

Political Identity in Northern Ireland

An Analysis of unionist and Republican ideological frames and the Good Friday Agreement.



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1. Introduction

Considering its relative size and influence on a global scale Northern Ireland as an entity has been the subject of a vast amount of academic work. The province stands as an almost definitive example of contested history, either as a formation in its own right or as a continuation of a longer narrative of English Irish relations. It has produced poets, musicians, novelists as well as public figures and politicians both celebrated and condemned. There is a rich culture of symbolism, tradition and language each of which is as divided as its population.

The origins of Northern Ireland as it exists today lie in the Government of Ireland Act of 1920, however the province wouldn't become fully removed from the rest of Ireland until the following year. On the 5th of December 1921, at 2.20am a document subsequently referred to as the Anglo-Irish treaty was signed at 10 Downing Street in London. The treaty brought to an end the Irish War of Independence (1919 – 1921), fought between British forces in Ireland and the Irish Republican Army (hereafter the IRA). In doing so it provided for the creation of an Irish Free State, and provided Northern Ireland with the option to opt out of this new independent state which it subsequently took.

When considering the centuries long shared history of Britain and Ireland this marks the point whereby England's attempts to rule Ireland in its entirety, beginning with the reign of Henry II in 1133, came to an end. Opposition to the division of Ireland however remained. While the so-called Irish question had faded from view somewhat in the 40 years following partition it would return violently, unpredictably and to some incomprehensibly in the late 1960s. Following this came the period euphemistically referred to as the Troubles, at the heart of which was the constitutional status of those remaining six counties still under British rule.

The overwhelming conclusion when explaining this period is that it constituted a continuation of historical conflicts at the heart of which is English policy in Ireland. Whether this is in the form of an ongoing religious war or else a continuation of a colonial struggle is contested, but in either case the parties involved remain largely the same. Northern Ireland is a society divided into two distinct communities. This division is present along religious, national and political lines with the extent to which each is emphasised depending on the focus of the author. On one side is the Irish, Catholic community supporting in the majority nationalist or Republican goals. In opposition to this are the unionist community, predominantly Protestant and claiming a British identity.

Many accounts and histories of the province however, whether intentionally or not, show this two sided view to be overly simplistic. First of all any attempt to define the Troubles as a conflict between only those communities present in Northern Ireland overlooks the vast influence of both the forces and policies of the British Government in the province. Many of those attacks carried out by the IRA targeted the British Army. Policies such as internment or the removal of special category status, analogous to prisoner of war status, from paramilitary prisoners that served to strengthen and further unite the Republican movement in opposition came as a direct result of policies passed by the Westminster parliament.

To align the British government too closely with the British and unionist community in Northern Ireland likewise gives only a partial picture. Unionist politicians have at times stood in direct opposition to British government policies, denounced successive Prime Ministers as traitors and there has consistently been broad support within the movement for devolved rule

suggesting a desire for autonomy even before devolved legislatures were present elsewhere in the UK.

Even when considering solely the community of Northern Ireland broader divisions appear. Ireland prior to division contained traditions both of constitutional campaigns for change and violent ones, and the same is true of Northern Ireland. The Irish Party's success in raising the profile of the Irish question within British politics in the late nineteenth century drew support for the constitutional tradition, the failure of the third Home Rule Bill led to physical force becoming dominant resulting in the 1916 Easter Uprising (Hayes, 2001: 912). Likewise during the Troubles while Republicans supported attempts to remove British rule through violence, nationalist parties most prominently the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) pursued peaceful and democratic means. On the other side of the communal divide the same distinction exists between unionists and Loyalists, the latter more often a term used in reference to paramilitaries and those willing to support violence.

These inter-communal distinctions have led to a number of texts focusing specifically on the role of particular movements within the province. Most written about is Republicanism, particularly the link between Sinn Féin and the IRA (e.g. Taylor, 1999, Feeney), although there is also a growing body of work focusing on Loyalist paramilitaries (e.g. Smithey, Gallaher). Further research by authors such as Evans and Duffy expand on this focus by considering the role that the rhetoric, prominent figures and political tactics of individual parties had on shaping the conflict. Research of this kind accepts the significance of the underlying religious and ethnic divides present in Northern Irish society and attempts to analyse the effect of this as a political rather than sociological level.

2. Theoretical Basis for Discussion

2.1. Contested Definitions

When Ireland was partitioned in 1922 the boundary was drawn around the maximum area within which unionists could reasonably be expected to maintain a majority. On this basis Northern Ireland came to mean the counties of Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Tyrone together constituting six of the nine counties of Ulster. References to Ulster within Protestant or British communities typically refer only to those counties of Northern Ireland. Defining an identity as distinct from that of Irishness is problematic for unionists on several levels, as illustrated by the fact that the borders of their state fail to include even the entirety of the province they claim to defend.

The requirement to establish such a distinct identity and tradition is a fundamental requirement for Unionism due to partition long being presented as the legitimate will of the majority of Northern Irish citizens. It is on the basis of a distinct people with a right to self determination that unionists accept the border dividing the North from the Republic of Ireland as legitimate, as Kee notes 'given the geographic compactness of their strength they could still refuse to acknowledge, unlike southern unionists, that the majority of the Irish people had any right to determine their own future' (665).

The boundary exists as a geographical marker of state sovereignty. Historical accounts of Ireland within the unionist tradition draw distinctions between Ulster's sons and those of other Irishmen in an attempt to demonstrate through historical discourse the antiquity of a modern and still contested division. This assertion is analogous to the created antiquity of the colonial view of bordered nation states through the cartographic discourse of 'historical maps' (See Anderson 170-178). It is this partition that is rejected entirely by Irish nationalists that instead accept only an Irish state within the geographically created boundaries of the island of Ireland. Both traditions accept the principle of a centralised nation-state, both accept the rights of a national people to self determination the remaining conflict is one of boundaries.

The acceptance of both sides of the right to self determination and democratic principles makes the use of violence to achieve political goals appear at first problematic. There is a tendency when evaluating political action to view the use of violence and democracy as mutually exclusive principles. A democratic mandate requires that a substantial number of the population consent to be ruled by a government, leader, or else agree to a plan of action and for this to be legitimate it requires free choice. Any vote or decision can not be the result of a free choice and therefore does not create a legitimate mandate if it is exercised under the threat of violence, a principle that was central to discussions of decommissioning during the 1990s. One of the principle objections held by unionist leaders to peace talks was the inclusion of Sinn Féin prior to the decommissioning of weapons by the IRA, the view of figures like Trimble was that being able to threaten a return to violence gave the parties representatives an unfair advantage in negotiations.

Considering the acceptance of the violent beginnings of many nation-states, through the remembrance of rebellions or independence movements, and the waging of war under the guise of spreading democracy a better distinction may be that it is within 'mature democracies' that violence has ceased to be a legitimate means of achieving legitimate goals. 'Mature' democracies here are defined on the basis of Collier's work *Wars, Guns and Votes*:

Democracy in Dangerous Places. The term refers to societies that having moved away from political violence following the end of the cold war hold the expectation that their leaders are there to serve the people, in contrast to those whose leaders rule by force.

Violence is one of many tragic themes within the history of Ireland. The Irish Free State that would later become the modern day Republic of Ireland came from the war of Independence and the drawing on the figures and history of previous uprisings provides a tendency within Republican ideology to view partition as evidence of a job only half completed. However the legitimacy of the violent campaigns was widely contested during the Troubles, and was used by the British government to justify a total refusal to speak to and negotiate with any figure that advocated it. This led to the censorship of Sinn Féin figures on both British and Irish television, and the issue took on particular prominence following the removal of special category status for paramilitary prisoners in the Long Kesh prison that led to the Blanket Protest and ultimately the 1981 Hunger Strike.

The presentation of the conflict by both the British Government as well as unionist figures as one of criminality, referring to IRA 'Godfathers' in an attempt to draw allusions to the Mafia and organised crime, was ultimately built on the refusal to recognise violence as a legitimate tool for political change. Margaret Thatcher, British Prime Minister during the protests at Long Kesh, summed up this view by stating "crime is crime. It is not political". The distinction is between violence that is solely criminal, such as terrorism which was the classification given to acts carried out by the IRA and other paramilitary groups, and that may be carried out by state figures such as police or in particular soldiers. This is further discussed in the chapter discussing the Irish Republican identity which deals more closely with the IRA, the means by which this criminality narrative was presented in particular by the British Government is shown more closely in David Miller's book *Don't Mention the War. Northern Ireland, Propaganda and the Media.*

Northern Irish history is at its heart contested, whether discussing the legitimacy of the boundary that created it or else when defining its most recent conflict. It is here that a focus on social movements becomes useful. The presence of a strong propaganda element within the conflict has been demonstrated in works such as Miller's and the origins of much of the language and competing narratives that can be described this way come from political organisations and movements in the province attempting to assert their definition of events over that of their opponents.

2.2. Collective Social Identity

Social Identity Theory (SIT) is a socio-psychological view of group identification and behaviour created by Henri Tajfel and John Turner (Tajfel 1974, 1981. Turner 1975, 1980. Tajfel & Turner 1985). It asserts that people place themselves into various social categories, these categories are defined by prototypical characteristics extracted from the members (Turner, 1985). People identify with many different identities and do so through categorisation schemas that although unique to them, being formed from their own experiences, draw on those defining characteristics of the group creating some amount of consistency.

This social classification allows for self identification within an ordered social environment but also creates a systematic means for defining others, whereby a person is assigned the

characteristics according to their group membership. According to SIT a person's understanding of his or her own identity is formed not only from individual characteristics, abilities, physical attributes, psychological traits etc, but also through social identification. Such identification with groups places a person within an aggregate whole, and in addition creates the perception of a shared fate.

National identity would be one such social identity. A person defining themselves as Irish or British does so through individual schemas, making each person's perception of a national character different, however there remains a sense of kinsmanship and notions of a shared purpose and views. This understanding of identity is relational (Tajfel & Turner), defined in contrast to those characteristics of members of other categories. This in addition allows for a contextual understanding of identity. That rather than being fixed it shifts depending on individual experience and broader social context that together form the schemas and categories through which it is read.

Such social definitions allow for a more comprehensive reading of identity and group allegiances within divided societies, recognising the transformative effect of ethnic or entrenched conflict on those involved. Politicized identities within such societies play a prominent role in group membership, in addition to which may play a role in evaluating the legitimacy of targets within violent campaigns. In the case of Northern Ireland communal divisions evident in support for political parties would be an example of the former, the targeting of Catholic civilians by Loyalist paramilitaries would be an example of the latter (for more information see Kearney or Volkan).

Overall the advantage of Social Identification Theory is in allowing for the study of group identity as a coherent unit, while also accepting the inherent inconsistency of definitions both of oneself and of broader communities. The process through which categorisation takes place is described through self-categorization theory, specifying the action of social categorization as the basis for understanding group behaviour. The act of such categorization accentuates those similarities between members of those groups to which a person belongs, the in-group, and accentuates those differences between the in and out-groups in addition to drawing broad conclusions based on the perceived characteristics of out-group members.

This process creates an understanding of another as not just an individual but rather an embodiment of relevant characteristics of a particular group (Hogg & Terry 123). This leads to additional processes such as stereotyping, ethnocentrism, empathy and collective behaviour.

In particular it allows for an understanding of group behaviour within broad communities such as nations or religious societies that contain within them a multitude of different ethnic, class, political and sexual identities. In the case of political movements it serves to explain the broader behaviours of groups not covered by resource or power centric models that focus instead on access to and the control of resources and influence as the basis for movement organisation rather than particular grievances.

These models are built on the assumption of rational choice. Such a view offers little explanation for the significance of symbols, language and other markers of identity within such movements and in addition may fail to take into account the influence of propaganda, emotion or individual experience. This last one is particularly important in societies where violence is present, the shared experience of loss and pain suffered by communities was

undoubtedly a driving force for many groups during the Troubles as can be seen by the central importance of funerals within Republicanism or retaliatory attacks by paramilitaries.

Overall such theories fail to explain the presence of broader communities within and surrounding social movements and a resource centric view fails to explain the means by which groups with limited resources might effect social change. The relative power and resources of government institutions to the IRA makes this a major factor when considering Northern Ireland. A focus on communal identity furthermore offers an explanation for seemingly illogical acts. In Northern Ireland the act of martyrdom would be a clear example since it offers one of the most extreme instances whereby the cons of an action must logically outweigh its pros.

2.3. Narrative History and the Social Shape of the Past

Social perspectives allow for a view of history as a unifying device for social identity as well as a possible motivator for further shared action. Manifest destiny and the civilising mission of western empire all served not only to shape understandings of the past but also drove and justified imperial expansion. A modern example could be the war on terror or else the promotion of democracy and western style capitalism. Such narratives of history allow a group to define not only who they are, typically through the tracing of origin (Hilton et al), but also where they should be going.

It refers to the tendency to create narratives or canons, the events and details recounted in which are influenced by the context of those constructing them. All events in history are not given the same significance, while some are celebrated others are forgotten and some are actively rewritten or suppressed. Through the act of structuring history links are made between events, people and groups leading to the periodization of history (the civil rights era, the age of enlightenment, the Cold War), and narratives are constructed. The act serves to 'mentally transform essentially unstructured series of events into seemingly coherent *historical narratives* (Zerubavel. 13). It is these narratives that make particular events inherently meaningful.

Social identification theory recognises the tendency to view members of your own group more positively than others (Tajfel & Turner 1986). In defence of this collective self esteem there may be a tendency to emphasise and glorify past successes while minimising losses, mistakes or morally questionable acts (Hilton et al). The establishment of a national canon serves as a clear example. The narrative is one of the nation and those events and figures featured are given meaning in so far as they serve the contemporary understanding of the nation. The continuous link throughout is some imagined shared national identity and character conducive to present society, for instance the founding fathers of America become champions of freedom when many were slave owners.

In the case of Northern Ireland the interpretations of Irish or British history have a profound effect on how more recent conflicts are interpreted. For Republicans it's the continuation of a fight against an occupying force, for unionists a law and order issue intent on over ruling a legitimate act of law that maintains the support of a majority in the six counties. National history is used to build a secondary history of a particular social movement, within Republicanism one of rebellion and to unionists one of a community under siege.

Narrative history serves as an illustration of the way history remains contested and significant in the province, however much the conflict may draw from history there remains also a modern history of the Troubles that is similarly divisive. Any attempt to understand such groups requires an interpretation not only of identity and history but also a consideration of justifications and dynamics affecting social and political movements.

2.4. Framing Theory: The Presentation and Justification of Social Movements

Framing refers to a theory within the study of social movements put forth by Snow et al and credited with bringing ideology back into the field. It allows for a constructivist view of meanings, aims and motivations present in social movements that is created and maintained by its members (Snow & Benford). Frames in this context refer to Schemata of interpretation that enable individuals to locate, perceive, identify and label (Goffman), schemata referring to a cognitive structure extrapolated from previous experience allowing for the interpretation and understanding of future experience. The difference between frames as relating to collective action and references to schema that may be found in fields such as psychology is that the shared nature of frames makes them 'not merely aggregations of individual attitudes and perceptions but also the outcome of negotiating shared meaning' (Gamson, 1992: 111). Although open to individual interpretation they are defined at a group level.

Schema theory serves as an underlying basis for both Social Identity Theory and that of narrative history. The shared assumption of each is that the human mind perceives the world through not only the recognition of pattern and application of definitions but is also capable of applying additional levels of meaning through symbolism or ideological significance. Frames act to render events meaningful, organising experience and guiding further action both individual and collective.

Frames are constructed not only by activists but also interactions between interest groups, experts and politicians (Gamson and Modigliani) They serve not only as a basis for meaning within the group but also come to define opposition groups. This is particularly obvious in the case of those political movements that challenge institutionalised power, vested interests or social structures.

These frames serve not only as a means of identification and contextual interpretation for a movement but also as motivation for action. First of all adherents to a cause or group negotiate a shared understanding of a condition or situation they wish to change. They then identify the cause of the problem, suggest an alternative arrangement and attempt to motivate others to work in order to affect this change. These stages are referred to by Snow and Bedford as 'diagnostic framing', identifying the problem and symptoms, 'prognostic framing' and 'motivational framing'. The former create agreement and the latter moves people to act.

The most relevant example for the case of Northern Ireland would be that of 'injustice frames', initially conceptualised by Gamson (1992). The means by which the victims of injustice are recognised, and often how subsequent actions aim to amplify this victimisation are recognised by Gamson as a justifier for collective non-compliance, protest and depending on the situation rebellion armed or otherwise. Justice and injustice frames are one of the most common studied within framing theory (Cable & Shriver, Carroll & Ratner, Klandermans & Goslinger).

A related area of research aims to explain what occurs when collective action frames come into contact with oppositional frames, particularly in the case of anti-establishment movements the aim is to discover the means by which some frames become dominant while others do not. One text by Oberschall raises the question of legitimacy, this using a case study of anti-regime dissidents in East Germany.

The frames of the dissident movements were “free elections” and “democracy”, these were created by protesters with the media as a means of communicating them. This embedded in a culture that understood this Western European model of democracy as the antithesis of the Communist party state and yet there came to be a remarkable level of consensus (Ash). The protest movement came after forty years of party and state propaganda, yet Oberschall identifies this as having largely become empty rhetoric by 1989 creating a lack of trust and legitimacy that discredited the regime's discourse. This lack of a credible communist frame allowed for a rapid formation of collective identity among many formerly apolitical citizens.

