

**Ten Years On:
Who are the Winners and Losers
from the Belfast Agreement?**

**Authors:
Jessie Blackburn
Kacper Rekawek**

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Introduction

There is a widely held belief that in the zero sum climate of politics in Northern Ireland, the Belfast agreement could only prove a success for one community at the cost of failure to the other community. This research then tries to examine the question of which community represents the winners from the Belfast Agreement, and which community represents the losers, to try to discredit the popular expectation and assumption that middle class Catholics have benefitted from the Agreement to the detriment of working class Protestants.

The research is divided into five areas of exploration to analyse the impact of the Belfast Agreement on the lives of the citizens of Northern Ireland. The first area to be examined addresses general questions about the perceived effect of the Belfast Agreement on the two communities in Northern Ireland. It also analyses patterns of voting in the referendum of 1998 and hypothetical patterns of voting if the referendum was held again in 2008, and finally it focuses on how the devolved institutions are working in Northern Ireland. The second section deals with the problem of Northern Ireland remaining a divided society in spite of the Belfast Agreement's provision of a devolved assembly with a cross community power sharing executive, specifically this section aims to address whether there is the perception that the division of the two communities benefits one community over the other. The third section of the research challenges perceptions of identity in Northern Ireland in terms of the constitutional status of Northern Ireland; particularly it attempts to address the issue of whether a United Ireland or maintenance of the Union with the United Kingdom is the desired preference for the people of Northern Ireland. The fourth area of study examines the problem of paramilitary violence in Northern Ireland to assess whether levels of violence have increased or decreased since the Belfast Agreement. The fifth section considers general points about the broader theme of the research; who has won and who has lost from the Belfast Agreement.

The research will work from new qualitative survey data which will supplement current quantitative statistics and secondary source data on Northern Ireland post-Belfast Agreement.

The results of the research offer the possibility to examine the Belfast Agreement and the perceived winners and losers in a new light.

The Belfast Agreement – Protestant Perspectives

This research tried to address the broad theme of how people in Northern Ireland believed that the Belfast Agreement was working in terms of the two communities. Specifically the research also tried to gain an understanding of how the Agreement had lived up to or disappointed expectations by assessing the correlation between how people voted in the referendum of 1998 and how they would vote in the same referendum if it was taken again in 2008. The research also sought to analyse whether the devolved institutions in Northern Ireland were perceived to be working better for the province than it had fared under direct rule from Westminster.

In the referendum of 1998, voters in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland were polled on whether they wanted to support or reject the Belfast Agreement. In Northern Ireland, with a turnout of 81%, 676,966 voters voted 'yes' to the Belfast Agreement, representing a 71% share of the vote, and 274,879 voter voted 'no' to the Belfast Agreement, representing a 29% share of the vote¹. The Belfast Agreement therefore was endorsed by the vast majority of the Northern Irish electorate. There was, however, a marked contrast between how Protestants and Catholics voted on the referendum. According to Jonathan Tonge, "With both Nationalist parties endorsing the Agreement a 99 per cent 'yes' vote was recorded among Catholics, but only 57 per cent of Protestants voted likewise"². This research then aims to understand why there was a difference between Protestants and Catholics in the vote on the referendum, and which community is perceived to have benefitted most from the Belfast Agreement. The changes of attitudes towards post 1998 economic, political and social arrangements in Northern Ireland became obvious within six months of the May referendum; only 41% of Protestants, as against 72% of Catholics, felt that the Good Friday Agreement [the Belfast Agreement] benefited unionists and nationalists equally. The same survey found that 50% of Protestants felt that the Agreement benefited nationalists more than unionists³.

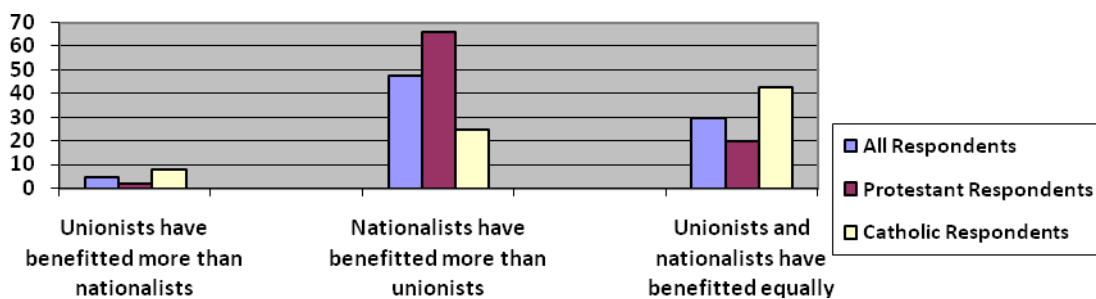
¹ J. Tonge, *Northern Ireland Conflict and Change* (Second Edition), Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd, 2002, p. 190.

² J. Tonge, *Northern Ireland Conflict and Change* (Second Edition), Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd, 2002, p. 190.

³ J. Darby and R. MacGinty, "Imperfect Peace: The Aftermath of Northern Ireland Peace Accord", *Ethnic Studies Report*, Vol. XVII, No. 2, July 1999.

The most recent statistics from a survey carried out by ARK in 2005 give interesting answers to the question of who has benefitted from the Belfast Agreement⁴.

The chart below shows the answers of all respondents and of just Protestant respondents, as well as Catholic respondents for comparison, to the question: ‘Thinking back to the Good Friday Agreement now, would you say that it has benefitted unionists more than nationalists, nationalists more than unionists, or that unionists and nationalists have benefitted equally?’⁵ All numbers are in percentages.



This chart demonstrates that from the perspective of all respondents and from the majority of Protestant respondents (66%) in 2005, nationalists were in general believed to have benefitted more from the Belfast Agreement than unionists. Few Protestants (2%) believed that unionists had benefitted more than nationalists, and 20% of Protestant respondents believed that unionists and nationalists had benefitted equally from the Belfast agreement⁶. These statistics reflect the general perception that nationalists benefitted to a greater extent than unionists from the Belfast Agreement.

Our 2008 survey data reinforces the above statistics that perceptions amongst Protestants were that Catholics have benefited most from the Belfast Agreement. When asked which community they thought had benefited most from the Belfast Agreement Out of our Protestant respondents 78% stated that the Catholic community benefited from the Belfast

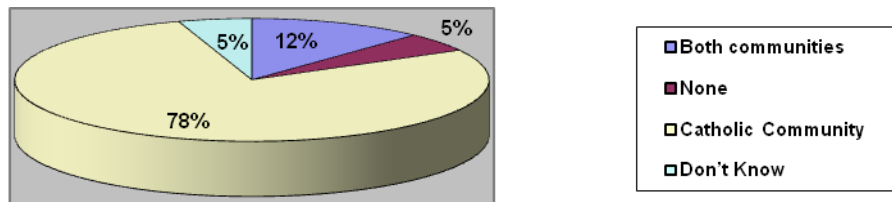
⁴ *Surveys Online*, 2005.

⁵ *Surveys Online*, 2005.

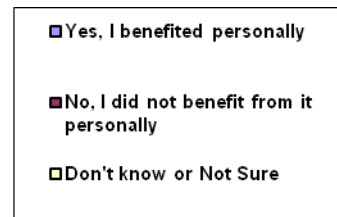
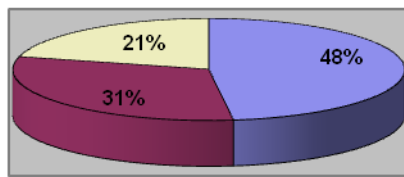
⁶ *Surveys Online*, 2005.

Agreement, 5% said none of the communities did, 12% that both communities benefited and 5% did not know.

None of the respondents stressed that it might have only been the Protestant community which had benefited from the Belfast Agreement. Please refer to the chart below:

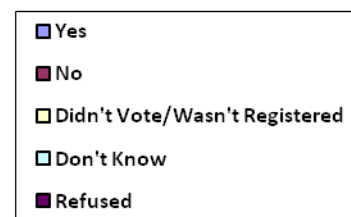
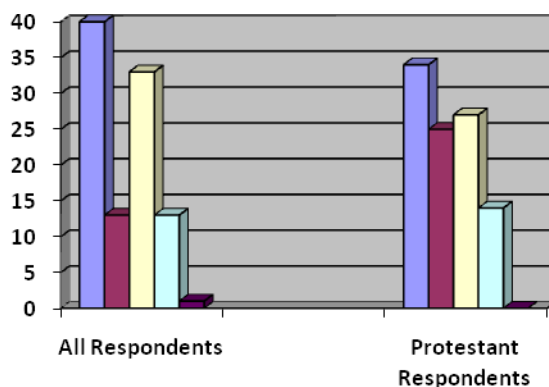


These statistics demonstrate that the Protestant perception of the Belfast Agreement in 2005 was that the Agreement benefitted nationalists over unionists, but it does not explain why they believed that. The survey data carried out in 2008 aimed to complete our understanding of why this is the case, however very few respondents answered the question of why they thought that the Catholic community had benefited over the Protestant community. The Protestant respondents who said that both or only their community benefited from the Belfast Agreement almost all gave very similar answers as to how the benefactors are actually better off now than they used to be 10 years ago. Usually they mentioned an increased sense of personal security and the ending of terrorism as the most benefiting factor. However, they also stressed that the majority of the benefits actually targeted the Catholic community which gained an unprecedented access to political power and representation. This might represent the idea that though Protestants perceive the Belfast Agreement to have benefited Catholics unequally to Protestants, respondents generally didn't understand why or how this had happened, and may have been basing their answers on a perception that Catholics had benefitted rather than from actual evidence. When asked if they had personally benefited from the Belfast agreement 48% of our Protestant respondents felt that they benefited from the Belfast Agreement, 31% said they did not benefit from it and 21% was not sure or didn't know. Please refer to the chart below.



These results seem to contradict the answers to the previous questions, where Protestant respondents perceived Catholics to have benefited from the Belfast Agreement. If 48% of Protestant respondents felt that they had benefited personally from the Agreement, but only 12% of Protestant respondents thought that it had benefited both communities (no Protestant respondents claimed that Protestants had benefited from the Agreement) it demonstrates a sense of shared or collective Protestant grievance at the Belfast Agreement, rather than reflecting the reality of the respondents' everyday lives. Since nearly half of Protestant respondents claimed to have benefited personally from the Agreement, the lack of overall consensus that the Protestant community has benefited is surprising.

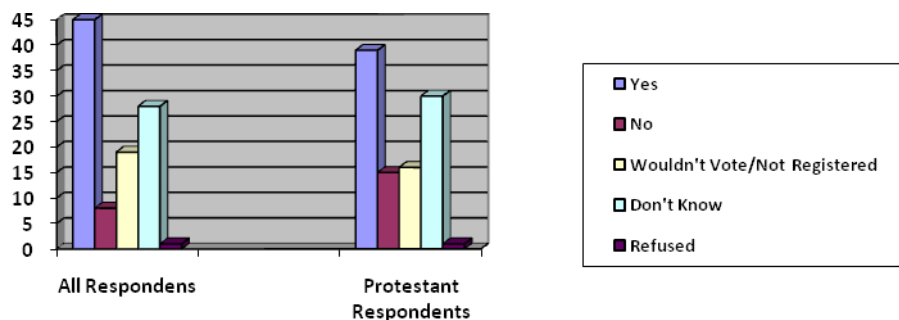
In 2006 the *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* polled its respondents on how they voted in the 1998 referendum on the Belfast Agreement. The results were as follows for all respondents and for just Protestant respondents⁷. All numbers are in percentages.



⁷ *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey*, 2006.

This chart demonstrates that the number of all respondents who didn't vote at all was slightly smaller than the number who voted yes. Those who voted no made up only 13% of all respondents. When the numbers for Protestant respondents are looked at however, the results show a different story. The number of Protestants who voted yes is lower than for all respondents, but the number of Protestants who voted no is roughly equivalent to those who didn't vote at all, and is less than 10% lower than the number who voted yes⁸. This demonstrates that Protestants were less likely to vote yes for the Agreement in 1998 than Catholics.

The *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* did not ask the question of how respondents would vote again on the Belfast Agreement referendum, but *Surveys Online* polled respondents on how they would be likely to vote on the St Andrews Agreement if there was a referendum on that question held in 2007. The results are as follows⁹, all numbers are in percentages.



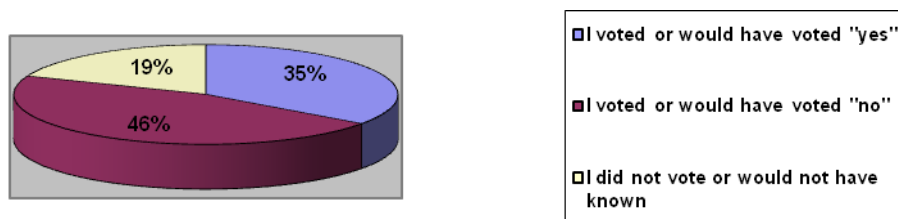
These statistics are slightly more positive in outlook than the statistics on the number of people who voted yes to the Belfast Agreement, though high numbers of both all respondents and Protestant respondents indicated that they did not know how they would vote. More Protestants claimed that they would vote yes to the St Andrews Agreement than had voted yes for the Belfast Agreement, though this may reflect changes in the St Andrews Agreement that may have been perceived to benefit the Protestant community over the Catholic community.

⁸ *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey*, 2006.

⁹ *Surveys Online*, 2006.

In carrying out survey data in 2008 respondents were asked how they voted in 1998, and if they would vote the same way in a referendum in 2008, and why this was the case. These findings will help supplement the statistics to inform a better understanding of why Protestants were less likely to vote yes to the Agreement than Catholics.

Only 35% of our Protestant respondents voted or would have voted 'yes' in 1998 had they been of voting age. 46% voted 'no' or would have voted 'no' in 1998 had they been of voting age. As many as 19% did not know how to vote or would not have known how to vote in 1998 had they been of voting age.



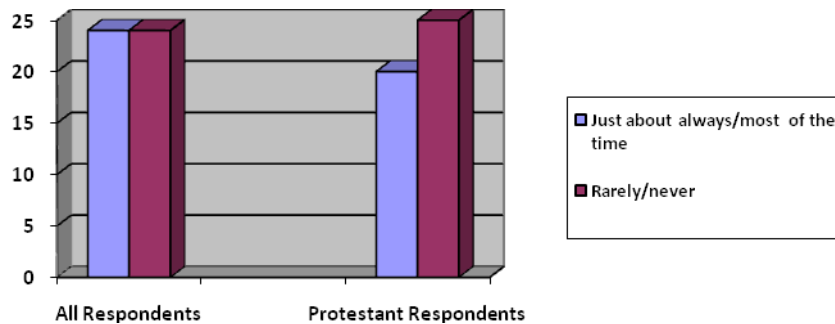
When asked if they would vote the same way in 2008, our Protestant respondents broadly repeated their voting patterns from 1998 were they to vote on the Belfast Agreement in 2008. 44% of our Protestant respondents would vote 'no' in 2008 on the Belfast Agreement. 37% of them would vote 'yes' and almost one fifth (19%) would not know how to vote. This demonstrates that those Protestants who voted no in 1998 have not been persuaded of the value of the Agreement and would continue to vote against the Agreement if it was put to another referendum in 2008. This demonstrates again how a large portion of Protestant respondents feel like they have not received any benefits from the Belfast Agreement.

This final section of research on the Belfast Agreement aims to understand how people in Northern Ireland think the devolved institutions have worked for the benefit of the province in comparison to how Northern Ireland benefitted under direct rule.

The most recent statistics on this are from 2003, and respondents had multiple choice answers to the question: 'Under direct rule from Britain, as now, how much do you generally trust British governments of any party to act in the best interests of Northern Ireland?'¹⁰. The

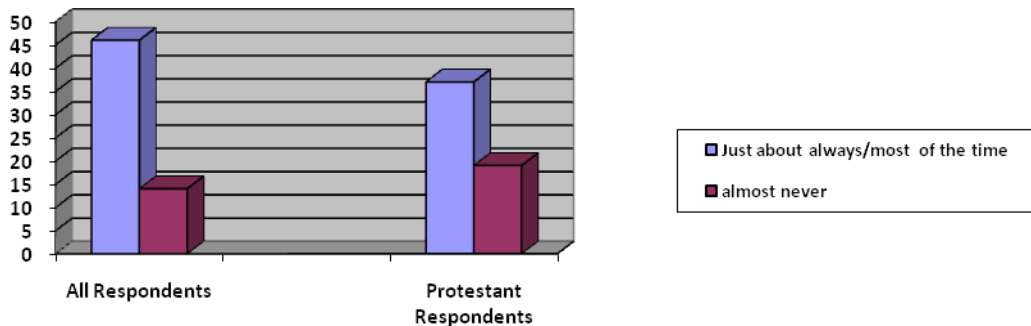
¹⁰ *Surveys Online*, 2003.

survey groups respondents answers into ‘just about always’ and ‘most of the time’; or ‘rarely’ and ‘never’. The results are in the chart below¹¹. Numbers are in percentages.



This chart demonstrates that Protestant respondents are split relatively equally between those who trust that the British government will act in the best interest of Northern Ireland (20%), and those who don’t trust that the British government will act in their best interests (25%)¹².

The survey also asked the same question but for devolved institutions in Northern Ireland, with the same answer possibilities. The results for 2003 are as follows¹³, all numbers are in percentages.



When compared with the statistics for how much trust respondents had in the British government to work in the best interests of Northern Ireland, these results show that Protestant respondents reflect the trend of all respondents in preferring devolved institutions as the best option for Northern Ireland over direct rule. Despite the perceived problems of the Belfast

¹¹ *Surveys Online*, 2003.

¹² *Surveys Online*, 2003.

¹³ *Surveys Online*, 2003.

Agreement and the many suspensions of the devolved institutions, Protestant respondents still had more trust in the Northern Ireland Assembly than in a direct rule government to work in Northern Ireland's best interests. This demonstrates a tacit support for the devolved institutions and consequently for the Belfast agreement that created them.

The majority of responses from our Protestant respondents were negative in answering the question 'how has the Northern Ireland Assembly worked for you since devolution compared to direct rule?' The majority of the answers claimed that the devolved institutions had not actually "affected them" or they failed to "notice it" or "follow its works".

The advantages of the new, post Agreement Northern Ireland are generally thought to include reduction of violence, "growing, albeit tentative, improvement in relations between some of the political groupings" and "the greater sense of confidence among at least that part of community which... had felt severely alienated". Nevertheless, there exist numerous commonly identified disadvantages like continuing inter and intra communal disputes, sectarian and racist attacks, "increased interface tensions", intimidation of certain members of both communities, "continuing paramilitary presence", "disillusionment within many working-class communities, the growing alienation from the Agreement from within the Unionist community" which only cautiously supported the Agreement¹⁴.

¹⁴ M. Hall, *The Good Friday Agreement – where to now? Report of a conference organised by Drogheda Cross-Border Focus*, Newtownabbey: ISI and Publications, 2004, speech by Julietta Clancy of Meath Peace Group.

The Belfast Agreement – Catholic Perspectives

This research tried to address the broad theme of how people in Northern Ireland believed that the Belfast Agreement was working in terms of the two communities. Specifically the research also tried to gain an understanding of how the Agreement had lived up to or disappointed expectations by assessing the correlation between how people voted in the referendum of 1998 and how they would vote in the same referendum if it was taken again in 2008. The research also sought to analyse whether the devolved institutions in Northern Ireland were perceived to be working better for the province than it had fared under direct rule from Westminster.

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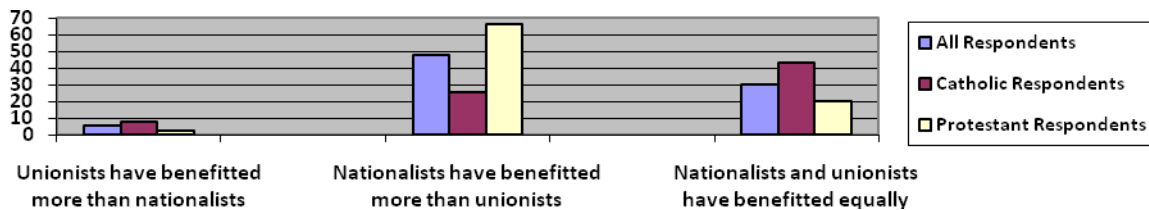
¹⁵ J. Tonge, *Northern Ireland Conflict and Change* (Second Edition), Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd, 2002, p. 190.

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¹⁷ J. Darby and R. MacGinty, ‘Imperfect Peace: The Aftermath of Northern Ireland Peace Accord’, *Ethnic Studies Report*, Vol. XVII, No. 2, July 1999.

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The chart below shows the answers of all respondents and of just Catholic respondents, as well as Protestant respondents for comparison, to the question: ‘Thinking back to the Good Friday Agreement now, would you say that it has benefited unionists more than nationalists, nationalists more than unionists, or that unionists and nationalists have benefited equally?’¹⁹ All numbers are in percentages.



This chart demonstrates that from the perspective of Catholic respondents the majority believed that the Belfast Agreement benefited nationalists and unionists equally, with the second largest category believing that nationalists had benefited more from the Belfast Agreement than unionists. Few Catholics (8%) believed that unionists had benefited more than nationalists²⁰. The statistics for Catholic respondents don’t reflect the general trend of all respondents in the perception that nationalists benefited to a greater extent than unionists from the Belfast Agreement.

These statistics demonstrate that the Catholic perception of the Belfast Agreement in 2005 was that the Agreement benefited nationalists and unionists equally, but it does not explain why they believed that. The survey data carried out in 2008 can help complete our understanding of why this is the case. Out of our Catholic respondents 54% felt both communities benefited, 20% said no community had benefited. 13% that it was the Catholic community, 6% did not know and 6% refused to answer. These answers reflect general trends from the previously collected data. Respondents were then asked why they thought that this was the case. Out of the respondents who said that both communities benefited from the Belfast Agreement 38% stated that the

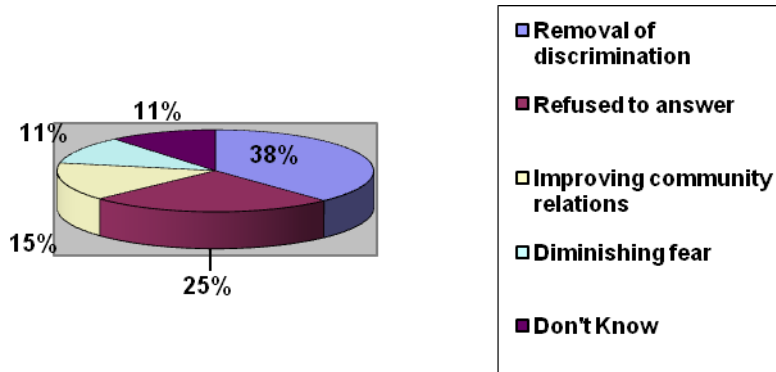
¹⁸ *Surveys Online*, 2005.

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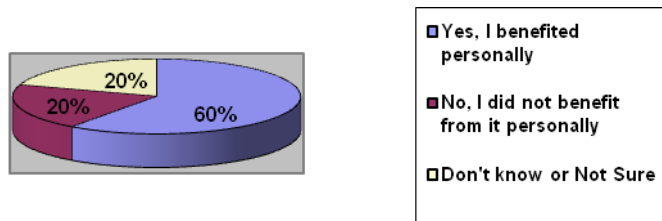
²⁰ *Surveys Online*, 2005.

removal of discrimination was the main reason for this, 25% refused to answer, 15% credited the improving inter community relations for this, 11% thought that this was the result of diminishing fear for one's live in Northern Ireland and 11% would not know the answer to this.

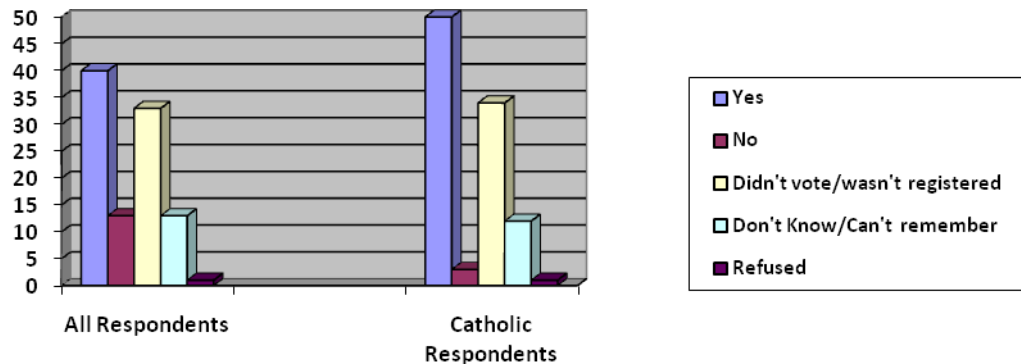
Reasons that Catholic respondents thought the Belfast Agreement benefited the two communities:



Respondents were also asked to give reasons to how they thought that communities had benefited from the Belfast Agreement. The Catholic respondents who said that both or their community (none mentioned the Protestant community as benefactors) benefited from the Belfast Agreement gave very broad answers to as how the benefactors are actually better off now than they used to be 10 years ago. The most repeated responses included ones pointing out to the issues of greater equality, representation of both communities in devolved institutions, ending of terrorism, and economic benefits. When asked if they had personally benefited from the Belfast agreement 60% of our Catholic respondents felt that they benefited from the Belfast Agreement, 20% said they did not benefit from it and 20% was not sure or didn't know. These numbers correspond to those who answered that both communities had benefited and that the Catholic community had benefited. It demonstrates that the majority of Catholic respondents believed that the Belfast Agreement had improved their lives. Please see the chart below:



In 2006 the *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* polled its respondents on how they voted in the 1998 referendum on the Belfast Agreement. The results were as follows for all respondents and for just Protestant respondents²¹. All numbers are in percentages.



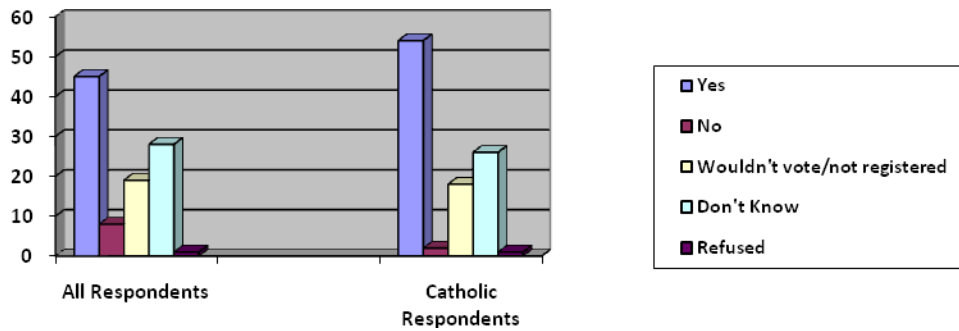
This chart demonstrates that 50% of Catholic respondents voted yes to the Belfast Agreement, with the second largest category being those who didn't vote or weren't registered to vote. Very few Catholic respondents (3%) voted no to the Agreement. This reflects general trends in known voting statistics for the referendum on the Belfast Agreement, with yes being by far the most popular choice for Catholics²².

The *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* did not ask the question of how respondents would vote again on the Belfast Agreement referendum, but *Surveys Online* polled respondents on how they would be likely to vote on the St Andrews Agreement if there was a referendum on that question held in 2007. The results are as follows²³, all numbers are in percentages.

²¹ *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey*, 2006.

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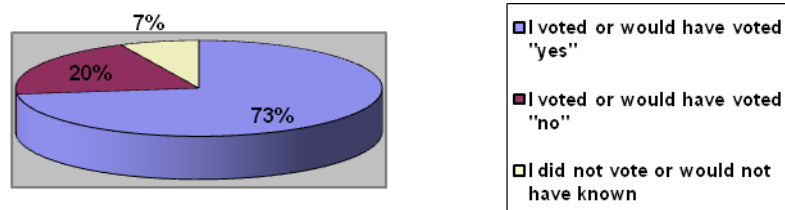
²³ *Surveys Online*, 2006.



These statistics are slightly more positive in outlook than the statistics on the number of people who voted yes to the Belfast Agreement, though relatively high numbers of both all respondents and Catholic respondents indicated that they did not know how they would vote. More Catholics claimed that they would vote yes to the St Andrews Agreement than had voted yes for the Belfast Agreement, though this may reflect a general trend for Catholics to prefer a devolved government in Northern Ireland to direct rule.

