of the Catholic Community in the Battle of the Boyne and the Siege of Derry. These parades march through Catholic neighborhoods, which is unsettling and deliberately provokes anger and distraught among the Catholic and Scot communities.

Not only did Jane Morrice mention integrated education as an important aspect in the Good Friday Agreement, but she also mentioned the concept of equality. As previously mentioned, the Good Friday Agreement incorporated a power-sharing agreement in government

between the opposing communities and acknowledged the steps to take if the constitutional status of Northern Ireland should change. Morrice also mentions that equality is not yet achieved in the region, but the Agreement provided the foundations for establishing equality between Protestant and Catholic communities. Morrice mentioned the controversy over the Irish Language Act, which would promote the preservation of the languages and cultures within Northern Ireland. It would allow for the incorporation of the Irish and Scots languages in Northern Ireland and would allow citizens to have access to translations within public services and protections for minority rights and culture. Opponents think the Irish Language Act would promote sectarian violence and would be expensive to enact. Nevertheless, the Act has strong support, including from the Council of Europe (BBC). The minorities are the native people to the region before Anglican domination. To be frank, allowing minorities—who have been there for centuries, to speak their own language and embrace their cultures is not promoting separatism, but equality. Given the years of violence and political domination, it would be fair for the Act to pass and would be significant progress to accepting that Northern Ireland is a nation of many communities, not just the most powerful.

Conclusion

This topic is pertinent today given the recent Brexit vote for United Kingdom to leave the European Union. This issue is important due to the border policy under the Schengen Agreement, in which the border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland has remained open. Since free-moving labor and traveling visas have been permitted among EU member states, the open border policy of Northern Ireland and the Republic will have to be officially negotiated when Britain officially makes its permanent leave. In addition, the constitutional question of Scotland has come into question due to Brexit. Nicola Sturgeon, the

Prime Minister of Scotland, has recently announced that there will be a second referendum on Scottish Independence due to the Scots overwhelmingly voting to remain in the European Union. Over 62% of Scots voted to remain, citing economic incentives to stay within the European Union.⁹⁹ The constitutional status of Northern Ireland will also come into play because over 55% of people within Northern Ireland voted to remain in the European Union, the highest numbers coming from the border counties with the Republic.¹⁰⁰ In my opinion, the question of Northern Ireland will not be addressed in the near future because it all depends on what happens within Scotland, and if they can work out a deal with the European Union. Although, peace within Northern Ireland was made in 1998 and the region is still not stable. The constitutional question will not be a simple process at what Scotland could face—which is still complicated. The most recent revelation occurred on April 29, 2017, the EU Summit on Brexit accepted a united Ireland declaration if a referendum in Northern Ireland decides to remain within the EU.¹⁰¹

In my paper, I utilize Northern Ireland as a case study to specifically apply scholarship on ethnic conflict. The specific case of Northern Ireland is widely discussed among ethnic conflict scholars, and it is beneficial to examine how different theories can be applied. The most important part of my paper is that I adamantly disagree with many scholars on how they define and explain this ethno-national conflict. The actual conflict was territorial and based on a nation's identity, but scholars emphasize this rather than fully acknowledge the religious undertones that clearly shaped each of the conflicting identities in Northern Ireland. When

⁹⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/06/24/world/europe/how-britain-voted-brexit-referendum.html>

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/06/24/world/europe/how-britain-voted-brexit-referendum.html>

¹⁰¹ <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/brexit-summit-eu-accepts-united-ireland-declaration-1.3066569>

ignoring the religious aspect of the in and out groups, one cannot understand the totality of the conflict or address how the in and out groups understood themselves and each other. My research examines how the broken political system of Northern Ireland is the primary reason for why ethnic conflict was extended decades after obtaining peace within the region. The political system in Northern Ireland was unjust and not representative of its citizens, which caused the already divisive ethnic identities to divide even further.

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