So a further requirement of a successful social movement is a consistency between the frames established and the actions of the group, as well as a level of trust between members and those they address. This translates well to much of the literature on Northern Ireland. Considerations of the province from a security point of view have long recognised the role oppressive anti-terrorism acts had in galvanising Republican support, and policies carried out by successive British governments over the objection of unionists lead to a growing unwillingness to accept their presentation of events.

Overall the aim of my research will be to identify the primary frames of both the Republican and unionist political movements in Northern Ireland, and in particular how these changed to allow for the compromises that went into the Good Friday Agreement. This will also involve an attempt to identify which of the two movement's frames appear as the dominant and accepted interpretation at any given time, with a further analysis of those acts or events that served to damage the legitimacy of each.

One of the problems in studying Northern Ireland is untangling propaganda from factual accounts. Each is important in understanding the conflict however any attempt to write a history of the Troubles or the peace process will be influenced by attempts by those involved to excuse their actions or else present themselves in a positive manner, and literature or reports from the time have to be considered in the light of not only government propaganda but also official policy such as the broadcasting ban on members of Sinn Féin that will often lead to a distorted overall picture.

Accepting this and furthermore making it a point of study helps in understanding the way the conflict was perceived by each side and what served to motivate the actors involved. The presence of ideological distortion, differing views of reality and obvious political propaganda is a problem when attempting to write a neutral (if such a thing is possible) history of a conflict however the identities, political movements and experiences of such a period cannot be understood without them.

2.5. Research Questions

Drawing on previous research into social movements, in addition to both first and second hand accounts of Northern Ireland, I intent to answer the following research question:

As decisive language and propaganda was moderated to allow for a peace process and the resulting Good Friday Agreement, what changes occurred to the frames and collective identities of the provinces major social movements.

In order to answer this question it will be necessary for me to focus specifically on those political movements that played a dominant role in Northern Ireland both prior to, during and following the Troubles. This in order to compare those issues of significance prior to the Good Friday Peace Agreement, those that came to play major role in peace negotiations, those that have been dominant since and the way in which each was framed during each period. The two movements that will be the focus of my research are Republicanism and Unionism, however the latter is more varied in terms of the actual figures analysed. Specifically Unionism will refer to two groups within a broader movement that emerged during the peace process, one for and the other against the Good Friday Agreement.

Secondary research questions:

What changes occurred within Republicanism to allow for a move away from the violent campaign of the IRA, eventually culminating in the acceptance of a law and order policy in support of police services in the province.

What shifts within Unionism occurred to allow for members of the movement to engage with the Republican movement and support a shared agreement.

What changes occurred within previously anti-agreement Democratic unionist Party to allow for their entry into government with Sinn Féin in 2007.

3. Communal Identity in Northern Ireland

Identity in Northern Ireland is a highly politicised issue. The common understanding of the province is that it contains two distinct communities divided along ethno-religious lines, Catholic/Irish or else Protestant/British. The majority of political parties and movements in the province have typically drawn support from only one of these broader communities.

Such communal splits have their basis in the historical relations between Britain, or in the case of earlier history predominantly England, and Ireland. Differing National identities come from the recognition of difference between those coming as settlers from Great Britain and those native to Ireland and the religious division originates in the Plantation Period.

Plantation was a policy most prominent in Ulster and marks the point whereby broader cultural divisions open up between Ulster and the rest of Ireland. It followed the flight of the Earls in 1607, this being the emigration of the former Gaelic leaders of Ulster to the European mainland in 1607. Plantation in this period refers to a policy that aimed to pacify Ulster through the 'planting' of settlers loyal to the English Crown who were gifted land in the province.

This policy began in 1606 and proved to be most successful in the six counties making up the land that had formerly been under the control of Hugh O'Neill. The majority of the settlers gifted land in Ulster came from Scotland, their role was to establish a society based on English law and to serve as a garrison against native resistance. They were also Protestants, in opposition to the majority Catholic population of Ireland.

Since this point the two communities, Protestant and Catholic, have remained remarkably distinct. As of 2006 90% of children in Northern Ireland still attended separate faith schools. Interfaith marriage is by far the minority, although there are regional differences (Morgan et al) and large numbers of communities remain ethnically and religiously homogeneous.

Religion itself holds a prominent position within Northern Ireland. The main denominations in the province are Catholic and Protestant, with Protestantism divided among Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Free Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist and Brethren churches. Polarisation on questions of identity and constitutional preference exists between the two communities, a fact that has not changed significantly since the Good Friday Agreement (Fahey et al).

The province has often been referred to as a place apart, both within Ireland but also in terms of broader culture both within the UK and further abroad and this view is borne out by studies of religion in the area. In terms of the importance of religion Northern Ireland is certainly distinct in comparison to not only Great Britain but also much of Western Europe. The 1968 Loyalty Survey showed 96% of the population claiming to belong to either the Catholic faith or one of the three main Protestant denominations (Church of Ireland, Presbyterian or Methodist), and although this number has shown slight drops in the preceding years an overwhelming majority of 80% still claimed such membership in 2008 (Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2008). In comparison in the 2009 British Social Attitudes Survey a Christian faith was claimed by 42.9% of respondents. Church attendance is also markedly higher in the Province (Tearfund).

Census data, Life and Times and similar surveys have shown a significant minority within both religious communities of middle-ground identities such as Northern Irish however such identities have been found to not evoke strong positive feelings (Fahey). Like multi-faith marriage, any cross-over between the two communities is rare.

Table 1 highlights changes in the preferred national identities of both Protestant and Catholic during

the Troubles. The earliest survey carried out by Rose months before the first outbreak of sustained violence is particularly significant on account of the 20% of Protestant respondents that consider themselves to be Irish. Likewise 20% of Catholic Respondents at the time considered themselves to be British.

Table 1

Religious Divisions within National Identity, Northern Ireland 1968 - 1986

	1968 [1]		1978 [2]		1986 [3]		1989	
	Prot (%)	Cath (%)	Prot (%)	Cath (%)	Prot (%)	Cath (%)	Prot (%)	Cath (%)
British	39	20	67	20	65	6	68	6
Irish	20	76	8	69	3	61	3	60
Ulster	32	5	20	6	14	1	10	2
Northern Irish	-	-	-	-	11	20	16	25

[1] Rose

[2] Moxon-Browne

[3] Whyte

Surveys following Rose show an increase in the numbers of Catholics selecting the Irish over British identity, with the same being true for Protestants choosing British over Irish. In addition data shows almost a complete collapse of the Ulster identity, chosen by 32% of Rose's Protestant respondents. The view of Catholic and Irish, or else Protestant and British in the province becomes more strongly the case following the outbreak and continuation of sectarian violence.

The selection of a single identity, such as that required by the three surveys included in Table 1, is problematic in understanding national feeling in Northern Ireland and elsewhere in the United Kingdom on account of the difficulty in precisely defining the British identity.

The typical amalgamation made in discussions of Northern Ireland of British and Protestant requires an understanding that the particular culture, religious and political status of the province means that British is likely to hold different associations than it might in the rest of Great Britain. At the same time the combination of middle ground identities such as Northern Irish and a growing minority choosing no religious affiliation at all shows that such associations, although the majority case, and not a universal rule. Table 1 for instance shows growing numbers of respondents selecting the Northern Irish identity.

In addition to religious and ethnic identities there exists a further association, that of political identity. The divided nature of identity in the province has led to communal divisions dominating the political context as well as its cultural make-up. Those considering themselves to be British, predominantly Protestant, are assumed to be unionist or Loyalist with the same being true of Nationalists and Republicans within the Catholic Irish community.

The results of surveys conducted between 1989 and 1991 show 0% identification with the Nationalist party the SDLP as well as Sinn Féin among Protestant respondents, and very few Catholic respondents identifying with unionist Parties. These results were duplicated for the most part among Catholics associating with major unionist parties. Only the cross community Alliance Party of Northern Ireland draws similar levels of support from both communities. Full survey data is shown in Table 2.

One of the concerns raised with regards the governance of Northern Ireland is that the political institutions that exist at the moment encourage the continuation of such divisions, when the emphasis should instead be on cross-communal co-operation. One of the main areas where this is an issue is within the structure of the Stormont assembly, the devolved legislature established as part of the Good Friday Agreement.

The Stormont assembly in its present form requires the designation of Members (MLAs) as either Nationalist or unionist. Ministerial roles are shared out proportionally across unionist and Nationalist blocks and each has a veto over areas of legislation.

Table 2

Political Affiliation and Religious Identity, Northern Ireland Parties Only.

	Catholic			Protestant		
	1989 (%)	1990 (%)	1991 (%)	1989 (%)	1990 (%)	1991 (%)
Official Unionist		-	-	52	54	51
Democratic Unionist	1	-	-	19	16	14
Alliance	7	8	9	10	8	9
SDLP	44	43	49	-	-	1
Sinn Féin	7	7	10	-	-	-
Worker's Party	5	3	2	1	1	1
Other Party	1	2	3	2	3	3
None	28	23	16	10	13	13
Other/Don't Know/No Response	7	14	12	7	5	7

(Stringer and Robinson)

Overall electoral support remains with those parties identifying themselves as members of either block, although there do exist cross-community parties. The largest of which is the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland who averaged 8.4% of the vote in their first five region-wide election campaigns (1973-75), then dropped to 6% between 1996 and 1999 and the entire share of the vote by all parties outside unionist/Nationalist blocks in 2003 averaged only 8% in total (McGarry & O'Leary, 2006: 255). Table 2 likewise shows relatively low levels of representation for Alliance within both communities.

The most significant point underlying both the workings of the Stormont assembly and the criticisms made of it is that political culture of the province remains divided along sectarian lines. Members, instead of representing a country or province, are likely to be seen as representing a single community. The requirement that the Northern Ireland Executive, the governing body of ministers elected from the Stormont Parliament, contain both unionist and Nationalist ministers exists for this reason. The province is governed through a coalition rather than a majority as is the case in Westminster and both the Scottish and Welsh devolved assemblies.

So whereas policy distinctions are likely to affect whether somebody is a DUP or UUP supporter, the same with Sinn Féin and the SDLP, such divisions in most cases would determine support with

little crossing of the Nationalist or unionist line.

So the unionist/Nationalist distinction is officially recognised by the democratic structures of the province, however this is the division where a simple two sided approach is least able to fully understand the different viewpoints. It's more accurate to say there exist four identities within Northern Irish politics, Nationalist and Republican on one side and unionist and Loyalist on the other.

The distinction between Nationalist and Republican is typically simplified to those who have or continue to support an armed campaign and those who don't, with Republicans the former and Nationalists the latter.

Within unionist and Loyalist identities there exist more varied levels of difference, although a simplistic view also assumes the same dichotomy of unionists against violence and Loyalists in favour. Ulster Loyalism can also in a minority of cases refer to campaigns such as the Ulster Third Way, advocating for a politically independent Ulster removed from both Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

Interviews with former Loyalist paramilitary members, the most extensive of which is Gallaher's, suggests that there exists an important difference in Republican/Nationalist and unionist identity that also has an effect on unionist/Loyalist distinctions. The political classes of Britain have historically been overwhelmingly unionist. Many MPs, particularly in the Conservative party, have had connections to lodges of the Orange Order and unionist Parties played a role in keeping Prime Minister John Major in power in the early 1990s. There exists in the province however a level of distrust of this political elite and successive policies of the British government.

To take the example of the DUP, Ian Paisley became renowned for attacking British politicians almost as much as he did members of what he referred to as the pan-nationalist front. 'Traitor' or 'Lundy' were commonly thrown at Thatcher, as well as other more colourful insults such as 'loathsome reptile' particularly following the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985. The agreement gave the Irish government an advisory role in the running of Northern Ireland and was strongly opposed by all unionist parties.

So the additional distinction exists between Unionism within the political classes of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and that of groups critical of them.

Gallaher's accounts of Loyalist Paramilitaries in the years since the Good Friday Agreement offer an additional level of distinction drawn from interviews with former prisoners, namely that of class. That is you were upper or middle class you were a unionist and working class a Loyalist. Many of the testimonies collected in the volume suggest a common experience shared by Loyalist paramilitary members and their Republican counterparts. That with regards to housing, education or finding work members the problems faced by members of both communities were the same but the rhetoric of the conflict lead to them being grafted instead onto sectarian oppositions. There is a level of common acceptance that there has been a failure of government by Westminster and the political classes in the province, but that cross-communal examples of this are overshadowed by the polarised politics of group identity.

So the self identification of the province's population contains more complex elements than a simple Irish/British duality, but what does account for the prominence of such a duality in writings about Northern Ireland is the powerful and decisive nature of symbols, histories and ideas surrounding ideas of what being British or Irish means.

There is evidence of an Irish national identity as referenced by parts of the Republican and Nationalist movement, and an opposing identity within unionist/Loyalist camps. All the symbols and constructions associated with a shared national identity exist in duality within Northern Ireland. The flying of flags, the Irish Tricolour or the union Jack, public commemoration of historic events, the Easter Rising or the Siege of Derry, even language, Ulster Scots or Irish. Markers of identity within Northern Ireland are politicised, and the identities they symbolise are used by political parties, even if identity at an individual level is a more complex picture.

4. History and Culture of Irish Republicanism

The Republican movement is the one most often written about in accounts of Northern Ireland. Drawing on the long history of the English in Ireland, or Scottish from the Plantation period onwards, the movement encompasses criticisms of British colonialism and imperialism as well as advocating for justice, civil rights, nationalism and democratic representation. The ultimate aim is a united Ireland free from British rule, with the rights of the whole Irish people to national self determination framing what is known as 'the struggle' in terms of the removal of an occupying force.

Republicanism draws on both a long and varied history and a sustained modern campaign, many of the most widely known and studied events during the Troubles are part of the Republican narrative. The Civil Rights marches, the Hunger Strikes and the prominent role played by the US in the province to take just three examples.

Several threads are apparent in overall Republican thought, evident in what ideology, the historic events they choose to commemorate and propaganda from different parts of the movement.

4.1. The Global Movement

The first such theme is the relative international nature of Republicanism as compared to Unionism. The first Republicans were heavily influenced by the French Revolution, later the Civil Rights movement in America lead to the mobilisation of protest that included new trends of thought combined with traditional nationalist grievances (Melucci 292).

The movement also maintains close links with the global Irish community, most notably in America. The image is of a transnational Irish nationalism or what is known as diaspora nationalism (Kenny). Emigration of Irish nationals on account of British policy (see Miller, 1988) or economic hardship have a dedicated focus within Republicanism. A Sinn Féin campaign leaflet issued by Arthur Morgan, TD for Louth, 2002 – 2011, accused the Fianna Fáil/Green Party government of the Republic for driving young workers overseas through economic policies akin to forced emigration, under the slogan 'It wasn't cool the 1980s and it's not cool now'.

In addition to this national global community, Republicanism has maintained links with broader ideological movements. This includes separatist movements, most notably those in the Basque region (Frampton) as well as groups in Palestine (Howe).

The movement is globally associated with human rights campaigns for political prisoners worldwide, to which end Sinn Féin leaders have criticised American policies in Guantanamo bay (Adams "Force Feeding in Guantanamo Bay". *Irish Republican News*), and former IRA hunger striker Tommy McKearney publicly sent a message of support to hunger strikers in Palestine.



Emigration Leaflet, Sinn Féin

The placing of the Republican movement with this broader national and ideological context serves as a rejection of their minority position within Northern Ireland, instead the struggle is one of broadly accepted principles within a wider community of oppressed peoples. At a tactical level global connections allowed for the development of more effective forms of resistance, explored by Melucci with a particular focus on framing during the Civil Rights era, and in the case of the IRA allowed for the provision of equipment.

4.2. War and Order: Legitimacy and the IRA

The IRA were central to Republicanism during the Troubles, strongly linked with the political party Sinn Féin to the extent that to many figures the two were synonymous. The organisation holds a similarly prominent place within discussions of the legitimacy of violence and the nature of terrorism, at the very heart of the ideology surrounding the armed Republican campaign is the definition of terrorism as opposed to legitimate violence and war.

Support for the use of force within Republicanism is not a phenomenon unique to the Troubles but rather a continuation of the campaign that led to the establishment of the Irish Free State following the Irish War of Independence. The Declaration of Independence, adopted by Dáil Éireann in 1918, as well as the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic hold great significance to Republicans who view their movement as a continuation of this same campaign. The first is referenced by the IRA handbook, framed copies of the second remain for sale in the Sinn Féin online shop.

The IRA during the Troubles drew on the same justification as those of the 1916 Easter Rising, the freeing of Ireland from a foreign force and the recognition of a sovereign 32 county Irish state. The continued presence of British forces in Northern Ireland as well as continued partition were considered the underlying cause of violence throughout Ireland.

The Green Book, the trainings and induction manual given to IRA recruits, contains the following statement:

'Commitment to the Republican Movement is the firm belief that its struggle both military and political is morally justified, that war is morally justified and that the Army is the direct representatives of the 1918 Dáil Éireann parliament, and that as such they are the legal and lawful government of the Irish Republic...'