In carrying out survey data in 2008 respondents were asked how they voted in 1998, and if they would vote the same way in a referendum in 2008, and why this was the case. These findings will help supplement the statistics to inform a better understanding of why Catholics were more likely to vote yes to the Agreement than Protestants.

73% of our Catholic respondents voted or would have voted 'yes' in 1998 had they been of voting age. 20% voted 'no' or would have voted 'no' in 1998 had they been of voting age. 7% did not know how to vote or would not have known how to vote in 1998 had they been of voting age.

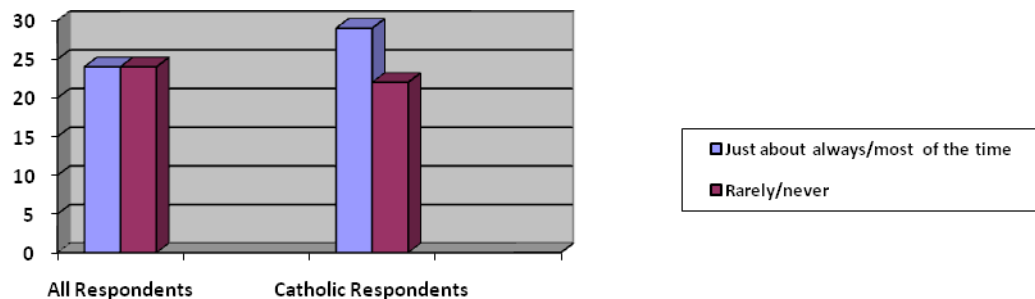


When asked if they would vote the same way in 2008, our Catholic respondents broadly repeated their voting patterns from 1998 were they to vote on the Belfast Agreement in 2008.

75% of them would vote 'yes', 18% would vote 'no' whereas 7% would not know how to vote. This demonstrates a general Catholic satisfaction with and confidence in the Belfast Agreement, which clearly underlines how this community feels it has benefited from the Agreement.

This final section of research on the Belfast Agreement aims to understand how people in Northern Ireland think the devolved institutions have worked for the benefit of the province in comparison to how Northern Ireland benefited under direct rule.

The most recent statistics on this are from 2003, and respondents had multiple choice answers to the question: 'Under direct rule from Britain, as now, how much do you generally trust British governments of any party to act in the best interests of Northern Ireland?'.²⁴ The survey groups respondents answers into 'just about always' and 'most of the time'; or 'rarely' and 'never'. The results are in the chart below²⁵. Numbers are in percentages.



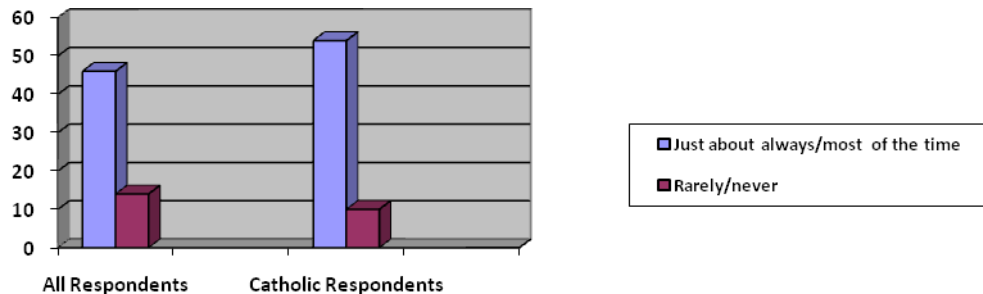
This chart surprisingly demonstrates that Catholic respondents show quite high levels of trust in the British government to act in the best interest of Northern Ireland (29%), with fewer respondents claiming that they would never trust that the British government will act in their best interests (22%)²⁶.

²⁴ *Surveys Online*, 2003.

²⁵ *Surveys Online*, 2003.

²⁶ *Surveys Online*, 2003.

The survey also asked the same question but for devolved institutions in Northern Ireland, with the same answer possibilities. The results for 2003 are as follows²⁷, all numbers are in percentages.



When compared with the statistics for how much trust respondents had in the British government to work in the best interests of Northern Ireland, these results show that Catholic respondents reflect the trend of all respondents in preferring devolved institutions as the best option for Northern Ireland over direct rule. Despite the perceived problems of the Belfast Agreement and the many suspensions of the devolved institutions, Catholic respondents still had more trust in the Northern Ireland Assembly than in a direct rule government to work in Northern Ireland's best interests, though a surprisingly large number of Catholics also trusted the British government to work in the best interests of Northern Ireland. This could reflect perceived impressions of a change of policy from British governments since Labour came to power in 1997 resulting in a revived peace process and the Belfast Agreement in 1998.

The majority of responses from our Catholic respondents were negative in answering the question 'how has the Northern Ireland Assembly worked for you since devolution compared to direct rule?' The institution itself was not criticised but the way in which it operated, or as many pointed out failed to operate and was not actually working, received the harshest treatment. For example one of the respondents answered: "It wasn't actually working at all, I hope it gets better" whereas another called it a "joke". The fact that the Assembly was suspended for nearly five of the past ten years may explain these answers, as well as the fact that people may not remember how the Assembly had worked for them as it was only restored within the past year.

²⁷ *Surveys Online*, 2003.

The advantages of the new, post Agreement Northern Ireland are generally thought to include reduction of violence, “growing, albeit tentative, improvement in relations between some of the political groupings” and “the greater sense of confidence among at least that apart of community which... had felt severely alienated”. Nevertheless, there exist numerous commonly identified disadvantages like continuing inter and intra communal disputes, sectarian and racist attacks, “increased interface tensions”, intimidation of certain members of both communities, “continuing paramilitary presence”, “disillusionment within many working-class communities, the growing alienation from the Agreement from within the Unionist community” which only cautiously supported the Agreement²⁸.

²⁸ M. Hall, *The Good Friday Agreement – where to now? Report of a conference organised by Drogheda Cross-Border Focus*, Newtownabbey: ISI and Publications, 2004, speech by Julietta Clancy of Meath Peace Group.

The Belfast Agreement – Conclusions

In 1998, with an 81% turnout at the referendum, 71% of voters in Northern Ireland voted for the Belfast Agreement, and 29% voted against the Agreement. This shows overwhelming support for the Belfast Agreement; however when this is examined in the context of religion a slightly different picture emerges. Of Catholics who voted, 99% voted for the Agreement, whereas only 57% of Protestants voted for the Agreement. Protestants therefore had a more negative view of the Agreement from the outset, believing that it was not beneficial to their community. Our research aimed to understand if that negativity of the Protestant community and optimism of the Catholic community towards the Agreement remains.

From our research we found that:

- The majority of Protestants voted (or would have voted) no (46%) rather than yes (35%).
- The majority of Catholics voted (or would have voted) yes (73%) rather than no (20%).
- If a referendum was to be held in 2008:
 - The majority of Protestant respondents (44%) would vote no rather than yes.
 - The majority of Catholic respondents (75%) would vote yes rather than no.
- The majority of people in Northern Ireland believe that the Agreement has benefited nationalists over unionists.
- The majority of Protestants believe this to be true.
- The majority of Catholics believe the Agreement to have benefitted both unionists and nationalists.
- However, when asked if they had personally benefited from the Agreement, 48% of Protestants claimed to have benefited and 60% of Catholics claimed the same.
- Reasons given by Protestants that the Belfast Agreement had benefitted the both communities and just the Catholic community included: Increased security; the end of terrorism; and unprecedented political power and representation for Catholics.
- Reasons given by Catholics that the Belfast Agreement had benefitted both communities included: Removal of discrimination and greater equality; improved inter-community relations; less fear; the end of terrorism; greater representation in devolved institutions; and economic benefits.

Northern Ireland as a Divided Society – Protestant Perceptions

The central pivot of the 1998 Belfast Agreement involved the provision of a power sharing executive between representatives of the main parties from the two communities in Northern Ireland. This cross community approach at the elite level has been mirrored by an increased community and voluntary sector in Northern Ireland with various programmes aimed at creating links between the two historically divided communities²⁹. These political elite and voluntary sector cross community links, however, do not necessarily represent the situation of ordinary Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland. There is increasing evidence to suggest that Northern Ireland remains as divided in 2008 as it was in 1998 before the Belfast Agreement and the devolution of power to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The *Irish News* reported on 2nd September 2006 that “the number of peacelines have multiplied over the last 30 years to a total of 40 walls today, stretching 13 miles across Belfast”³⁰. On 4th July 2007 the *Guardian* reported the reasons for the increase in peacelines in Northern Ireland: “While politicians have begun calling for the high-security barriers to be demolished, like the Berlin Wall, the Northern Ireland Office is erecting a new, 25ft-high fence in the grounds of Hazelwood integrated primary school in north Belfast. The decision to go ahead with the project illustrates how the territorial patchwork of the city remains deeply engraved in local minds, and how hard it is to decommission a sense of insecurity”³¹. This report is backed by evidence from a 2008 Milward Brown Ulster poll of 1,037 people from both communities living near some of the more notorious peacelines in Belfast. According to the results of the poll, only 21% of respondents expressed a wish to see the peacelines dismantled immediately, while 60% wanted them to be removed eventually, but not at the moment³².

Our 2008 survey asked respondents why they thought there was more evidence of a physical divide, such as more peace walls, in 2008 than in 1998. More than half (57%) of our Protestant respondents regarded the threat of attacks from another community as the main reason for more evidence of a physical divide. Almost one third (31%) blamed sectarianism for more

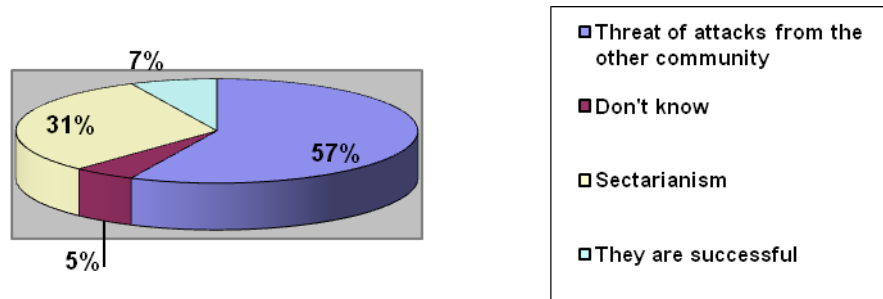
²⁹ For example: The PEACEII Programme which ran from 1993 to 2006 supported organisations which had cross community policies and which aimed at promoting better links between the two communities in Northern Ireland.

³⁰ *Irish News*, 2nd September 2006.

³¹ *Guardian Unlimited*, 4th July 2007.

³² *News Letter*, 8th February 2008.

peace walls and 7% thought that their number increased because of their success and contribution to social peace after 1998.



According to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister's *Good Relation Indicators Baseline Report*, January 2007, only 30% of Protestants live mainly Protestant areas, the number of Catholics who live in mainly Catholic areas is significantly higher at 44%³³. The same report also shows that respondents may not be happy with this artificial segregation of Protestants and Catholics, with 79% of people in Northern Ireland stating a desire to live in a mixed area³⁴. This might explain what appears to be an increase in toleration between the two communities, in an Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister report 82 % of Protestants report that they understand the Catholic community's culture and traditions, and 87% of Protestants report that they respect the Catholic community's culture and traditions. Statistics on how relations between the two communities are perceived by Protestants also show an increase from 1998 when 29% of Protestants believed that relations between Protestants and Catholics were better than five years ago, compared with in 2008 when 54% of Protestants believed that relations between Protestants and Catholics were better than five years ago³⁵. The same poll shows an optimism for the future relations between Protestants and Catholics, with 50% of Protestant respondents in 2006 claiming that they thought relations between Protestants and Catholics will be better in the future, compared to just 37% who thought the same in 1998³⁶. Whilst there is in general a steady increase in the numbers of Protestants who think that relations

³³ Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, *Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report*, January 2007.

³⁴ Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, *Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report*, January 2007.

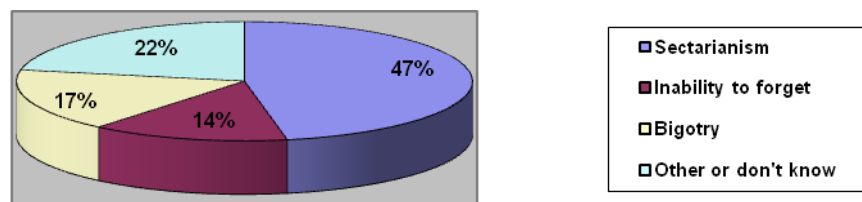
³⁵ *Surveys Online*, 1998a, 2006.

³⁶ *Surveys Online*, 1998a, 2006.

are better than five years ago and will be better in the future, there was a dip in the years 2001 and 2002. This is probably an anomaly and represents the an upheaval in the political and security situation at the time, particularly the suspension of the devolved assembly, the arrest of the Colombia 3 in 2001, a failure by the Irish Republican Army to decommission even in light of the terrorist attacks on the USA on September 11th 2001. Although some of these statistics represent a more tolerant and integrated future for Northern Ireland, in the most recent *Surveys Online* poll on the question in 2004, 85% of Protestants claimed that religion would always make a difference in Northern Ireland³⁷, negating any potential optimism from the statistics proclaiming a more tolerant Northern Ireland.

This research then aimed to discover whether there was a perception in Northern Ireland that one community had more to gain by maintaining the divide than the other community. Our 2008 survey data offers supplementary evidence as to why and how people think that Northern Ireland is a divided society.

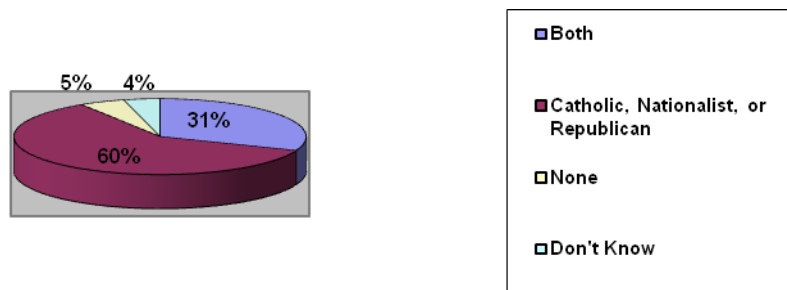
When asked the question: ‘Given the Belfast Agreement, why do you think Northern Ireland remains a divided society?’ 47% of our Protestant respondents still blame sectarianism for the division of society in Northern Ireland. 14% maintained that the division was still present because of the inability to forget the past. 17% thought that bigotry was responsible for the state of affairs. The rest of the respondents thought other reasons were behind the division of society or did not know the answer. Please refer to the chart below:



When asked ‘Which community do you think is maintaining the divide and has the most to gain from maintaining the divide?’ 60% of our Protestant respondents insisted that the Catholic

³⁷ *Surveys Online*, 2004.

community maintained the social divide and had the most to gain from maintaining the divide. 31% felt that both communities were responsible for the social divide in Northern Ireland.



In understanding which community is perceived to be maintaining the divided society in Northern Ireland, it is also necessary understand what benefits are perceived to be incurred as a result of the divide. There is a general perception that the Belfast Agreement has benefitted Catholics to the detriment of Protestants, however, a *Surveys Online* poll demonstrates that each communities view of who is treated better differs quite dramatically. Only 8% of Protestants thought that Protestants were treated better in Northern Ireland in 2003, whereas 41% of Protestants thought that Catholics were treated better in the same year³⁸, this isn't unsurprising in itself as it reflects general assumptions that Catholics are the winners from the Belfast Agreement, what is however surprising is the numbers of Catholics who perceived Protestants to be treated better in 2003, which was 56%, with only 1% of Catholics believing that Catholics were treated better³⁹. This negates the idea of Catholics benefiting from the Belfast Agreement more than Protestants, however it is important to note that these are only perceptions of who is treated better, and don't represent actual numbers. This research then aims to address the question of which community has better opportunities in the realm of education, employment and political representation, or if both communities benefit equally from the Belfast Agreement.

Education in Northern Ireland is one of the key areas of segregation between Protestants and Catholics, with the vast majority of Schools in the province admitting single faith students. The first integrated school in Northern Ireland was opened in 1981, and there are now 63 integrated schools of various levels throughout the province⁴⁰ with integrated schools

³⁸ *Surveys Online*, 2003.

³⁹ *Surveys Online*, 2003.

⁴⁰ <http://www.nicie.org>.

representing only 5.5% of the student population⁴¹. According to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, two thirds of people said they would prefer to send their children to an integrated school in 2005⁴², however the numbers do not reflect this and the vast majority of students in Northern Ireland therefore attend schools with only students of the same religion as their own, and there are not many opportunities for students of the two religions to integrate. University often offers the first opportunity for students in Northern Ireland to associate with people of a different religion. Third level education in Northern Ireland then is an important indicator of the opportunities offered to each community.

Third level education in Northern Ireland is integrated and open to applications from all sections of Northern Irish society, as well as to United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland applicants and international applicants. There is however a notable difference in the numbers of Protestants and Catholics from Northern Ireland who attend University in Northern Ireland. According to a Department for Employment and Learning report, students “who leave Northern Ireland for Higher Education are different in many respects from those who stay. For example, on average, those who left Northern Ireland tended to be better qualified in terms of A level scores, were more likely to be from the Protestant community, their parents were more likely to have had a professional background and they tended to have had a grammar school education”⁴³. This is reflected by statistics based on graduates of 1995 and 1999, which, though somewhat out of date help demonstrate the traditional divide between Protestant and Catholic students at universities in Northern Ireland. 42% of students in these years claimed a Protestant identity, which is significantly less than the numbers who claimed a Catholic identity (51%)⁴⁴.

Perceptions of the opportunities offered to students in Northern Ireland seeking third level education may however differ to the known results. Our 2008 Survey asked ‘Since the Belfast Agreement which community do you think has better opportunities in Northern Ireland for university and third level education?’ 51% of our Protestant respondents stated that the Catholic community had better opportunities for university or third level education. On the Other hand 32% regarded these opportunities as equal for both communities in Northern Ireland. Only 4% of

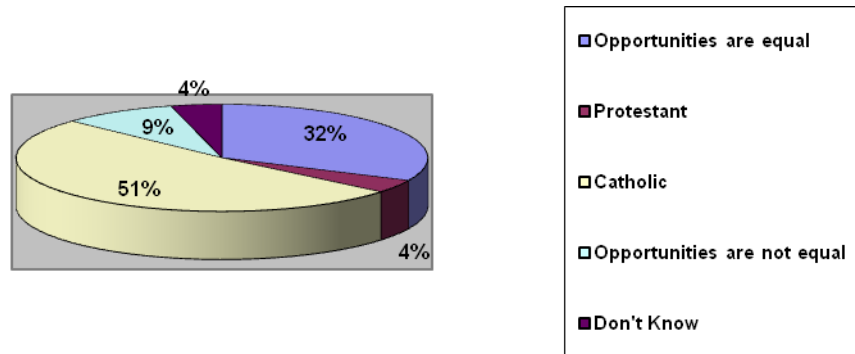
⁴¹ Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, *Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report*, January 2007.

⁴² Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, *Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report*, January 2007.

⁴³ Department for Employment and Learning, *An analysis of higher education students who study in Northern Ireland compared to those who leave to study in GB - 2002/03 Academic Year*.

⁴⁴ Department for Employment and Learning, *Northern Ireland's graduates: the classes of '95 and '99*, October 2005.

the Protestant respondents felt that their community had better opportunities in these fields. These reflect generally held misperceptions amongst the Protestant community that the Belfast Agreement has advantaged Catholics to a greater degree than Protestants, even though educational opportunities are similar. Please refer to the chart below:



Educational benefits is not the only area that can be examined to see if there is a difference between which community is perceived to have gained from the Belfast Agreement and whether this is statistically so. Employment has traditionally been segregated in Northern Ireland amongst Protestants and Catholics, and this is reflected in today's employment laws which have introduced quotas for some professions⁴⁵, and encourage applicants from certain sections of the community to apply for particular jobs where one community is over represented and the other is under represented. It is therefore necessary to see if employment opportunities have been affected by the Belfast Agreement.

In 2006 Protestants constituted 56.3% of the work force in Northern Ireland, a clear majority over the Catholic share of the workforce (43.7%). These statistics taken out of context however, fail to demonstrate that the Catholic share of the workforce is on the increase, signalling a decrease over time in the Protestant share of the workforce⁴⁶. These changes in the workforce can be attributed to certain factors amongst the Protestant population of Northern Ireland. Firstly, more Protestant students leave Northern Ireland to pursue third level education in the United

⁴⁵ The Police Service of Northern Ireland runs a policy of attempting to employ 50% Protestants and 50% Catholics.

⁴⁶ The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, *2006 Monitoring Report. Monitoring Report No. 17. A Profile of the Northern Ireland Workforce.*

Kingdom than Catholics, and significant numbers do not return to Northern Ireland⁴⁷. Secondly the Protestant population has an older age profile than the Catholic population⁴⁸.

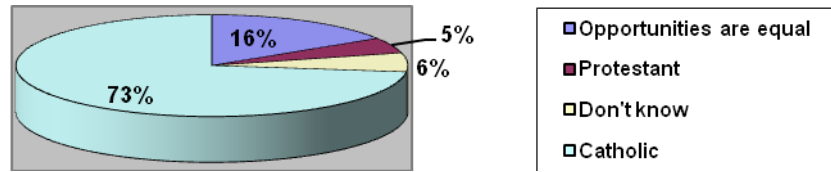
Different forms of employment that could be expected to demonstrate a clear difference in employment opportunities in Northern Ireland simply reinforce the suggestion that the two communities benefit equally in the area of employment. 42.6% of Protestants were more likely to have no qualifications than Catholics, but the percentage for Catholics is 41.3%, roughly equivalent to the Protestant numbers. Protestants were less likely to work in construction than Catholics, 7.3% and 11.7% respectively, though this difference is very small, and as could be expected Protestants were more likely than Catholics to work in the public sector with 10.4% and 7.4% respectively. This is also a negligible difference. Not even in the area of managerial and professional occupations, which Protestants could be expected to be in greater numbers than Catholics is the difference between the two communities very great at 28.3% for Protestants compared with 25.8% for Catholics⁴⁹. Employment opportunities therefore appear to be split evenly between the Protestant and the Catholic community. This may not however be the perception amongst members of the Protestant and Catholic communities, so new survey data analysing which community is perceived to be benefitting more can help supplement these raw statistics.

When asked ‘Which community do you think has better employment opportunities?’ 73% of our Protestant respondents thought that the employment opportunities are better for Catholics in Northern Ireland. 16% found them equal for both of the communities. This does not reflect the known statistics about employment opportunities in Northern Ireland, though this answer may have been influenced by the quota system in certain professions which seeks to employ an even number of people from both the Protestant and Catholic communities.

⁴⁷ Department for Employment and Learning, *An analysis of higher education students who study in Northern Ireland compared to those who leave to study in GB - 2002/03 Academic Year*.

⁴⁸ The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, *A Report 2006. Census 2001: Community Background in Northern Ireland*.

⁴⁹ The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, *A Report 2006. Census 2001: Community Background in Northern Ireland*.



Northern Ireland in the opinion of many observers remains a divided political entity. The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland which is the only cross community party in Northern Ireland currently has 7 elected representatives (out of the total 108) in the Northern Ireland Assembly, and continuously reminds the voters of this fact and maintains that the social divide is costing the province 1 billion pounds every year⁵⁰.

⁵⁰ “£1 billion spent yearly on segregation is destroying our economy – Alliance”, http://www.allianceparty.org/news/002362/1_billion_spent_yearly_on_segregation_is_destroying_our_economy__alliance.html.

Northern Ireland as a Divided Society – Catholic Perceptions

The central pivot of the 1998 Belfast Agreement involved the provision of a power sharing executive between representatives of the main parties from the two communities in Northern Ireland. This cross community approach at the elite level has been mirrored by an increased community and voluntary sector in Northern Ireland with various programmes aimed at creating links between the two historically divided communities⁵¹. These political elite and voluntary sector cross community links, however, do not necessarily represent the situation of ordinary Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland. There is increasing evidence to suggest that Northern Ireland remains as divided in 2008 as it was in 1998 before the Belfast Agreement and the devolution of power to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The *Irish News* reported on 2nd September 2006 that “the number of peacelines have multiplied over the last 30 years to a total of 40 walls today, stretching 13 miles across Belfast”⁵². On 4th July 2007 the *Guardian* reported the reasons for the increase in peacelines in Northern Ireland: “While politicians have begun calling for the high-security barriers to be demolished, like the Berlin Wall, the Northern Ireland Office is erecting a new, 25ft-high fence in the grounds of Hazelwood integrated primary school in north Belfast. The decision to go ahead with the project illustrates how the territorial patchwork of the city remains deeply engraved in local minds, and how hard it is to decommission a sense of insecurity”⁵³. This report is backed by evidence from a 2008 Milward Brown Ulster poll of 1,037 people from both communities living near some of the more notorious peacelines in Belfast. According to the results of the poll, only 21% of respondents expressed a wish to see the peacelines dismantled immediately, while 60% wanted them to be removed eventually, but not at the moment⁵⁴.

Our 2008 survey asked respondents why they thought there was more evidence of a physical divide, such as more peace walls, in 2008 than in 1998. Equally one third of our Catholic respondents either did not know why there was more evidence of a physical divide or blamed this on a threat of attacks from members of the other community. 27% blamed

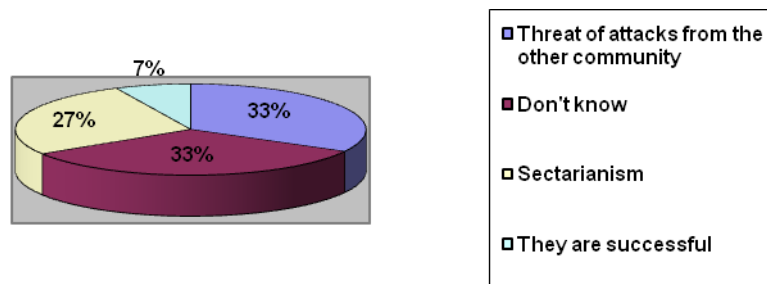
⁵¹ For example: The PEACEII Programme which ran from 1993 to 2006 supported organisations which had cross community policies and which aimed at promoting better links between the two communities in Northern Ireland.

⁵² *Irish News*, 2nd September 2006.

⁵³ *Guardian Unlimited*, 4th July 2007.

⁵⁴ *News Letter*, 8th February 2008.

sectarianism for this and 7% thought that more peace walls were being erected because in the past they had been successful. Please refer to chart below.



There is ample evidence to suggest that Northern Ireland is a divided society with two communities who do not know or interact with each other; according to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister's *Good Relation Indicators Baseline Report*, January 2007, 44% of Catholics live in mainly Catholic areas. This number is considerably lower for Protestants (30%)⁵⁵. This might suggest that the Catholic community still perceives itself as being oppressed by the state and for this reason its members are more likely to look for safety while living together. This could, however, also be interpreted as a rising Catholic confidence in Northern Ireland; as the Catholic population expands it incorporates more areas into its domain. This theory might be supported by the fact that Protestants are responsible for the majority of opinions hostile to the desegregation of Northern Ireland, such as the dismantling of peace walls which are seen to protect them from more confident, energetic and recently more vibrant Catholic community. The current state of division does, however, not reflect the long term goals of Northern Ireland's Protestants and Catholics, with as recently as January 2007 79% of people in Northern Ireland stating their wish to live in a mixed area⁵⁶.

The Catholic community displays a warm and welcoming approach towards their Protestant neighbours; 82% of Catholics say they understand the Protestant community's culture and traditions and 92% respect the Protestant community's culture and traditions⁵⁷. Moreover, in 2006 60% of Catholics said that relations with Protestants were better than they had been five

⁵⁵ Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, *Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report*, January 2007.

⁵⁶ Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, *Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report*, January 2007.

⁵⁷ Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, *Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report*, January 2007.

years previously. In 1999 this figure was the same but in 2001 and 2002 less than 40% of Catholics thought this⁵⁸. These negative results may however reflect a period of upheaval in the political and security situation in Northern Ireland prior to the IRA's first act of decommissioning, in the wake of the Columbia 3 scandal, and especially in the light of the events of September 11th 2001 which added to the pressure on the paramilitary organisations to disband and to decommission. In 2006 61% of Catholics said that relations with Protestants will be better in the future, however, these statistics also dipped in 2001 with only 40% of Catholics agreeing with this statement⁵⁹. This could again reflect a worsening of intercommunity relations during one of the tensest periods of the peace process. Despite the fact that it is becoming harder to locate any visible traces of anti-Catholic discrimination, in 2006 81% of Catholics claimed that religion will always make a difference in Northern Ireland. This does not represent much of a change from the late 1990s with 77% in 1998 and 79% in 1999 of Catholics responding in the same way⁶⁰. This of course can be broadly interpreted but it seems to suggest that the divide between the communities, despite the peace process and all of the reconciliation gestures, is deeply entrenched in Northern Ireland and it is unlikely that the situation is to change any time soon. Moreover, this grim conclusion receives more support from the fact that there were 1,470 sectarian and 746 racist hate crimes in Northern Ireland during 2005/06⁶¹.

This research then aimed to discover whether there was a perception in Northern Ireland that one community had more to gain by maintaining the divide than the other community. Our 2008 survey data offers examples of why and how people think Northern Ireland is a divided society.

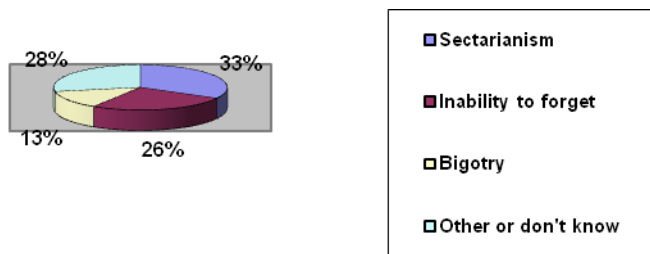
When asked the question: 'Given the Belfast Agreement, why do you think Northern Ireland remains a divided society?' 33% of our Catholic respondents still blame sectarianism for the division of society in Northern Ireland. 26% maintained that the division was still present because of the inability to forget the past. 13% thought that bigotry was responsible for the state of affairs. The rest of the respondents thought other reasons were behind the division of society and did not know the answer. See chart below:

⁵⁸ *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* 1999, 2001, 2002, 2006.

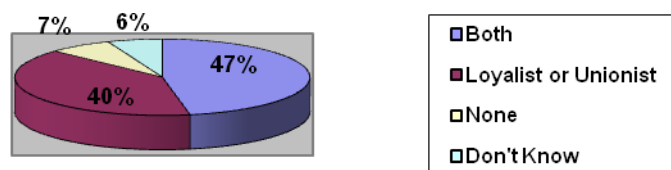
⁵⁹ *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* 1999, 2001, 2006.

⁶⁰ *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* 1998, 1999, 2006.

⁶¹ Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, *Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report*, January 2007.



When asked ‘Which community do you think is maintaining the divide and has the most to gain from maintaining the divide?’ 47% of our Catholic respondents insisted that both communities maintain the social divide in Northern Ireland. It was mostly the younger respondents who stressed this point. Nevertheless the broadly accepted allegation that it was the Protestant community which was maintaining the divide was supported by 40% of our respondents. The rest of the respondents were almost equally divided between those who did not know or who stated that none of the communities maintained the social divide. See chart below:



In understanding which community is perceived to be maintaining the divided society in Northern Ireland, it is also necessary understand what benefits are perceived to be incurred as a result of the divide. There is a general perception that the Belfast Agreement has benefited Catholics to the detriment of Protestants, however, a *Surveys Online* poll demonstrates that each communities view of who is treated better differs quite dramatically and the official statistics regarding the division of society in Northern Ireland can sometimes lead to surprising results. The most recent statistics show that 56% of Catholics thought that Protestant were treated better in 2003, which is a significant rise from the results of 1998 when only 37% had been of the same opinion⁶². This is surprising due to the fact that one might have expected the opposite to be the

⁶² *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* 1998, 2003.

case in 1998. It looks therefore as if the confidence and vibrancy of the Catholic community might not be as high as widely perceived. However, more recent data is needed to support the claim which would lead to the opinion that Protestants benefit more from maintaining the divide in Northern Ireland. This last claim seems baseless in the light of the fact that in 2006 only 6% of Catholics claimed that they were generally treated unfairly when compared with other groups, this differs by nine percentage points from the first available results from 2001⁶³. In contrast, in 2006 only 1% of Catholics believed that Protestants were generally treated unfairly when compared with other groups⁶⁴. Thus, it is becoming evident that the Catholic community has stopped perceiving itself as oppressed in Northern Ireland despite the fact that the continuing discrimination against Catholics is still reported⁶⁵. Nowadays, such reports may be used simply for the political gain of one or other of the nationalist electoral parties. It is, however, hard to support this with facts; Catholics are no longer discriminated against in terms of housing and jobs, and the current composition of the Derry City Council, where 24 out of 30 councillors represent Nationalist parties on the council serves as the best commentary to any accusations of political discrimination⁶⁶. Nevertheless, it must be noted that a small percentage of the Catholic community still suffers from what may be considered pre-Belfast Agreement discrimination; in 2001 16.1% of Catholics were living in an overcrowded house, 8.7% were unemployed and 9.8% were in the category of ‘Never Worked and Long-term unemployed’⁶⁷. All of these numbers are considerably lower for the Protestant community.

This research then aims to address the question of which community has better opportunities in the realm of education, employment and political representation, or if both communities benefit equally from the Belfast Agreement.

Education in Northern Ireland is one of the key areas of segregation between Protestants and Catholics, with the vast majority of Schools in the province admitting single faith students. The first integrated school in Northern Ireland was opened in 1981, and there are now 63

⁶³ *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* 2001, 2006.

⁶⁴ *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* 2006.

⁶⁵ S. Breen, “Catholics still get the raw deal in North”, *The Village*, November 8, 2004.

⁶⁶ <http://www.derrycity.gov.uk/elected-members.htm>.

⁶⁷ The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, *A Report 2006. Census 2001: Community Background in Northern Ireland*.

integrated schools of various levels throughout the province⁶⁸ with integrated schools representing only 5.5% of the student population⁶⁹. According to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, two thirds of people said they would prefer to send their children to an integrated school in 2005⁷⁰, however the numbers do not reflect this and the vast majority of students in Northern Ireland therefore attend schools with only students of the same religion as their own, and there are not many opportunities for students of the two religions to integrate. University often offers the first opportunity for students in Northern Ireland to associate with people of a different religion. Third level education in Northern Ireland then is an important indicator of the opportunities offered to each community.

A Department for Employment and Learning report claims that students “who leave Northern Ireland for Higher Education are different in many respects from those who stay. For example, on average, those who left Northern Ireland tended to be better qualified in terms of A level scores, were more likely to be from Protestant community, their parents were more likely to have a professional background and they tended to have had a grammar school education”⁷¹. This is reflected in the statistics which clearly demonstrate this phenomenon; only 69% of students originating from Northern Ireland remain to study at its Higher Education institutions whereas the levels for England and Scotland are 95% and 94% respectively⁷². On the basis of this, it can be argued that the bulk of the Northern Irish students at this province’s Higher Education institutions are Catholic as the result of the emigration of their potential colleagues from the Protestant community.

Perceptions of the opportunities offered to students in Northern Ireland seeking third level education may however differ to the known results. Our 2008 survey asked ‘Since the Belfast Agreement which community do you think has better opportunities in Northern Ireland for university/third level education?’ 40% of our Catholic respondents stated that the opportunities are equal and that both communities are making the most of them. Equally 20% thought that it was either the Catholic or the Protestant community that has the better educational opportunities. 10% opted for saying that opportunities were not equal and roughly the same number of

⁶⁸ <http://www.nicie.org>.

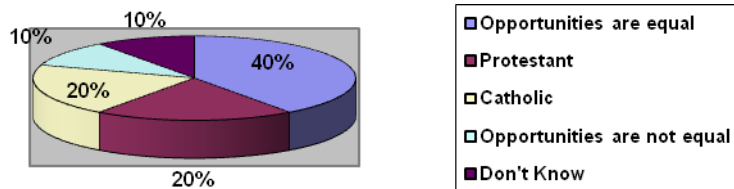
⁶⁹ Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, *Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report*, January 2007.

⁷⁰ Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, *Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report*, January 2007.

⁷¹ Department for Employment and Learning, *An analysis of higher education students who study in Northern Ireland compared to those who leave to study in GB. 2002/03 Academic Year*.

⁷² Department for Employment and Learning, *An analysis of higher education students who study in Northern Ireland compared to those who leave to study in GB. 2002/03 Academic Year*.

respondents did not know how to answer this question. The majority of Catholic respondents therefore felt that opportunities for education were equal between the two communities, demonstrating that Catholic respondents in general believe the Belfast Agreement to equally benefit Protestants and Catholics.



Educational benefits is not the only area that can be examined to see if there is a difference between which community is perceived to have gained from the Belfast Agreement and whether this is statistically so. Employment has traditionally been segregated in Northern Ireland amongst Protestants and Catholics, and this is reflected in today's employment laws which have introduced quotas for some professions⁷³, and encourage applicants from certain sections of the community to apply for particular jobs where one community is over represented and the other is under represented. It is therefore necessary to see if employment opportunities have been affected by the Belfast Agreement.

In 2006 Catholics constituted 43.7% of the workforce in Northern Ireland. This number may suggest a factual Protestant domination of the labour market but in reality it is the latest reminder of the fact that Northern Ireland has witnessed a "long-established trend of growth in the Roman Catholic share of the workforce"⁷⁴. Of the 1995 and 1999 classes of graduates in Northern Ireland approximately 51% respondents cited their community of origin as Roman Catholic with 77% of them declaring an overall satisfaction with their careers⁷⁵. This trend is now increasingly visible and Higher Education Institutions in Northern Ireland which provide the

⁷³ The Police Service of Northern Ireland runs a policy of attempting to employ 50% Protestants and 50% Catholics.

⁷⁴ The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, *2006 Monitoring Report. Monitoring Report No. 17. A Profile of the Northern Ireland Workforce.*

⁷⁵ Department for Employment and Learning, *Northern Ireland's graduates: the classes of '95 and '99*, October 2005.

local labour market with the most qualified members of the workforce are therefore supplying more Catholic graduates than Protestant graduates. This is hardly surprising, given that the Protestant population is of an older age profile; Protestants constitute more than 60% of persons of the age group 55 to 74 and almost 70% of the most senior citizens of Northern Ireland, those aged over 75⁷⁶. Thus the disproportion in the number of Catholic and Protestant students is not the result of the differences in academic qualities between the two, nor the aforementioned emigration of the Protestants to English or Scottish universities but mostly the result of the age profiles of the communities. The outcome of this is the fact that 4.6% of all Catholics were students in 2001 – a considerably larger share than for the Protestant community⁷⁷.

Different forms of employment that could be expected to demonstrate a clear difference in employment opportunities in Northern Ireland simply reinforce the suggestion that the two communities benefit equally in the area of employment. 41.3% of Catholics were likely to have no qualifications, but the percentage for Protestants is 42.6%, roughly equivalent to the Catholic numbers. Protestants were less likely to work in construction than Catholics, 7.3% and 11.7% respectively, though this difference is very small, and as could be expected Catholics were less likely to work in the public sector than Protestants with 7.4% and 10.4% respectively. This is also a negligible difference. Not even in the area of managerial and professional occupations, which Catholics could be expected to be in lesser numbers than Protestants is the difference between the two communities very great at 25.8% for Catholics compared with 28.3% for Protestants⁷⁸. Employment opportunities therefore appear to be split evenly between the Protestant and the Catholic community. This may not however be the perception amongst members of the Protestant and Catholic communities, so new survey data analysing which community is perceived to be benefitting more can help supplement these raw statistics.

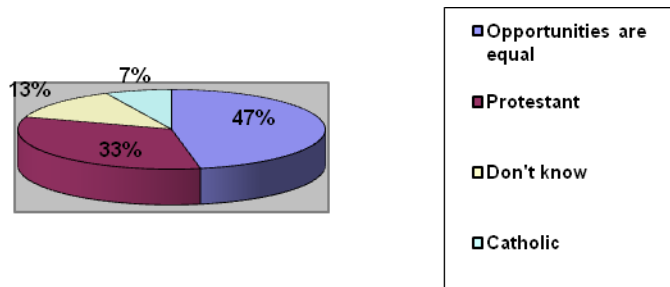
When asked which community has better employment opportunities 47% of our Catholic respondents thought that the employment opportunities are equal for both of the communities but 33% still regarded the Protestants as more privileged in this aspect of life. 13% did not know how

⁷⁶ The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, *A Report 2006. Census 2001: Community Background in Northern Ireland*.

⁷⁷ The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, *A Report 2006. Census 2001: Community Background in Northern Ireland*.

⁷⁸ The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, *A Report 2006. Census 2001: Community Background in Northern Ireland*.

to answer and 7% responded that the Catholics had better employment opportunities. The majority of Catholic respondents felt that employment opportunities, like educational opportunities were shared equally between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, Catholic perceptions of the Belfast Agreement then appear to be positive.



Northern Ireland in the opinion of many observers remains a divided political entity. The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland which is the only cross community party in Northern Ireland currently has 7 elected representatives (out of the total 108) in the Northern Ireland Assembly, and continuously reminds the voters of this fact and maintains that the social divide is costing the province 1 billion pounds every year⁷⁹.

⁷⁹ “£1 billion spent yearly on segregation is destroying our economy – Alliance”, http://www.allianceparty.org/news/002362/1_billion_spent_yearly_on_segregation_is_destroying_our_economy_alliance.html.

Northern Ireland as a Divided Society – Conclusions

Northern Ireland remains a divided society. Currently there are more peace walls than in 1998 and 74% of the local inhabitants live in strictly single community housing areas despite the fact that almost four fifths of them would like to live in a religiously mixed area.

In addition to this our research shows that:

- More than half (57%) of our Protestant respondents felt that there were more peace walls because of the threat of attacks from the other community. One third of Catholics shared this view but also more than a quarter (27%) blamed sectarianism for this. A similar share of Protestants also chose sectarianism as a reason for this (31%). Nevertheless, most surprising was the fact that one third of our Catholic respondents said they had not known why there was more evidence of a physical divide between the two communities.
- Almost half of our Protestant respondents (47%) regarded sectarianism as the reason for the continuous division of the Northern Irish society. In addition to this 17% blamed bigotry for this. Catholic respondents tended to blame sectarianism less (33%) but focused on the inability to forget the past by both communities (26% to 14% of the Protestants).
- According to our Catholic respondents it was either the Loyalist/Unionist community (47%) or both communities (40%) which were responsible for maintaining the social divide in Northern Ireland. On the other hand three fifths of our Protestant respondents blamed the other community for this and almost one third (31%) maintained that both of the communities shared the blame for the social divide.
- Both sets of respondents were convinced to a similar degree of the equality of educational opportunities in Northern Ireland (40% of Catholics and 32% of Protestants). Nevertheless, it became clear that a very small majority (51%) of Protestants are also assured of the fact that it was Catholics who actually have better educational opportunities. Hardly any of the Protestant respondents (4%) felt that their community had better opportunities. On the other hand, a roughly similar number of our Catholic respondents (one fifth for each) regarded that it was either their community or the other which was in a better position in this regard.

- Almost half of our Catholic respondents (47%), and almost three times more than the polled Protestants (16%), thought that the opportunities in employment were equal for both communities. At the same time almost three quarters (73%) of Protestants felt that the other community had better employment opportunities and only one third of Catholics said the same thing about the other community.

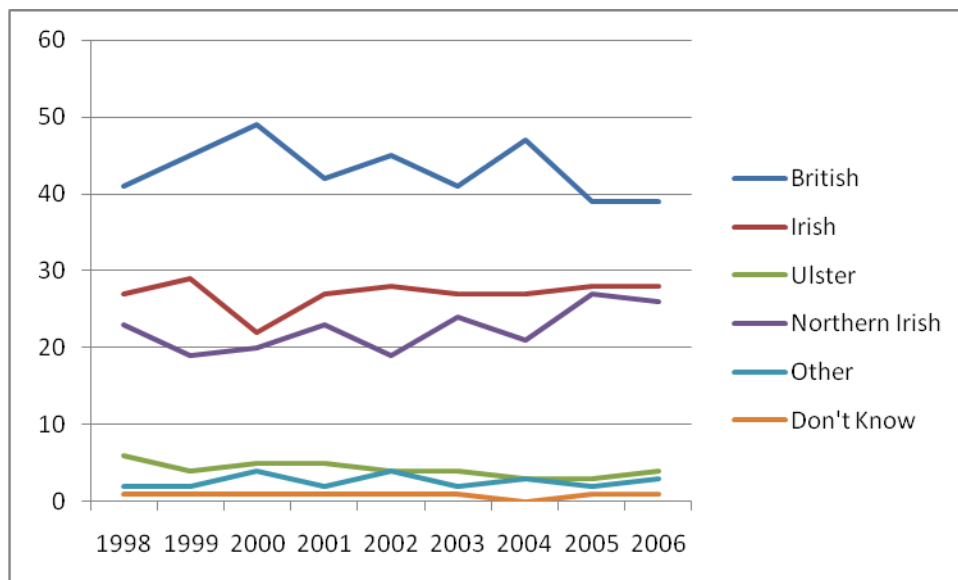
National Identity – Protestant Perceptions

This research aimed to address the question of how people believed their own personal identity, and the identity of Northern Ireland as a country had changed in the 10 years since the Belfast Agreement. The aim was to understand whether there was a perception amongst respondents that Northern Ireland was changing because of the Belfast Agreement and becoming either more Protestant/unionist/loyalist, or more Catholic/nationalist/republican. These perceptions were addressed to understand the broader implications for the constitutional future of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom.

The results of the survey must however be examined in the context of a broader study of a time series analysis of identity in Northern Ireland. This will help us understand if the reasons given by respondents to why or how they think their own identity and that of Northern Ireland has changed reflect the realities of the statistics.

The *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* polls respondents on their national identity, and their political identity.

The results for all respondents to the question of national identity for the years 1998 – 2006 are in the table below⁸⁰.

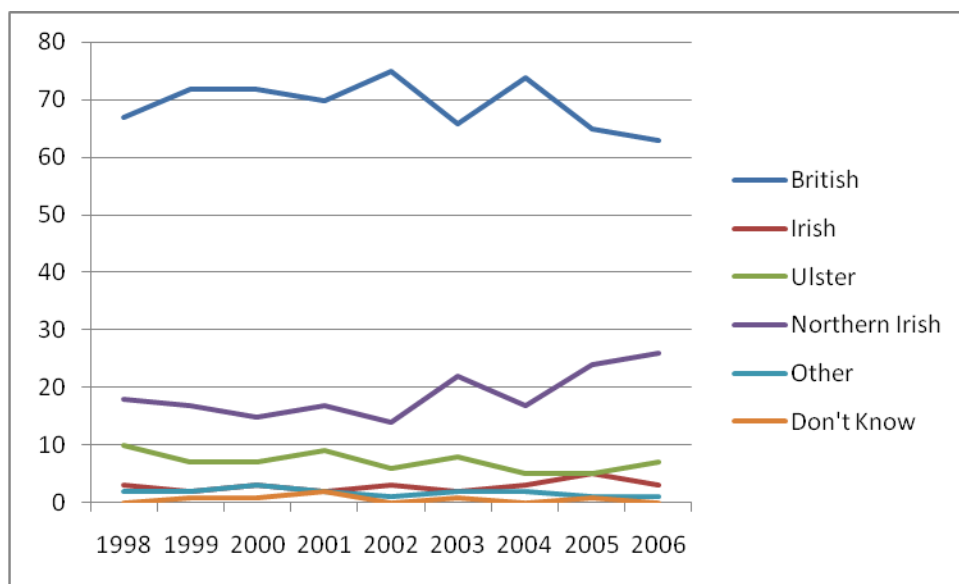


⁸⁰ *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey*, 1998; 1999; 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006.

This graph demonstrates that over the first 8 years following the Belfast Agreement there is a slight downward trend in respondents who consider their identity to be British, though this is the largest category, a generally steady trend of those who perceive themselves to be Irish, which is the second largest category, and a slight increase in those who perceive their identity to be Northern Irish which is the third largest category. Those who considered themselves as Ulster remained under 10% for the whole period, while those who either considered their identity to be ‘other’ or who didn’t know their identity remained under 5%⁸¹.

The most recent statistics show that in 2006 39% of respondents claimed a British Identity, 28 % an Irish identity, 26% a Northern Irish Identity, 4% an Ulster Identity, 4% responded with an other identity and 1% didn’t know their identity⁸².

When the statistics are examined to show how Protestant perceptions of Identity have changed, they reflect the general trend of all respondents. The results for Protestant respondents to the survey for the period 1998 – 2006 are in the table below⁸³.



⁸¹ Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, 1998; 1999; 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006.

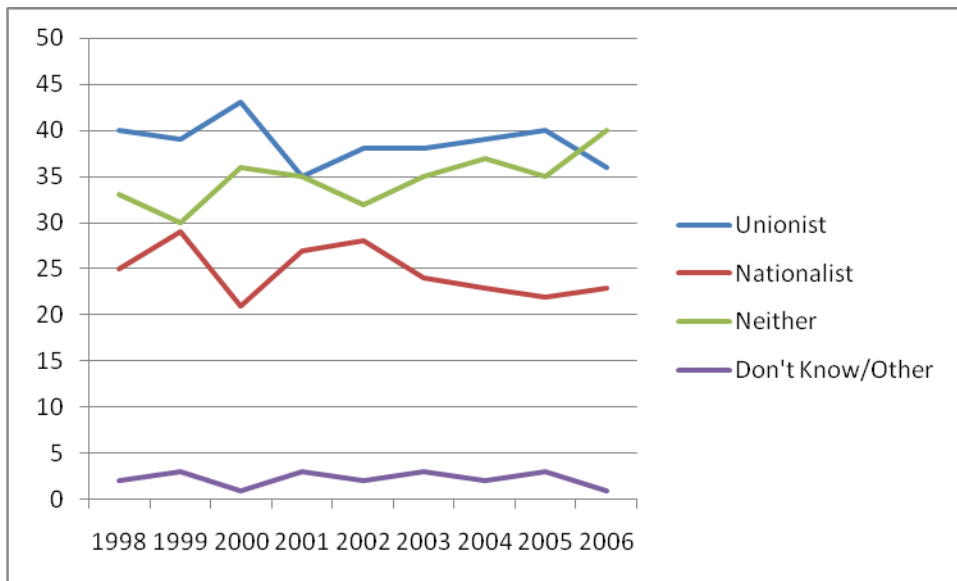
⁸² Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, 2006.

⁸³ Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, 1998; 1999; 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006.

This graph demonstrates a slight downward trend in the numbers of Protestants who perceive their identity to be British, though this is by far the largest category. There is a steady increase in the number of Protestants who perceive their identity to be Northern Irish, which explains the overall increase from all respondents in this category. Protestants who considered their identity to be Ulster, Irish, an other, or who didn't know their identity maintained insignificant levels under 10% of respondents each.

National Identity in Northern Ireland is often considered analogous to political identity. The *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* regularly polls respondents on their political identity, offering the respondent the choice of unionist, nationalist, neither, other, or don't know.

The results for all respondents to the question of political identity for the years 1998 – 2006 are in the table below⁸⁴.



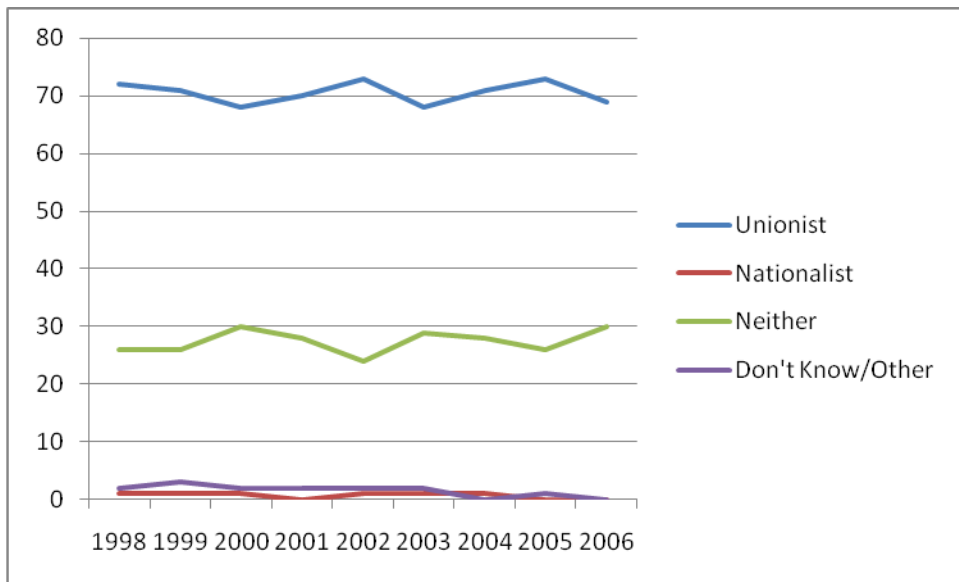
This graph shows an interesting and perhaps unexpected trend over the eight year period. Respondents who considered their political identity to be either unionist or nationalist both decreased over the period, with those considering their political identity to be neither nationalist nor unionist showing an upward trend and in 2006 this represented the largest category. Those

⁸⁴ *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey*, 1998; 1999; 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006.

who did not know their identity or chose an ‘other’ identity maintained low levels of under 10% of respondents.

The most recent published statistics show that in 2006 the largest category of political identity in Northern Ireland was neither unionist nor nationalist, with 40% of respondents choosing this identification. The second largest group has a perceived unionist identity with 36% of respondents, and those who chose nationalist as their political identity was the third largest group with 23% of respondents choosing this category. The statistics for respondents who did not know their political identity or chose an ‘other’ was 1% in this year⁸⁵.

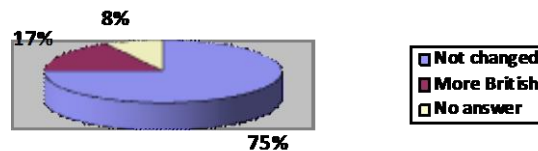
The statistics for just the Protestant respondents to the survey reflect the wider trends in the general statistics for all respondents. See the table below.



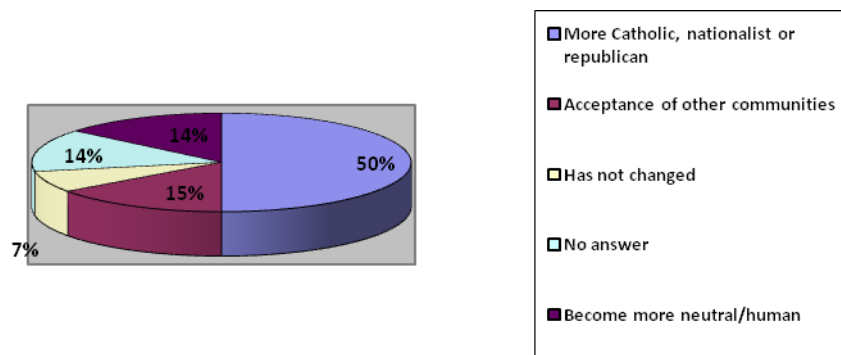
In general, Protestants who felt that their political identity was unionist decreased marginally, though it is still by far the category with the largest percentage of Protestant respondents. The second largest category belongs to Protestants who felt that their political identity was neither unionist nor nationalist, and those respondents who felt their identity to be nationalist, who didn't know their identity or chose an ‘other’ identity was negligible.

⁸⁵ *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey*, 2006.

Our survey aimed to address the questions of how respondents felt that their own personal identity and the identity of Northern Ireland had changed since the Belfast Agreement, which allows a comparison with the known statistics on how identity has changed. The statistics above show that in general Protestant Identity has remained constantly unionist over the past ten years, with a slight increase in respondents who felt neither nationalist nor unionist. Our survey data shows that 75% of Protestant respondents claimed that their identity had not changed since the Belfast Agreement, with 17% claiming that their identity had become more British. Unsurprisingly no Protestant respondents thought that their identity had changed to become more Irish. Please see the chart below:



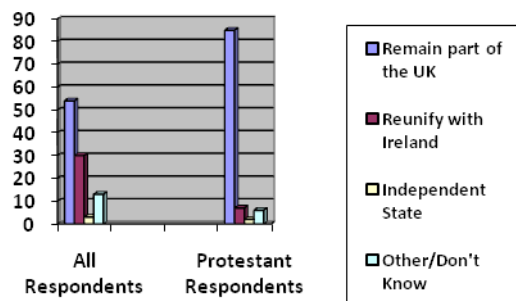
Our survey also asked respondents how they thought the identity of Northern Ireland had changed in the ten years since the Belfast Agreement. 50% of Protestants felt that the identity of Northern Ireland had changed and become more Catholic, nationalist or Republican. This is unsurprising and reflects perceived impressions of how Protestants view Northern Ireland post-Belfast Agreement. 15% of Protestant respondents felt that there was a greater acceptance of other communities from both Catholics and Protestants; only 7% felt that the identity hadn't changed, and 14% felt that the identity had changed to become more neutral or more human.