The unequivocal statement is that the IRA is at war against the British state, they are a volunteer army not a terrorist group or criminal organisation and have the legitimate authority to wage war on behalf of the Irish people. The official view of both the British Government and unionists is that they were both of the latter, hence official propaganda at referencing IRA 'godfathers' to draw associations with the Mafia. Criminalisation was the central focus of the British governments strategy from the mid 70's onwards. The intention was to de-politicise the armed campaign, the withdrawing of special category status from prisoners convicted in the no-jury Diplock courts is the clearest example of this tactic and ultimately led to the hunger strikes of 1981 (Rolston, 1989, 1991).

The fundamental issue is that of defining terrorism. The common distinction between terrorism and state action is the killing of civilians, which in the case of Northern Ireland makes applying such a definition to the IRA problematic. The Irish Information Partnership in a 1990 report identified 37.4% of IRA victims between 1969 and June 1989 as civilians. This in contrast to those killed by army or police forces 54.4% of which were civilians.

References to the IRA during this period would with few exceptions mean the Provisional IRA, otherwise known as the Provos, who emerged out of a split in the IRA in December 1969. The split resulted in the formation of the Provisional IRA out of what became known as the Official IRA and originated from ideological splits within the movement.

The OIRA had a large base in Dublin and there was discontent over moves to discontinue the policy of abstention within the Republic of Ireland. Such southern based policies led to accusation that

the organisation was ignoring those in the north. Other points of division included support for an offensive violent campaign, as opposed to defensive, and Marxist policies advanced by Chief of Staff Cathal Goulding in opposition to sectarianism (Taylor, 1997, O'Brien). The PIRA were responsible for the majority of deaths during the Troubles, just under half of the total number of victims.

Instances of violence carried out by the British armed forces and the RUC lead to an additional understanding of the IRA as defenders of the Catholic community. The Civil Rights period is credited with reinvigorating the violent Republican campaign in the province, as well as leading to the formation of the PIRA, and the tactics of the RUC are often criticised as being in part responsible. Failures of the political system at the time are also considered significant.



Civil Right Protesters

The movement originated in opposition to discrimination and inequality in Northern Ireland during the 1960s and made widespread use of the tactics employed by protest movements in America. The Northern Irish Civil Rights Association, responsible for the organisation of peaceful protest marches and political campaigns, however encountered barriers and policies that would ultimately serve as motivation for violence.

The parliament of the time, the first assembly at Stormont, was dominated by unionists and formed part of a blocked political system incapable of responding to the demands of formerly peaceful groups. In addition to this the forceful ending of protest marches by the RUC, often using physical force, served as catalysts for mobilisation as well as increasing the alienation felt between the force and the Catholic community (Ellison and Smythe 54-72).



IRA Mural, Belfast

The failure of British forces to defend Catholic neighbourhoods from Loyalist attacks and accusations of collusion between the RUC and Loyalist paramilitaries further added to this secondary understanding of the IRA as defenders of a people unable to turn to any legitimate state for support.

So IRA violence was justified as both political in nature, opposing rule by an illegitimate and foreign state, as well as defensive in response to state sanctioned violence. The priorities of the IRA are reflected in those of Sinn Féin, prominent leaders of which have had previously served time for IRA membership. Republican tactics during this period

relied on both organisations as the two sides of a united campaign, later to be referred to as the Armalite and the Ballot Box.

4.3. The IRA and Sinn Féin

‘Our position is clear and it will never, never, never change. The war against British rule must continue until freedom is achieved.’

- Martin McGuinness, Speech to the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis 1986.

In the mouths of Loyalist figures Sinn Féin and the IRA are inexplicably linked, to destroy one is to destroy the other. Sinn Féin as the political wing of the IRA is even acknowledged at the time of writing on the parties official website.

Sinn Féin was originally formed in 1905 by Arthur Griffith but took its current form during the

1970s. As with much of modern Republicanism the party has historical links to the Easter rising of 1916, an event at the time referred to as the Sinn Féin rebellion. The party is Republican, politically left wing and has at various points claimed to represent support both for a political Republican campaign as well the continuation of violent one.

The parties president Gerry Adams cites the beginning of his activism as being an attempt to prevent an Irish tri-colour being flown outside Sinn Féin's West Belfast Office in 1964 (Adams, 1966. 51), an experience similar to that of many of the party's members as well as members of Loyalist paramilitaries (Hayes, 2001). Policies that served to radicalise members of the Catholic community have often lead to increased support for both Sinn Féin and the IRA, one example being the Hunger Strikes.

The party was for much of the Troubles subservient to the military wing of Republicanism. The Army Council held annual meetings prior to the parties Ard Fheis in which decisions were made that then directed the actions of their junior partner (O'Brien). Important to the rise in numbers during the 1980s were the presence of ex-prisoners who had become politicised while in prison and the emergence of the 'Falls Road Think Tank'. The group included Adams, McGuinness and a handful of others whose key aim was to broaden the movements support base while making sure to retain it's revolutionary nature. The relationship was complex at this time; although Sinn Féin could now act without the Army Council instruction they still accepted their ultimate authority and many were members of both groups. Any councillors repudiating the armed campaign were forced to resign.

Ultimately the final shift towards a predominantly political continuation of the struggle came when the movement was convinced it was the most tactically beneficial move, the aim of Sinn Féin was always to bring the IRA with them rather than to distance themselves from them. The rise in the party's influence within the movement appears to have been designed to move political influence away from the IRA Army Council and create a dedicated political form of representation for the Irish people.

Up until a vote at held at a specially convened Ard Fheis following the Good Friday Agreement however Sinn Féin were active as a political party in elections but remained outside of those political institutions to which they were elected. Electoral success was interpreted as support for the Republican cause, however the longstanding refusal to accept the legitimacy of either British rule or else the governing bodies established following partition remained prominent within the party through a policy of abstention.

4.4. Abstentionism

Abstention as a policy is rooted in the total rejection within Republicanism of the institutions established by British rule and the partition of Ireland. Sinn Féin MPs elected in 1918 to the UK parliament refused to take their seats and instead established the first Dáil, claiming to be the legitimate parliament over Ireland. It was at the first meeting of this parliament that the Declaration of Independence was read out, drawn from the Sinn Féin election manifesto of 1918.

Following partition the abstention policy was applied to all institutions established within a divided Ireland, as the only true parliament for the Irish people could be that of a united Ireland. The policy serves as a primary point of distinction between Republicanism and constitutional nationalism (Laffan, Patterson).

The policy is central to the legitimacy of leaders within the movement and has is divisive enough to

have lead to splits. The dispute in such instances has been over whether or not abstention exists as one of the primary principles of Republicanism or else as a tactic to achieve it's means. The former leaves little room for deviation, the latter allows for a more realist approach allowing for change according to political context.

The significance of the policy within the movement meant that changing it would necessitate not only a change of policy but also a change of mind. As one former member of Sinn Féin commented this could only occur as part of a learning curve, allowing for the contemporary situation to be viewed through a much more pragmatic lens (Morrisson). The two sides are characterised by this distinction, pragmatism in aid of the ultimate Republican goal for the future on one side and ideological absolutism on the other disallowing any acceptance of the modern reality of Ireland and seeking to realise this goal as much as possible in the present on the other.

Splits occurred when abstention was raised in 1970, with members leaving to establish the Workers Party, and later in 1986 which would lead to the creation of Republican Sinn Féin. The beginning of the 'learning curve' that would lead to the policy changing in the mid 80s can be traced back to Adams' influence. While interned at Long Kesh he had began to contribute to the monthly *Republican News* under the pseudonym 'Brownie' and many of these articles include suggestions of a shift towards a more political campaign. In particular that the movement needed to provide a 'people's alternative to the Brit system and we must implement the Republican alternative at every opportunity on as many fronts as possible' (Adams, 1975).

The article references active abstentionism, the designation attributed to the current policy whereby Sinn Féin MPs continue to work for their constituents as much as possible without taking their seats in the House of Commons. Patterson raises this as a revival of an earlier tradition of Republicanism, the aim of which was 'to rally the masses to the 'anti-imperialist struggle' by taking up economic and social issues' in what he terms 'social Republicanism' (Patterson, 1985: 5).

Later speeches by Adams recognise a need for Sinn Féin to end it's isolationist role in the South, to accept that much of the electorate had accepted the institutions of a partitioned Ireland and that there was a need for the party to get among such people if they were to ultimately achieve their goals.

Debate over the policy represents the difficulties faced by political parties defining themselves as outsiders, or else more hard line groups cast as outsiders. Being located outside the actual institutions of politics allows for a certain level of ideological absolutism, but so long as the movement supports democratic principles any changes will ultimately require majority support.

Republicanism has always espoused democratic principles, as stated in the Declaration of Independence 'We ordain that the elected Representatives of the Irish People alone have power to make laws binding on the people of Ireland, and that the Irish Parliament is the only Parliament to which that people will give its allegiance'. Their contention is that such principles apply only to the people of a 32 county united Ireland.

Later Republican literature published by Sinn Féin has accepted the democratic rights of unionists as a minority within Ireland 'which not only can be upheld but which must be upheld in an independent Ireland. That is the democratic norm. That is an essential ingredient of peace and stability.' (*Freedom*). The aim of the party is to achieve social change, and so in addition to ideological motivation there is also an element of political tactics.

The justification for the change of policy was similar to that of the shift to a politically focused continuation of the struggle rather than a violent one. Ultimately it was a tactical decision rather

than an ideological shift. It marked an acceptance that a majority within the north and south of Ireland had accepted the institutions as legitimate, without Sinn Féin themselves doing so, and is one step in a gradual move away from absolutism towards pragmatism that would allow for the party to accept a place in the government of Northern Ireland. The view of the party as outsiders in the political system still exists to some extent, particularly in Westminster where MPs still refuse to take their seats, but is gradually being eroded by their time in government.

The party has undoubtedly changed in order to allow for support of the Stormont assemble and entry into government, however there have been no moves to distance themselves from their previous violent campaign or the actions of the PIRA. Likewise Republican figures who died either during the Troubles or in previous uprisings still hold great significance. Despite the PIRA ceasefire and decommissioning, and Sinn Féin now actively supporting peace in Northern Ireland, figures who came to prominence as unifying symbols and martyrs during the Troubles still cast a long shadow over modern Republicanism.

4.5. Martyrdom and Mortality

One need only glance through those events and figures held to be significant to Republicans to see lists of uprisings that were put down and Republicans who died at the hands of British forces. Funerals, for citizens or IRA men, have traditionally held a special significance within the movement. Members of the Sinn Féin leadership attended many such funerals during the Troubles, often with Adams himself carrying the coffin. A similar focus can be found in the special position held by prisoners or former prisoners, the movement places great importance on those who have suffered in its name.



Adams carries coffin of IRA bomber
Thomas Begley

The effect of hunger strikes as well as broader sacrifice for a cause had the effect of transforming 'not only the perceived sacrificial victims but, in the eyes of many ordinary Irish people, the cause for which they died. The martyrs and their cause became sacred' (Sweeney 13). The commemoration of such figures can be seen through the murals dedicated to Bobby Sands and the other prisoners at Long Kesh as well as the yearly remembrance of the 1916 Easter Rising. The symbol of the Easter Lily, commonly worn as a badge by Republicans, commemorates those that were executed following the uprising. Depending on the wearer it may also commemorate other examples of Ireland's 'patriot dead', those of the pre-Treaty uprisings or members of modern incarnations of the IRA.



Easter Lily, metal
in colours of the
Irish Tricolour

Such acts of protest fit well with the idea of martyrdom as a prominent feature of Republicanism. The act most often occurs as a last resort measure, used often times when previous attempts at resistance had been frustrated as an act of self sacrifice for a greater goal and a dramatic illustration of exclusion. Hunger Strike as a form of protest for instance has a long tradition in Republican and Irish history. Ireland experienced more than 50 hungerstrikes during the ten year period of 1913 and 1923, participated in by both male and female prisoners in protest of a variety of grievances against the British Government and later the authorities of the Irish Free State. Close to 8,000 Republican prisoners also participated in a mass hunger strike in opposition to the Anglo-Irish Treaty (Sweeney 12)

The particular tradition of martyrdom within Catholicism has been suggested by some authors as an additional influence (O'Malley) however interviews and accounts of surviving hunger strikers (McKeown, Campbell et al, Feldman) show their motivations overall to be secular

not sacral. The presence of quasi-religious imagery within murals depicting the hunger strikers (Rolston, 1991) suggests Catholic tradition had some influence, but such instances are better characterised within discussions of political protest and secular symbolic opposition to oppression rather than as any manifestation of a religious tradition. Such traditions if they were present were more likely to have been deployed as a means of adding additional legitimacy and significance to acts rather than as a primary motivating factor (Coulter).

In the words of Patrick Pearse, the commonly accepted leader of the 1916 rebellion, “Life springs from death and from the graves of patriot men and women spring living nations” (in Edwards 236). It is through such an understanding of death that Republicanism not only attributes meaning to the acts of its own dead but also justified IRA killings (Toolis).



**Mural Commemorating Long Kesh
Hunger Strikers**

The rise in IRA recruits following the hunger strikes supports the latter, the powerful image of those that died served as a rallying cry to the movement. But such high emotions could also lead to a narrowing of options within the movement, 'comrades imprisoned cannot be abandoned; comrades killed in police shoot outs or in prison are martyrs whose deaths demand a response. The reaction in many cases is increased commitment to violence to pay back state violence (McCauley and Moskalenko).

The election of Bobby Sands as an MP during the period of the hunger strikes is the best explanation for why this didn't occur within Republicanism. The overall result was an emphasis on the failure of the British to engage with a group whose mandate could no longer be ignored given such electoral gains. Sands' own commitment to a political campaign made his death a dramatic illustration of the exclusion of the Republican and Catholic communities from the institutions of the province.

5. Unionism, Loyalism and the Ulster identity

Ulster Unionism and loyalism has in comparison to Republicanism received rather less attention in studies of Northern Ireland. As a movement the two are more disparate, whereas Republican or nationalist groups differ in respect to the condoning of violence or the acceptance at some level of involvement in post partition political institutions they do mostly share a single overarching historical and ideological interpretive framework.

Without wishing to oversimplify the divisions within the Republican movement the dominant figures are evident in Sinn Féin and the IRA, the latter more precisely referring to a number of incarnations but most often during the Troubles the Provisional IRA. Also taking into consideration the SDLP there is a clear formation of movements differing on tactics and certain ideologies but largely united for Dublin rule and a united Ireland.

By contrast although the continued union is a clear unifying force in opposition to this the parties advocating it are more diverse both in terms of ideology and language as well as views as to what form continued British rule should take. The association with the British government is also problematic for those opting for violent campaigns. They exist in effect as pro-state paramilitaries yet are in opposition to that state's rule of law.

Clear in survey data, political propaganda and events within the province themselves is a definition of identity within the unionist community in opposition to that of Irish Republicanism. This may manifest either as an image of a community under attack by violent Republican groups, or else as opposition to an Irish Republican ascendancy. Also present is the idea of those in Ulster as the descendants of those that defeated Catholic and Irish figures to establish Protestant rule in Ireland. This identity has put the unionist community at odds not only with Republicanism but often times the British Government, as such there is a prevalent idea that successive British governments have not valued the union to the same extent that the people of Ulster do.

The term Ulster Unionism offers an illustration of this view. Northern Ireland is an anomaly within the union, geographically distant as well as politically distinct. Those political parties that dominate the legislature of the State of Great Britain and Northern Ireland do not formerly organise in the province and those on the ballot in Northern Ireland do not organise within Great Britain.

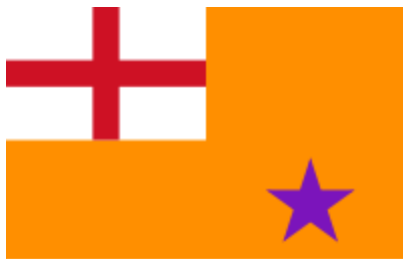
The unionist community in Northern Ireland exists as a minority within two sovereign states. While a majority within Northern Ireland they would be reduced to a minority within a united Ireland, and within Great Britain their representatives form a minority within the British parliament. Objections by unionist parties to government policies have been overruled by even those parties typically considered to be their allies.

Within the province there is the Ulster identity as well as an Ulster unionist communal culture. Within it are movements such as the Orange Order, political parties, the Protestant community and its own historical narratives. Present also is what is often referred to as a 'siege mentality' within Ulster Unionism, a defensiveness born of the belief that theirs is an identity being attacked from both sides.

5.1. Home Rule and the emergence of Political Unionism

The origins of a distinct Ulster unionist movement can be found in the coming together of Liberals and Conservatives in opposition to the Home Rule Bills, initially brought forward by the Gladstone government the Fourth of which established Northern Ireland as a political entity. Prior to this the

Orange Order was already a political influence throughout Ulster with 'Orangeism' serving as an ethno-cultural defender of the Protestant faith. The Orange Order is evidence of religious divisions that had long been a feature within Ulster politics. Opposition to Catholicism was justified by its association with Irish Nationalism and this served as a unifying element for a collective identity superseding divisions of class and denomination (Walker 2).



Boyne Standard, Flag of the Orange Order

The primacy of identity in Ulster politics was therefore established, as were a number of hallmarks of the 'Orange' or Ulster identity. One of the key areas of debate surrounding Unionism at this time is the extent to which it can be claimed to be a form of nationalism. That Unionism was based on claims of self-determination and cultural distinctiveness is disputed. The view as presented by Gibbons in a largely Marxist approach claims such nationalist ideals had come to be by the time of the second Home Rule Bill. The alternative take, characterised by Miller (1978), is that the movement claimed instead a 'contractarian' political view.