These statistics represent generally held perceptions that the Protestant community believes that Northern Ireland has become more Catholic since the Belfast Agreement. According to the *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* this is however not the case. It is important to note, however, that Protestants believe there to be a change in identity in Northern Ireland, whether this in fact reflects the reality of the situation or not. This also feeds into the perception of Protestants that they have somehow lost from the Belfast Agreement and that Catholics have won.

The statistics for the political and national identity of Northern Ireland are often considered crucial on the specific issue of a united Ireland, due to the principle of consent embedded in the Belfast Agreement⁸⁶. There is perceived to be a fear amongst Protestants that when the number of Catholics in Northern Ireland reaches the 50% plus 1 mark, a united Ireland will inevitably be entered into, but polling of both Catholics and Protestants demonstrates that this fear may be unfounded.

The *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* asks four very important questions on the subject of what the long-term policy for Northern Ireland should be, how respondents would feel if Northern Ireland reunified with the Republic of Ireland, how respondents would feel if Northern Ireland never reunified with the Republic of Ireland, and their current view on the constitutional status of Northern Ireland. The statistics for all respondents and for Protestant respondents only for 2006 are in the chart below⁸⁷.

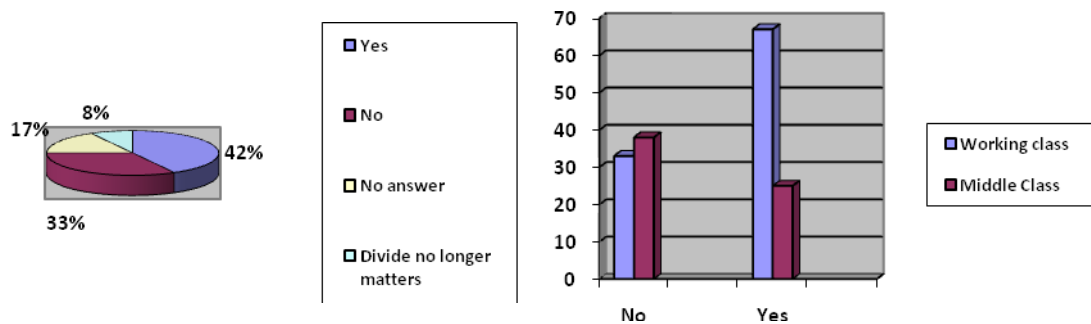


These statistics reflect perceived expectations on the issue of the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, with the majority of Protestants (85%) expressing the wish to remain part of the

⁸⁶ *Belfast Agreement* 1998.

⁸⁷ *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey*, 2006.

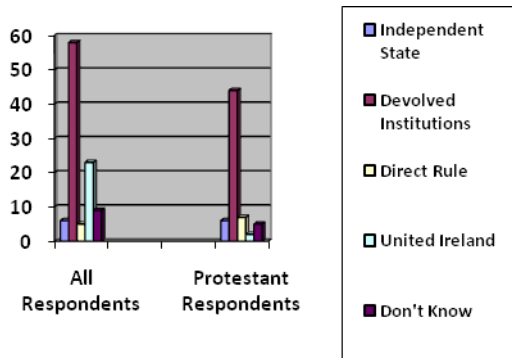
UK. Given that the current population divide between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland is approximately 55% to 45%, it is surprising that of all the respondents only 30% expressed the wish to reunify with the Republic of Ireland⁸⁸. This means that the constitutional status of Northern Ireland does not look set to change even with the increasing percentage of Catholics and the decreasing percentage of Protestants in Northern Ireland. This data suggests that the majority of Protestants wish to remain within the United Kingdom, our survey alternatively polled respondents on whether they thought that a united Ireland was close. When polled on the question of whether respondents felt that a united Ireland was close, 42% of Protestants felt that this was the case, and 33% thought that it was not. Disaggregating this information by social class can help inform us if there is a difference in how working class and middle class Protestants think about the issue of a united Ireland. Working class Protestants were much more likely to think that a united Ireland was close compared to their middle class counterparts (67% compared to 25%). This could reflect a genuine or perceived disillusionment with the Belfast Agreement and the future constitutional status of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom, and reflect perceptions amongst working class Protestants that Catholic goals have benefited from the Belfast Agreement. Please see the charts below:



The above statistics demonstrate what respondents to the survey wished the future of Northern Ireland to be, but the *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* also polled respondents on what constitutional position was closest to their view. The chart below shows the answers of all respondents and of just Protestant respondents to the question of which constitutional position best represents their view⁸⁹.

⁸⁸ *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey*, 2006.

⁸⁹ *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey*, 2006.



These statistics clearly show that the wish of the Protestant community is to live in a Northern Ireland which remains constitutionally part of the United Kingdom but has a devolved legislature. The numbers of all respondents who chose the option that a united Ireland comes closest to their view of the constitutional position of Northern Ireland is 23%, a similar percentage and reflective of the question asking respondents what the long term policy of Northern Ireland should be.

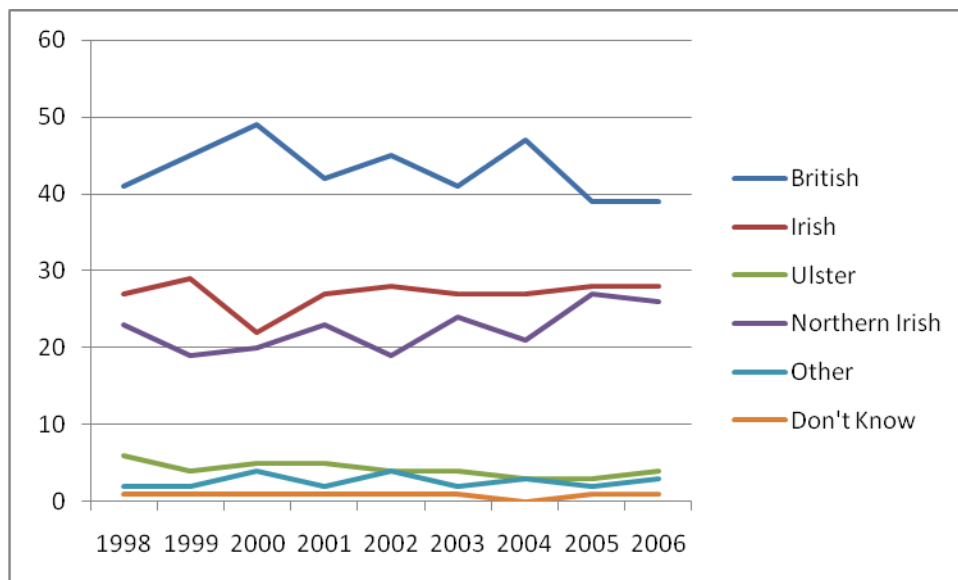
National Identity – Catholic Perceptions

This research aimed to address the question of how people believed their own personal identity, and the identity of Northern Ireland as a country had changed in the 10 years since the Belfast Agreement. The aim was to understand whether there was a perception amongst respondents that Northern Ireland was changing because of the Belfast Agreement and becoming either more Protestant/unionist/loyalist, or more Catholic/nationalist/republican. These perceptions were addressed to understand the broader implications for the constitutional future of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom.

The results of the survey must however be examined in the context of a broader study of a time series analysis of identity in Northern Ireland. This will help us understand if the reasons given by respondents to why or how they think their own identity and that of Northern Ireland has changed reflect the realities of the statistics.

The *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* polls respondents on their national identity, and their political identity.

The results for all respondents to the question of national identity for the years 1998 – 2006 are in the table below⁹⁰.

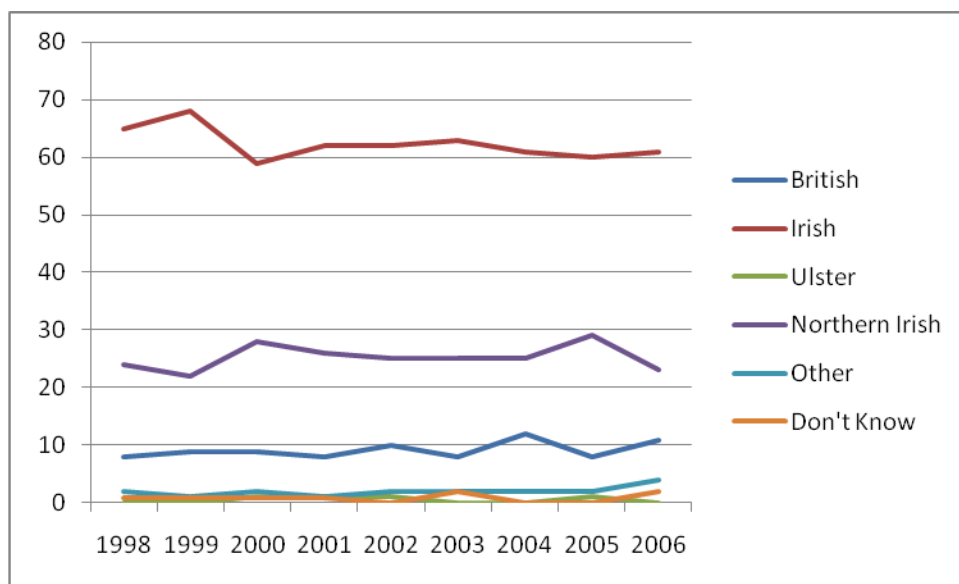


⁹⁰ *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey*, 1998; 1999; 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006.

This graph demonstrates that over the first eight years following the Belfast Agreement there is a slight downward trend in respondents who consider their identity to be British, though this is the largest category, a generally steady trend of those who perceive themselves to be Irish, which is the second largest category, and a slight increase in those who perceive their identity to be Northern Irish which is the third largest category. Those who considered themselves as Ulster remained under 10% for the whole period, while those who either considered their identity to be ‘other’ or who didn’t know their identity remained under 5%⁹¹.

The most recent statistics show that in 2006 39% of respondents claimed a British Identity, 28 % an Irish identity, 26% a Northern Irish Identity, 4% an Ulster Identity, 4% responded with an other identity and 1% didn’t know their identity⁹².

When the statistics are examined to show how Catholic perceptions of Identity have changed, they show some surprising results. The results for Catholic respondents to the survey for the period 1998 – 2006 are in the table below⁹³.



⁹¹ Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, 1998; 1999; 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006.

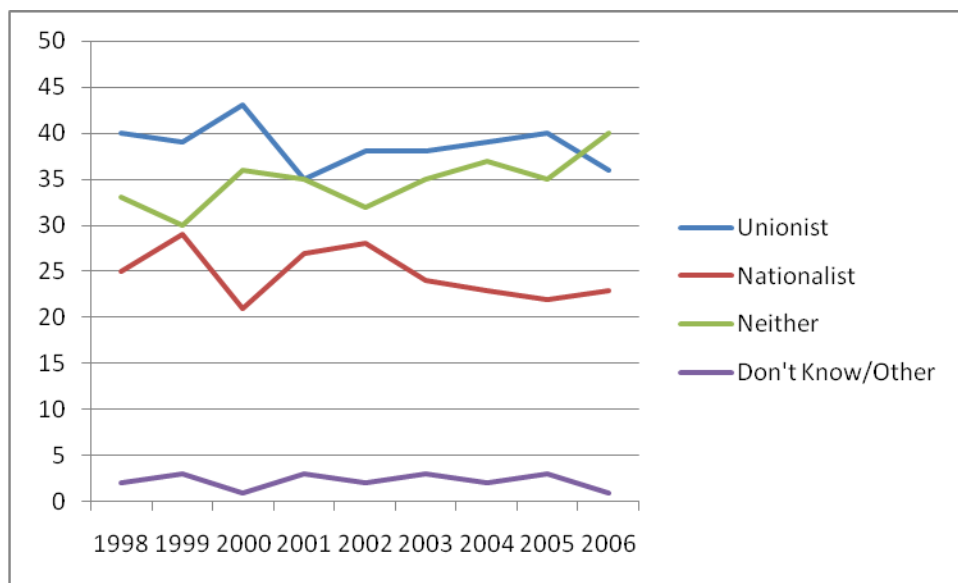
⁹² Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, 2006.

⁹³ Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, 1998; 1999; 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006.

This graph demonstrates a slight downward trend in the numbers of Catholics who perceive their identity to be Irish, though this is still by far the largest category. The numbers of Catholics who perceive their identity to be Northern Irish fluctuates slightly but stays between 20% and 30%, and this is the second largest category for respondents. The percentage of Catholics who considered their identity to be British increased gradually, and this identity makes up the third largest category, though it peaked at 12% in 2004 and settled at 11% in 2006. Catholic respondents who perceived their identity to be Ulster, other, or who didn't know their identity maintained insignificant levels under 10% of respondents each.

National Identity in Northern Ireland is often considered analogous to political identity. The *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* regularly polls respondents on their political identity, offering the respondent the choice of unionist, nationalist, neither, other, or don't know.

The results for all respondents to the question of political identity for the years 1998 – 2006 are in the table below⁹⁴.



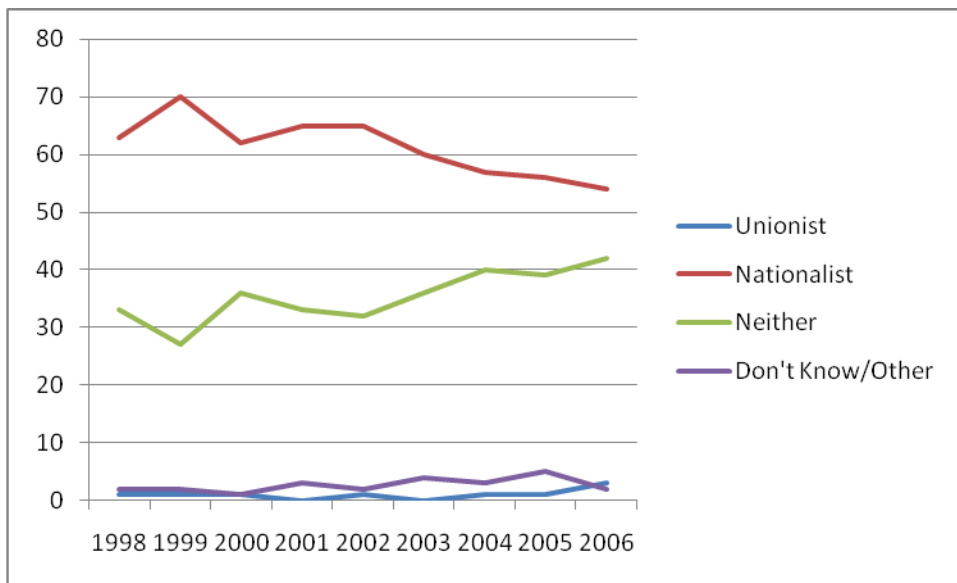
This graph shows an interesting and perhaps unexpected trend over the eight year period. Respondents who considered their political identity to be either unionist or nationalist both

⁹⁴ *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey*, 1998; 1999; 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006.

decreased over the period, with those considering their political identity to be neither nationalist nor unionist showing an upward trend and in 2006 this represented the largest category. Those who did not know their identity or chose an ‘other’ identity maintained low levels of under 10% of respondents.

The most recent published statistics show that in 2006 the largest category of political identity in Northern Ireland was neither unionist nor nationalist, with 40% of respondents choosing this identification. The second largest group has a perceived unionist identity with 36% of respondents, and those who chose nationalist as their political identity was the third largest group with 23% of respondents choosing this category. The statistics for respondents who did not know their political identity or chose an ‘other’ was 1% in this year⁹⁵.

The statistics for just the Catholic respondents to the survey reflect the wider trends in the general statistics for all respondents. See the table below⁹⁶.



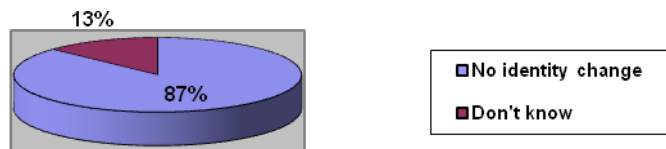
In general, Catholics who felt that their political identity was nationalist decreased quite significantly. Catholic respondents who felt that their political identity was neither unionist nor nationalist increased notably over the eight year period, and this saw a narrowing of the gap in 2006 to less than 12% between the largest category representing a nationalist identity, and the

⁹⁵ Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, 2006.

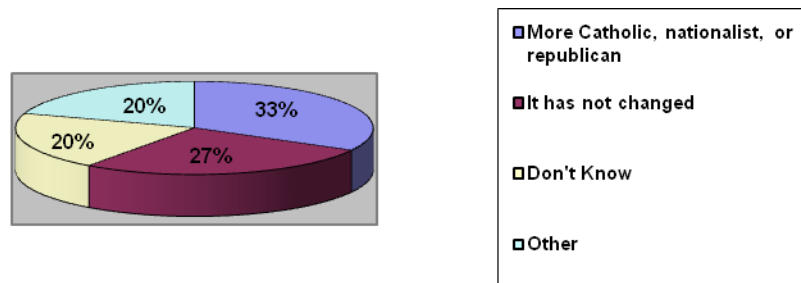
⁹⁶ Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, 1998; 1999; 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006.

second largest representing neither a unionist or nationalist identity. Catholic respondents to the survey who felt that their identity was unionist, who didn't know their identity or chose an 'other' identity was negligible.

Our survey aimed to address the questions of how respondents felt that their own personal identity and the identity of Northern Ireland had changed since the Belfast Agreement, which allows a comparison with the known statistics on how identity has changed. The survey above demonstrates that in general Catholics have become less nationalist in their identity over time and more neutral. Our survey results show that an overwhelming 87% of our Catholic respondents said that their identity had not changed in the last ten years, while 13% did not know the answer to this question. See chart below:



Our survey also asked respondents how they thought the identity of Northern Ireland had changed in the ten years since the Belfast Agreement. One third of our Catholic respondents felt that Northern Irish identity was becoming more Catholic, nationalist, or republican since the Belfast Agreement. At the same time 27% of them felt that the pre 1998 identity had not changed. 20% did not know the answer and roughly the same share stated that it was changing and becoming more secular, more modern or more Protestant. See chart below:



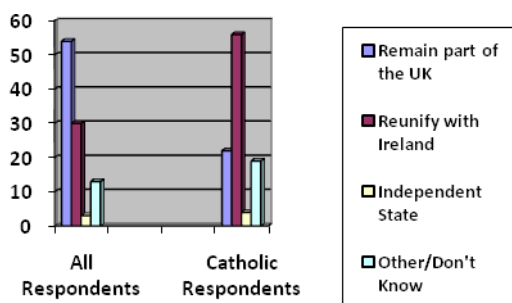
These statistics may simply represent an acknowledgment by the Catholic community that their numbers are increasing at a greater rate than the Protestant community, but it might also reflect that the Belfast Agreement created a change in politics in Northern Ireland, allowing a

Catholic community that had undergone discrimination in the past to celebrate and be proud of its culture and traditions.

The statistics for the political and national identity of Northern Ireland are often considered crucial on the specific issue of a united Ireland, due to the principle of consent embedded in the Belfast Agreement⁹⁷. There is perceived to be a fear amongst Protestants that when the number of Catholics in Northern Ireland reaches the 50% plus 1 mark, a united Ireland will inevitably be entered into, but polling of both Catholics and Protestants demonstrates that this fear may be unfounded.

The *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* asks four very important questions on the subject of what the long-term policy for Northern Ireland should be, how respondents would feel if Northern Ireland reunified with the Republic of Ireland, how respondents would feel if Northern Ireland never reunified with the Republic of Ireland, and their current view on the constitutional status of Northern Ireland.

The statistics for all respondents and for Catholic respondents only for 2006 are in the chart below. All numbers are in percentages⁹⁸.



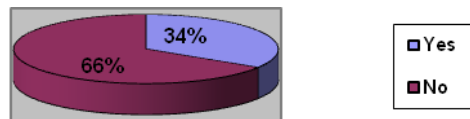
These statistics negate perceived expectations on the issue of the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, with only a small majority of Catholics (56%) expressing the wish to reunify with the Republic of Ireland⁹⁹. This means that even with an increasing Catholic population and a decreasing Protestant population, the numbers of Catholics who wish to see the reunification of

⁹⁷ *Belfast Agreement* 1998.

⁹⁸ *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey*, 2006.

⁹⁹ *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey*, 2006.

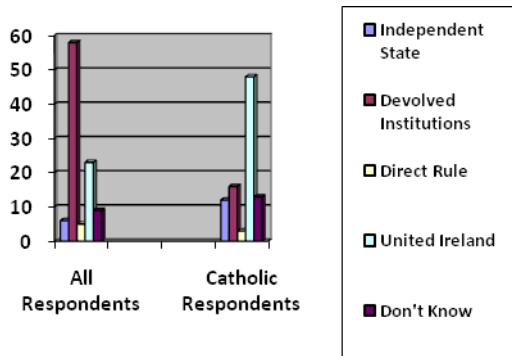
Ireland are not sufficient to bring this about if or when the Catholic population overtakes the Protestant population. This means that the constitutional status of Northern Ireland does not look set to change in the near future, even with the principle of consent that is embedded in the Belfast Agreement. Our 2008 survey data found a similar response from Catholic respondents. 66% of our Catholic respondents thought that we were not closer to a United Ireland, with only 34% thinking that a united Ireland was close. See chart below.



This may seem unusual, but taken in the context of the Belfast Agreement's principle of consent; it may represent Catholic perceptions that a united Ireland isn't close because the population has yet to change its majority and minority groupings. Added to this is the fact that when polled on a united Ireland, only a small majority of Catholics respond that their wish is to see a united Ireland or that their current view is that a united Ireland is the best policy for Northern Ireland.

The above statistics demonstrate what respondents to the survey wished the future of Northern Ireland to be, but the *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* also polled respondents on what constitutional position was closest to their view. The chart below shows the answers of all respondents and of just Catholic respondents to the question of which constitutional position best represents their view¹⁰⁰.

¹⁰⁰ *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey*, 2006.



These statistics clearly show that the majority of the Catholic community view a united Ireland as the best representation of their view on the constitutional position of Northern Ireland. This is unsurprising and reflects the position of Catholics on what they see as the long term future of Northern Ireland, but is unrepresentative of the majority of all respondents to the question. This shows that the reunification of Ireland is specifically the aim and view of Catholic respondents, but not the view of Protestant respondents. Although our survey shows that the majority of Catholics think that a united Ireland is not close, this does not detract from a united Ireland being their desired goal.

National Identity – Conclusions

Northern Ireland's identity has changed since the Belfast Agreement:

- Northern Ireland is becoming less British (this is still the largest category).
- Northern Ireland is becoming less Irish (this is the second largest category).
- Northern Ireland is becoming more Northern Irish (this is the third largest category).

Catholic identity has changed since the Belfast Agreement:

- Catholic identity has become less Irish (this is still the largest category).
- Catholic's have maintained a steady Northern Irish identity (this is the second largest).
- Catholic identity has become more British (this is the third largest category).

Protestant identity has changed since the Belfast Agreement:

- Protestant identity has become less British (this is still the largest category).
- Protestant identity has become more Northern Irish (this is the second largest category).

The political identity of Northern Ireland has also changed since the Belfast Agreement:

- Protestants who consider themselves to be unionists have decreased.
- Catholics who consider themselves to be nationalists have decreased.
- There has been an increase in the number of both communities who consider themselves neither unionist or nationalist.

Our statistics demonstrate that there is a perception amongst Catholics and Protestants that there has been a change in Northern Ireland's identity, even though this isn't the case:

- 50% of Protestants thought that Northern Ireland had become more Catholic, nationalist or republican.
- 33% of Catholics thought that Northern Ireland had become more Catholic, nationalist or republican.
- Northern Ireland has in fact become less divided in its identity, with increasing numbers choosing to identify themselves as Northern Irish rather than the typical British/Irish division, and more people identifying themselves as neither unionist nor nationalist.

Levels of Violence – Protestant Perceptions

Since 1998 there has been a substantial change in the levels of paramilitary violence. According to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister's *Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report*, January 2007, the number of deaths due to the security situation has decreased from 55 in 1998 to 5 in 2005¹⁰¹.

There are less paramilitary murders, less shooting incidents and less paramilitary assaults taking place each year. Between March 2003 and November 2007 loyalist paramilitaries committed 14 murders¹⁰². Loyalist paramilitary groups were responsible for 34 shooting casualties between March and August 2003 but only two between September 2006 and February 2007. However, this number would occasionally rise; there were 69 between September 2003 and February 2004. There were 46 loyalist paramilitary style assault casualties between March and August 2003 but only 13 between September 2006 and February 2007¹⁰³.

The loyalist paramilitary organisations are responsible for the majority of violent acts in Northern Ireland. 70% of paramilitary style murders between March 2003 and November 2007 (14 out of 20) were perpetrated by the Ulster Defence Association, Ulster Volunteer Force and Loyalist Volunteer Force, the main loyalist paramilitary organisations. In 2005, despite a decrease from 186 casualties in 2001, loyalist paramilitary organisations were responsible for 87% of casualties (out of a total of 85) from paramilitary style shootings¹⁰⁴. In addition to this they were also responsible for 67% of casualties of paramilitary style assault¹⁰⁵. Thus it is obvious that the loyalist paramilitaries are by far more active than their republican counterparts post 1998.

In our survey respondents were asked if they thought paramilitary violence had increased or decreased since the Belfast Agreement. 70% of our Protestant respondents felt that paramilitary violence decreased after 1998. 18% thought otherwise. This is an overwhelming confirmation of the tangible benefits that the Belfast Agreement has had in the area of paramilitary violence. See chart below:

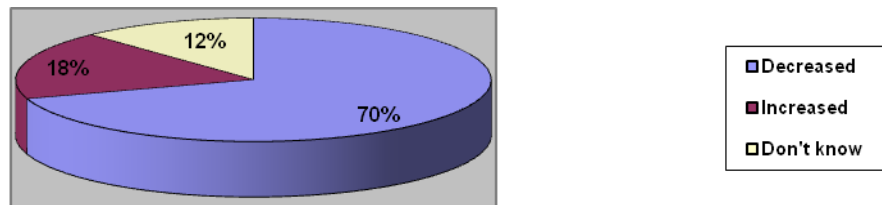
¹⁰¹ Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, *Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report*, January 2007.

¹⁰² *Seventeenth Report of the Independent Monitoring Commission*, November 2007.

¹⁰³ *Fifteenth Report of the Independent Monitoring Commission*, April 2007.

¹⁰⁴ Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, *Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report*, January 2007.

¹⁰⁵ Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, *Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report*, January 2007.



Certain communities, usually these regarded as loyalist or republican heartlands in the past, are definitely more affected by the continuing presence of the paramilitaries than others. This may not be a widespread phenomenon but for certain individuals or their immediate families or neighbours living within these communities, it is a serious problem which should have been addressed during the last ten years.

The biggest loyalist paramilitary organisation, the Ulster Defence Association, is allegedly edging away from its criminal and violent image, and is said to be making cautious steps on the road to reforming itself in the mould of a community organisation. However, the fact that last November it refused, despite its significant statement on its future intentions, to decommission its weaponry, and to this day has not produced nor implemented a cohesive mechanism which would help the leadership deal with rogue elements, suggests that it might still take some time before it is a peaceful former paramilitary organisation¹⁰⁶. There exists an ongoing battle within the organisation between the mainstream faction and the so-called South-East Antrim faction. The standoff between the two resulted with violent incidents such as the rioting and shootings that were commonplace in certain loyalist areas throughout 2007¹⁰⁷.

The Ulster Defence Association's presence is widely felt within certain communities in North, South and West Belfast. This does not mean that the level of power it used to hold in these very communities remained unchanged especially after the events of 2005 when the Provisional IRA in reality announced its disbandment. Nevertheless, there is ample evidence to suggest that the Ulster Defence Association may no longer control loyalist strongholds of Northern Ireland but its members continue to engage in acts of criminality which are harmful to the development

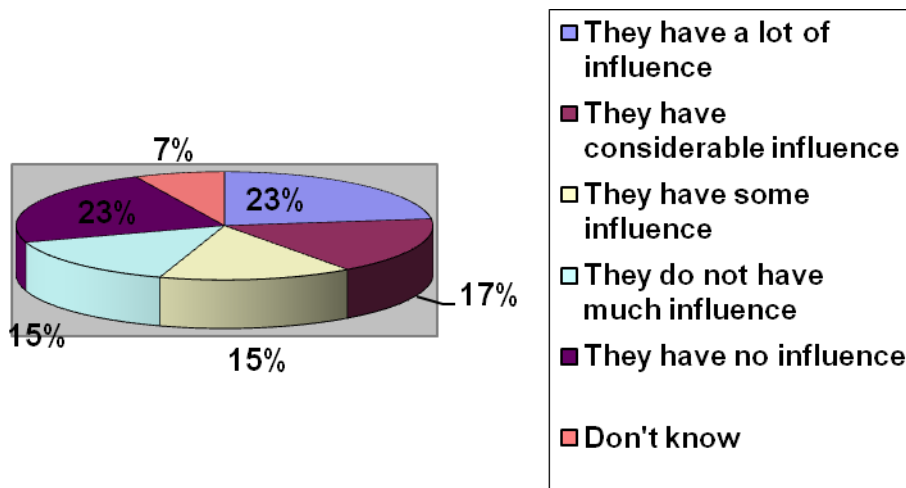
¹⁰⁶ *The Irish News*, November 13, 2007.

¹⁰⁷ *Seventeenth Report of the Independent Monitoring Commission*, November 2007.

of a more energetic and vibrant loyalist communities, which leads to the allegation that the protestant community represents the losers of the Belfast Agreement.

The second biggest loyalist paramilitary organisation, the Ulster Volunteer Force, has been limiting its activities since its May 2007 announcement on transforming itself into a civilian group, and can no longer, therefore, be said to enjoy a significant amount of control over any of the loyalist communities in Northern Ireland¹⁰⁸. It would not have announced its factual disbandment had it not been for the fact that its main rival, the Loyalist Volunteer Force, preceded Ulster Volunteer Force's decision to stand down its units for more than 18 months. Assured of the smaller organisation's intentions and after a prolonged process of internal debate the Ulster Volunteer Force decided to officially announce the termination of its paramilitary activities. Nevertheless, the members of these two organisations still are involved in criminality and their presence is felt in certain loyalist communities such as East Belfast. They may not be acting with the consent of their respective leaders but for many it may seem as if not much have actually changed since 1998.

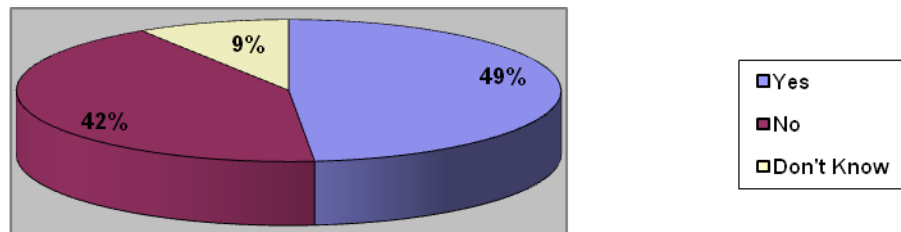
When polled on how much power paramilitaries still held within the community in Northern Ireland 38% of our Protestant respondents thought that the paramilitaries had no influence or not much influence in their communities. Around 55% still felt that they had some sort of influence, considerable influence or a lot influence. See chart below:



¹⁰⁸ *Seventeenth Report of the Independent Monitoring Commission*, November 2007.

This reflects the view that Protestant paramilitary organisations still wield some form of control or power over their communities, even despite the fact that several of the organisations have formally disbanded. While overall levels of violence have decreased over the past ten years, paramilitary organisations within Protestant communities still have considerable power, and this is a remnant of the conflict in Northern Ireland that the Belfast Agreement does not appear to have successfully addressed.

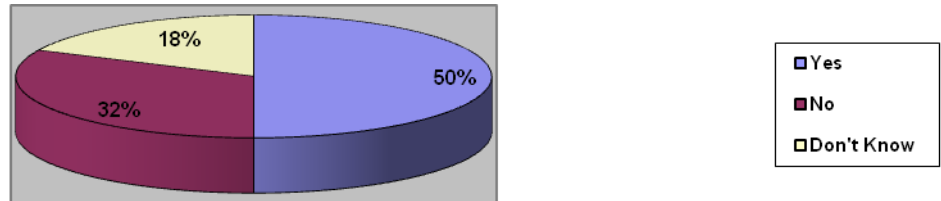
The available statistics suggest that fewer people know victims of paramilitary style attacks or incidents due to the fact that the paramilitary organisations are generally less active than they were prior to the Belfast Agreement. Our research shows that this is not in fact true. When polled on the question of whether respondents had themselves or knew anyone who had been affected by paramilitary violence, 49% of our Protestant respondents said they had known, or themselves had been, someone affected by violence. 42% responded otherwise. See chart below:



This could reflect a general trend in the amount of power still held by Protestant paramilitaries in certain communities, but it could also reflect the turf war fought amongst members of different Protestant paramilitary organisations since the Belfast Agreement.

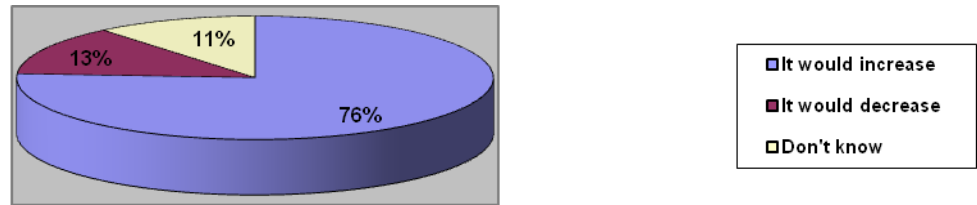
It is generally accepted that the Belfast agreement was a turning point in the decrease of violence in Northern Ireland. It is enough to consider the aforementioned statistic on deaths due to the security situation in order to support this claim. However, it could also be argued that the turning point was in fact the year of 1994 when all of the major paramilitary organisations announced their ceasefires. Our research shows that only half of our Protestant respondents

regarded the Belfast Agreement as a turning point in the decrease of violence. 32% thought otherwise and 18% did not know the answer. See chart below:

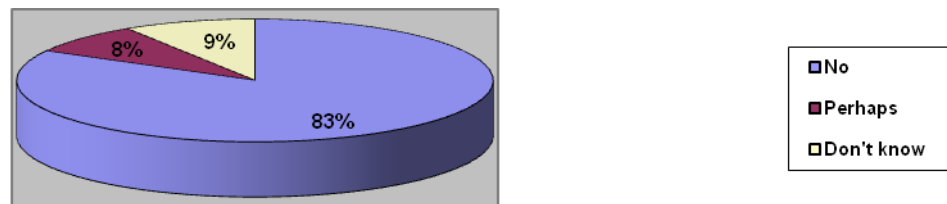


Some political leaders used to utilise the threat of a doomsday scenario in order to convince their followers and voters to support controversial arrangements and compromises which were the result of the Belfast Agreement. Probably the last party to use this threat was the Democratic Unionist Party which performed the biggest political leap in its history by deciding to share power with Sinn Fein, and would remind its potential voters of the threat of collapse of the more plausible version of the Belfast Agreement, the St. Andrew's Agreement.

However, with the slow disbandment and dismantling of paramilitary organisations and their structures, plus the political and social ostracism which surrounds the last proponents of violence, it is hard to imagine that yet another suspension of the Agreement might lead to an increase in violence in Northern Ireland. Throughout the last ten years the local political institutions were hardly operational and mostly suspended but that did not lead to an outbreak of violence reminiscent of the early 1970s. Our research figures show that Protestants do in fact fear that the end of the Belfast Agreement would lead to an increase in paramilitary violence in Northern Ireland. A vast majority (76%) of our Protestant respondents thought that the violence would increase in case of a termination of the Belfast Agreement. Only 13% stated that violence would actually decrease if the Agreement was to end and 11% did not know the answer. See chart below:



Members of the Provisional IRA are blamed for murdering Robert McCartney in Belfast in January 2005. Throughout the last three years remarkable attention has been given to the events leading to his murder, its alleged cover up by the republican movement and the campaign of his five sisters and partner to bring the perpetrators of this act to justice. Our research shows that an overwhelming majority (83%) of our Protestant respondents thought that the McCartney sisters would never receive justice for the death of their brother. 8% was not sure about this but also thought that the sisters might get the justice and 9% did not know the answer. See chart below.



Levels of Violence – Catholic Perspectives

Since 1998 there has been a substantial change in the levels of paramilitary violence. According to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister's *Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report*, January 2007, the number of deaths due to the security situation has decreased from 55 in 1998 to 5 in 2005¹⁰⁹.

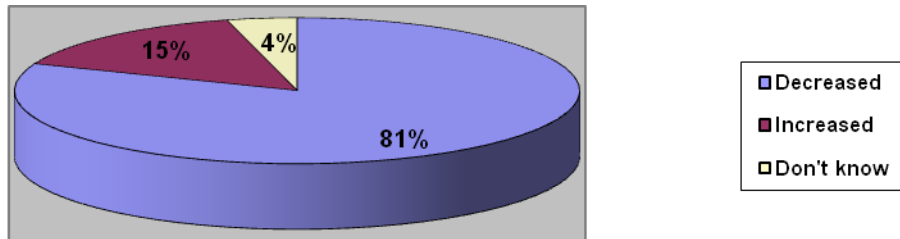
There are less paramilitary murders, less shooting incidents and less paramilitary assaults taking place each year. The republican paramilitary organisations could be said to have been responsible for four paramilitary murders in 2007 alone, this includes the murder of Paul Quinn, but only two between March 2003 and January 2005 when Robert McCartney was stabbed to death in Belfast. This still constitutes a remarkable change from the levels of violence in the late 1990s but it also shows that these groups, despite a considerable change in economic, political and social reality of Northern Ireland, do still exist and are ready to commit murder if their members feel threatened or if their corporate interests are somehow in danger. Moreover, some of these latest murders clearly depict the situation in which the leaders of these groups have ongoing problems exercising a sufficient level of control over all of their subordinates.

The republican paramilitary groups were responsible for 35 shooting casualties between March and August 2003 but only eight between September 2006 and February 2007. There were 24 republican paramilitary style assault casualties between March and August 2003 but only 5 between September 2006 and February 2007¹¹⁰. This was mostly the result of the serious reduction of Provisional IRA activity, but this does not mean that other dissident republican paramilitary groups are not intent on increasing their respective levels of violence perpetrated in the name of their political objectives.

In our survey respondents were asked if they thought paramilitary violence had increased or decreased since the Belfast Agreement. 81% of our Catholic respondents felt that paramilitary violence decreased after 1998. Only 15% thought that it had increased, but perhaps this can be interpreted as a sizeable minority given the change in economic, political and social climate. 4% claimed not to know whether paramilitary violence had increased or decreased.

¹⁰⁹ Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, *Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report*, January 2007.

¹¹⁰ *Fifteenth Report of the Independent Monitoring Commission*, April 2007.



Certain communities, usually those regarded as loyalist or republican heartlands in the past, are definitely more affected by the continuing presence of the paramilitaries than others. This may not be a widespread phenomenon but for certain individuals or their immediate families or neighbours living within these communities, it is a serious problem which should have been addressed during the last ten years.

The Provisional IRA has visibly limited its presence and actions since its 2005 statement calling an end to its armed struggle and promising to cease its involvement in paramilitary incidents such as attacks and preparatory acts such as the recruitment and training of volunteers¹¹¹. However, its paramilitary structures have not been totally disbanded and its members are routinely accused of illegal activities which probably would not be sanctioned by the republican leadership had it known about them in advance. Nevertheless, the fact that former Provisional IRA members still hold a considerable amount of power in different communities in Northern Ireland is a well known and well documented fact of which the murder of Paul Quinn last October is a grim reminder. This act is alleged to have been perpetrated by a group of republican activists, including former Provisional IRA members, who were determined to punish Mr. Quinn for anti-social behaviour. Unfortunately, and tragically, this alleged punishment beating resulted in the victim's violent death.

More evidence of the allegedly continuing Provisional IRA existence has recently been uncovered by the Social Democratic and Labour Party which claimed that the organisation has still been issuing the so-called 'ASBOs' (anti-social behaviour orders) to different members of the public in the republican heartlands of Northern Ireland¹¹². This would suggest that the

¹¹¹ *Thirteenth Report of the Independent Monitoring Commission*, January 2007.

¹¹² *The Irish Times*, February 4, 2008.

Provisional IRA remain in control of certain communities which used to provide it with an almost unconditional support pre-1998 and regarded the militant republicans as their defenders. However, the Provisional IRA does not and cannot claim to be defending any given community in Northern Ireland in 2008, although as late 2006 it was still involved in information gathering on criminals, persons behaving anti-socially or suspected informers or dissidents¹¹³. In certain cases, as reported by the Independent Monitoring Commission in early 2007, its members would threaten or use violence against “those believed to be responsible for anti-social behaviour or other low-level crime”¹¹⁴.

One of the latest pieces of evidence in relation to the Provisional IRA’s existence and presence within certain communities in Northern Ireland was the fact that it issued a New Year’s Statement in January 2008 which appeared in *An Phoblacht*¹¹⁵. Despite the fact that it had no militant content it must be understood as a reassuring gesture for the numerous members of the organisation scattered around the island of Ireland who are still present in the republican heartlands, and in many instances and ways also dominate them economically and politically.

Moreover, Northern Ireland is still witnessing different levels of activity from dissident republican paramilitary organisations. In early February 2008 the spokesman for the Real IRA issued a blatant threat of “war is back on” in an interview with Suzanne Breen of *The Sunday Tribune*. In a first official interview by a senior member of this organisation in five years, he claimed that “those who promote and protect the illegal occupation of the six counties – British soldiers, RUC/PSNI members, and British government ministers” are “Real IRA’s targets”. The Real IRA spokesman also revealed that his organisation had undergone a three year long reorganisation period which only increased its capacity to launch a prolonged terrorist campaign¹¹⁶. The events of late 2007 when the Real IRA carried out armed assaults against policemen could be regarded as a proof of its increased activity, (the Independent Monitoring Commission was reporting that the level of Real IRA activity was on the rise as early as January 2007)¹¹⁷, but on the other hand the Real IRA, despite all of its grandiose rhetoric, has so far failed to execute a single member of its aforementioned group of targets. Because of this Hugh Orde, the chief constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland called the dissident republican

¹¹³ *Fifteenth Report of the Independent Monitoring Commission*, April 2007.

¹¹⁴ *Thirteenth Report of the Independent Monitoring Commission*, January 2007.

¹¹⁵ *An Phoblacht*, January 10, 2008.

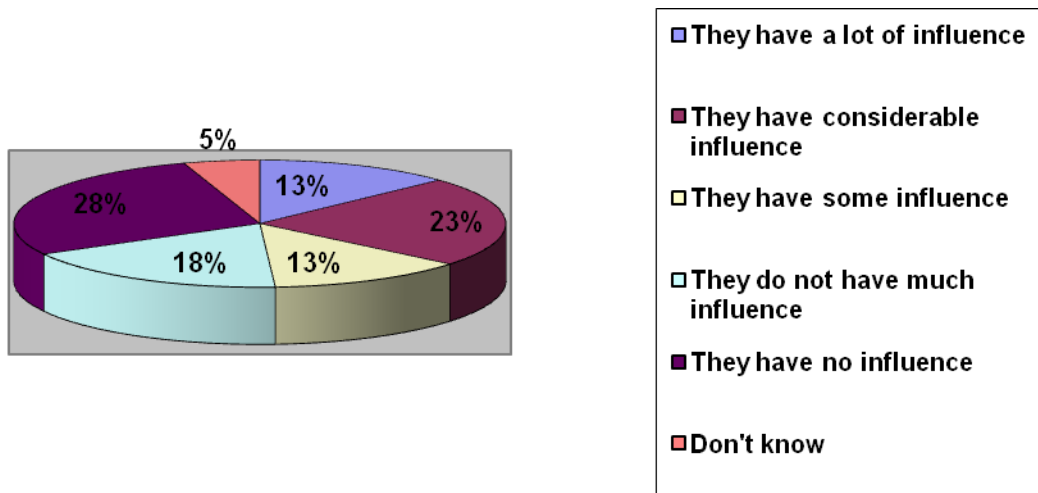
¹¹⁶ *The Sunday Tribune*, February 4, 2008.

¹¹⁷ *Thirteenth Report of the Independent Monitoring Commission*, January 2007.

terrorist groups inept in the aftermath of the Real IRA interview. However, he also did not fail to add that he also regarded them as dangerous¹¹⁸.

Orde's claim was fully supported by the actions of some dissident republican paramilitary organisations. The Irish National Liberation Army was responsible for one paramilitary murder in 2007, but it also engaged in undertaking "shootings and assaults against some people it believed to be acting anti-socially"¹¹⁹ and carrying out patrols in Belfast, Derry and Strabane "to prevent anti-social behaviour" and "acted against a number of alleged drug dealers"¹²⁰. The Continuity IRA was also responsible for the murders of two of its former members who had established a rival group in Belfast in 2007.¹²¹

When polled on how much power paramilitaries still held within the community in Northern Ireland 46% of our Catholic respondents thought that the paramilitaries had no influence or not much influence in their communities. 49% still felt that they had some sort of influence, considerable influence or a lot influence.



The available statistics suggest that fewer people know victims of paramilitary style attacks or incidents due to the fact that the paramilitary organisations are generally less active than they were prior to the Belfast Agreement. Our research shows that this is essentially true;

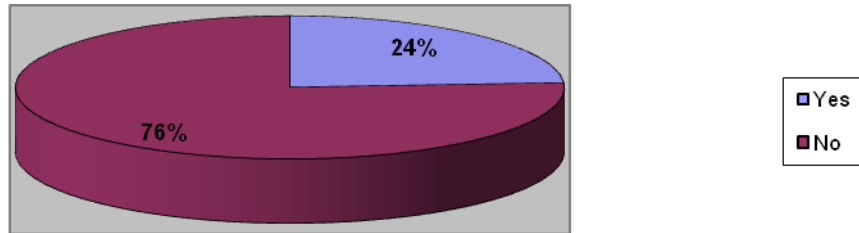
¹¹⁸ *The Belfast Telegraph*, February 6, 2008.

¹¹⁹ *Thirteenth Report of the Independent Monitoring Commission*, January 2007.

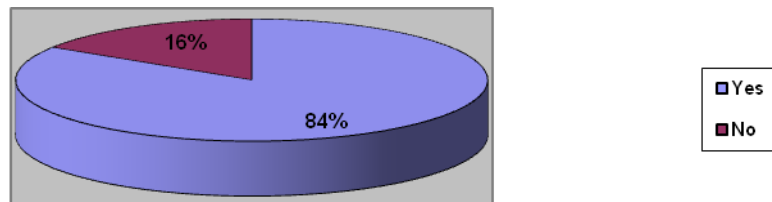
¹²⁰ *Seventeenth Report of the Independent Monitoring Commission*, November 2007.

¹²¹ *Seventeenth Report of the Independent Monitoring Commission*, November 2007.

24% of our Catholic respondents said they had known, or themselves had been, someone affected by violence, although in many cases not of paramilitary type.

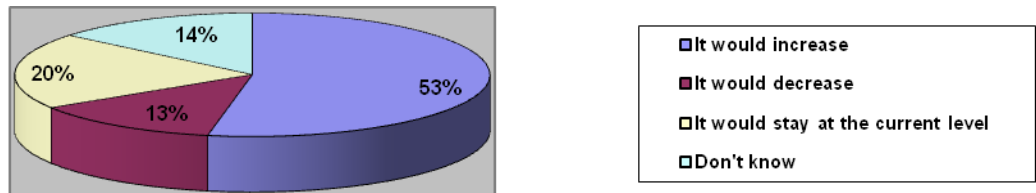


It is generally accepted that the Belfast agreement was a turning point in the decrease of violence in Northern Ireland. It is enough to consider the aforementioned statistic on “deaths due to the security situation” in order to be supportive of this claim. However, it could also be argued that the turning point was in fact the year of 1994 when all of the major paramilitary organisations announced their ceasefires. Our research shows that 84% of our Catholic respondents regarded the Belfast Agreement as a turning point in the decrease of violence, while only 16% thought that was not the case.

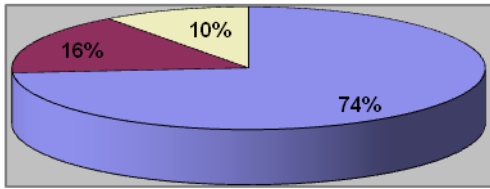


Some political leaders used to utilise the threat of a doomsday scenario in order to convince their followers and voters to support controversial arrangements and compromises which were the result of the Belfast Agreement. Probably the last party to use this threat was the Democratic Unionist Party which performed the biggest political leap in its history by deciding to share power with Sinn Fein, and would remind its potential voters of the threat of collapse of the more plausible version of the Belfast Agreement, the St. Andrew’s Agreement.

However, with the slow disbandment and dismantling of paramilitary organisations and their structures, plus the political and social ostracism which surrounds the last proponents of violence, it is hard to imagine that yet another suspension of the Agreement might lead to an increase in violence in Northern Ireland. Throughout the last ten years the local political institutions were hardly operational and mostly suspended but that did not lead to an outbreak of violence reminiscent of the early 1970s. Our research figures show that a slight majority of our Catholic respondents thought that paramilitary violence would increase in the case of a termination of the Belfast Agreement. However, one fifth said that not much would change and the level of violence would remain the same. Moreover, 13% stated that violence would actually decrease if the Agreement was to end. See chart below:



Members of the Provisional IRA are blamed for murdering Robert McCartney in Belfast in January 2005. Throughout the last three years remarkable attention has been given to the events leading to his murder, its alleged cover up by the republican movement and the campaign of his five sisters and partner to bring the perpetrators of this act to justice. Our research shows that an overwhelming majority (74%) of our Catholic respondents thought that the McCartney sisters would never receive justice for the death of their brother. 16% stated that the justice had already been done and that there was no need for further investigation and 10% did not know the answer. See chart below:



- No
- No need for that, they already got justice
- Don't know

Levels of violence – Conclusions

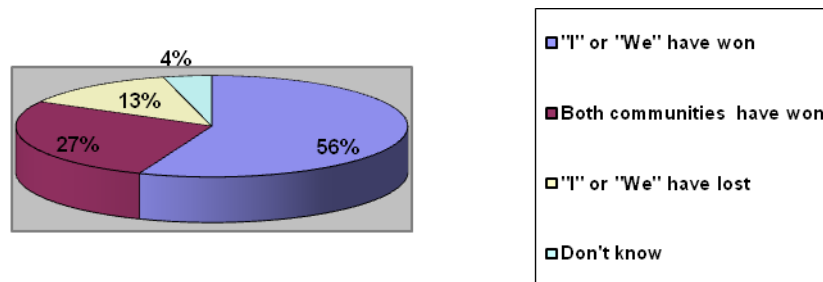
Northern Ireland's levels of violence have visibly decreased since the Belfast Agreement. There are less paramilitary style murders, style shootings and assaults. Most of the violence is perpetrated by loyalist paramilitary organisations but the so-called 'dissident' republican groups seem to be intent on reviving their respective campaigns of violence.

In addition to this our research shows that:

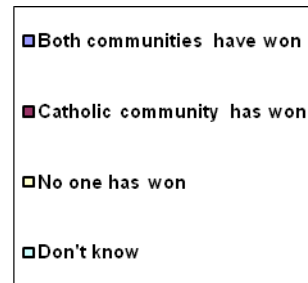
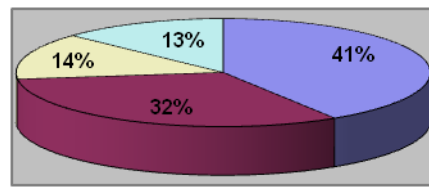
- More Catholics than Protestants think paramilitary violence has decreased since the Belfast Agreement (81% to 70%) which might be a sign of a more resilient hold of power in the hands of the loyalist paramilitaries in certain Protestant communities.
- Around half of our Catholic respondents and a slightly higher number of polled Protestants still think the paramilitaries have a certain level of influence in their respective communities.
- Almost half of our Protestant respondents said they themselves or someone they knew had been affected by violence. Only 24% of Catholic respondents gave a similar answer which might again be interpreted as a sign of a more outright presence and influence of the loyalist paramilitaries in Protestant communities.
- Only 50% of our Protestant respondents thought that the Belfast Agreement was a turning point in the decrease of violence in Northern Ireland. The number of Catholic respondents who shared this sentiment was far higher – 84%. This suggests that more of the low level violent acts, which often are unreported, are perpetrated in the loyalist communities than in the nationalist/republican heartlands.
- The fact that the Protestant community regards the Belfast Agreement as a guarantor of social peace is visible while reviewing the statistics on the possible outcome of the collapse of the Agreement – three quarters of our Protestant respondents thought that this would be a prelude to more violence whereas slightly more than a half of the polled Catholics thought the same.
- Huge majorities of our respondents for both communities (74% Catholics and 83% of the Protestants) stated that the McCartney sisters are not likely to receive justice for the murder of their brother but a sizeable portion of polled Catholics (16%) suggested that they had already received their justice.

Who are the Winners and the Losers from the Belfast Agreement?

It would be extremely hard to present one of the two communities as straightforward winners of the Belfast Agreement. On the one hand it would not be unreasonable to state that Catholics are now in a much better economic, political and social position than they were pre 1998. However, the Protestant community is also now under no threat whatsoever, due to the transformation of the main republican paramilitary organisation into an “old boys club”, a point stressed by our Protestant interviewees as one of the main positive changes post 1998. Moreover, the economic benefits, or ‘the peace dividend’ as it is sometimes referred to, are generally aimed at both communities, and so it would not be reasonable to say that Protestants are the losers. Our 2008 survey data can help illuminate the perceptions of the two communities as to who has won or lost from the Belfast Agreement. 56% of our Catholic respondents felt that they or their community were the winners of the Belfast Agreement. Only 13% felt otherwise. In addition to this 27% said that both communities benefited from the Agreement. This reflects a positive outlook view from the Catholic community, and the statistics reflect what is commonly perceived, that Catholics have benefited from the Belfast Agreement. See the chart below:



Alternatively, when Protestants were asked the same question 41% of our Protestant respondents felt that both communities were the winners from the Belfast Agreement. 32% of them thought that the Catholic community were the winners and 14% thought no one had won. See chart below:



Some claim that in reality there are no winners of the Belfast Agreement, for example the Committee for the Administration of Justice (CAJ), an independent non-governmental organisation affiliated to the International Federation of Human Rights, claimed in 2006 that “the poorest members of the society in the North, both Catholic and Protestant” were “worse off” than they had been a decade ago. This was due to the high economic activity of Northern Ireland’s inhabitants and in particular the hidden unemployment¹²². Others could easily point to the fact that the university graduates of the assumed winners, the Catholic community, were estimated to be more in debt than their Protestant counterparts¹²³. However, this can also be interpreted as a sign of the determination for being socially mobile and investing in one’s education which in the later stages of life would benefit the debtor.

In our view, there are no straightforward winners as far Higher Education in Northern Ireland is concerned. The reason behind the higher number of the Catholic students have been presented in the earlier section of this document but it is hard not to notice statistics such as the *Northern Ireland Student Income and Expenditure Survey 2004/05* according to which 57% of students declared themselves Catholic and only 25% Protestant or Presbyterian¹²⁴. One of the Protestant respondents to our survey vocalised the noticeable difference in the numbers of Protestant and Catholic students at university in Northern Ireland by claiming “As Catholics and Protestants grow up in completely separate societies – different schools, sports, churches, towns, newspapers, etc. As a first year student at Queen’s I sometimes find it daunting due to the fact it is 90% Catholic”. Nevertheless, the influx of Catholic students to Higher Education Institutions in Northern Ireland is not a new phenomenon; it can be argued that their increased number of

¹²² *The Irish Examiner*, September 14, 2006.

¹²³ Department for Employment and Learning, *Northern Ireland’s graduates: the classes of ’95 and ’99*, October 2005.

¹²⁴ Department for Employment and Learning, *Northern Ireland Student Income and Expenditure Survey 2004/05*.

admissions at Queen's University Belfast in the late 1960s was one of the factors behind the radicalisation of the political situation in Northern Ireland and the outbreak of the Troubles.

The changes in Northern Ireland post 1998 allow both communities to thrive but prosperity cannot be taken for granted. Thus it is to Catholics and Protestants equally to make sure that they individually and on a communal level gain from the new beginning in Northern Ireland. The generally held view is that Catholics have been more successful in lifting their economic, political and social status but one cannot omit the fact that in many areas their position was significantly worse prior to 1998. This is not to suggest that in Northern Ireland in 1997 Catholics were actively discriminated against or living in a state of poverty but to stress the fact that the Belfast Agreement certainly empowered this community on a political level for the first time in the history of the province. If one is to add to this the fact that the Catholic community was also growing in size, and still remains to do so, and was gaining economic and political confidence because of the successes of the Celtic Tiger phenomenon in the Republic of Ireland, then it might be possible to claim this as a victory for one of the Northern Irish communities. Nevertheless, we are not convinced that this is the case.