This meant that rather than owing loyalty to the British state such loyalty instead was reserved for the Crown, but that such allegiance was conditional on the continued willingness of the Government to protect the rights of its citizens. This focus on the Crown also had the effect of shifting the focus of Unionism from the British Government as represented at Westminster to the then British Empire.

At the time of the Government of Ireland Act there was strong opposition from Conservative figures who believed greater autonomy for Ireland would undermine British claims elsewhere within the Empire. Lord Randolph Churchill, in a speech the language of which would be echoed many times over in the decades that followed, claimed 'Ulster will Fight and Ulster will be Right' in support of actions by Ulster unionists in opposition to Home Rule (Tonge 7).

In one of the ironies of Northern Irish politics unionist support in Ulster was to be rewarded with a Home Rule assembly, the opening of which on 22 June 1921 was hailed as a triumph. In fact many of the limitations of this Initial Stormont parliament were on account of unionist protest, as noted by Alvin Jackson in his account of Irish home rule 'in the end, the paradox is not only that Unionism won Home Rule; it is rather that they were burdened by a form of Home Rule that they themselves had subverted.' (Jackson 200)

5.2. Identity in Ulster Politics

Modern Ulster Unionism draws its legitimacy from the idea of a common identity and a communal right to self-determination, according to the nationalist principles of a sovereign state rather than a multi-national empire. The duty of the state to its people is still maintained, and criticisms of successive British governments voiced by unionist figures have often been based on a failure to protect their interests and defend their rights as citizens.

Like Republicanism, Unionism has evolved to where it is today through a series of ideological shifts as well as splits within the movement. The Ulster unionist Party, Ulster's oldest unionist political party, rose to prominence through their domination of the first Stormont Parliament. Unionism at the time existed as a response to an Irish Nationalism that rejected formations of the Irish People as British subjects. As proposed by Walker a change had occurred within the movement transforming it from a civic, inclusive formation of Unionism as aligned with an Irish state under the British crown to an ethno-nationalist idea of Protestant Ulster as a community possessing its own distinctiveness and rights to self-determination.

Prior to this members of the predominantly Protestant middle classes had pushed for change allowing for greater self governance for Ireland. Catholic emancipation was argued for on the grounds that for Ireland to become an independent nation under the crown the inclusion of three quarters of its population in political life would become necessary. Equal treatment was far from total but the passing in 1778 of the first Catholic Relief Bill allowed Catholics to once again buy property. Other similar moves suggest an openness to inclusive citizenship at this time.

Significantly this would refer to an equal Irish citizenship. Grattan one of the most prominent figures of the 1782 parliament in Ireland addressed the Irish House of Commons with the words 'the question is now whether we shall be a Protestant settlement or an Irish nation... for so long as we exclude Catholics from natural liberty and the common rights of man we are not a people' (Quoted in Kee 35).

Initially the rejection of Irish Nationalism came from a criticism of the exclusive, ethnic nature of the movement. However as Ulster Protestants came to believe that their protestations of loyalty to the union as Irishmen was not enough to stop such a project they began to adopt similar ideas regarding Ulsterness.

So whereas a distinct Ulster ethno-nationalism is apparent, the continued claim to a British national identity prevents a purely ethnic understanding of the unionist movement. The home rule crisis in Ireland, in addition to campaigns for home rule in Scotland, raised the ambiguities of what could be considered 'Britishness' in light of an acceptance of distinct nationalities in the union's constituent countries. In the period since the first Home Rule bills Unionism has continually moved between the inclusive and the particular as well as the civic and the ethnic.

So unionist leaders argue against the perceived will of politicians at Westminster, within whom they are a minority, to bring about a united Ireland because as a people the British community of Ulster have a right to self determination. Within Northern Ireland the majority will of all inhabitants of the province is to remain within the union. This justifies over-ruling the minority will of the Irish Nationalist community to self determination in their desire to re-unite Ireland.

5.3. Northern Ireland within the Union

'We demand, as British citizens, equality of treatment, the protection of our lives, persons and property, and the return of a democratic and accountable government, free from the domination of violent political terrorism, and in which all citizens have equal rights'.

From *The Declaration and Pledge of the United Unionists*, a leaflet circulated as part of the Good Friday Agreement NO campaign.

The Grand Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly stated in it's first report, in response to the institutions established by the Anglo-Irish Agreement, that 'Northern Ireland is no longer a part of the United Kingdom on the same basis as Great Britain' (Quoted in Hadden & Boyle 1985). unionists during the peace process quoted the Downing Street Declaration that the British Government has no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland as further evidence of this view.

Such distancing of the British government from Northern Ireland as well as the allowance of involvement in the province's affairs from a 'foreign' government accepts the extraordinary nature of

the province within the union. To allow the Irish government a role in the governance of their province to unionists is to deny them the same rights as other British citizens, the assumption being such involvement would not be allowed within Great Britain.

Within Unionism there exist two groups; those in favour of full integration and rule from Westminster and those in favour of devolved institutions that still remain within the union. The Ulster unionist Party under James Molyneaux was more integrationist than it would become under Trimble, although since then there has remained an integrationist community within the party even since the Good Friday Agreement. These members are drawn largely from those that voted no to the Agreement. Splits within the party's Ulster unionist Council lead to separate pro and anti agreement groups, with the 'No' camp opposed to devolution and pro integration with Great Britain. However both remained largely neutral to the idea of political integration, whereby the dominant parties in Great Britain organise in Northern Ireland (Cox et al 77-8).

One of the main influences on integrationist thinking during the Molyneaux era was Enoch Powell, former member of the Conservative Party he joined the Ulster unionists in 1974. An account by Alex Kane, a former constituency organiser for Powell in Loughbrickland, describes a speech he gave whereby he argued for integration as a means to undermine the IRA campaign:

'Every word or act which holds out the prospect that our unity with the rest of the United Kingdom might be negotiable is itself, consciously or unconsciously, a contributory cause to the continuation of violence in Northern Ireland'

Rather than the focus being on military intervention or legal punishment his view was that a violent Irish Republican campaign would only end for good when the aggressors saw with certainty that their war was not one that could be won. This tactic is almost identical in aim to that of the IRA, to sap the will of the British to remain in Ireland. In this way it is notable for deviating from a strictly law and order approach to the conflict.

unionist opposition to direct rule from Westminster of the form imposed following the end of the first Stormont parliament is common to both those in favour of integration and devolution. Events since, the failed Sunningdale Agreement of 1973 and later the Anglo-Irish agreement signed in 1985, established the recognition of distinctive needs unique to Northern Ireland as a province that could not be addressed by Westminster alone. It also highlighted the dominant role of the British government. The Anglo-Irish agreement was signed in the face of mass protests by unionist groups, although the campaign became dominated by Ian Paisley's DUP. Prior attempts at a peace deal have been met with negative responses from unionists, not only the Anglo-Irish Agreement but also Sunningdale some decades earlier.

5.4. Sovereignty and Foreign Power

When the question of home rule for Scotland was raised in the period following the Second World War a paper drawn up for the Scottish office identified the initial aim of the Government of Ireland Act that created Northern Ireland in 1920. As stated the purpose of the Act was to allow for devolved powers within two assemblies in the north and south of Ireland that would later come to serve as a bridge for their eventual union (Walker).

Division was an unwanted policy among Irish Nationalists, unionists and British politicians. The assumption was that Northern Ireland would eventually become a part of the Irish Free State, however the assumption was also that a newly united Ireland would remain within the British

Empire and Commonwealth. This would maintain Irish allegiance to the Crown, so a United Ireland in this context would mean something different than it would after Ireland declared itself a Republic thereby removing itself from the Commonwealth of Nations in 1948. Prime Minister Clement Atlee explained the effect the exit of Ireland would have on British relations during a meeting at Chequers, 'once the External Relations Act was repealed, Eire would become a foreign state in relation to the United Kingdom and the other countries of the Commonwealth' (Quoted in Fanning 98).

A common unionist objection to the establishment of cross border institutions and co-operation between the British and Irish governments is the involvement of a foreign state in the affairs of their province, this being an attack on their rights as British citizens to be governed by the British state. The argument is that the allowance of such interference makes them second class citizens within the union, that the British government would not tolerate such interference elsewhere in the UK. The Republic of Ireland Act in 1948 marks the point whereby the 26 counties in the south of Ireland became this foreign state, however a link remained through the nationalist community in the north that still considered themselves to be Irish.

The Crown itself is a powerful symbol to Ulster unionists. The Orange Order, one of the dominant groups in the movement and prominent in ideas or Ulster 'Orangism', bases it's ethos around the core concepts of loyalty to the Crown, Country and Empire. Faith and the Crown remain unifying points among unionists, Ireland's exit from the Commonwealth made their alternative to a continued union one of existence within a foreign state without any of the institutions granting them British citizenship.

5.5. Paramilitaries and the Loyalist, unionist divide

Sovereignty, the acceptance of partition and the law and order approach taken to the resolution of conflict in the province all form part of the largest difference between unionist and Republican feeling. This is simply the view on the unionist side that British rule in Northern Ireland is legitimate, as are the institutions of the British state. From this basis the relationship between the unionist movement, Loyalism and paramilitaries becomes more complex than that between Republicans and the IRA. Smaller parties with paramilitary links have and do exist, one example being the Progressive unionist Party linked to the Ulster Volunteer Force. However the policy of the larger, more established unionist parties to vocally oppose violence while condemning the IRA meant Loyalist groups lacked the means by which to explain and justify their actions that the IRA had through Sinn Féin.



UFF Mural. Kilcooley Estate, Bangor

Organisations such as the UDF or UDA exist as pro state terrorist groups, however the treatment of the Troubles as a law and order issue by the British state labelled their actions as criminal and hence illegitimate.

Loyalist paramilitary violence often appears to lack the broader ideological justification of the IRA; instead they have often been regarded as a reactionary force or else simply as acting out of bigotry and a hatred for Catholics. The positive regard for Republican prisoners is also not true of Loyalists, the relationship between former paramilitary members and unionists is more often negative as recounted by Gallaher and former prisoners often feel abandoned by their communities.

The distinction between Loyalist and unionist is across the lines of class and tolerance for violence,

not one of the largest paramilitaries from the Protestant community uses the term unionist in their name. The reasons for this are more complex than simply a greater level of aggression within the working class population. At the beginning of the Troubles the focus of the IRA was in Catholic working class areas, at the time there were few middle or upper class Catholic areas, and this resulted in the majority of attacks taking place in Protestant working class neighbourhoods on account of their proximity. Better off neighbourhoods were also better able to protect themselves from violence through options not available to working class ones, either Catholic or Protestant.

In this context violence became sanctioned as a form of self defence for Protestants in the same way the IRA took on the role of defenders for Catholics. Loyalists here were stepping in to combat the failure of the state to protect its citizens; here they claimed legitimacy for their violence on account of the defence of their communities. In addition this allowed them to present themselves as the defensive force, the aggressors were the IRA and on this basis the continuation and escalation of violence was caused by them. This also came to be an accepted explanation for the outbreak of the Troubles. Zurawski offers another compilation of interviews with Loyalist paramilitary members, many of which reference feelings of personal and cultural threat at times of Catholic and Republican protests.

Present also in Loyalism is a sense of distrust towards the political elite represented by Unionism. The significance given to the Battle of the Somme is an interesting example of this. The identity created through the re-appropriation by Loyalist groups of the Battle of the Somme is that of a Protestant identity distinct from Ireland, Britain and dominant Unionism. The identity that emerges is one of a people betrayed, let down and who have lost almost everything (Graham and Shirlow). In particular the Loyalist view is of brave men, in service of their country, let down and lead to their deaths by either detached or incompetent officers representative of the British and unionist elite.

6. The Peace Process and Referenda Campaigns

6.1. The Peace Process, 1994 – 1998

The Northern Ireland Peace Process concluded with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement on 10 April 1998, the two documents making up the agreement would be put to the public in dual referenda in the north and the Republic of Ireland on 22nd May that same year. The beginning of the process is rather harder to pinpoint. The announcement by the PIRA of a complete cessation of hostilities on 31st August 1994 is one option. The Combined Loyalist Military Command would issue a similar statement on behalf of all Loyalist paramilitaries on the 13th of October that same year. Although both ceasefires would later be broken 1994 can be considered as the beginning of a political process aiming to decide the future of the province through politics without the simultaneous presence of an armed campaign.

The ceasefires came as part of a longer process, like all events of such a complex nature their origins can be traced back to any number of points. The beginning of engagement in politics by the Republican movement, the 1986 Ard Fheis proposition on abstention, the Hume-Adams talks beginning in 1988 or the Downing Street declaration of 1994 all serve as starting points for the broader picture.

The most effective point for this purpose is the IRA ceasefire, considered in addition to what is known of the debates leading up to it. As an event it heralded a definitive move towards a political settlement endorsed by hard line Republicanism. Loyalist groups had long maintained that they would continue their armed campaigns for as long as the IRA remained active so the ceasefire was significant in drawing both sides in to a truce, although this would prove to be only temporary.

Looking at public comments, speeches, newspaper articles and autobiographical accounts of the time as well as historical accounts four dominant themes appear throughout the period leading up to the Good Friday Agreement. These are the principle of consent, decommissioning, 'the struggle' for Republicanism and the territorial claim of the Republic of Ireland over Northern Ireland long opposed by unionists. Two additional facts are also apparent; that unionist support was predominantly for a devolved assembly rather than Westminster rule, and that political Republicanism made no attempts to challenge the legitimacy of the armed campaign even while attempting to negotiate a peace.

6.2. The Armed Campaign: Decommissioning and the Cease Fires.

'If these other people believed that armed struggle was wrong then they needed to work with us in producing an alternative to armed struggle'

- *Richard McAuley, Gerry Adams' Press Secretary.*

Earlier I quoted Hayes in stating that the relative emphasis on either violent or constitutional traditions within Republicanism has historically been based more on matters of expediency than morality and I intend to come back to this viewpoint now when considering the 1994 ceasefire.

The summer of 1994 featured debate within the Republican movement about a possible ceasefire, focused largely around a document reproduced by Mallie and McKittrick (421-4) called TUAS. To continue a tradition of multiple names depending on your views or audience this is either thought to stand for Tactical Use of the Armed Struggle or, somewhat more clumsily, as Totally UnArmed

Struggle. The suggestion being that one was designed for the movement's members and the other to reassure those in London, Dublin and Washington (Moloney, *Sunday Tribune*. 30 January 2000) the document makes use of tactical ambiguity, also recognised as a feature of the later Agreement.

The ultimate result of the peace process has led to the view that this ceasefire was all but inevitable given developments within Republicanism in the 1980s, and that the IRA was entirely sincere in a desire at this point to seek an unarmed strategy (Mallie and McKittrick). Such a view comes with the benefit of hindsight and, as Dixon (2001: 241-43) in particular raises is problematic given outbreaks of violence during this period that can be viewed as more emblematic of Republican feeling than rhetoric in support of peace from Sinn Féin leaders. Patterson in particular argues that 'while there were certainly some Republicans who believed that the armed struggle had become an obstacle to further progress, and the peace process was not in that sense a sham, it was, however, a much more ambiguous and contradictory strategy than many of its uncritical supporters would allow' (231).

One of the largest single stumbling blocks throughout the peace process was the issue of decommissioning. Republicans more frequently referenced demilitarisation, this being the cessation of military action by the IRA without handing in their arms. The primary issue at the heart of the debate remained the legitimacy of violence. Unionist figures as well as British politicians refused to accept any legitimate right by Republicans to wage an armed conflict against political rule in the province, and this served as justification for denying Sinn Féin a place in the talks prior to the IRA ceasefire. The public argument was that the future of the province should be decided through democracy not force.

Decommissioning and the motivations behind the ceasefire are evidence of why the Belfast Agreement is so problematic from a conflict resolution point of view, because at its basis it didn't resolve the conflict it merely recorded the intentions of its signatories to pursue their goals using peaceful rather than violent means. Once this is taken into account the Republican actions take on a different light. It's useless to look for the point where the movement began to move away from violence as a legitimate form of resistance because this hadn't fully occurred by the time of writing this thesis let alone in the 1990s. The abandonment of the violent campaign was always a tactical decision, some authors argue on account of the fact that the IRA and British states had fought to a ceasefire by the mid to late 1980s (Smith, Patterson), another suggestion is that continued support for violence was limiting Sinn Féin's success at the ballot box.

This is not to say however that changes did not occur in the rhetoric and framing of the Republican movement during this time, all parties have acknowledged that the propaganda war needed to be wound down before a peace could be reached. To this end a number of shifts occurred in the language and presentation of events in the province.

In particular the debate on decommissioning highlights an interesting feature of the early process. References to the need to reduce the polarising rhetoric that had been present during the conflict suggests that attempts would be made to moderate language, however the opposite is in fact true. The early peace process is characterised by divisive rhetoric and attacks on opponents from both sides, the climate remained one of conflict. Accounts given by one British source suggest this as the whole basis for the eventual agreement, 'the real truth about this deal is that they backed each other into it' (*Sunday Business Post*, 19 April 1998). The focus was not on reconciliation, rather the understanding was of a continued conflict only fought at the negotiating table, and often it was an attack against an opponent that smoothed the way for concessions.

Gradual shifts towards engagement and moderation by the leadership of Sinn Féin were met with resistance from the middle and lower ranks, particularly in South Armagh and Tyrone (Dixon 2001:

223-4) and a transition period would be needed to gain broad support for an unarmed struggle. Increasing levels of IRA violence accompanied early attempts at gaining a foothold in the political process, then Prime Minister John Major characterised such developments as being due to the IRA leadership's own 'perverted logic. For them, an offer of peace needed to be accompanied by violence to show their volunteers that they were not surrendering (Major 433).

The story given by the British government to reassure unionists however was that the IRA had lost and that they were now managing the surrender. This was in part a story designed to pacify opinion after it was revealed the same government whose Prime Minister had stated that it would 'turn my stomach' to talk to Sinn Féin had in fact done just that as was revealed in 1993. Following the revelation of these talks a statement from the Ulster unionist Party was given, 'unless the Northern Ireland Office can indicate to us we have nothing to fear, then they can expect a pretty rough ride from the Ulster unionist party.' Ian Paisley was ejected from the Commons for calling Secretary of State Patrick Mayhew a liar.

The unionist community had always maintained the same complete refusal to accept the legitimacy of the violent Republican campaign as the British Government had previously. In addition to this a distrust of Westminster meant a need for unionist parties to reassure the community they weren't selling them out, and also to show the government that they were no more willing to surrender than the Republicans were.

So the story at this point is presented as partial victory for both sides. Support from the US and Ireland had created what became known as a pan-nationalist front, the aim of which was to allow Sinn Féin representatives to enter the process from a position of strength and secure support for attempts at a political solution. To this there came an assertion of strength from the leadership itself that has remained since, the image of the IRA as the undefeated army. This was asserted by Adams in a speech to supporters following the ceasefire announcement, and has remained a large part of how the IRA is viewed in post accord Northern Ireland. As a slogan it's available on fridge magnets and coffee cups in the Sinn Féin online store.

For the unionist audience the claim of IRA intentions to surrender was created. David Trimble's entry into the all party talks was presented as an act of aggression, the intention of the UUP was to enter negotiations in order to fight for the union against the Republican front. This tactic asserted both that the unionist party was not about to give in to their long time enemies but also that the talks were now the means by which the conflict would be continued. In the end Trimble entered talks flanked by political representatives of the Loyalist paramilitary parties, the image reminding journalists of the scene from 'Gunfight at the OK Corral' (de Breadun 63).

Decommissioning however would require an acceptance that the armed campaign was permanently over, and the requirement demanded by the British Government that the process begin before Sinn Féin be allowed into talks was commonly understood as coming on account of unionist pressure. The hardline view within Unionism, what Dixon refers to as 'anti peace-process unionists', was opposed to any concessions or even talking to terrorists on account of this corrupting core values and democratic norms (Dixon, 2011).

Allowing Sinn Féin without prior decommissioning into talks was a corruption of democratic principles, the DUP were advocates of this view supporting in effect a period of decontamination between IRA decommissioning and Sinn Féin entry into negotiations. Paisley was vocally opposed to Trimble's entering into talks prior to full decommissioning, accusing the leader of dishonesty, immorality and incompetence (Ganiel 306).

Ultimately decommissioning did not begin until some time after the Good Friday Agreement came into force. Criticisms of unionist leaders from Adams in particular present it as a foregone

conclusion, the IRA were unwilling to hand in their weapons at this time and attempts to push for decommissioning were unionist stalling tactics aimed at preventing an agreement. The reasoning behind this was the continued assertion that the aim of the British government was to 'defeat Irish Republicanism and remove it as an element in Irish politics' (Adams, writing in *An Phoblact* 1995). This understanding of the situation was also present in the IRA statement issued following the bombing of a British barracks on 8 October 1996. The British Government, or 'British occupying forces', had 'squandered that historic opportunity in a vain attempt to defeat the IRA'.

The change came with the introduction of the Mitchell principles, that parties with an electoral mandate would have to assert a total commitment to non violence and democracy before being admitted to talks and in addition would have to address the issue of decommissioning. Decommissioning itself however would not have to actually take place before these talks began. The establishment of a three member international body, chaired by senator George Mitchell, helped to ease the concern by removing the job of recommending time frames for decommissioning from either the British government or the unionist groups pressuring it.

When the IRA ceasefire broke with the bombing of canary wharf the reaction was broadly one of horror. The attack vindicated unionist distrust that the IRA ceasefire had not been intended as permanent while Republicans blamed unionist and British intransigence. When the second IRA ceasefire was announced following the election of Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair in 1997 it was met with a greater amount of caution. Although decommissioning was not required to enter the talks both Sinn Féin and the Ulster Democratic Party, political representatives of the Ulster Defence Association, were temporarily thrown out following violence.

6.3. The Political Campaign: Principle of Consent and State Legitimacy

'We will represent you in talks with the British Government, in talks with the Dublin Government and in talks about the future of this country let there be no mistake about that'
- Martin McGuinness, addressing crowds following the IRA Ceasefire (1994).

At the heart of discussions of Northern Ireland's constitutional future is the principle of consent, the primacy given to the articulated views of the province's populace that ultimately trumps established borders (Campbell et al). Such a principle requires that the British Government remain neutral and allow for the removal of Northern Ireland from the UK state should this be the will of its people. As was stated in the Downing Street Declaration and an earlier speech by Secretary of State Patrick Mayhew the British Government at the time was claiming no economic or strategic interest in Northern Ireland. Reassurances to unionists following this assertion that negotiations would not lead to an end to the union came in the form of a guarantee that the British Government would defend the principle of consent rather than the union specifically, although this is contrasted with the intentions throughout much of the peace process to offer a pan-unionist front to counter the pan-nationalist movement.

For Republicans the principle of consent was also accepted, although with one significant distinction. The principle applied instead to the whole peoples of Ireland the will of which was an end to partition. The role of the British government to the Republican viewpoint was to persuade the unionists to 'reach a democratic accommodation with the rest of the Irish people' (Hickman & Smyth 123). The objection was that the principle without this provision substituted a unionist veto (Connolly, 1995). The main requirement to any deal was going to be the acceptance of Northern Ireland as a distinct political unit, and therefore the application of this democratic right to its people.

It's here that the Mitchell Principles of democracy and non-violence once again become relevant.

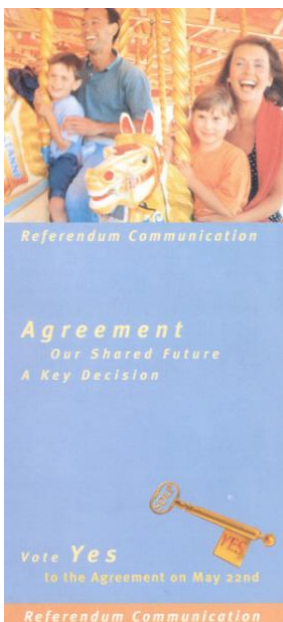
Throughout early talks parties began to get a sense of how serious others were about given issues. Language at this point becomes less negative in tone, and reasons behind each group's positions were given in an effort to present an argument rather than simply make assertions (Durkan). The DUP maintained at this point their total objection to the presence of Sinn Féin in the talks, and continued to attack unionist leaders as traitors. The dismissal of such absolutist principles following the beginning of talks is characterised in a statement by SDLP member Seamus Mallon 'let others draft press releases, we have to draft an agreement' (quoted in Durkan).

The Agreement itself, coming at the end of all party talks, was signed on April 10 1998 and put to dual referenda in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland on May 22 1998. The referendum in the North was for the result of the multi-party agreement, the one in the South was to change the state's constitution to remove the territorial claim over Northern Ireland.

6.4. The Good Friday Agreement: Yes Campaign

The Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, on receipt of a draft copy of the Agreement, stated that 'no one is going back to war over this document'. The view was the war was over, the prisoners were coming home. Former prisoners appeared at rallies for the Yes campaign and were greeted enthusiastically by the crowds. Among them were the members of the Balcombe Street gang, four PIRA members responsible for a shooting in London's Mayfair district that killed one and injured fifteen others. Their release had been arranged by then secretary of state for Northern Ireland Mo Mowlam and was intended as a sign of things to come. Prisoner release was guaranteed by the terms of the Agreement.

The campaign for a Yes vote in the referendum in the North featured the majority of major political parties in the province as well as those of Great Britain, the primary exception was Ian Paisley's DUP. Prisoner release and the recognition of victims of violence became the primary focus of much of the media coverage. These factors were also a focus of the agreement itself, which established a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland as well as an equality commission and the Northern Ireland Victims Commission.



SDLP Leaflet in support of Good Friday Agreement

All of these allowed for the process of reconciliation that would be required following the Agreement, and the beginning of a new phase of the province's history which was the focus of the Yes campaign. The term 'change' appeared frequently on the tag lines of posters; 'Make Change Make Peace' and 'For Real Change' in the case of Sinn Féin, the SDLP literature featured 'Your opportunity to leave the past behind you and unlock the door to a better future'. Whereas much of what I have discussed so far has been on the history of the movements, the main focus here is on a break with the past.

In a public relations consideration of the referendum campaigns Somerville and Kirby emphasis the use of 'equal rights' and in particular 'the people' among leaflets, most dominantly the SDLP. The distinction is between new proposals and past arrangements, with an emphasis on equality intended to reassure the nationalist movement that there would be no return to a Protestant ascendancy such as that of the first Stormont parliament. Significantly Somerville and Kirby claim the SDLP campaign as the only one whose public relations activities were designed to appeal to all peoples of Northern Ireland regardless of tradition. In addition to the parties own

figures the campaign featured an emphasis on third party endorsements, one of the most famous of

which being U2's Bono who would share a stage with John Hume and David Trimble.

In the case of Sinn Féin the primary goal was to communicate the advantages of the Agreement to their own members. The campaign focused more on internal communication and securing positive media coverage the aim of which was to ensure they brought the broader movement with them in supporting a Yes vote. This had been a consideration for the party throughout the peace process, with a concern that any failure to convince members would lead to splits in the movement in the same way as previous ideological difference.

Such factions needed to be prevented as they could have conceivably lead to a rejection of the agreement and a return to violent conflict. The new developments required moves to reassure Republicans that they were not abandoning the ultimate aims of the movement despite both the assertion by the SDLP of a new beginning in the province and the campaigns of the unionist parties that emphasised their own gains from the Agreement.

Despite the presence of both Sinn Féin and prominent unionist party figures within the Yes campaign the underlying faults between the two movements remained evident. The presence of IRA prisoners at a specially convened Ard Fheis, as well as the applause they received, was suggested by unionist Yes campaigners to be 'like Christmas for the No lobby' (cited in de Breadun 158). Similar concerns were raised about the presence of Loyalist prisoners at rallies. Unionists who had lost ground during the peace process over compromises in the requirements for decommissioning needed to avoid losing further ground over the early release of prisoners. What they ultimately had to avoid were suggestions that the agreement was evidence that the violent campaigns they had condemned had in fact netted those movements aligned with paramilitary groups positive results.

Overall unionist support for the referendum contained a strong focus on the removal of the territorial claim to Northern Ireland from the Republic's constitution, with an additional emphasis on the continued security of the province's place in the United Kingdom according to the principle of majority consent. These gains were used to defend the policy of engagement throughout the peace process. The accusations levelled against those that had refused to take part in drafting the Agreement was that they had nothing to offer the electorate but rhetoric and the status quo, while unionist party negotiators had won real gains in discussions with Nationalists. Claims that Trimble and others had sold out the unionist cause were met with the assertion that they had done what outside and more hard line figures had failed to do, namely remove the constitutional claim of the Republic to Northern Ireland.



UUP Communication for Good Friday Agreement Referendum

Leaflets by other unionist parties used a similar technique. The Progressive unionist Party characterised the agreement as securing the union as well as abolishing the Anglo-Irish Agreement, that great testament to the failures of unionist campaigns in the past, as well as establishing an accountable and democratic government. This last one is another point common to Republican, Nationalist, unionist and Loyalist campaigns. The Agreement emphasised the principle of consent when deciding the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, and in addition passages regarding policing and human rights tacitly accepted failure and mistreatment under British Government Rule. On these grounds the future was to be built on devolved rule and new institutions.

The Agreement was accepted with a 71 percent Yes vote. This included almost the entirety of the Nationalist and Republican vote but featured a much narrower majority among unionists of 57

percent (Hayes and McAllister 73). The UUP in particular were campaigning against intense inter party divisions, with several high profile defections to the No campaign occurring prior to the referendum. This in addition to continued points of contention over decommissioning, rule of law, the release of prisoners and reform of the RUC.

A meeting of the UUP party executive on 11 April had voted to support the Agreement by 55 to 23. A similar vote by the Ulster unionist Council accepted the Agreement and endorsed Trimble's leadership by a margin of 540 to 210. By comparison at a special Ard Fheis 331 of the 350 delegates voted in favour, with Gerry Adams calling the Agreement 'a high point where Republicans are now a pivotal and growing force in Irish politics' (*Times*, 13 April 1998).

6.5. The Good Friday Agreement: No Campaign

Opposition to the agreement in the North came in the majority from unionist parties, although support among unionist Party members was higher than the Protestant population as a whole only 57% of which voted to support the agreement (Hayes and Macallister 73). Pro Agreement unionists recognised the removal of the Republic's territorial claim to Northern Ireland and the commitment by Republicans to pursue peaceful methods as being among the Agreements strengths, however objections remained. These were with few exceptions the same issues that had been problematic throughout the peace process. Decommissioning, the influence and acceptance of Sinn Féin, the release of prisoners and the involvement of the Republic of Ireland Government.

When discussing the Republican abstention policy the question was raised as to whether it is a tactic or a principle, and the same idea is useful in considering the peace process and subsequent referendum campaigns. Is the condemnation of the use of violence for political ends a principle or merely a tactic in attempting to limit it's effectiveness? Is the sovereignty of the British state over it's territories a principle or else is it liable to be sacrificed for expediency? The Agreement allowed unionists gains on both of these counts, but reaching a final document required concessions from each side and it was these that the no campaign targeted.

The Democratic unionist Party as well as the UK unionists had opposed the Agreement almost from the start of negotiations, and as the campaign progressed splits would appear within the UUP with high profile figures defecting to join the No camp.

One of the main areas of conflict was the release of prisoners, coming as a concession not only to Sinn Féin but also the two Loyalist parties with paramilitary links that had been included in the negotiations. Many reacted with horror when it was revealed prisoners convicted of murder would be released having in some cases served less than three years. There was some nationalist concern regarding the release of certain Loyalist prisoners but most opposition came from the unionist community (Hayes and MacAllister). Assurances were made that decommissioning was necessary for the allowance of Sinn Féin in government, and that only those prisoners who were members of paramilitaries still on ceasefire would be eligible for release.

Despite these requirements the accusation of those opposing the agreement was that early release represented an unacceptable breakdown of the justice system and rule of law, and that furthermore substantiated violence as a means by which to affect change. One leaflet circulated by the campaign claimed a No vote would demonstrate to the IRA/Sinn Féin (presented as one entity in almost all instances) that the 'Ulster people' refused to be 'bombed into Dublin Rule by terrorist gangsters'.

Much of the language was designed to generate fear, with a secondary aim being to convince voters to 'Stand up for Ulster! Stand up for your children and your heritage!' that was achieved through

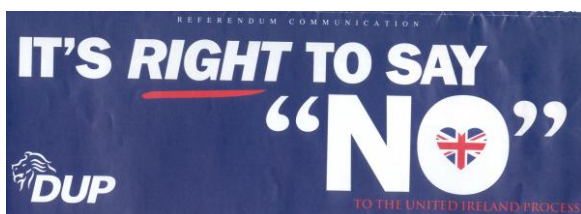
many of the leaflets confrontational style. This is a prominent difference in the way that the No campaign presented the possible future of the province. In the case of the above quoted statement the DUP are presenting not an image of a new and improved future but rather a rallying call in defence of the past. To further take the example of the DUP campaign there is no evidence of Paisley moderating his language or viewpoint. In particular one of his 'Dear friend and voter' messages claimed that a no vote would show 'that the Ulster people will not be bullied, bribed or butchered into accepting fascist rule!'

The same claims were made by the UK unionists, a relatively small unionist party that were often integrationist in it's policies and highly critical of the Blair Government's acceptance of devolved rule. Under the leadership of Robert McCartney official party literature used similarly emotive language to that of the DUP, 'Those who have survived bomb and bullet must not yield to bribery and brainwashing'. The siege mentality identified within Ulster Unionism is certainly present in the leaflets for both parties, with the implied goal of the Agreement being to begin a process towards Irish unity supported by both Nationalists, portions of the unionist movement and both the Irish and British governments.

The three main points to appear in DUP campaign literature were that the Agreement constituted 'An embryonic United Ireland Government', that it would lead to 'IRA/Sinn Féin in Power' and that 'Nationalists would be handed a veto'. This last point in particular is significant since one of the strengths of both the Agreement and the resulting structure of the Stormont Assembly was the existence of a veto for representatives of both Nationalist and unionist communities. Veto-rights are one of the four organizational principles accepted by supporters of consociational democracies, the principles of which were first applied to Northern Ireland by Lijphart but that are more commonly associated with O'Leary and McGarry.