Belfast, which is Northern Ireland's capital has already been dubbed a "City of the Future"¹²⁵ and has allegedly been "transformed" and is a visible sign of the "triumph of peace process"¹²⁶. The peace definitely brought numerous economic benefits to the province and "the formal end to the IRA's long war may give a new impetus to investment and tourism in the North as well as to cross-Border trade". On the other hand many argue that "the North's [Northern Ireland's] economy needs more private sector and international investment"¹²⁷. This has been acknowledged as recently as in December 2007 by the Northern Ireland executive: "While Northern Ireland's economy was the second fastest growing region of the UK last year there is still work to be done to improve economic prosperity"¹²⁸.

It is not our intention to dwell on whether the peace process has been a triumph but it would be hard to imagine that this radical change in the city's fortune brought benefit to only one of the communities. Moreover, the current authorities' urge to bring foreign investment to

¹²⁵ *The Irish Independent*, May 4, 2005.

¹²⁶ *The Spectator*, February 9, 2008.

¹²⁷ *The Irish Independent*, July 29, 2005.

¹²⁸ "20 December 2007 – Building on economic growth", available online at: <http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news-deti-201207-building-on-economic>.

Northern Ireland, which made Ian Paisley appear at the opening of the American Stock Market and preach about the profits of investing in his province to businessmen from the Republic of Ireland¹²⁹, also appears to ensure that both communities benefit from the post 1998 order. The same could be said about the calls for harmonisation of Northern Ireland's corporate tax with the 12.5% rate in the Republic of Ireland. This could, according to some, provide the province with up to 180 000 new jobs by 2030 and double the local rate of growth¹³⁰. Such a move would surely benefit both communities which are now enjoying the benefits of peace but need to be prepared for grave changes to the structure of the Northern Irish economy if they desire to see the newly established prosperity to continue.

The aforementioned prosperity is visible on the streets of Northern Ireland but its viability is not yet well entrenched. The optimists would surely read the statistics seasonally provided by the Executive's Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment which state that the unemployment rate for the period November - January 2006 was 4.0% equalling the lowest rate ever recorded for Northern Ireland, the weekly earnings for full time employees were growing four times faster in Northern Ireland than in the rest of the United Kingdom (4.9% in Northern Ireland compared to 1.2% in the UK) and Northern Irish female full time employees were one of the best paid in the whole of the country¹³¹. On the other hand Northern Ireland's GDP per capita for the years 2000 to 2002 was still below the average of the European Union's 15 members and 10 candidate countries which joined in 2004. It stood at 91.2% which was not a significant performance at all given the fact that this average was already calculated for the European Union with new member states from Central and Eastern Europe, countries considerably poorer than the core 15 Western European members¹³².

This last statistic can be utilised as a perfect excuse to dismiss the successes of the local economy but it is hard not to agree with huge parts of the comments on Northern Ireland such as: "Inward investment is sluggish and indigenous entrepreneurialism low-key; employment is now concentrated around a service sector that is an extension of mainland Britain's. The result is an

¹²⁹ *The Irish Independent*, February 8, 2008.

¹³⁰ *The Irish Independent*, February 7, 2008.

¹³¹ http://www.detini.gov.uk/cgi-bin/get_builder_page?page=2137&site=4&parent=135.

¹³² Eurostat news release, *GDP per capita in 2002 ranged from 32% of the EU25 average in Lubelskie to 315% in Inner London*, available online at: http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/PGP_PRD_CAT_PREREL/PGE_CAT_PREREL_YEAR_2005/PGE_CAT_PREREL_YEAR_2005_MONTH_01/2-25012005-EN-AP.PDF.

economy that has more in common with the old communist regimes in Eastern Europe than with the dynamism just across the border in the Republic of Ireland, where the Celtic Tiger has delivered remarkable and sustained growth for more than a decade. Public spending by the British government is responsible for 63% of Northern Ireland's gross domestic product, and the state directly employs about a third of all those in work, double the rates south of the border and substantially more than in the rest of the UK. The effect is economic sclerosis, with statistics that point to steady economic growth masking Northern Ireland's suckling dependency on government spending. Last year [2005], Northern Ireland received £5 billion more from the British government than it contributed, a subvention that has been rising steadily each year despite a decade of 'peace', yet the province remains one of the poorest regions in the UK, with GDP per head of population almost 20% below the UK average"¹³³.

¹³³ "Northern Ireland – Where is the bright new future?", from March 23, 2006 available at: <http://www.managementtoday.co.uk/news/542849/>.

Conclusions

It is true that certain people or communities are not better off than they were before 1998 but we do not feel that they would be in a different position now even if the Agreement had not been signed and accepted in the referenda. The Agreement was a constitutional, political project which was not aimed at addressing economic or social ills of Northern Ireland in detail. Thus we think that it is hard to blame the Agreement for the lack of success on individual or community level by people living in Northern Ireland and more particularly our respondents.

There were a few problems which were only vaguely addressed in the Agreement like e.g. reforms of the police or the decommissioning. This was probably done to maximize the support for the project in both communities and to delay any sort of serious arguments over its careful wording into the future when the Agreement would supposedly be working and revealing its positive, non contentious factors benefiting everyone. This approach was called “constructive ambiguity” and might today be seen as the biggest stumbling block to a Northern Ireland wide and full acceptance of the Belfast Agreement. However, it also has to be noted that had it not been for this “ambiguity” then probably there would not be any Agreement at all.

Sadly, many of our respondents seemed to regard the whole situation in Northern Ireland as a kind of a zero sum game, evidently present in local politics, in which one’s lack of access to prosperity would be blamed on the successes of the others. This was evident while questioning some of our Protestant respondents who would speak of “terrorists benefiting from the Agreement”, “Catholic community getting a better deal”, “Nationalists having it all” etc. However, what they failed to mention was the fact that one of the pillars of the Agreement was the empowerment of the previously oppressed (the degree of this oppression will not be presented nor discussed in this study and probably for many years will remain as one of the most potent debating points for people in Northern Ireland) minority in Northern Ireland. Thus from day one this could be seen as a Catholic victory by many but others, let us call them “realists”, regarded this as a necessary compromise on the way to normality in Northern Ireland (“Power sharing was the right thing to do in the end”; “It was all done for a purpose” – said some of our Protestant respondents). This compromise was to ensure that there would be less talking about constitutional

issues in the province and more effort on assuring that its economic and social situation changes for the better.

The “realists” faced a strong coalition of “rejectionists” or “begrudgers” who would not only cry “sell out”, from both sides of the political divide, but also blame all of the Northern Irish or Irish ills on the Agreement. The group of “realists”, which not only consisted of consensual Protestants but also a significant section of the die hard republicans who came to a conclusion that this was the best compromise they could get at the time, were supported by the “protagonists”, mostly members of the SDLP which is widely seen as the main power broker behind the Agreement and less significant sections of the unionist community, favourable to the idea of power sharing.

We do not think that the all the working class on both sides of the divide are worse off than they once were. It is our view that actually before and during the Troubles both sides of the working class were in a pretty dire economic situation. Obviously Protestants seemed to have it better due to the fact e.g. they formed around 90 per cent of the workforce of the Belfast shipyard and there were businesses in West Belfast, just on the edge of the Catholic Falls, which hired lots of people and none of them were Catholics. These were usually textile or agricultural industry factories.

Nevertheless, there is ample evidence of Protestants suffering from horrible housing conditions and poverty, which did not differ much from these in the nearby Falls, in some of the loyalist heartlands of Northern Ireland like Shankill or East Belfast pre 1969 and consequently pre 1998. Please refer to the loyalist’ testimonies of this in e.g. P. Taylor, *Loyalists* or J. Stevenson, *‘We Wrecked the Place’: Contemplating an End to the Irish Troubles*. Thus the fact that some areas of e.g. Belfast are still economically and socially deprived does not mean that this is the result of the Belfast Agreement. People living in areas representing both sides of the divide lived in squalor condition prior to 1994 (ceasefires) or 1998 (the Agreement).

It is true that the republican heartlands were more policed and militarised – the change in this aspect is still regarded a major boon by the Catholics. Some of our Catholic respondents, especially the ones who are now over 30 or middle aged, would comment on this: “The main difference between now and 1998 is that there is no army here now. They are somewhere in Ireland but at least you can be assured that they won’t come and smash up your house or ram

over your wife's roses in the garden!"; "It is better now, you can breathe, there is no oppression, no troops walking around"; "At least now I don't have to worry that some Scottish or Welsh sadist will kick my arse in just because I looked at him"; "Would you like helicopters to fly over your head on a daily basis? I wouldn't" etc.

Protestant areas did not receive this boon – security there has never been that tight, although it would be an oversimplification to state that it was lax. This might be the reason for the fact that almost from day one many Protestants saw the Catholic boon as some unnatural reward for the “other” community. Theoretically their gain was to enjoy an increased sense of personal and communal security after the end of the “war”. Unfortunately, this was not to happen due to the fact that the Provisional IRA was still active, albeit on a “ceasefire”, and the dissident republican groups maintained an aggressive posture at the West and especially the North Belfast interfaces. The loyalist paramilitary groups were no different but the message that reverberated through the Loyalist heartlands was that the republicans were still intent on harming Protestants. This might be the reason for an even increased sense of being under siege of the Protestant community – majority of our Protestant respondents still think the peace walls are to protect them from the attacks coming from the other community. A couple of our respondents, again usually the older ones plus the Antrim Protestants, offered some interesting comments on this while we conducted our research: “The [peace] walls are coming up because we are afraid. Afraid of attacks, petrol bombs, stones, bottles”; “We feel besieged, even more now, coz in theory it should be all better now but it is not”; “There is nowhere for us to go and that is why we have to defend, stand our ground”.

Despite all of the aforementioned opinions, the Protestant respondents, while being asked about the main change the Agreement might have brought to Northern Ireland, most often mentioned the overall improvement in security situation as the biggest boon for the whole of the province post 1998. Comments like: “I/We feel safer”, “threat of terrorism is gone”, “we are less afraid” etc. were common but have to be viewed against the backdrop of the aforementioned comments on the peace walls and the fact that half of the Protestant community still thinks that paramilitaries have some sort of influence in Northern Irish communities. This probably is the reflection of the fact that the paramilitary organisations, and not only on the Protestant side, are now largely morphing into organised crime groups, or have been doing that from 1994 onwards,

which are present in their local communities. In the end it is the same people who are committing the crimes but this time there is not even a slightest pretence of a political justification for this.

Thus the November 2007 Ulster Defence Association statement which promised a transformation of the organisation into a community group and further clarifications of this offered by its outspoken leader, South Belfast “brigadier”, Jackie McDonald, about “people’s guns” which cannot be decommissioned, have to be seen as pathetic attempts to disguise involvement in criminality. This view is also supported by the fact that when in 2004 the Ulster Volunteer Force, the second biggest loyalist paramilitary organisation, started its internal process of debate, which was to ensure its steady progression into peacetime reality in Northern Ireland, it was revealed that the organisation was at the peak of its manpower. Most of the members were recruited post 1994, i.e. the loyalist ceasefires, in order to counter the influences of the Ulster Defence Association or the Loyalist Volunteer Force. In the end, this “countering” amounted to assuring that the spoils of criminality unleashed in the times of terrorism, pre 1994, would not be threatened by another tribal grouping within loyalism. There was no other reason for these organisations to exist nor to expand but they nevertheless had done so and this was a vital ingredient for scenes of intra community violence on the loyalist side which only added to the perception that “we have lost” on behalf of the Protestants and especially its working class.

Nevertheless, it would be far fetched to blame the Belfast Agreement for this in an outright manner. This was a political settlement, not an economic nor a social one which was to act as a catalyst for curing the ills of the Northern Irish society, one of them being the presence of paramilitaries. However, it is true that all the parties to the Agreement were not specifically forced to (please refer to the Agreement for legal details of this) to pledge their ongoing commitment to disbandment and disarmament of the illegal paramilitary organisations. Theoretically this was to happen by May 2000 but almost from the beginning seemed like an unrealisable date.

The attitude accepted, although not spelt out at that time, was in fact that politics was to create the proper climate for these groups to melt away which could lead to curing other ills of the communities most affected by violence. It was not thought out that perhaps all of this should have been approached differently and the change which the Agreement undoubtedly orchestrated would not be accepted by many had it not been generated at the lower, community level.

In the end, there was the Agreement and not much seemed to change afterwards for many of the communities – the causes of their dire economic situation, i.e. the hold of the paramilitaries and their criminal reign of fear, was still there, especially in the Protestant communities. This was different in the nationalist community in which the republican activists were harnessed to work for the political change not through the usage of arms but through community and political activism. This explains the 15 000 strong army of Sinn Fein activists island wide who were marched off into another type of activity and their obedience and commitment were assured by the military like discipline of the movement. Obviously, the situation looked totally different within the loyalist communities which suffered from paramilitary fragmentation and the lack of a clear cut political representation – both the UUP and the DUP could not have been classified as purely “loyalist” parties just as Sinn Fein has been republican and working class.

In fact, in our view, Sinn Fein has been given a free ride in regard to modelling their supporters politically and controlling their allegiance by being given spoils of political power which resulted in e.g. the party having the silent final say in who is getting a job in West Belfast or North Belfast, and this not only concerns public sector jobs. The republicans, as they were seen as having a legal mandate to represent the most deprived part of the Catholic community, have become the governmental interlocutor in regard to poverty, lack of decent housing, unemployment etc. in certain parts of Northern Ireland. As a result of this, the party groomed its own middle class, out of the former representatives of the Catholic working class, who definitely are the beneficiaries of the Agreement. Seeking them out and talking to them would be a good idea, in our view, for the films you are trying to make. Examples of these people, although many would resent to being called the working class, can be found in different organisations, especially community groups, ex prisoners’ associations etc., which are broadly involved in day to day activities of the republican movement and also receive a fair share of outsourced work to carry out on behalf of Sinn Fein.

Sadly, there were no such interlocutors on the loyalist side. The fragmentation of the Protestant politics, even the UUP on the eve of the Agreement was nothing else but a conglomerate of localised party branches, made the task of finding some almost impossible. The fact that the situation looked exactly the same with the paramilitary organisations did not help this task either.

One can obviously state that it was the construction of the Agreement which ensured that the loyalists would “lose”. We do not agree with this view – we actually think that they might have even lost before the Agreement was signed. They had no viable political representation, were ideologically and politically on the defensive against the republican ideas of striving to achieve a United Ireland. The history came back to haunt loyalists whose paramilitary groups were always said to be purely reactive, acting solely in response to republican violence. They would deny this but after 1998 their “micro parties”, UDP and PUP, failed to carry their message across and pretty soon almost drifted into oblivion (UDP is actually no longer operational, PUP has two councillors and one MLA at the moment). They have been no match for the united by the purpose, militarily disciplined Sinn Fein. Some of our Protestant respondents commented on this: “One can easily see the difference between the two [republican and loyalist paramilitaries turned politicians]: one is after a United Ireland and the other just wants to get a new house and a flash car”; “Just look at them, the “loyalists” – all tattoos, jewelry, booze and drugs. And then take a look at the republicans”; “I hate them, they are all gangsters, I would never vote for them”; “I would not trust them, they did hurt our community just when they were supposed to defend us”.

We would say that the Agreement was about empowering one of the communities with a strong political voice. The province was going from majority rule then direct rule to power sharing and this simple fact would automatically suggest that the minority was the winner of the Agreement. However, it turned out that the minority had a pretty good idea what it wanted from the Agreement and how it wanted to achieve this whereas sections of the majority hardly moved an inch economically and politically from where they were e.g. in 1997. Thus it is our view that the Protestant working class is not the loser from the Agreement. The critical ingredients for its “defeat” were in place prior to 1998 and afterwards have not been removed although many Protestants would regard this as a ploy on behalf of the less and less trusted by them British government which desperately tried to empower the minority in Northern Ireland. This stance was visible during our research: “We were sold out”; “The British government never looked after us”; “It was all about spoils for the Catholic community” were some of the comments uttered by our most resentful Protestant respondents.

In this sense we think that a section of a Protestant community, especially the ones who responded that it was the Catholics who benefited from the Agreement, does regard the Agreement as a scapegoat for its pre 1998 problems. The Agreement did not create the

paramilitaries and was not responsible for violent feuds between them which scared potential investors in these communities and made the British government think twice before it committed any money to loyalist areas (this is clearly visible by a recent decision of SDLP Minister for Social Development Margaret Ritchie to suspend 1.2 million pounds of funding to a community organisation which was regarded as a Ulster Defence Association front, in October 2007). There are similar groups, e.g. An Coiste, working on the other side of the divide, but no one has ever accused it of being Provisional IRA front and it is now at a forefront of a new ex prisoners' groups initiative (a consortium involving five ex-prisoner groupings working in partnership to address sensitive issues in relation to "dealing with the past") which secured funding from EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation.

We have not found evidence indicating that the republican heartlands mostly benefited financially from e.g. European Union programmes post 1998. These very programmes are always open to bidders representing different communities, groups or organisations in all member states. It is true that the first transfer of EU money, 240 million pounds which were granted shortly after the 1994 ceasefires, was aimed at the most deprived and impoverished areas and at that time they were mostly republican. However, it would be untrue to say that e.g. the Protestant East Belfast has never received any governmental or EU money prior to late 2007 23.5 million pounds for the Connswater Project. By 2006 the Peace II initiative put more than 14 million pounds into 72 different projects in this part of Belfast like a major community centre, job development schemes and programmes devised to address the issue of breaking inter community barriers and this is on top of the multi million project aimed at regenerating the "Titanic Quarter". In addition to this, e.g. more than 33 million pounds were made available for community projects in Protestant areas of Belfast like Shankill, Lower Oldpark, Shore Road in April 2006.

We also failed to locate evidence of the alleged discrimination of one of the communities in the area of housing. In May 2006 Minister of State in Northern Ireland Office David Hanson responded to a question from the SDLP leader and member of the House of Commons for the Foyle Constituency, Mark Durkan, on the religious affiliation of those on waiting lists for accommodation and those who were awarded accommodation. Please consult the tables below for the Minister's answers:

Waiting for accommodation in Northern Ireland:

	At March			
	2002	2003	2004	2005
Northern Ireland				
Catholic	0,401	0,512	0,983	2,182
Protestant	1,407	2,237	2,512	3,222

Awarded accommodation in Northern Ireland:

	At March	
	2004	2005
Northern Ireland		
Catholic	80	55
Protestant	78	28

These statistics point out to the fact that only a slight majority of the applicants come from the Protestant community but 64% of the accommodation made available in 2005 was awarded to Protestants. We do not think that this the result of some form of discrimination – this is a hyper sensitive issue in Northern Ireland from late 1960s onwards and it would be extremely foolish of any administration of the province, be it London or Stormont based, to revert to the discriminatory practices of the pre Troubles. We are not sure if this result of the fact that more

representatives of this community were on the waiting list for a longer period of time and therefore now have a preference in having accommodation awarded. This might also be the result of the fact that simply there are more Protestants on the waiting list and it would be natural for them to be successful with a higher number of applications. However, this does not explain why the ratio in 2005 was 64% to 36% in favour of Protestants. It might be the consequence of the older age structure of the Protestant population which theoretically might argue that at the moment it is in the greater need for accommodation. If this view is accepted then we should see a reversal in the successful applications in favour of Catholics in the next few years when more and more of them will start families and become eligible applicants for accommodation in Northern Ireland.

There is a general consensus that the rising trend in suicides in Northern Ireland is the result of the increase of suicides amongst males aged 15-34 in both communities. A quarter of all deaths of 15 and 34 years olds between 2000 and 2005 were attributed to suicide. Suicide rate higher in Catholic areas (11.1 per 100,000) than Protestant (9.7) or mixed areas (8.9).

In 2002-2004 Northern Ireland recorded average of 18.3 male deaths from suicide per 100,000 population, equal to UK average, but higher than the 16.7 male deaths per 100,000 in England. There were 213 suicides in Northern Ireland in 2005: 146 the year before. Previous high was 183 in 2000. A greater proportion was in urban areas (10.5) than rural (8.4). West Belfast has highest suicide rate (17.1), rural Mid-Ulster (5.5) and East Belfast (6.1) the lowest.

This can be seen as surprising if one is to consider the fact that the loyalist communities were supposed to be more affected by all the social ills of the Northern Irish society. There is a theory which points out to the fact that suicide rate and terrorism in Northern Ireland are interlinked i.e. when there are more deaths resulting from the latter, there are more resulting from the former, e.g. 1972 when 497 died because of terrorism, “only” 47 people took their own lives. If one is to compare this with the latest suicide rates then he or she might conclude that there might be something in this theoretically far fetched theory.

The other social ill of the society in Northern Ireland is drug use. Once again we have to claim that this very “ill” is generally regarded as affecting the Protestant community in Northern Ireland. One simply has to study Jim McDowell’s *Godfathers* in which the horrible situation in relation to drugs in the Protestant “Biblical Belt” of North Antrim is described and this is

contrasted with the killings of drug dealers operating in Catholic districts by the Direct Action Against Drugs, a front for the Provisional IRA post 1994. Moreover, the papers were full in the past of the stories on the so-called “Drug Volunteer Force”, a new nickname for the Loyalist Volunteer Force, the third biggest loyalist paramilitary organisation, which main occupation throughout its history was drug dealing. The members of the rival Ulster Volunteer Force, interviewed by the authors in the past for the purposes of their PhD research, would claim that this was a deliberate strategy on behalf of the British who would not interfere with Loyalist Volunteer Force drug dealing activities which were aimed at fomenting criminality in the loyalist community. This allegedly was to ensure economic, political and social crippling of loyalism, a potential rival for the republicans with which the British preferred to negotiate. This is a far fetched theory but it is not hard to find evidence for loyalist paramilitary organisations heavy involvement in drug dealing but we would never describe this “trade” as being “promoted” by the British government or its intelligence agencies.

The illicit drug situation in Northern Ireland continues to develop and change. It appears to be establishing its own unique features compared to other parts of the British Isles sharing some similarities, but also having quite marked contrasts. The main drugs of choice remain cannabis, solvents and those drugs typically associated with the club scene and/or youthful use i.e. Ecstasy, speed and LSD. Although injecting drug use, especially of heroin, is not as significant a feature as in Dublin and parts of Britain, heroin use has increased markedly over the last five years, and there are particular concerns about its use in mid-Antrim, North Down and parts of Belfast. In the past year there has been growing concern about the use of cocaine, with anecdotal evidence suggesting that it is moving beyond being a drug of choice for a small group who can afford it. However, this is almost an EU wide trend which cannot be described as a solely Northern Irish phenomenon.

We do not think that one can speak of a more prevalent drug problem in one community or the other due to the fact that the drug trade, based mostly on cannabis and cocaine, moved into middle class areas and Belfast city centre where drugs are offered to more affluent potential users and especially students plus young professionals who make up the majority of club goers anywhere in the world. We are not able to assess how much of this trade is controlled by the paramilitaries but since we did find information on them actually opting for moving their businesses out of the traditional areas of operation, i.e. republican or loyalist heartlands, we

expect them to be seriously involved in this. It would not be far fetched to say that many of the former paramilitaries, especially on the loyalist side, continue to operate in similar vein as in the past but now they have ridden themselves completely of any sort of pretence of political cover or justification for their actions. This is now done purely for personal gain. There is a theory which says that the republican leadership actually allows certain hardliners to continue with their illegal actions in order to secure their acceptance of the Sinn Fein post 1998 strategy. This probably mostly concerns the former Provisional IRA members in places like South Armagh. Situation with loyalists is different due to the fact that their leadership was not able to in a way outsource its rank and file members to community groups, local initiatives, political parties on a scale comparable with the republican leadership which staffed all of these on the other side of the divide with former Provisional IRA members, sympathisers or ex prisoners. This is one of the greatest failures of the loyalists who still suffer from the fact there literally are thousands of able men within certain Protestant communities not wanting to simply change and move on into peaceful Northern Ireland.

The latest finding, from January 2008, on drugs use in Northern Ireland point to the fact that 28% of respondents aged 15-64 years reported taking any illegal drugs at some point in their life. Cannabis was the most popular drug with cocaine and heroin or crack lagging far behind in the statistics on drugs usage in Northern Ireland – 25% of all adults reported using the former, whereas “only” 5% opted admitted to trying cocaine and less than 1% heroin or crack. Drugs were more common among men – 34% of men reported lifetime use of any illegal drugs compared to 22% of women; 14% of men reported last year use compared to 5% of women; and 5% of men reported last month use compared to 2% of women. The use of illegal drugs was highest for 25-34 year olds (42% admitted to their lifetime use).

We can only speculate on which community is more affected by drug use. There is some questionable evidence which seems to point out that the Protestant community suffers from this problem on a bigger scale. Both Antrim and South Down are in majority Protestant areas and it is there where the problem is supposed to be the most evident. In addition to this, in 2006 215 of the 288 registered Northern Ireland’s drug addicts were living in Antrim and Down – counties where Protestant are a majority. Antrim and Down also reported 85% of the overall syringes issued to these addicts by the Health Service Boards in 2006. Out of 1464 people presenting themselves for

drug misuse treatment in Northern Ireland 920 were from Antrim and Down but also 334 were inhabitants of Derry or Fermanagh where Catholics are a majority.

The aforementioned statistics may support the generally held view that the Protestant community in Northern Ireland is more affected drugs use but a more detailed study would be needed to fully assess this. We are not totally convinced that there is a link between social deprivation and number of drug users – it is enough to consider the fact that the allegedly most affected areas of Antrim and Down are not the most deprived parts of Northern Ireland. Thus even if we were to assume that Protestant communities, due to the fact that throughout the last 10 years they allegedly have not benefited as much as the Catholic ones, are in a worse economic and social position then this does not automatically mean that they are ripe to be taken over by drug dealers. The fact that the impoverished parts of North Dublin, but also Southern parts of the city, have for the last decade or so been full of drug users should not always be used as a proper comparative example for Northern Ireland. The same applies to the Republic's heroin problem which is less evident in Northern Ireland.

Appendix One – Disaffection

1968

In a 1968 survey entitled the *Loyalty Survey*, citizens of Northern Ireland were polled on their opinions on matters concerning religion and identity, constitutional issues, sectarianism and political parties and the results were published in the book *Governing Without Consensus*¹³⁴.

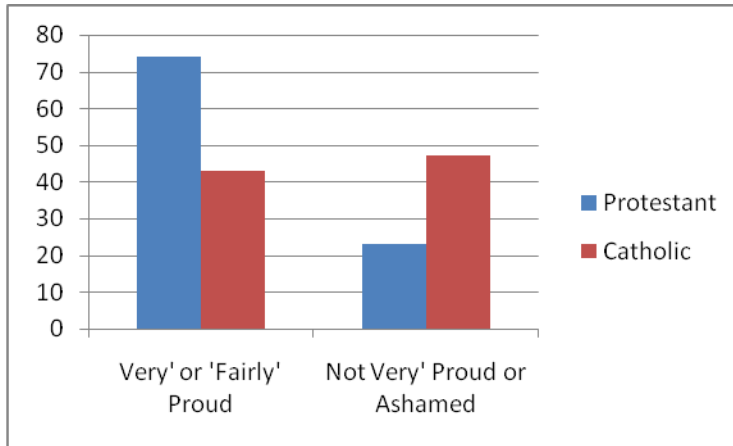
The survey found that 68% of Protestants supported the constitution of Northern Ireland as remaining a part of the United Kingdom and only 10% disapproved of the constitutional position. This is a ratio of 7 to 1 in favour of the constitutional position and demonstrates a general sense of Protestant satisfaction with the state. According to the author, “Catholics, by contrast, are divided into three almost equal group – supporters, don’t knows and opponents. Only one third are explicitly prepared to endorse the constitution. The high level of don’t knows indicates in part confusion about the meaning of a complex, four-syllable word, especially among persons with a limited education”¹³⁵.

In the same survey it was found that 74% of Protestants felt either ‘very proud’ or ‘fairly proud’ about the way the country is governed. Only 43% of Catholics responded with the same answers. When the opposite answers of ‘not very proud’ and ‘ashamed’ are examined, it can be seen that 47% of Catholics felt this way, but only 23% of Protestants¹³⁶. There is therefore a correlation between religion and pride in the way that the country is governed, with Protestants having significantly more pride in the way the country is governed than Catholics, and significantly more Catholics being ashamed of the way the country is governed than Protestants.