The idea of a veto was criticised as being undemocratic under the rules of a majority based democracy such as that present in Westminster or previously the first Stormont parliament. To deny this principle amounted not only to a tacit acceptance that Republicans and Nationalists had been correct in their complaints against previous arrangements but also that their distrust of the unionist community had been justified. A veto would only be required in a situation whereby the majority party could not be trusted to rule in everybody's favour, and furthermore that the principle upon which the majority of Great Britain was governed did not apply to Northern Ireland.

The main problem faced by the No campaign when constructing their arguments was that the Agreement came at the end of a process that had given the province relative peace for the first time in decades. As a result there was fear that a rejection of the agreement would mean an end to the paramilitary ceasefires and therefore further deaths. In this context those that opposed it faced a challenge in arguing that theirs constituted a responsible course of action. This resulted in the two dominant slogans of the No campaign: 'It's right to say No' and 'Have a Heart for Ulster'.



DUP Leaflet against Good Friday Agreement

St Clair McAllister offers an interesting glimpse into how these slogans were arrived upon. In the case of the former she herself suggested an image of parents sitting down with their children, the reasoning being 'You actually have more often to tell your child No for its own good, more often than you say Yes. No to drugs, No to drink, and people think No is a very

non-constructive word. I put forward the case that it was probably a more constructive word than saying Yes' (Sommerville and Kirby 248). This certainly fits with the style of the party's leader. The DUP are in many ways synonymous with the views and style of Ian Paisley.

Paisley appears often as an authoritarian figure, those who have worked with him describe him also as paternalistic in nature (Smyth) and his career as a preacher is highly influential in his style of argument and address. Many of his speeches include biblical imagery, and in particular his drawing on scripture is part of his moralistically defined message to the electorate. It is this that has often lead him to criticise unionists who choose to compromise on what he considers fundamental principles. His oratory style is one of the spiritual leader, one who leads and expects people to follow (Grego).

Although the language of the No campaign was exclusive in it's emphasis of British sovereignty and the 'men and women of Ulster' the 'Have a Heart' campaign was seen as one of the most effective messages of the time. McAllister explained the symbolism as a response to what really holds a people together. Once political realities of economics and constitutional law are removed this is ultimately the heart (Somerville and Kirby). The slogan was typically used in conjunction with the emotive language designed to raise unionist fears, a technique synonymous with political propaganda since Bernays helped to craft the red scare, and attempted to combat any image of the no campaign as being irresponsible and heartless in putting political disagreements over the chance to prevent further violence.

The yes campaign's emphasis on the future created an additional problem for the no camp. If the Agreement wasn't to be accepted what was the alternative? A return to the situation prior to the peace process was clearly undesirable, and with so many of the province's political parties having put their full support behind the agreement any move to establish further talks in search of an alternative would be problematic. In an attempt to combat this the UK unionist Party added to the campaign slogan with 'It's Right To Say No When There's A Better Way To Go', calling claims that there was no alternative 'propaganda sound-bites for the politically naïve'.

This alternative would, or so they claimed, have the overwhelming support of both communities if they were not being threatened with violence that the government appeared unwilling to suppress. In keeping with the intergrationist policies of the party the leaflet asserted that policies should be enacted that brought Northern Ireland more in line with England, Scotland and Wales. This would mean having devolved powers 'within a pluralist United Kingdom free from external influence' as well as placing an emphasis on 'democratic and accountable government'. Given the importance of police reform to the Republican movement, as well as continued support at the time for Sinn Féin despite it's well known IRA links, complete exclusion from government of parties with paramilitary links and a drive for cross-community recruitment for the RUC are unlikely to have met with the broad approval the party claimed. The suggestions serve instead as a means by which to answer accusations that the No campaign was working to destroy the best chance for peace in the province.

The No campaign's argument holds to a number of principles considered to be non-negotiable. These included a refusal to in any way renegotiate the union. A total refusal to accept the validity of violent campaigns and the political representatives of those that carry them out and finally objections to All-Ireland institutions that affect the sovereignty of the British state over the province. This argument refuses to accept the legitimacy of almost the entire Republican movement and it's allies. It supports the complete absence of not only Sinn Féin but also the Irish and US governments whose influence had been vital in gaining and maintaining support from the broader Republican movement for negotiations and the peace process. Left is the SDLP as the representative of the opposing community, although United unionist campaign leaflets assert that any agreement supported by the party cannot possibly be good for the union.

This last point would appear an obvious one since clearly it was never the role or aim of Nationalist or Republican representatives to defend the union, rather that was what the unionists who took part in the talks were to do, but it does highlight a fault at the heart of the campaign. Support for

majority rule in the province, the exclusion of parties with paramilitary links, continued support for the RUC and the suggestion that cross-border co-operation can be managed under current arrangements when necessary (UKUP alternative proposals) all assume an underlying validity to current institutions. Objections to a Nationalist/Republican veto ignore the view within the Republican community that any unionist dominated parliament, judging by such institutions in the past, would fail to represent their best interests. The suggestion that the RUC remain as it is but press for broader cross-community recruitment ignores the intense opposition the force had earned in the Irish/Catholic community.

The main difference of the two campaigns is that the No campaign treats as underlying principle, and therefore not open to compromise, not only many of the issues at the heart of the conflict itself but also those that were most prominent within the Republican movement. An end to violence is ultimately a goal for both, since the no campaign is vocal in condemning any involvement of parties associated with violence in the future of the province, but the No campaign works under the assumption that an end should be gained through the complete suppression of one side. This is in direct opposition to many accounts of the peace process by academics, historians as well as those figures directly involved. There is a commonly held view that one of the motivating factors leading to the establishment of peace talks was an accepted understanding on both sides that such a thing was impossible.

Overall the campaign contains a refusal to accept the mandate of the opposition movement including many major unionist figures who are accused of betraying their electorate. The ultimate aim most often appears to be the continuation of the status quo within the region than with any changes that might favour unionists. Assertions of the importance of individual rights and freedoms, as well as representative government and fair policing, are all things that are accepted in principle but under the assumption that they could be reached either under minor changes to existing institutions or else through new institutions that would still allow for unionist rule.

7. Analysis

The previous chapters recount the period of the peace process and the Good Friday referendum with a particular focus on those issues judged to be most significant both in terms of the frequency with which they were commented on in media accounts of the time as well as statements made in first hand accounts and subsequent research. The importance of each is due to their relation to the defining characteristics of both the Republican and unionist movements. If the primary characteristic of each movement is assumed to be those of the unionist and Nationalist divide then those disagreements and debates most at the forefront of the peace process, and that continued to be problematic since, are based primarily on secondary issues.

My justification for the focus on social movements in my research was the internal differences present in each of the communities of Northern Ireland. These I have defined at an ethnic, or else national, and religious level on account of previous research showing a strong correlation between the two. Preferred constitutional choice is also divided along two lines as shown by the split in party support across communal lines. The division is at the level of either political support for a particular party or else membership of a movement and this can be explained better in reference to the above mentioned secondary issues, forming as they do a shared group identity that defines each movement. They are also the basis of inter-communal party distinction; Nationalist or Republican, unionist and Loyalist.

In addition to these there is another distinction, that of the split that appeared between pro and anti agreement unionists. The division reveals a fundamental disagreement as to whether shared principles that had been central tenants of their public campaigns during the Troubles were tactics or else fundamental principles, analogous to the split that had earlier occurred within Republicanism over abstention. In terms of Republicanism the focus of the yes campaign, the gains of the agreement they sold to their members and significant events that have occurred since it was passed have shown a focusing of objections away from overarching constitutional ones and instead towards a pragmatic desire to improve those institutions that exist within Northern Ireland.

This section will discuss the period of both the peace process and the years following the signing of the Good Friday Agreement up to 2007. The reason for this time frame is that despite the Agreement marking the successful end of the 1990s peace process, many of the institutions and developments it promised did not occur until many years later. There were a couple of points during the early years of its implementation when it seemed in danger of collapsing the same way previous Agreements had done. Although changes had occurred to allow for the peace talks and negotiation of the Agreement, further shifts were required for it to be implemented and these would not be complete until in some cases almost a decade later.

Taking into consideration those conclusions about Republican and unionist identity that can be drawn from the years prior to the peace process there are a number of events that occurred post Agreement that would appear at best surprising or even impossible if not for an understanding of the changes that took place in the preceding years. First of all is the condemnation of acts of violence by a number of IRA splinter groups, in particular the identification of such figures as 'anti-peace Republicans'. Second is the vote by Sinn Féin to support the police services in the province, and third of all the most astonishing development is the agreement between Sinn Féin and Ian Paisley's DUP party that created a power sharing government between the two in 2007.

Changes from throughout the peace process and the post-agreement years leading up to these events will be the focus of this section, in addition to a precise definition of those frames identified within both movements relevant to the period of discussion.

7.1. The Good Friday/Belfast Agreement

Prior to this analysis it is necessary to more precisely detail what constitutes the Good Friday Agreement, since references will be made throughout to its constituent parts. The Good Friday Agreement came into force on December 2 1999 following decisive yes votes in referenda both in both the north and south of Ireland. Belfast Agreement is the name given to it on occasion by unionist or Loyalist figures, presumably on account of Good Friday's association with Catholicism. The length and nature of the Troubles meant that any Agreement, even one that gained broad cross community support, would be difficult to implement and many of the underlying features of the conflict would remain for many decades afterwards.

The Agreement itself consists of two texts. One is a legal Agreement between the governments of Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland, the second is more substantial and constituted an agreement between the eight political parties in Northern Ireland that drafted and supported it. This second document is at times referred to as the Multi-Party Agreement to distinguish it from the first.

Provisions and requirements in both agreements are organised along three strands. Each strand relates to one of the prominent relationships or considerations that must be taken into account in future governance of the province. Strand one refers to the status and governance of the province itself including the framework for a democratically elected devolved legislature. Strand two refers to the relationship between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, including details of cross border institutions capable of managing relations between the north and south. Strand three outlines future connections between Great Britain and Northern Ireland and like the other two provides for the establishment of institutions to regulate them.

Although referenda in both the north and south returned substantial majorities in favour of the agreement its implementation was marked by disagreements and recurring crises. The issues that were to cause delays and concern following the Agreement were those same issues that had proved to be problematic while it was being negotiated, however the necessity to now complete the transition towards the new form of politics that had been promised by the pro agreement campaign meant a number of significant changes had to take place. Politics in Northern Ireland throughout the early years of the peace agreement may have been less violent but it was no less conflicted, the challenge remained for leaders to bring their supporters with them as the deal they had negotiated was implemented.

7.2. Justice Frames: Republicanism and Police Reform

The primary feature of justice frames is the definition of a situation as unjust, this definition then serves as the basis for action. Republican complaints against the RUC and other security services in Northern Ireland suggest a number of underlying assumptions regarding the duty and requirements of a police service that were not being met. First is that institutions within the justice system, hereafter meaning courts, prison and the police, should be neutral and even handed in the interpretation of the law. The perception that the police in Northern Ireland disproportionately targeted Catholic citizens, and that acts of collusion occurred allowing police and other officials to escape punishment for offences committed were evidence to Republicans that this requirement was not being met in Northern Ireland. Secondly, but related, is the view that justice, and in particular policing, should be neutral. That laws should not be made targeting only one group within a society and that the police force should equally serve all members of that society. The assumed bias of the RUC towards the Protestant community, or at least that claimed by Republicans, was the second basis on which the situation was defined as unjust.

Human rights issues also became linked with justice framing in the Republican movement. The underlying assumption is best described as the understanding that the government and its institutions have a duty to protect the human rights of its citizens. Specifically this related to the rights to a free trial, which policies of internment violated, as well as freedom from torture. This last one relates also to accusations of police brutality carried out when dealing with peaceful protesters, civilians as well as prisoners. Prior to reform Republicans objections against the RUC were made on these grounds, and reform that answered each accusation was vocally supported and emphasised by leaders to show the progress that had been gained by negotiation.

To return to the three step process of frame formation detailed in the theory section of this thesis, the identification of the problem remained consistent throughout the period of the Troubles, the peace process and the years following it. What changed was the alternative arrangement being offered by the movement. Previously these issues and complaints had been subsumed under the banner of calls for self determination, with recognised injustices being defined as evidence of a brutal and illegitimate British state. The peace process shows the problem being addressed instead as a separate issue in its own right, distinct from that of constitutional questions. The alternative offered instead was a radically reformed police service within Northern Ireland. This allowed Republicans to represent sections of the Agreement addressing many of their long-standing complaints against the RUC as a victory.

Many of these complaints came from the point of view of personal experience. The prominent role of former prisoners in Sinn Féin meant that many of those responsible for shaping the direction of the party had first hand account of policies such as internment as well as the use of violence by police and other security services. 'Operation Demetrius' is one example of the latter that Adams himself claims personal experience of. Many of the 'five techniques' utilised during interrogations were subsequently found to be illegal under domestic law and the European Commission of Human Rights ruled that they constituted torture.

Opposition to human rights abuses of this kind within Republicanism go beyond discussions of Northern Ireland to form part of the movements broader ideology. Following the publication of photographs in a British newspaper appearing to show the torture of an Iraqi prisoner by British soldiers Adams recounts his own experience of torture following his arrest and imprisonment in the Palace barracks in 1972, although he mentions being interrogated in a similar manner on other occasions when he was arrested. The opening paragraph of the article is particularly significant;

'News of ill-treatment of prisoners in Iraq created no great surprise in Republican Ireland. We have seen and heard it all before. Some of us have even survived that type of treatment. Suggestions that the brutality in Iraq was meted out by a few miscreants aren't even seriously entertained here'.

(Guardian, 24 May 2004)

Such experiences appear as a focus for solidarity not only within the movement but also to international groups. The above is an example of offered solidarity to those in Guantanamo bay, similar comments have also been made about the treatment of Palestinian prisoners.

Criticism of the RUC and the practices of the British security services is one issue Republican figures in post-agreement Northern Ireland have made no substantial moves to distance themselves from. It serves as a point of continuity with former manifestations of 'the struggle' as well as allowing distance between Sinn Féin and Westminster administrations. The narrative continues to be that of a Republican identity in opposition to the British state with regard to its security policy and military actions, as demonstrated by the vocal opposition of both Adams and McGuinness to

the Iraq war.

Such criticisms were not unique to the RUC, the conduct of the British Army was also broadly criticised by Nationalists and Republicans. The most prominent example of this would be Bloody Sunday, also known as the Bogside Massacre, where 26 civil rights campaigners were shot by soldiers. The initial report carried out by the Widgery commission into the account described the soldiers actions as 'reckless' (Conclusion, point 8) but failed to find major fault and it's recommendations were taken to justify the complete lack of disciplinary action against those involved. The report was described as a 'whitewash' by SDLP leader John Hume.

This and other events supposed to be evidence of collusion, cover-ups by government officials or members of the security services received further investigations and resulted in the setting up of several major commissions in the months preceding as well as following the Good Friday Agreement. Among these were the Saville report into Bloody Sunday and the Stevens enquiry into RUC collusion in the murders of Belfast solicitor Patrick Finucane and Brian Adam Lambert. Finucane was a Belfast solicitor who worked on a number of human rights cases challenging the British Government during the 1980s while Lambert was a 19 year old Protestant student mistaken for a Catholic in the wake of the Enniskillen remembrance Sunday bombing by the IRA in 1987. Both were killed by Loyalist paramilitaries. The report concluded that the way the case was handled by police suggested evidence of collusion. The Finucane case in particular is often discussed in relation to a UN Report on the RUC criticising Ronnie Flanagan, then Chief Constable, on the alleged harassment of defence solicitors.

The new beginning promised in the Good Friday Agreement section on Policing and Justice included the establishment of a commission to investigate police practices in the province. The Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland, better known as the Patten commission, was established in 1998 to carry this out. The commissions report, *A New Beginning: Policing in Northern Ireland*, was published on September 9 1999. It recommended changes to the institutional arrangement, focus and rules of the force in addition to addressing changes to it's name and associated symbols, and it is this that was the focus of most opposition by unionist figures.

The reasons given for changes to the forces symbols, name and uniform given by the Patten commission is that the RUC had become politicised following extended conflict in the province. According to the commissions report 'Like the unique constitutional arrangements, our proposals seek to achieve a situation in which people can be British, Irish or Northern Irish, as they wish, and all regard the police service as their own' (Patten Report 99). This validated one of the accusations made by Republicans against the force, that it had failed to represent the entire people of Northern Ireland.

The divisive nature of the existing symbols of the force in terms of national identity was also noted in the report. The name, Royal Ulster Constabulary, invoked the British crown which was considered to be alienating for Republicans. Badges and symbols associated with the police force had similar connotations, and the Union Flag was flown above police buildings.

In order to create a police force accepted equally by both communities the report recommended that the name be changed to the Police Force of Northern Ireland (CAIN. "Patten Report recommendations" 150). In addition to this 'a new badge and symbols which are entirely free from any association with either the British or Irish States' (r. 151) should be adopted and 'The Union Flag should no longer be flown from police buildings (r. 152). Recommendation number 153 of the report goes on to state that when it is appropriate for a flag to fly on police buildings it should be that of the PSNI, which should also bear no symbol of or association to either the British or Irish governments.

Responses to the report were broadly positive among Nationalists and Republicans, in addition the Government of Ireland welcomed its recommendations claiming them to 'comprehensively address the full range of important and sensitive issues' (CAIN "Government of Ireland Statement" 9 Sept, 1999). Statements by representatives of both governments recognised that the issue of policing was 'sensitive', as did the SDLP who also endorsed the recommendations. In particular the parties statement praised the recommendations put forward in the report in response to human rights complaints. These included specialised training, a new oath to uphold such rights taken by every officer and the video-taping of all suspect interviews (CAIN "SDLP statement" 9 Sept, 1999).

Both the SDLP and Sinn Féin statements emphasise the commitment made in the Good Friday Agreement to create a new beginning for policing in Northern Ireland, serving as an argument in favour of the Agreement and furthermore emphasising the positive features they had themselves most lobbied for. The Sinn Féin statement also included a reassertion of their long standing accusations against the RUC:

'Over the years the RUC have seen themselves and have been seen as the armed guardians of the union with Great Britain and the armed wing of Unionism. The RUC has never been representative of the community, nor accountable to it. Both it and the criminal justice system within which it operates have been found guilty of violating the most basic international human rights principles.' (CAIN "Sinn Féin Statement" 9 Sept, 1999)

Distrust of the British Government is evident in the assertion that they will scrutinise their position on the report 'bearing in mind its failure to implement critical sections of the Good Friday Agreement over which it has direct control' (CAIN).

The statement begins significantly with the assertion that the Good Friday Agreement guaranteed the establishment of 'A policing service which is capable of attracting and sustaining support from all sections of our people' (CAIN). 'Our' people here can be assumed to mean the entirety of the people of Northern Ireland. Although reference to the province as 'Northern Ireland' is still not as common in official statements as references to the north or else 'this province', inclusive language is evident in the use of 'we' or 'our' to mean people of both communities.

Police reform is one area where change occurred within the Republican movement, specifically a greater focus on the present day realities of the province. The identification of the problem is still there, human rights abuses and failures by the RUC are still emphasised, their actions are still viewed through the same frame defining them as unjust, however the alternative is one of police reform rather than national constitutional change.

The ultimate vote of support followed a report by the police ombudsman of Northern Ireland Nuala O'Loan revealing collusion in the past between special branch and Loyalist paramilitaries, confirming many of the long time claims of the Republican movement and allowing for SF leaders to emphasise the changes they had achieved in the service.

Adams re-affirmed the commitments of the Good Friday Agreement with the statement that 'citizens' rights include the right to a proper police service' (Opening Address to Sinn Féin Ard Fheis on Policing 2007), something that those in the north had never had, and that offices like the ombudsman wouldn't exist without SF campaigning. The final argument was similar to unionist justifications when entering negotiations, Gerry Kelly the parties police spokesman stated 'after getting this far we cannot leave this fundamental arena to be dominated by unionists... this is about achieving a united Ireland' (Speech to Sinn Féin Ard Fheis on Policing 2007).

The Patten recommendations were published in 1999 however Sinn Féin didn't vote to support the police until 2007. One of the main reasons for this was delays to the implementation of the reports recommendations on account of unionist opposition. In addition to this was the continued presence of an armed IRA. The group were still considered a terrorist organisation and membership or involvement remained illegal. Official support for the police at this point would therefore mean a stand in opposition to the IRA, and despite the condemnation of violence by 'anti peace Republicans' there have been no moves by Republican figures to distance themselves from or challenge the legitimacy of the IRA of it's armed campaign during the Troubles.

7.3. Unionist Justice Frames and the RUC

Unionist objections to the Patten report show that the political significance of the RUC is not unique to Republicans. Police reform was widely opposed by unionist figures who had long supported the force. DUP leader Ian Paisley described the report as an 'insult', and further claimed it an 'unconstitutional attack upon the democratic rights of the Ulster people' (CAIN "DUP Statement" 9 Sept, 1999). The UUP statement was similarly critical, describing the Patten commission as having 'allowed itself to be diverted into a gratuitous insult by stripping the service of its name, badge and flag' (CAIN, "UUP Statement" 9 Sept, 1999).

Objections to the Patten Commissions recommendations regarding the symbols and culture of the force highlight the powerful connections between the unionist and Protestant community and the RUC. When discussing Unionism reference has often been made to the movements focus on law and order, evidenced by their condemnation and refusal to accept the legitimacy of paramilitary violence as well as support for the police and other forces. As used here this focus refers specifically to the rule of law as laid down by the British Government in Northern Ireland, as well as previously under the first Stormont Parliament.

It is also a point whereby Unionism comes into direct conflict with the injustice frames of the Republican movement. The solution long advanced by both Government and unionist figures was that IRA violence constituted nothing more than criminality. The aim of the police and the Government by this reasoning was to shut down the movement and bring those responsible for carrying out acts in its name to justice, meaning trial and imprisonment. It is on this basis that Unionism supported anti-terrorism measures, the RUC and opposed the early release of prisoners as part of the Good Friday Agreement.

The close links between Protestant communities and the RUC, members of the force being mostly Protestant, as well as it's name and symbols many of which invoked the institutions of the British State meant that the force came to be strongly associated with Unionism. Criticisms of the force thereby came to be associated with criticisms of the British state as well as the broader Protestant community of Northern Ireland.

Unionists justified their opposition to the IRA on the basis that the institutions they were attacking were legitimate within the province this is related to the 'democratic' frame present within unionist ideology. At it's base are a number of assumptions. First that the people of Northern Ireland constitute a distinct people with a right to self determination. Second that continued British presence in the province is legitimate on the grounds that it is the majority will of this population. Third, that institutions are fair and even handed and that the Catholic community claims of unfair discrimination are exaggerated or unfounded. The problem as it was identified was criminal violence attempting to overthrow legitimate governmental institutions, the solution was therefore the removal of such groups from Northern Ireland. The understanding of justice is largely the same

as that present in Republicanism, the difference being that the additional framing of British institutions as legitimate lead to complaints that the RUC was violating the requirements of justice being ignored or deemed to be false.

Acceptance of discrimination or abuses by the RUC undermined these assumptions, and furthermore risked alienating their support base on account of close communal links with the force. The one problem that was accepted was the low number of Catholic officers in the force, however the reason most commonly given was that this was due to intimidation within the Catholic community to those who wished to join the force. To return to the responses in the wake of the Patten report, the UUP statement claimed that beyond those changes to policing that would come as the result of an end to terrorist violence, 'the only change that is really needed is to have many more Catholics serving the community in the police' (CAIN).

Reference is also made to the 'the emasculation of the police's anti-terrorist campaign' (CAIN). This marked a particular concern among unionists since the IRA, although still on ceasefire, had not announced a complete end to their armed campaign. Any moves seen to weaken attempts by security services to apprehend IRA members could potentially have been seen as a surrender to terrorist violence, a theme common to the peace talks. Accusations that this was what unionist leaders were doing by negotiating with Sinn Féin members was the basis of opposition to the talks by the DUP, and furthermore formed the basis for the NO campaign against the Agreement. Unionist opposition to police reform can therefore be interpreted as an attempt to prove that this is not the case, and furthermore that the Agreement many of their leaders had supported did not mean defeat.

7.4. Decommissioning and the legitimacy of the armed struggle.

A phrase has become established in the political culture of post-agreement Northern Ireland, that of anti-peace Republicans. Variations include the less common anti-ceasefire Republicans or republican dissidents, and this last one illustrates the fundamental shift that has occurred within the movement. Whereas the IRA was traditionally a major part of the Republican struggle, with Sinn Féin once described by Adams as the group's poorer cousin, now in the years following the Agreement that marked the ultimate end of the peace process those that continue the military campaign are described as dissidents.

This change began with the establishment of the peace process in the early 1990's, or else the drive to create a more influential political republican movement in the mid 1970s, but ultimately both periods exist as points within a broader process. Following on from the culmination of the Peace Process event in particular stands out as significant. This is the Omagh bombing carried out on 15 August 1998, the first act of IRA terrorism to be condemned unequivocally by Adams. Previously there had been an acknowledgement that certain attacks had been mistakes, in particular the 1987 Remembrance Day bombing in Enniskillen which was described as a 'monumental error', but never an outright condemnation of an attack such as that issued following Omagh.

Adams' statement following the attack effectively rules out further support for a continued violent campaign, 'the violence we have seen must be for all of us now a thing of the past, over, done with and gone' (*An Phoblacht*, 3 September 1998). This being the same man who told the Sinn Féin assembly when he took over as president that 'if at any time Sinn Féin decide to disown the armed struggle they won't have me as a member' (Quoted in McIntyre 32). The IRA as it existed then was the Provisional IRA, as opposed to the group that carried out the Omagh bombing the Real IRA. The RIRA were a splinter group formed in opposition to the Good Friday Agreement and was one of two Republican groups to affirm its commitment to an armed struggle following the disarmament process in 2005, the Continuity IRA being the other.

They appealed to Republicans who distrusted the Agreement and compromises that had been accepted over the principle of an all Ireland Republic as an end to the Troubles (to Republicans the cause of the violence was the continued partition of Ireland) and the attack in Omagh was designed not only as an attack on the British but also against Republicans that had supported the provisionals as a reminder of their treachery in dealing with the British (Dingley 459).

Like the Provisionals the RIRA justified its campaign by referencing the historical Republican movement, however there was one important difference. Whereas the PIRA have viewed the armed-campaign as a form of militarised propaganda, a way to keep the issue of Ireland on the map and sap the political will of British forces to remain in the province, the RIRA instead placed greater significance on the view that the use of force was the main and uncompromising method by which they would achieve their goals (Alonso).

The RIRA can still claim legitimacy within the Republican tradition, despite the agreements overwhelming support the use of violence has never been based as much on mandated support as a cause believed to be right. This justified the continuation of the Provos campaign even at times when Sinn Féin only enjoyed low levels of electoral support. As Adams stated in 1996, when asked how the PIRA justified maintaining its armed campaign despite the majority of the Irish people consistently voting for parties opposed to violence, he responded 'because we have to remove the British from the equation' (Alonso).

One comment distancing the Omagh bomb from previous PIRA attacks, made by Sinn Féin's vice president Pat Doherty, stated that "The attack was not about removing the British government presence from our country. It was not an attack on the British military establishment on Ireland". Close analysis of PIRA tactics however shows this to be insincere. Omagh was certainly larger than previous attacks, the most devastating single attack in the province's history, in addition to being responsible for the deaths and injuries of Catholic and Republican civilians however it was not entirely removed from the tactics of the PIRA (Alonso).

What was different about it was its timing that highlighted not only the change in broader Republican thinking, but also the difference in how RIRA and PIRA had drawn legitimacy from the Republican tradition. The RIRA acted in opposition to the understanding of the armed-struggle as a tactic in achieving a United Ireland, Omagh came following a Yes vote on the Good Friday Agreement that had been won following an acceptance that violence was no longer the best way to ultimately achieve Republican goals. So from the pragmatic viewpoint of the peace process and beyond attacks like Omagh served to undermine the Republican movement, instead "they ignored the political objective for which they claimed to be struggling and raised military actions to an end in itself" (*An Phoblacht*, Leader 20 August 1998).

The previous IRA campaign had gained legitimacy not only from the history of the province but also a number of frames within the movement's ideology. The primary frame relating to the group is that of democratic self determination. The problem was the partition of Ireland and the presence of continued British rule in Northern Ireland, this being the underlying belief behind the entire Republican movement. However the presentation of a violent campaign as the solution to this required additional justification and it is this that proved to be problematic following the Good Friday Agreement. As shown by previous discussion regarding the origins of sustained violence in the 1960s one of the reasons an armed campaign was deemed to be necessary was a blocked political system unable to adapt to the complaints of its citizens. A second justification came from the need to defend Catholic civilians from state repression as well as violence carried out by Loyalist paramilitaries. A third reasoning was that there was a need to keep the issue of Northern Ireland at the forefront of British politics in order to affect change, here "The tactic of armed

struggle is of primary importance because it provides a vital cutting edge. Without it, the issue of Ireland would not even be an issue. So, in effect, the armed struggle becomes armed propaganda' (Adams, 1995: 63).

The Good Friday Agreement did not provide a united Ireland however it did provide solutions to these three recognised problems. The aim of police reform was to create a police force that would serve both communities equally. This and the ceasefire by Loyalist paramilitaries suggesting an end to the need for an armed paramilitary defence of Catholic neighbourhoods. The Peace Process had involved the bringing together of both Irish and British governments in addition to outside involvement from the US and the inclusion in peace talks of the majority of the political members in Northern Ireland showing the province to be a significant political priority. Finally the inclusion of Sinn Féin in negotiations as well as the possibility of them holding seats in a new devolved assembly meant that Republicanism had political representatives capable of affecting change.

Like justice frames and police reform the underlying issue Republicans wished to change remained, however following the conclusion of peace talks there existed a possible chance for change through political rather than violent means. Condemnation of the Omagh bombing as well as the wide margin by which the Good Friday Agreement had been accepted showed an increasing lack of support for violence. Oberschall's account of framing in East Germany raises the issue of legitimacy and trust when considering which frames eventually come to be broadly accepted and which are rejected, and the emphasis put on the political gains of Republicanism is one example where the frame of legitimate violence appears to be overtaken.

In addition to this Oberschall recognised that the context in which a frame is presented is also important. On this basis, returning to the role of the armed-struggle as a form of militarised propaganda another event following the signing of the Agreement becomes significant. As described by Tommy McKearney, former IRA prisoner, 'the objective of physical force people becomes one of making propaganda by their deeds' (4), and the relative success of propaganda of any kind depends on the broader context in which it is seen.

The US government played a major role in ensuring the establishment and continuation of the peace process. The Republican community in Ireland has strong links with Irish America, as well as various American administrations in particular that of Clinton. However if there is one event that can be considered the basis for American policy since the start of the new millennium it would be the attacks on the world trade centre on September 11 2001. The declaration of the 'War on Terror' following the attack had serious ramifications for Northern Ireland, not least because similar policies and rhetoric were adopted in Britain following not only 9/11 but also the subsequent London Bombings.

The drawing of parallels between the War on Terror and events in Northern Ireland is scattered and inconsistent, broadly speaking there is an acceptance among politicians as well as many academic researchers of a 'new terrorism' that first manifested itself in the September 11th attacks. Distinctions have been made on various grounds including the number of people killed, "I don't think the IRA would ever have set about trying to kill 3,000 people" (Blair, *BBC News* 26 July 2005), the methods employed (suicide bombers) or else distinctions between the nature of the demands of Islamic extremists and Irish Republicans.

Despite such assertions of difference the War on Terror was antithetical to even a tacit acceptance of the legitimacy of violent acts or any form of engagement with those that supported them, the methods that had led to the Good Friday Agreement were in direct opposition to those policies being carried out in America. Prominent Republicans have written in opposition to the policies employed at Guantanamo Bay, and Adams and McGuinness told the Guardian they had pleaded

with Blair to reconsider the Iraq War (*Guardian*, 13 March 2007).

The condemnation of the Omagh bomb, the end of the PIRA and decommissioning that took place in 2005 and the concept of 'anti-peace Republicans' are all due to the understanding of the violent campaign as a tactic rather than a principle. The goal of a united Ireland was the principle behind Republicanism, once a political option for achieving this became broadly accepted as realistic support for the armed struggle ceased. In addition to this the international outlook of the Republican movement made the broader context of the war on terror significant, the rhetoric used against Islamic extremism made the goal of eradicating terrorist violence the major political focus often times over riding those movements and narratives Republicans had historically made use of. The language and policies used bear greater similarities to those put forward by hard line Unionism.

In addition to the changing global political context the IRA lost support within the Republican and Catholic communities in Northern Ireland on account of a number of incidents that served to damage their reputation among members of each. The murder of Robert McCartney, a Catholic and according to his family supporter of Sinn Féin, in 2005 during a pub brawl lead to the suspension of 12 members of the party and the IRA also took action expelling three of it's members in the following weeks. Calls encouraging people to come forward with information were limited to recommendations to contact the McCartney family, a solicitor 'or any other authoritative or reputable person or body' stopping short of the PSNI. Prior to the 2007 vote and Sinn Féin taking their places on the policing board there had been moves to support the police in an unofficial capacity.

A statement by the IRA claiming to not only know the identities of all four men involved in the murder, but also offering to shoot them soon became a media disaster and the event did serious damage to the views of both Sinn Féin and the IRA. The McCartney sisters were invited to the white house while Adams was excluded, and criticisms within the broader community suggested that the PIRA had overstepped the boundary between legitimate anti-state activity and self interested racketeering. 'The boys were not what they were' (Moran 35). Even to those communities among which they had previously had support they incidents like these challenged the assumption that they were fighters for a cause as opposed to criminals.

The PIRA announced an official end to their campaign in 2005, and an IMC report noted both clear evidence of the organisations intentions to seek a political path as well as an intention to 'seek to stop criminal activity by its members and to prevent them from engaging in it'.

7.5. Dr. No. Ian Paisley's DUP.

Devolved rule returned to Northern Ireland on the 8th of May 2007 for the first time since the suspension of the assembly in 2002. Suspension had occurred following a police raid on the parliamentary offices of Sinn Féin on grounds of suspicion that an IRA spy ring was operating within the party, charges that were dropped in 2005. The accusations had lead to the DUP pulling ministers from the assembly and the UUP threatening to do the same and direct rule returned to Westminster when it became clear the assembly could no longer continue.