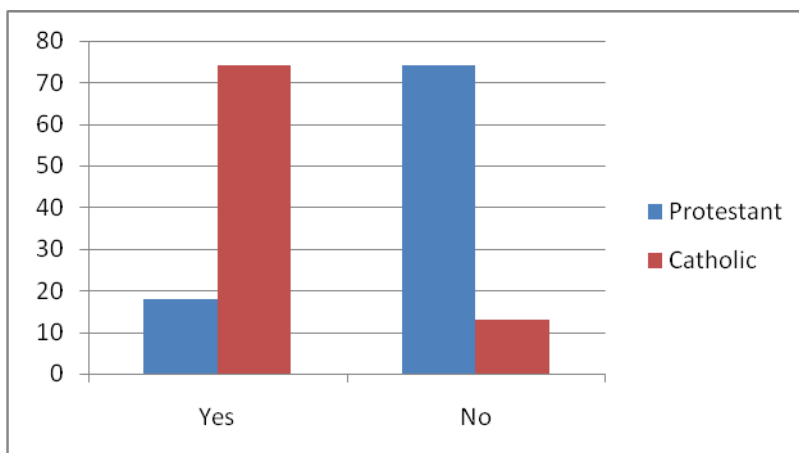
¹³⁴ R. Rose, *Governing Without Consensus: An Irish Perspective*, London: Faber and Faber, 1971.

¹³⁵ R. Rose, *Governing Without Consensus: An Irish Perspective*, London: Faber and Faber, 1971, p. 189.

¹³⁶ R. Rose, *Governing Without Consensus: An Irish Perspective*, London: Faber and Faber, 1971, p. 487.



Another way to examine levels of disaffection is to look at what people thought about discrimination in 1968. The survey asked people to agree or disagree with the following statement: ‘People sometimes say that in parts of Northern Ireland Catholics are treated unfairly. Do you think this is true or not?’ The findings here are very significant. Only 18% of Protestants, compared to 74% of Catholics agreed with this statement. In contrast 74% of Protestants compared to only 13% of Catholics disagreed with it. The number of yes and no answers for each religion is practically a mirror image. The chart below demonstrates this:



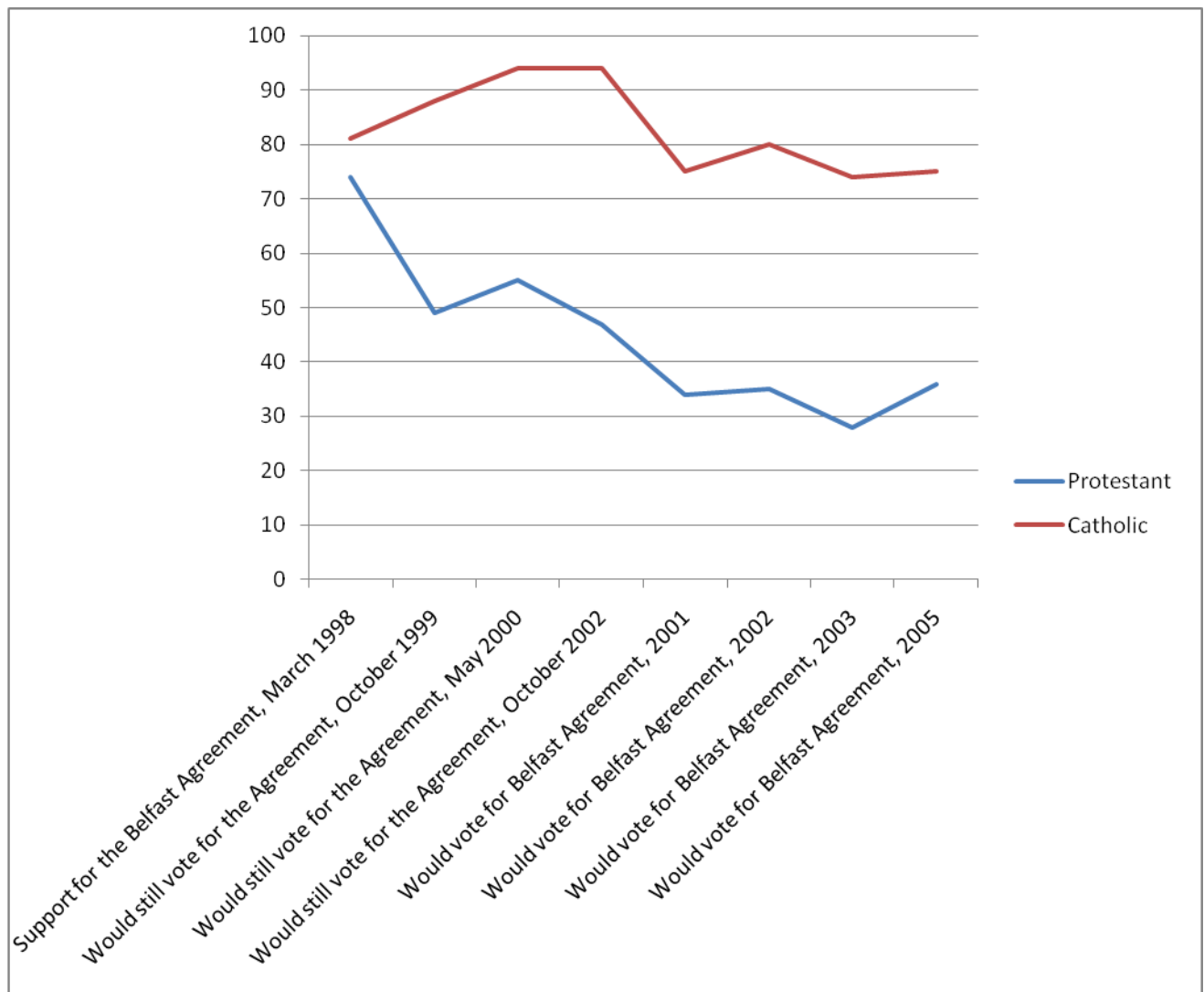
Obtaining statistics for 2008 is difficult as the year has only just started however there are other indicators of disaffection that can be examined showing a trend demonstrating growing disaffection amongst Northern Ireland's Protestants for the past ten years. Please also refer to other sections of the research which give figures for levels of unemployment, education etc as well as to our completed survey data on opinions of the Belfast Agreement and attitudes towards the constitutional position of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom. Protestants in Northern Ireland have gone from a position of strength and power in the political system from 1921 to 1972 (Northern Ireland in this period is commonly referred to as the 'Protestant State', or as a one party state), to the ability to prevent the 1974 power sharing Sunningdale Agreement, to a weaker position from the 1980s following the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the principle of consent and the return to a devolved assembly following the Belfast Agreement referendum of 1998. The post-Agreement suspension of the assembly demonstrates the unionist 'veto' in work, but changes in the balance of power between the pro-Agreement Ulster Unionist Party and the anti-Agreement Democratic Unionist Party demonstrate a growing disaffection amongst ordinary protestant voters and their concerns regarding the constitutional status of Northern Ireland.

An attempt to put this in figures can prove problematic, as voting behaviour can only reflect trends rather than absolutely denote disaffection, however, it is the best way to examine Protestant disaffection with the state.

Following the Belfast Agreement in 1998 a referendum was called to determine the strength of support and opposition to the provisions set out in the Agreement. The results of the referendum demonstrated an overwhelming support for the Agreement, with 71% of voters voting yes and only 29% voting no. The electoral turnout for the referendum was a staggering 81%. While the results demonstrate a significant majority of yes voters in Northern Ireland, when the results are broken down by religion a different pattern emerges. While the voting patterns of different religions are an important indicator of disaffection, it must be remembered that the numbers are based on exit polls, rather than exact numbers, so the numbers rely on the willingness of voters to divulge their religion and the way in which they voted. It has been

estimated that a 99% yes vote was recorded amongst Catholics¹³⁷, demonstrating near consensual support of the Catholic community who voted on the question of the Belfast Agreement. Protestant support for the Belfast was less awe-inspiring, with a recorded yes vote at only 57%¹³⁸.

Furthermore, when polls are examined questioning how people would vote if the Belfast Agreement referendum was to be held again, there is a general downward trend in Protestant support for the Agreement¹³⁹.

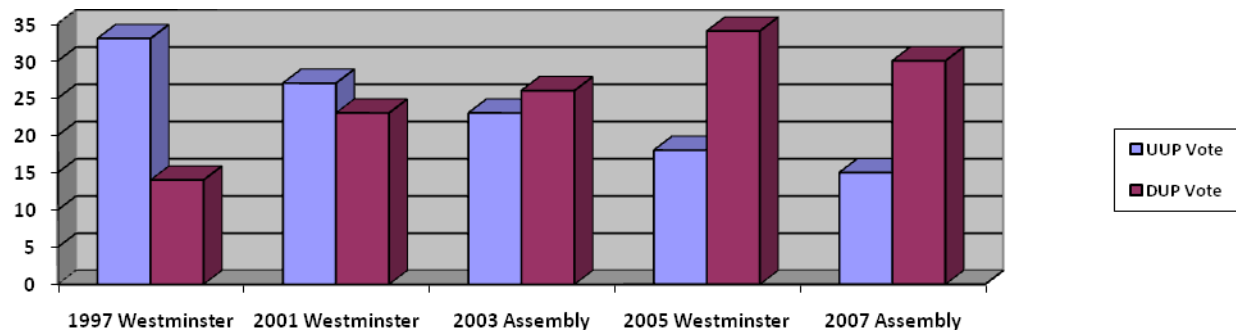


¹³⁷ J. Tonge, *Northern Ireland Conflict and Change*, (Second Edition), Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd, 2002, p. 190.

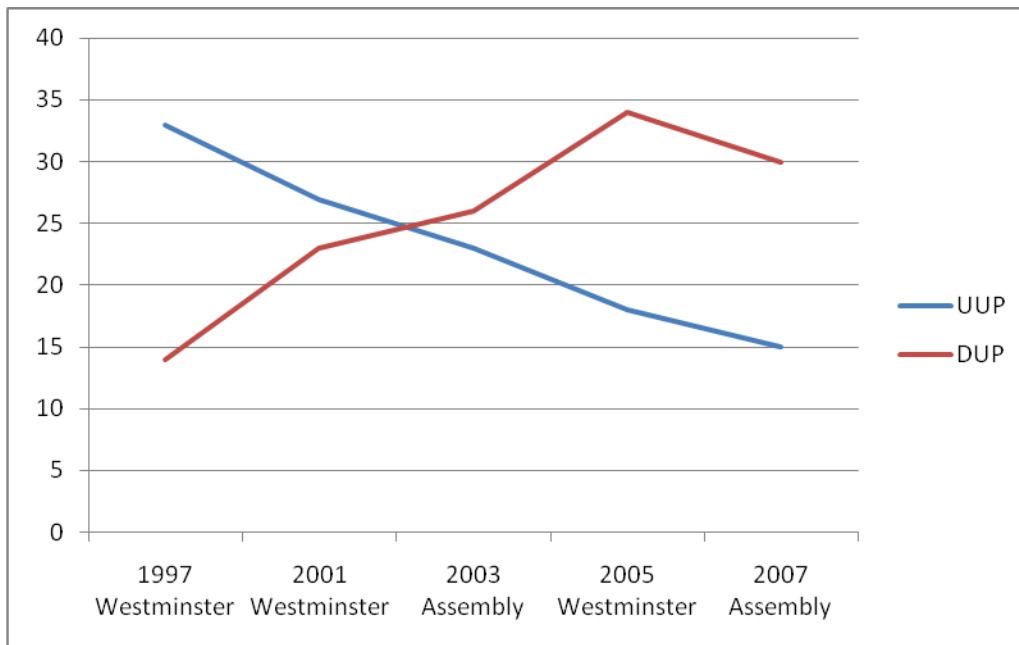
¹³⁸ J. Tonge, *Northern Ireland Conflict and Change*, (Second Edition), Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd, 2002, p. 190.

¹³⁹ Statistics taken from: C. Irwin, *The Peoples Peace Process in Northern Ireland*, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 260, and the *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey*, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005.

Voting patterns in the ensuing elections can help further determine Protestant disaffection with the current constitutional position of the state. In 1998 David Trimble's Ulster Unionist Party which was the main unionist party during the Belfast Agreement negotiations, positioned itself as the pro-Agreement party, while the Democratic Unionist Party, led by Ian Paisley, squarely placed itself as an anti-Agreement party, in fact it withdrew from the multi party negotiations which resulted in the Belfast Agreement and campaigned during the referendum for the no vote. A vote for the DUP in an election then can be considered a vote for dissatisfaction with the constitutional arrangement in Northern Ireland.



This is more effectively demonstrated in a line chart as below:



Dissatisfaction with the Belfast Agreement demonstrated through an unwillingness to vote for the Agreement again given another chance, and through voting patterns of voters opting to elect the DUP, the anti-Agreement party, demonstrate a growing Protestant disaffection with the state in comparison with a high proportion of Catholics who would still vote for the Belfast Agreement.

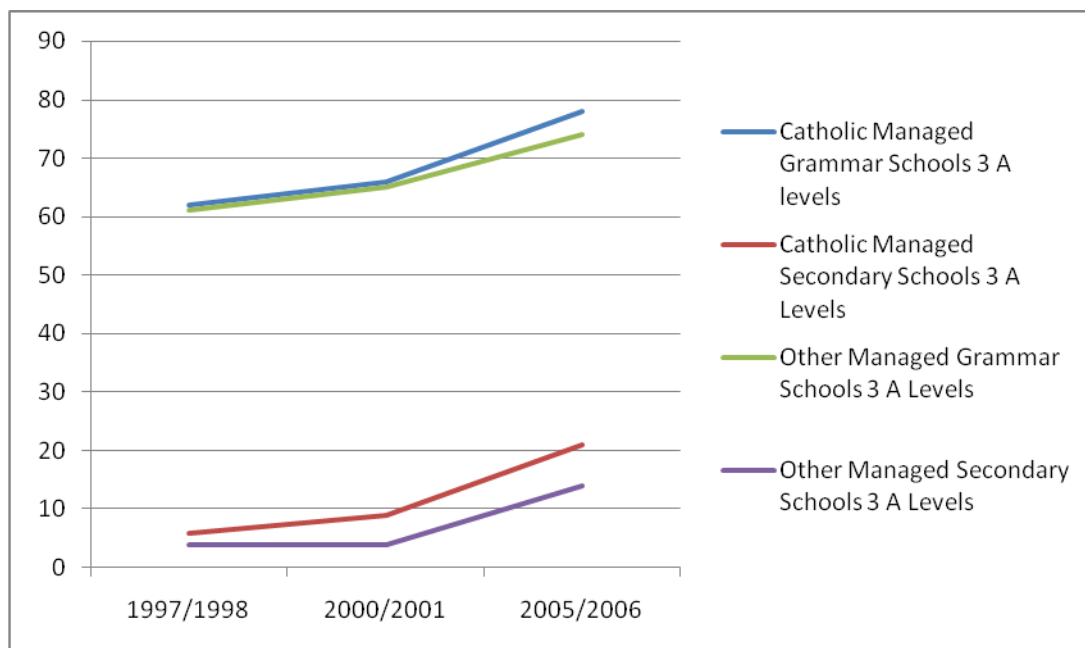
To further ascertain Protestant disaffection in the 21st century compared to a growing Catholic confidence in the Northern Irish state, please refer to the previous research on Protestant and Catholic perceptions of the Belfast Agreement.

It is unlikely that Northern Ireland will witness a resurgence of violence in the 21st century to the levels experienced in the late 1960s and during the troubles. Despite Protestant disaffection with the state, Loyalist paramilitaries have mostly disbanded and decommissioned, and the peace dividend that has previously been talked about is being seen even in working class protestant communities in Northern Ireland. The DUP vote has increased in correlation with the decrease of numbers of Protestants who are happy with the Belfast Agreement, so there is a viable political alternative to violence in the form of constitutional electoral politics in Northern Ireland. This was not the case in 1968. The discrimination felt by Catholics in 1968 is not replicated in 2008, in part due to provisions within the Belfast Agreement, however this may add to Protestant feelings of disaffection in that they no longer maintain control and political power as once they did. If you refer to our previous research on violence in Northern Ireland you will see that statistics demonstrate a lessening of paramilitary control over communities in Northern Ireland, and a generally accepted view that the Belfast Agreement was the turning point in the reduction of violence in Northern Ireland, though of course the 1994 ceasefires went some way in lowering levels of violence, the perception amongst interviewees was that the Belfast agreement entrenched Northern Ireland as a non violent society.

Appendix Two – Education

Education can be seen as an important factor in determining how a community is benefiting under the political regime. This particular part of the research aims to quantitatively assess whether Catholic and Protestant educational achievements are equal, or whether one community is benefiting more than the other from the educational system in Northern Ireland. Unfortunately there are not statistics dating back into the 1990s for all aspects of this research, so these findings will be based on the only available statistics which are the most current that have been published.

Taking the number of A Level passes and GCSE results as a good standard of educational achievement, it can be seen from the table below that standards have in general improved from both Catholic and Protestant grammar and secondary schools in the past ten years. All numbers in this chart are percentages¹⁴⁰.

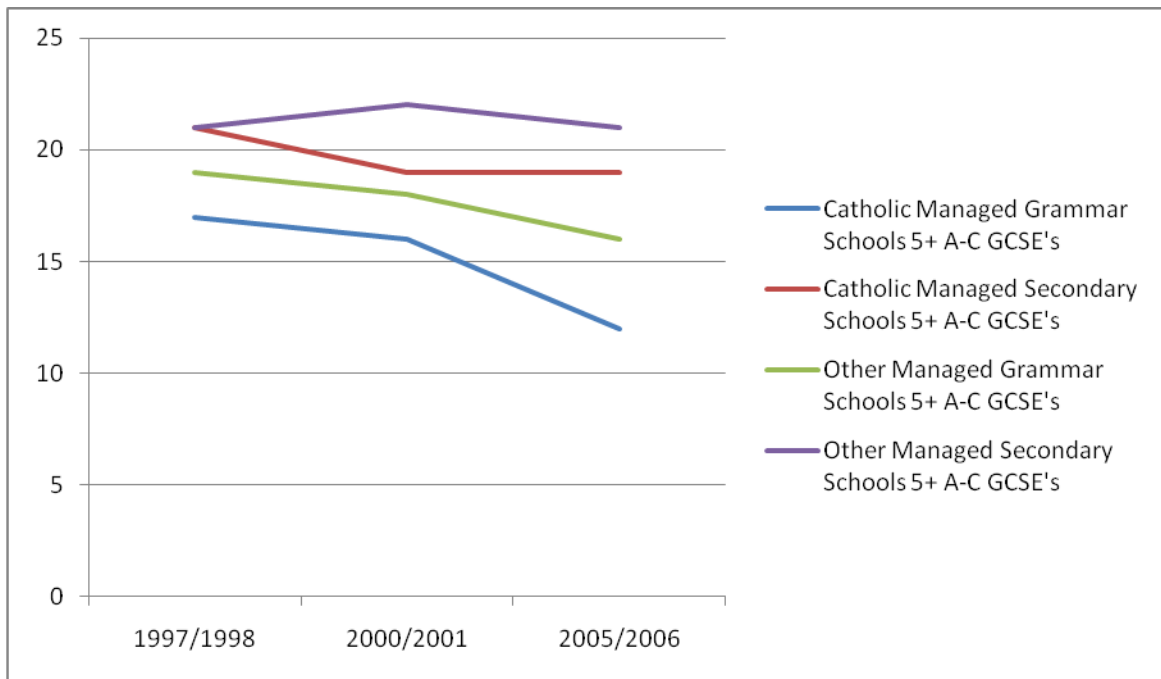


Whilst both Protestant and Catholic schools have shown an improvement over the past ten years, students from Catholic managed grammar and secondary schools have shown a greater

¹⁴⁰ <http://www.deni.gov.uk>.

improvement than their protestant counterparts, from 62% in 1997/1998 to 78% in 2005/2006. Comparably Protestant students have improved from 61% to just 74%.

Comparing the GCSE results offers a few surprises; please refer to the chart below¹⁴¹:

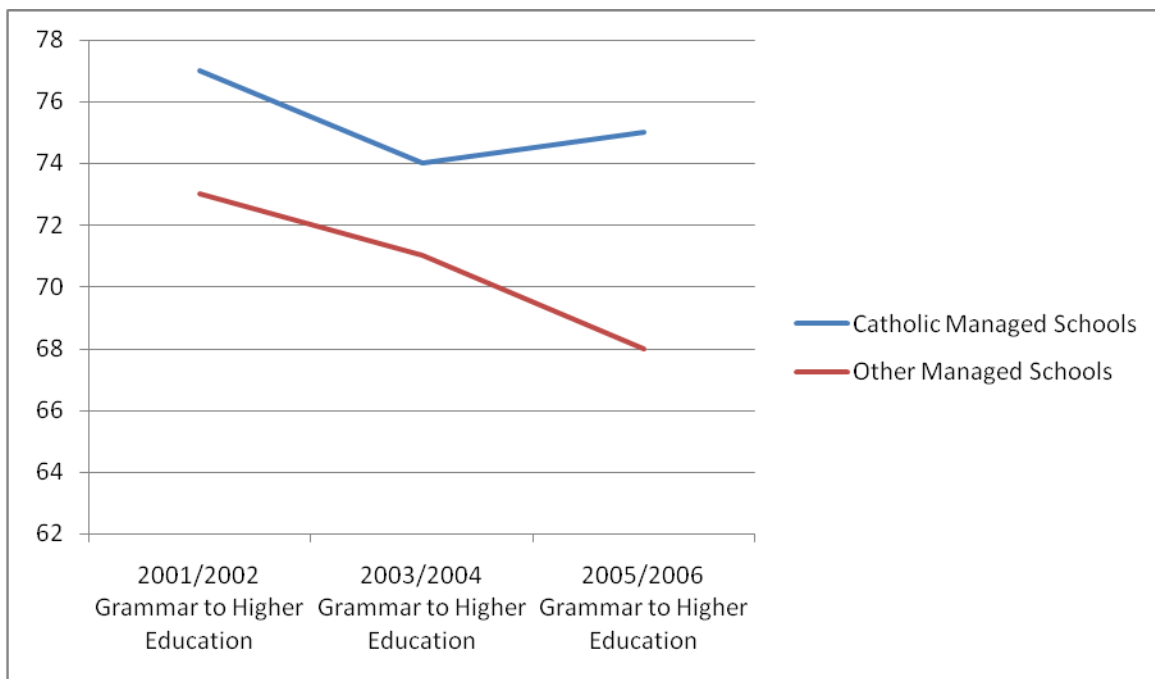


However, the statistics collected from the Department of Education for Northern Ireland show the highest qualification of school leavers, so the downwards trend in the numbers of students leaving schools with only 5 or more GCSE's could reflect the number that now leave school with A Levels. That is, more people now go on to achieve A Levels, so fewer people leave school at 16 only with GCSE's.

Since the statistics demonstrate a not very clear advantage to Catholics over Protestants, it is important then to assess where school leavers go after they have finished their full time secondary education.

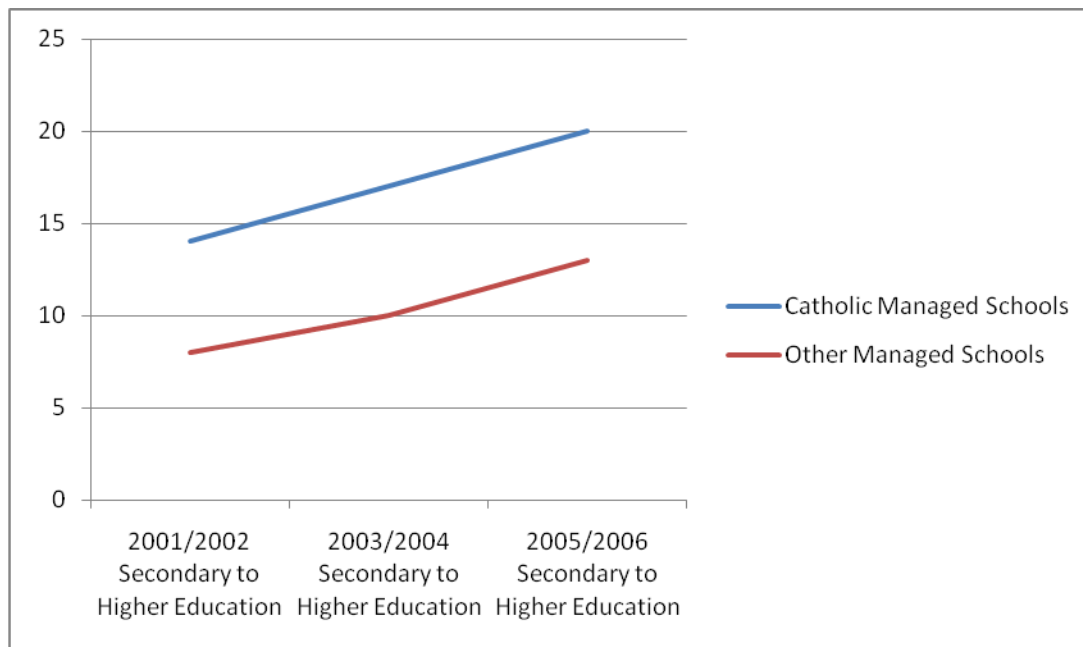
¹⁴¹ <http://www.deni.gov.uk>.

The chart below shows the number of students from Catholic and other maintained grammar schools who go on to attend higher education (university)¹⁴²:



There is a general downward trend for students from both Catholic and other managed grammar schools in attending higher education, though this trend is much more marked for students from other managed schools. In 2005/2006 only 68% of students from other managed grammar schools went on to attend university; whereas the figure for 2001/2002 was 73%, this is a drop of 5%. There is a different story however when you look at the destination of students from secondary schools, where there is an increase amongst students from both Catholic and other managed secondary schools from the start of the decade. Please see the chart below:

¹⁴² <http://www.deni.gov.uk>.



Students from Catholic managed secondary schools appear to be faring a lot better than their counterparts from other managed secondary schools. There is a discernible Catholic/Protestant divide on this issue. Bob Osborne and Ian Shuttleworth contend that this is because “The academic orientation of Catholic secondary schools has undoubtedly acted to boost Catholic participation levels overall and the representation of entrants from less well-off backgrounds”¹⁴³. Please see the previous research for some statistics and analysis of numbers of Protestants and Catholics who leave Northern Ireland to attend institutions in Great Britain, and those who remain in Northern Ireland. To add to the analysis, Osborne and Shuttleworth argue that there are two reasons to why students leave Northern Ireland to attend educational institutions in Great Britain: “Provision of places in Northern Ireland does not match demand. However, amongst these leavers, two groups have been identified: the determined and the reluctant leavers. The determined leavers tend to be Protestant, from middle class backgrounds, to be very well qualified and to attend the older universities. The reluctant leavers tend to be drawn more equally from the two communities, to be less well qualified, are less likely to be from the professional and middle classes and more likely to go to the former polytechnics”¹⁴⁴.

¹⁴³ B. Osborne and I. Shuttleworth eds. *Fair Employment in Northern Ireland A Generation On*, Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 2004, p. 180.

¹⁴⁴ B. Osborne and I. Shuttleworth eds. *Fair Employment in Northern Ireland A Generation On*, Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 2004, p. 80.

From this it can be ascertained that middle class Catholics benefit from a Queen's University Belfast university education more than any other group of middle or working class students.

To assess the general trend in third level education, statistics reflecting the number of economically active persons of working age with higher qualifications can be analysed. This chart shows the percentage of economically active persons of working age with higher qualifications for the years 1993, 1997, 2002 and 2005. While there has been an increase both in the numbers of Protestants and Catholics who have gained higher qualifications, there has been a much greater increase of Catholics (from 17% to 31%) than Protestants (17% to 25%). One quarter of the Protestant population of economically active persons of working age have higher qualifications, whereas nearly one third of Catholics of the same category do. This shows that economically active Catholics of working age are better qualified than their protestant counterparts, and this trend looks likely to continue.