An assembly election was held in 2003 that shifted the balance of power within the assembly from the UUP and SDLP to instead the DUP an Sinn Féin. Ian Paisley and the Democratic unionist party have been previously referenced in this thesis almost exclusively in terms of opposition whether it be to British Government policy, previous attempts to reach Agreement in Northern Ireland, peace talks or the Good Friday Agreement. A brief history of the party is relevant here in order to understand the context in which the agreement with Sinn Féin came to be reached.

The Democratic unionist Party was formed in 1971 by Ian Paisley and Desmond Boyle, both formerly members of the Protestant unionist Party also established by Paisley. The party has come to be associated most strongly with the bombastic and divisive rhetoric of Paisley himself, a Protestant preacher and founder in 1951 of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster. Ideologically the party is unionist, right wing and socially conservative.

Paisley has often drawn on biblical imagery and biblical passages in his speeches and has been vocal in not only condemnation of Republicanism but also Catholicism, the two of which are often viewed to be one and the same. To take the example of his response to the proposals set forth by John Hume and Gerry Adams in 1993 for the establishment of peace talks Paisley derided as evil in his opening speech to the DUP conference both the SDLP and Sinn Féin leaders, specifically Sinn Féin/IRA the two being synonymous more often than not for Paisley at this time, as well as 'the Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church', 'The Kennedy Lobby in the United States' and the Dublin government (CAIN).

Paisley's nickname of Dr. No is well founded when it is considered that him and his party stood in opposition to all three of the major Agreements put forth following the dissolution of the first Stormont Parliament. In 1973 he supported the United unionist Action Council general strike suggested as one of the reasons for the failure of the Sunningdale Agreement. In 1985 he led the opposition against the Anglo-Irish Agreement under the slogan 'Ulster says no' and he was one of the most prominent figures within Good Friday Agreement No campaign.

The choice to enter into Government with Sinn Féin in 2007 is therefore remarkable when considering not only the DUP's previous opposition to the Good Friday Agreement but also the powerful condemnation Paisley himself had previously directed at Republican leaders as well as his history of anti Catholic rhetoric.

7.6. The return to Devolved Governance

The image of Gerry Adams and Ian Paisley announcing the basis for a shared Sinn Féin and DUP administration at Stormont was a historic moment in the modern history of Northern Ireland. Although this is widely accepted there are contrasting views among even the participants as to the precisely what the event signified. For Adams this was a new beginning 'with the potential to build a new, harmonious relationship between nationalists and Republicans and unionists' (*Guardian*, 27 March 2007). Paisley however described the situation as 'a great victory for the unionist people', on the grounds that 'Gerry Adams will sit in our assembly – a British institution of the British state... [and] will take an oath to... support the rule of law' (*Newsletter*, 31 March 2007).

The requirement for talks between the two parties came on account of each becoming the largest representatives of their relevant communities following the 2003 election. The DUP campaign at this time offers a minor change in policy from that present during the No referendum campaign. The party's manifesto was launched under the slogan 'It's time for a fair deal' and contained pages of criticisms against the UUP and its leader David Trimble. At the time the collapse of the assembly meant that Trimble and other pro-agreement unionists were facing an election campaign in which they had very little to show for their willingness to show for their previous policy of engagement.

As characterised by the DUP manifesto the period since 1998 had contained

'The destruction of the RUC, the withdrawal of the army, the release of terrorist prisoners, the elevation of Sinn Fein/IRA members to government office without evidence of the destruction of weaponry, the creation of ever-expanding all-Ireland institutions, the lawless state of our province, the ever-growing list of breaches of IRA

and Loyalist so-called ceasefires, the disregard of the views of peaceful and democratic politicians in favour of the spokesmen of terrorist organisations' ("Message from the Leader", *DUP Manifesto 2003*).

The manifesto asked the question 'Who negotiates for Unionism?', claiming the DUP would halt concessions to Republicans and reassert the interests of unionists in the province in a way the UUP had failed to do and promised a re-negotiation of the Good Friday Agreement. A lot of the 'seven tests' that would need to be met before any proposals would be accepted were either reassertions of those present in the already existing Agreement or else at most only minor changes, overall the document was a promise to pursue established issues such as decommissioning more vigorously than Trimble and others had.

The requirement for support from both unionists and Nationalists was accepted (Test 1) as was equal opportunities for both groups (Test 5). Requirements for government were presented at being for devolved governance, test 7 called for a stable government that would not be susceptible to recurring suspension and the presence of a relationship with the Republic of Ireland was accepted so long as it was accountable to the Assembly (Test 4). These later aims highlight the distance between the DUP and the British Government, unsurprising considering Paisley had called successive prime ministers liars, traitors and in one case a 'loathsome reptile' (CAIN "Paisley speech to DUP conference" 1998). The focus was on an administration allowing for the rule of Northern Ireland by the political parties representing the people of Northern Ireland rather than the British Government, although this would take place within a continued union.

The overall presentation is similar to the Yes campaign for the Good Friday Agreement. Paisley's continued assertion of the right of the Ulster people to self determination, the DUP commonly referring to an ethnic Ulster identity often synonymous with conservative Protestantism, and the focus in both his speeches and party literature on the protection of democratic rights meant that a continued rejection of the Good Friday Agreement was unsustainable. Despite the No campaigns best efforts it had passed with a comfortable majority, to not accept this would be a rejection of those rights Paisley had always accused his enemies of denying. The democracy frames through which unionists had always sought to defend institutions in Northern Ireland as well as oppose the Republican campaign now recognised the choice of the public to accept those institutions of the Good Friday Agreement as similarly legitimate. Instead the DUP were now campaigning for support using the same logic by which the UUP had justified their presence in negotiations during the peace process, they were there to defend unionist interests.

The electoral gains of the DUP following the 2003 election results created an environment whereby a continuation of power sharing without their support would be likely to unbalance the province, and by the time of the 2007 election amendments had been made to the Agreement following a period of discussion within all parties. This applied predominantly to Strand One institutions, laid out in the St Andrews Agreement published in 2006. These included the introduction of a statutory Ministerial Code and a number of new processes through which decisions would be reached and ratified allowing for additional accountability and oversight within the Assembly (McEvoy 368).

The St Andrews Agreement was based on what Northern Ireland Secretary Peter Hain referred to as the 'twin pillars' of power sharing and policing. The first led to the changes made to assembly processes, the second related to the continuation of the debate over decommissioning and Republican support for policing. In this way the election and subsequent agreement to form a DUP, Sinn Féin coalition marks the end of shifts in both the Republican and unionist movements away from divisive rhetoric and ideology and towards an acceptance of power sharing arrangements.

In the light of DUP demands for the disbanding of the IRA many of the changes in the St Andrews

Agreement can be seen as a win for the party, however given the nature of Paisley's public statements more is required than an acceptance that such moves were genuine. Paisley's previous attacks against the Republican movement had been not only political but ethno-religious in nature. He had been vocally anti-Dublin and anti-Catholic, to the extent that he was once ejected from the European parliament for holding up a sign calling the visiting Pope the Anti-Christ.

The democratic frames present in both Republicanism and Unionism as demonstrated by Paisley are the most relevant here. The construction of such frames came from either the recognition that democratic rights were being denied, in the case of Republicanism, or were being challenged, in the case of Unionism. The rights of the people of Northern Ireland to decide how they should be governed was a point agreed by both, for Republicans this created a chance for influence outside of repressive British rule. For Paisley it likewise allowed for true democracy away from the British Governments he had to often criticised. The move by Sinn Féin to support policing and the rule of law, in addition to the IRA announcing the end of their campaign, removed an additional challenge to democracy Paisley had long criticised, the influence within government of criminals working to subvert democratic mandates.

8. Conclusions

Past sections have identified the major issues, events, symbols and ideologies that serve to define both the Republican and unionist movements as they were in Northern Ireland during and following the period of 'the Troubles'. Both Republican and unionist identities have developed through a shared interpretation of history as well as experience of the conflict present in modern Northern Irish history. Both draw on the history of British and Irish relations in an attempt to define the identity of their movement by tracing its origins.

This same history has played a role in placing these two identities in opposition to each other. The events commemorated by Unionism through culturally significant rituals such as Orange Order Marches or commemorations of the Siege of Derry are often accounts of defeat by Irish forces. This has led to the accusation by Republicans that such events are triumphalist. Events held to be significant to Republicans are often attempts to end British rule and rebellion against the institutions established by the British community in Ireland. Both commemorations are by their nature exclusive, their very meaning and continued prominence drawing on the divisions and conflict that exists between the two communities with a focus on defeat or victory rather than co-operation.

Communities has been used throughout this thesis to refer to religiously, nationally or politically defined groups within Northern Ireland and this is on account of the substantial levels of association and overlap between each. As has been shown identity is a topic that has been much studied in Northern Ireland. Data from this has shown that the Protestant population of the province does in the majority consider themselves to be British and this would become more pronounced following the outbreak of sustained violence in the late 1960s. Those of the Catholic faith do for the most part identify themselves as Irish with little overlap between this and notions of Britishness.

At a political level the majority of support remains with those parties defining themselves as unionist or Nationalist, both of which have almost exclusively single community bases of support. Irish Catholics vote Nationalist or Republican, or in any case do not vote unionist and the reverse is true for British Protestants.

As demonstrated in the introduction more specific divisions remain than those between ethno-religious community affiliation or the Nationalist, unionist political divide. Support for violence has been demonstrated to be a significant point of division among those in favour of a united Ireland, as has the acceptance in the mean time of institutions established by division. The distinction is between Nationalism and Republicanism. Although the violent campaign of the latter had more support among the Catholic community, and was furthermore justified as in part being in defence of this same community, it was not universally accepted. Many people supported instead the SDLP who advocated for an end to division by political means. Until 2003 they were the majority party among nationalist designated political groups in terms of electoral share.

Research among the British Protestant community has shown a further distinction between Unionism and Loyalist on account of the links of the former to the political elite in the province. There is a sense within Unionism of a failure among political movements to represent certain areas of their own community and this has led to a distinctive Loyalist identity emerging through reinterpretations of the province's history, the most prominent example being the emphasis of working class soldiers at the Battle of the Somme.

Unionism itself in the broader tradition has also been shown to be distinct from British political culture. Northern Ireland is culturally distinct within the United Kingdom, in the same way that Scotland or Wales might be considered to be, and those political parties organising in the province

are not present in Great Britain. Unionist parties can to this extent be considered to be representative only of the British community in Northern Ireland, the interests of which they have at times considered to be at odds with the politics advanced by those in Westminster.

The peace process during the 1990s also showed another division within Unionism similar to splits that had previously occurred within Republicanism. The basis for this was willing to compromise on what had previously been central tenets of unionist parties, the most prominent of these being engagement with Republican figures while the IRA were still potentially active as well as differing interpretations of the Good Friday Agreement and whether it represented a success for either Republicans or themselves.

In the section relating to identity theory and social movements it was established that frames of meaning created and shared by groups can come to influence the interpretation of events. These frames are influential also in creating a shared identity among members of these movements that furthermore explains how events and symbols come to take on such significance and become politically significant.

When the attitudes of the two movements to the same process and issues is analysed a number of interpretive frames are revealed. In a general sense the most significant are those of nationalism, democracy and justice frames. In Northern Ireland these features of communal identity that came to be emphasised came from a long history of division and conflict creating a divisive climate among political parties as well as a situation whereby politics in the province were considered a zero sum game, that any gains made by one community must necessarily mean a loss by the other. This was the view that needed to change if any agreement was to be reached, and what is evident during the peace process and beyond is not a complete removal of conflict from the language of the province but rather a change in emphasis affecting a number of different issues.

Overall many of the assumptions about the role and duty of institutions present within these frames are the same for both groups, however the definition of the situation in Northern Ireland is different in each case therefore justifying different forms of response. Republicans did not oppose the British state out of a rejection of the principles of democracy and self-determination but rather an understanding that they applied only to the entirety of the people of Ireland. Campaigns in opposition to the RUC were likewise not a rejection of the need for an organised police force but rather a criticism of the force's behaviour and perceived communal discrimination. Unionism on the other hand did not base its rejection of Irish nationalism on a rejection of the nationalist principles that the state and a national people should be conducive, but rather that the Protestant/British population of Northern Ireland constituted such a people.

The constitution section of the Good Friday Agreement acknowledged this, with a commitment also being made by the British and Irish governments that no attempt would be made to subvert this will. The emphasis on the people of Northern Ireland can be seen as the beginning of a cross-communal identity that already present in the province to some extent, as shown in survey data, is not widespread. The historic objection to representation by British government present in Republicanism, as well as the distance between successive administrations and unionists, means that the future of the province was presented as one of devolved rule by Northern Ireland parties.

The emphasis was on a new beginning for the people of Northern Ireland as a whole to govern themselves within new institutions specially designed to take into account the unique nature of the province. This was the dominant focus for Republicans and Nationalists both during the referendum campaign and the following years, emphasising the present-day advantages won for the Catholic community. Unionist figures campaigning for a Yes vote on the Agreement initially emphasised this new beginning too, although with a subtle change that their main emphasis was a future free from

paramilitary violence. This was true of both camps, although slightly less so for Republicans on account of their support for an armed campaign. This new start is also true in the case of police reform, the overriding narrative became the creation of new institutions unique to Northern Ireland.

In the years following the signing of the Agreement implementation was problematic and a shift occurred within Unionism as anti-agreement parties like the DUP began to win increased support. The focus was a defence of history that UUP leaders, often Trimble, had sold out and to renegotiate tougher terms for Republicans on central issues like decommissioning. The focus is a fair deal that represented the historic rights of the Ulster people, a view to the future that was still heavily presented as a continuation of the past rather than a break from it. This is true of much of the ideological changes that followed the agreement. For unionists it was the right to self determination that the Ulster people had defended against the threat of violence, for Republicans it was the continuation of 'the Struggle'.

Neither movements moved to reject their own interpretation of history or substantially distance themselves from past events, however there was an increased acknowledgement that the situation had changed. This led to an emphasis on changes that could be achieved in the present, many of which reduced the validity and acceptance of previous frames. This can be seen during the IRA, rather than rejecting the rights of Republicans to mount an armed campaign leaders within the movement identified a required change in tactics and claimed that in the present context it would be counterproductive. To this end the achievements won through political means were emphasised, in the case of police reform this came at the cost of one of the primary justifications behind the armed campaign. The IRA in post-agreement Northern Ireland can be viewed to have suffered to some extent from the same difficulty in justifying themselves that Loyalists had in the years prior.

What this thesis has shown in response to its primary question is that changes occurred within Republican and unionist movements both in how they presented those issues where they were attempting to affect change and the solutions they offered. The overall emphasis came to be that of a collective people of Northern Ireland, however a strong emphasis remained that they would represent the interests of their own communities. The alternative became a political one and furthermore one of engagement, leading both to the acceptance of Sinn Féin within governance and the eventual end to the armed IRA campaign.

The focus was on new institutions within a new Northern Ireland containing those committed to representing the wills and interests of their movements, to this end there remained a sense of continuity with the past since those interests were for the most part those that had been a part of earlier campaigns. There was a focus on cross communal co-operation and reconciliation however matters of identity remained divided, there was little attempt to attract support from outside of traditional communal bases.

The main point for further research would be to what extent is this still true following the almost total implementation of the Good Friday Agreement? The period up until the re-establishment of the Stormont parliament in 2007 was characterised by accusations that the agreement was not being delivered upon or else that parts of it required renegotiating. At the time of writing Belfast had experienced a period of violent protest over moves to limit the flying of the union Jack over a government building to only certain days of the year. In the wake of this there were suggestions within the media that support among Protestants for the agreement was falling. Whether or not this is true and what the given causes may be would be significant topics for further research into the effect of the Agreement on both communities. Whether this is due to a period of adjustment as unionists become accustomed to power sharing, or else symptomatic of fundamental problems within the agreement, would offer a further point of comparison with less successful past agreements.

In addition the emergence of any significant cross-community identity in the post-accord years is significant. Organisations have been established to attempt reconciliation within the province and whether any sense of shared identity built on recent history has begun to emerge would offer insight into not only the province but broader studies of conflict. Unionist and Republican history as studied here draws heavily on a long and conflicted British and Irish history, an addition to this would be the creation of an inclusive Northern Irish identity emphasising the shared experiences of those in the province during the Troubles as well as after.

Thirdly further analysis into the reasons behind party support would be significant among traditionally Republican and Nationalist voting communities. Historically one of the main distinctions has been the condemnation or acceptance of a legitimate violent campaign. A more detailed issue orientated analysis of support for both parties may suggest to what extent the legacy of violence still remains a decisive issue, or else whether support for Sinn Féin is still linked to support for a return to armed conflict under any circumstances. If not it would allow for a more detailed understanding of the political context of the province, and offer a starting point for analysis into any shift towards a 'normalised' political system. Normalised meaning a system whereby policy and divisions of left and right become more prominent as opposed to ethno-religious identity or paramilitary links. Analysing support for cross-communal parties would be a further way to access to what extent this is occurring in Northern Ireland.

9. List of Abbreviations

CIRA	Continuity Irish Republican Army
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
IMC	Independent Monitoring Commission
INLA	Irish National Liberation Army
LVF	Loyalist Volunteer Force
PIRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PUP	Progressive Unionist Party
RIRA	Real Irish Republican Army
RSF	Republican Sinn Féin
RUC	Royal Ulster Constabulary
SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour Party
SF	Sinn Féin
UDA	Ulster Defence Association
UDP	Ulster Democratic Party
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party
UVF	Ulster Volunteer Force

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