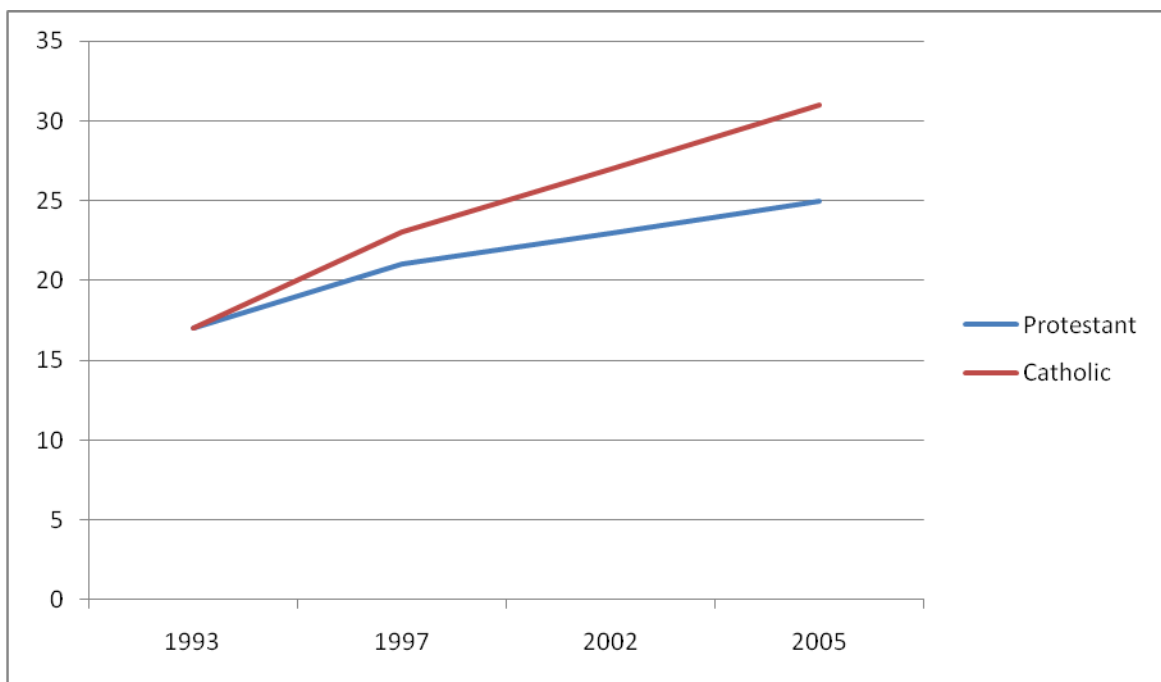


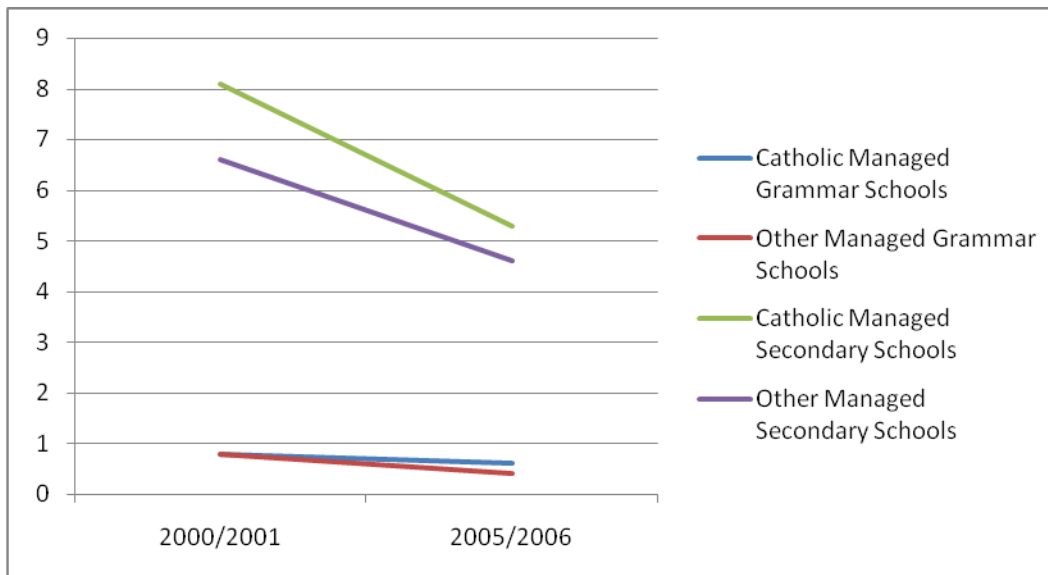
Figure 1 Percentage of economically active persons of working age with higher qualifications¹⁴⁵

Finally, an examination of the numbers of Catholics and Protestants of working age with university degrees in 2001 compared with 1971 can show a general trend in the overall increase in third level education in Northern Ireland. In 1971, 9% of the Protestant population, compared with 6% of the Catholic population aged 18-69 held degrees, whereas in 2001 16.1% of the

¹⁴⁵ Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister 2005 Labour Force Survey Religion Report, June 2007.

Protestant population compared with 16.9% of the Catholic population aged 16-64 held degrees. These numbers are based on the census data for these two years¹⁴⁶. In 1971 Protestants represented a 72.6% share of those with a degree qualification, and Catholics represented a 27.4% share. In 2001, Protestants still had a higher share of those with a degree qualification at 53.8% with the Catholic share 46.2%¹⁴⁷. This demonstrates a definite narrowing of the gap over 30 years, and helps demonstrate the problem of Protestant migration to Great Britain for university education.

The following chart shows the percentage of school leavers with no qualifications in Northern Ireland by school type and management (numbers in percentages). There is a general trend downwards in numbers of Catholic and Protestant students who leave education with no qualifications. The trend is particularly marked in the Secondary Schools rather than Grammar schools which have levels of under 1%. There are still more Catholic students who leave education in Northern Ireland without any qualifications than Protestants.



In 2000/2001 0.8% of students from both Catholic managed and other managed grammar schools left education without any qualifications. In 2005/2006 this had dropped to 0.6% for students from Catholic managed grammar schools and 0.4% for other managed grammar schools.

¹⁴⁶ B. Osborne and I. Shuttleworth eds. *Fair Employment in Northern Ireland A Generation On*, Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 2004, p. 82.

¹⁴⁷ B. Osborne and I. Shuttleworth eds. *Fair Employment in Northern Ireland A Generation On*, Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 2004, p. 82.

These numbers are broadly comparable and suggest that very few students leave grammar school education without any qualifications.

In 2000/2001 8.1% of students from Catholic managed secondary schools left education without any qualifications; the number for students from other managed secondary schools in this year was lower at 6.6%. Five years later, the numbers had again dropped so that only 5.3% of students from Catholic managed secondary schools and 4.6% of students from other managed grammar schools left education without any qualifications. Therefore, students at Catholic schools are more likely than students at other managed schools to leave full time education with no qualifications; however the numbers who leave school without qualifications is steadily decreasing.

Conclusions

There is evidence to show a statistical progression of increases in Catholic students' educational achievements at a higher rate than that of their protestant counterparts. Whilst there have also been increases in Protestant educational achievements it is at a lower level than that of Catholics students. Secondary level educational achievements can only show part of the story however, and more important is the progression on to third level or higher education. There has been a vast drop in the numbers of Protestant grammar school students who go on to attend university, 5% in five years, however this has been countered by the numbers of Protestant students from secondary schools who attend university, this number has increased by 5% from 8% to 13% in the past five years. In the same time period the numbers of Catholic students from grammar schools attending universities has dropped by only 2% and the number of Catholic students from secondary schools has increased 6% to 20% from 14%. When taken in the context of the percentage of the economically active population of working age, there have been increases of both the number of Protestants and Catholics who now have a degree qualification; however there has been a greater increase of the numbers of Catholics with degrees than Protestants. This is reflective of the decrease in numbers of Protestant school leavers who go on to attend university, and is also indicative of the trend of Protestants leaving Northern Ireland to attend university and not returning following completion of their degree.

Appendix Three – Employment

Before we present our views on the situation of both communities in the field of employment throughout the last 20 years, we would like to quote Bob Osborne, Director of the Social and Policy Research Institute at the University of Ulster and a professor at the University of Ulster, who co-edited a book on fair employment in Northern Ireland (*Fair Employment in Northern Ireland: A Generation On*) in 2004. He reached a series of interesting conclusions we feel should be included in this piece of research. Thus:

- “There have been major changes in fair employment since the mid 1970s. There is virtually no comparison with how things were over a quarter of a century ago”.
- “There has been a substantial improvement in the employment profile of Catholics, most marked in the public sector but not confined to it. Catholics are now well represented in managerial, professional and senior administrative posts. There are some areas of under-representation such as local government and security but the overall picture is a positive one”.
- “Catholics are still more likely than Protestants to be unemployed. As unemployment levels have fallen, lack of employment is a contributory factor to disadvantage and poverty, but not its main determinant”.
- “There are emerging areas of Protestant under-representation in the public sector, most notably in health and education. This is evident at many levels including professional and managerial”.
- “There has been a considerable increase in the numbers of people who work in integrated workplaces. At a time when public housing for example is virtually completely segregated, this represents another positive trend in the assessment of the implementation of the legislation”.
- “Educational qualifications are now virtually the same for Catholics and Protestants but there are two areas which will have huge influences on future trends in the labour market. First, there is the clear evidence that Protestants from poorer backgrounds do less well than Catholics from the same types of areas. Second, the long term patterns of the exodus of Protestants to universities and colleges in Britain and their tendency not to return means that graduates competing for higher level jobs in Northern Ireland are increasingly

more likely to be Catholic. Of those who remain in Northern Ireland Catholics are now more likely to have higher level qualifications than Protestants”.

- “A generation ago the chances of individuals doing better than their parents in the job market were significantly determined by their community background. Evidence now suggests that education mainly determines social mobility and that religion plays no independent role”.
- “Strong legislation has played its part. Employers have indicated that it has helped change practices. Evidence also suggests that affirmative action agreements between the Equality Commission and employers have helped redress both Catholic and Protestant under-representation as a vital part of the process of change”.
- “Public attitudes towards fair employment strategies and equality in general have changed. Catholics and Protestants are broadly supportive of equality. Fewer Catholics have major concerns about fairness in relation to employment but increasing proportions of Protestants are starting to have concerns about their position in the workplace. Increasingly these public attitudes towards fair employment and equality are at variance with the still often expressed historic perspective”.

These conclusions should be read as a backdrop to the *Labour Force Survey Religion Reports* published from 1990 onwards by “the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment (DETI) [which] is responsible for conducting the survey in Northern Ireland and produces a range of publications relating to the labour force in general. Analysis of the survey by religion was introduced in 1990 and is undertaken by statisticians from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency” (NISRA). The 2005 report has been published in mid 2007 and is the latest available. The situation is broadly similar with the *Monitoring Reports: Profile of Northern Ireland Workforce* prepared by the Fair Employment Commission and from 2000 the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. The first report was published in 1990 and the 2005 report is also the latest available.

The data from these reports has to be read while bearing in mind the fact that “from 1996 onwards, there has been a decline in perception of unemployment as ‘the most important problem’ in Northern Ireland [according to G. Kennedy, author of *The 2000 NI Social Omnibus*

Survey, Labour Market Bulletin 14, 39-44, Department of Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment, Belfast], underlining the ‘tightening’ of the labour market, and this been matched by continuing falls in unemployment counts”.

Below we present our findings in regard to employment in Northern Ireland after studying the relevant reports of both types from 1992, 1997, 2002 and 2005¹⁴⁸.

1992

In 1992 386 075 employees were monitored for the Monitoring Report prepared by the Fair Employment Commission. 60.9% described themselves as “Protestants” and 34.4% described themselves as “Catholics”. 4.7% would not determine their faith or Christian confession.

Protestant public sector employment stood at 59.6%, Catholic at 33.2%. Protestant private sector employment stood at 61.9%, Catholic at 35.1%.

Protestants dominated, i.e. constituted more than 60% of the private sector workforce, in craft and skilled manual occupations, plant and machine operatives, clerical and secretarial occupations and sales occupations. The same situation was in the public sector in personal and protective services, managers and administrators, professional occupations, craft and skilled manual occupations and sales occupations.

These figures, although they show a Protestant domination of the workforce, cannot be solely interpreted as a sign of discrimination against Catholics in the labor market in Northern Ireland. This is also the result of the fact that at that time the Catholics, and also now, formed a minority of all of the inhabitants of Northern Ireland. Thus it would be surprising to see them dominating the total number of the “monitored Northern Ireland Workforce”.

9% of all of the working age Protestants were unemployed whereas 18% of the working age Catholics found themselves in the same situation. In the end, due to the difference in the size of the communities, Catholics, despite their 18% unemployment rate, constituted “just” 55% of

¹⁴⁸ Please note that if an increase or decrease is discussed e.g. a 3% decrease of the Protestant employment in the public sector, it should not be read as a decrease of 3% but a decrease by 3 percentage points – e.g. the Protestant share decreased from 63% of the total to 60% of the total in case of the discussed 3% decrease.

the overall unemployed of both sexes (45 000) whereas Protestants constituted 45% (36 000). 47% of all of the aged 16+ Catholics were in employment – this figure stood at 55% for aged 16+ Protestants. 370 000 Protestants and 203 000 Catholics were employed in Northern Ireland. Thus the total workforce of circa 573 000 was 64.5% Protestant and circa 35.5% Catholic. Please note the difference in the actual Protestant employment with the aforementioned Monitored Workforce statistics (prepared by the Fair Employment Commission). This could have been the result of the fact that the NISRA statistics would not provide the numbers of the non-determined respondents and would divide the entire workforce into Catholics and Protestants. Overall, in 1992 the workforce in Northern Ireland was dominated by Protestants who suffered from lower unemployment rate and received a greater share of jobs in almost all of the section of the economy in both public and private sectors.

1997

In 1997 398 452 employees were monitored for yet another of the Monitoring Reports prepared by the Fair Employment Commission. 58.5% (a decrease of 2.4% from 1992) described themselves as “Protestants” and 37% (an increase of 2.6% from 1992) described themselves as “Catholics”. 4.6% would not determine their faith or Christian confession.

Protestant public sector employment stood at 57.5% (a decrease of 2.1% from 1992), Catholic at 35.8% (an increase of 2.6% from 1992). Protestant private sector employment stood at 58.9% (a decrease of 3% from 1992), Catholic at 37.7% (an increase of 2.6% from 1992).

In the public sector and private sector concerns with 26 or more employees the Roman Catholic share of male employees, increased by 4.2% between 1990 and 1997. For females this increase stood at 3.1%.

Between 1990 and 1997 the public and private sector employment for Catholics increased in all of the workforce sectors. The lowest representation was in the aforementioned sectors (in all of these Protestants constituted more than 60% of the workforce): personal and protective services, craft and skilled manual occupations, clerical and secretarial occupations, managers and administrators.

5% (a decrease from 9% in 1992) of all of the working age Protestants were unemployed whereas 12% (a decrease from 18% in 1992) of the economically active Catholics found themselves in the same situation. In the end Catholics constituted 62% (an increase from 55% in 1992) of the overall unemployed of both sexes (35 000, 10 000 less Catholic unemployed than in 1992) whereas Protestants constituted 38% (21 000, 15 000 less Protestant unemployed than in 1992). 52% (an increase from 47% in 1992) of all of the aged 16+ Catholics were in employment – this figure stood at 57% (an increase from 55% in 1992) for aged 16+ Protestants. 388 000 (an increase of 18 000) Protestants and 254 000 (an increase of 51 000) Catholics were employed in Northern Ireland. Thus the total workforce of circa 642 000 was circa 60% (a decrease from 64.5%) Protestant and circa 40% (an increase from 35.5%) Catholic. Please note the difference in the actual Protestant employment with the aforementioned Monitored Workforce statistics (prepared by the Fair Employment Commission). This could have been the result of the fact that the NISRA statistics would not provide the numbers of the non-determined respondents and would divide the entire workforce into Catholics and Protestants.

In 1997 Protestants constituted 62% of the employees of the top 40 companies in Northern Ireland (by number of employees) – 38 346 and Catholics made up the remaining 38% – 23 921. Companies like Harland & Wolff, Shorts, Northern Bank, Northern Telecom, Wilson FG, Stewarts Supermarkets had an overwhelmingly (from 70% to 90%) Protestant workforce. At the same time only Dunnes Store had more than 70% of Catholic employees.

In 1997 the unemployment in Northern Ireland, as it is now, was the highest, in terms of relative numbers, in Belfast. Other traditionally hard hit by this social malaise areas, which are nowadays referred to “the North” and “the West” like Derry, Coleraine, Enniskillen or Strabane, were also very much affected by this. No different was Newry (10.7%) which came third after Strabane (12.6%) and Derry (11.6%) in terms of the overall unemployment level. Please note that all of the most affected areas, apart from Coleraine, are up to now predominantly Catholic. Belfast is and has always been a mixed area.

Overall, between 1992 and 1997 the workforce had become less Protestant dominated – in terms of relative numbers and sheer dominance of sections of either the public or the private sectors. However, unemployment levels for both communities decreased quite significantly and more people from both communities were employed in Northern Ireland. We do not think that the

changes in the workforce structure are the result of some anti-Protestant discrimination but rather an outcome of the fact that more and more Catholics were entering the labor market and perhaps for the first time in the history of Northern Ireland they were able to find jobs, or to put it differently – the economy was doing well enough to provide these jobs for them. Thus the rise of 51 000 new Catholic employees.

2002

In 2002 72% of the overall workforce, that is 481 117 employees, was monitored for yet another of the Monitoring reports prepared by the Equality Commission. 56.3%, a decrease of more than 2% from 1997 and a 0.6% fall from 2001, described themselves as “Protestants” and 38.9%, an increase of almost 2% and a 0.6% increase from 2001, described themselves as “Catholics”. 4.8% would not determine their faith or Christian confession.

This is hardly surprising given the fact that in 2001 57.2% of the persons in the economically active working age were Protestants and 42.7% Catholics. At the same time this is to change in the coming years – Protestant population, as outlined in our initial piece of research, is of an older age profile than the Catholic population which will certainly increase its share in the economically active working age persons.

A clear Protestant domination was less visible than in 1997 in most sections of the workforce: almost 62% of “skilled manual craftsmen” and almost 60% “personal and protective service” workers were all Protestant. The rest of the employment sectors were more balanced, i.e. Protestant share was below 60%.

In 1990 the Roman Catholic “share of employment” stood at 34.9%. Twelve years later it surpassed 40% mark. This is a generous increase but we think this trend will only accelerate due to the differences in the age span of the both communities i.e. in the coming years there will be substantially more Catholics than Protestants entering the labour market (this is of course based on the premise that this labour market will continue to grow and provide enough jobs to accommodate school leavers and graduates).

In 1990 male Roman Catholics made up 32% of the full time male workforce in public sector bodies and private sector establishments with over 25 employees. Twelve years later their

share was at 37.4%. This again is a generous increase and for the very same reasons we expect this trend to continue at a considerable pace.

In 1990 female Roman Catholics made up 38.5% of the full time female workforce in public sector bodies and private sector establishments with over 25 employees. Twelve years later their share was at 43%. This again represents a rise (as with the male workforce) of 5% and we think this trend will only continue at a considerable pace.

In 2002 58.9% of the public sector full time employees were Protestant and 41.1% were Catholics. This constituted a modest 1.2% rise from 2001 for Catholics. This was due e.g. to a one tenth fall of Protestant share of security related jobs in Northern Ireland. Catholics indeed gained a respectable 7.3% share of the security related jobs in Northern Ireland. This probably is the result of the changes within the Northern Irish policing structures which are aiming for 50-50 quotas in the field of employment for both communities.

Catholic full time employment in the private sector might have decreased in 2002, by a meager 0.9%, but due to a more dynamic Protestant decrease of 1.6%, the Catholic share did still increase by 0.2% to 39.5%.

The most balanced section of the workforce were the public sector appointees – 50.2% Protestant to 49.8% Catholic.

There was a clear and major Protestant lead in the field of total full time workforce composition: 57.2% were of that confession, 38.2% Catholic and 4.7% “non-determined”.

There was more equality as far as total part time employment was concerned: 51.6% Protestants to 42.7% Catholics and 5.7% “non-determined”.

4% (a decrease from 5% in 1997) of all of the working age Protestants were unemployed whereas 8% (a decrease from 12% in 1997) of the working age Catholics found themselves in the same situation. Catholics constituted 58% (a decrease from 62% in 1997) of the overall unemployed of both sexes (24 000, a decrease of 11 000 from 1997) whereas Protestants constituted 42% (a percentage increase from 38% in 1997 and an 18 000, a decrease of 3 000 from 1997 in relative numbers). 54% (an increase of 7% from 1992 and 2% from 1997) of all of the aged 16+ Catholics were in employment – this figure stood at 57% (an increase of 2% from

1992 and the same as in 1997) for aged 16+ Protestants. 390 000 (an increase of 20 000 from 1992 and 2 000 from 1997) Protestants and 274 000 (an increase of 71 000 from 1992 and 20 000 from 1997) Catholics were employed in Northern Ireland. Thus the total workforce of circa 664 000 was circa 59% Protestant and circa 41% Catholic. Please note the difference in the actual Protestant employment with the aforementioned Monitored Workforce statistics (prepared by the Fair Employment Commission). This could have been the result of the fact that the NISRA statistics would not provide the numbers of the non-determined respondents and would divide the entire workforce into Catholics and Protestants.

Overall, the workforce was becoming more Catholic – although at a very modest pace and it could be argued that around 2002 the 60 – 40 was firmly established. Ten times more Catholics than Protestants entered the labour market and there was far less Protestant domination in different sections of both the public and the private sector. This period also saw a reversal in the Protestant/Catholic shares in the security related jobs.

2005

In 2005, the latest available statistics, 517 720 employees were monitored for yet another of the Monitoring reports prepared by the Equality Commission. 53.5%, a decrease of almost 3% from 2002, described themselves as “Protestants” and 40.4%, an increase of 1.5% from 2001, described themselves as “Catholics”. 6%, an increase of more than one per cent from 2001, would not determine their faith or Christian confession.

The Catholic rise is hardly surprising given the fact that from 2001, when 42.7% of the persons in the economically active working age were Catholics, the Catholic share of the total number of the economically active rose by 3% to 45.4%. Catholics constituted 43% of the total workforce in 2005 – a substantial 6% increase from 1997 and a rise of 0.7% from the previous year, 2004.

Protestant public sector employment increased by 2% - Catholic by 4.8%. In the end 53.7% of the public sector employees were Protestant, 41.4% Catholic, 4.9% “non-determined”. In regard to Protestants this constitutes a significant change (a decrease) in comparison to the data from 2002.

Overall Protestant private sector employment increased by 2.6% during 2005 – Catholic by 6%. Catholics now constitute 39.7% of the private sector employees and 42.3% (Protestants constitute 54.3%) of all of the full timer employees (both private and public sector). This is a significant 4% increase from 2002 (and a 7% from 1990).

The Roman Catholic male share in the overall full time employee numbers stood at 39.9% - a 2.5% increase from 2002. The female share rose to 44.7% from 43% three years earlier.

The Catholic share within security-related employment continued to rise – in 2005 by 12.1%.

Protestant no longer clearly dominated any of the sectors of the employment. There were less than 60% of them in each every sector.

3% (a decrease from 4% in 2002) of all of the working age Protestants were unemployed whereas 6% (a decrease from 8% in 2002) of the working age Catholics found themselves in the same situation (these figures were decreasing for both communities significantly over the period covered by the reports prepared by both bodies). Catholics constituted 62% (a rise from 58% in 2002) of the overall unemployed of both sexes (19 000, a decrease of 5 000 from 2002) whereas Protestants constituted 38% (12 000, a decrease from 42% in 2002 and a decrease of 6 000 from 2002). 53% (a decrease of 1% from 2002) of all of the aged 16+ Catholics were in employment – this figure stood at 58% (an increase of 1% from 2002) for aged 16+ Protestants. 403 000 (an increase of 13 000 from 2002) Protestants and 279 000 (an increase of 5 000 from 2002) Catholics were employed in Northern Ireland. Thus the total workforce of circa 682 000 (an increase of 18 000) was circa 59% Protestant and circa 41% Catholic – almost exactly the same as in 2002. Please note the difference in the actual Protestant employment with the aforementioned Monitored Workforce statistics (prepared by the Fair Employment Commission). This could have been the result of the fact that the NISRA statistics would not provide the numbers of the non-determined respondents and would divide the entire workforce into Catholics and Protestants.

Overall, the Catholic share of the total workforce continued to rise and the 60% Protestant mark has certainly been surpassed by 2005. However, when one looks at the number of the new Catholic employees he or she might begin to wonder whether this trend is to continue – almost

three times more Protestants successfully entered the labour market in Northern Ireland than Catholics who managed the same thing. This is not because the Catholic reservoir of potential workers has dried out. We think that this trend is likely to reassert itself again the coming years and will only be strengthened by the fact that so many of the Protestant school leavers and graduates are leaving Northern Ireland and thus the number of new employees from that community might begin to decline at some point, perhaps even in the last few years, post 2005. Obviously, the older age span of the Protestant community is also aiding this and the situation does not look likely to get better anytime soon. Again, this is the result of the Protestant youngsters, teenagers leaving. Thus their community will be “greying” (getting older) in the coming years.

A Look into the 1980s

As it was outlined before we are not able to provide the same statistics for 1987. However, what we tried to accomplish was to present a fairly thorough insight into the employment issue in Northern Ireland pre 1990.

At the beginning of 1990s the existing attitudinal evidence suggested that there existed a belief among both communities in Northern Ireland that prejudice and discrimination was still there to be found. In 1990 63% of Protestants and 84% of Catholics believed there was some prejudice against Catholics in Northern Ireland, while 69% of Protestants and 62% of Catholics believed there was some prejudice against Protestants.

According to A M Gallagher who researched this issue at the beginning of the 1990s: “On the one hand there appears to be a popular belief that discrimination in employment continues to be a widespread feature of life in Northern Ireland. On the other hand the research literature contains the full gamut of views, ranging from those who argue that the supposed level of discrimination in the past was exaggerated, through those who feel that the unemployment differential can be explained by factors other than discrimination, those who argue that indirect discrimination or disadvantage are more significant than direct discrimination, and finally those who argue that direct discrimination continues to play a role”.

Throughout the 1980s Protestants were over-represented in the higher status socioeconomic groups, compared with their proportion in the population e.g. in managerial and supervisory categories, among farmers of large units and in the armed services. “By contrast,

Catholics were over-represented among personal service workers, unskilled manual workers and own account workers (not professional)”.

“For women the largest extent of Protestant over-representation was among managers of large establishments, farmers of large units and members of the armed services, while for Catholic women it was ancillary workers and artists (intermediate non-manual). It should be noted also that Catholic men and women were over-represented among the category of 'inadequately described or not stated occupations' ”.

For Catholic men the highest share was in the construction industry, an area that had benefited from an influx of public funds and public sector employment in the 1980s, while the highest share “for Protestant men was public administration, national defence and social security, all directly linked to public sector employment”.

In 1987 35% of the Catholic unemployed had no qualifications whatsoever. This figure for Protestants was more than two times lower at 16%. 23% of unemployed Catholics had GCE O Level and below and 14% had GCE A Level and above. These figures for Protestants were 10% and 6% respectively.

In the late 1980s the following reasons were given for the higher unemployment levels among the Catholics: traditionally higher unemployment in the “Catholic” west and south of Northern Ireland; there were more Catholics entering labour market at that time “so that even if they had equal success in obtaining jobs as Protestants they would still be over-represented among the unemployed”; division of industrial sectors into traditionally Catholic and traditionally Protestant with e.g. construction, a largely “Catholic” sector, would often have a higher rate of unemployment depending on the level of public spending at a given time; Catholic school leavers had “fewer educational qualifications in comparison with Protestant school leavers” and were less likely to obtain scientific or technological qualifications; there existed a widespread although not systemic indirect discrimination in regard to recruitment among a huge number of companies in Northern Ireland; the same could be said about the direct discrimination i.e. intentional discrimination against Catholics which was still pretty widespread.

The two types of discrimination deserve more attention and will be addressed below.

Indirect discrimination

During the framing of the 1976 Fair Employment Act a differentiation was made between direct and indirect discrimination. “The former refers to intentional discrimination while the latter refers to procedures that could have the effect of discriminating against a section of the population whether or not the intent exists, for example favouring ex-members of the Boys Brigade (a Protestant youth organisation). A commonly cited source of indirect discrimination is informal recruitment methods, such as word-of-mouth recruitment: thus, if a workforce had an imbalance of one community and informal networks were in wide-spread use for recruitment then it is likely that the imbalance would be maintained”.

“Informal networks were widely used by leavers from Protestant and Catholic schools, but because unemployment was higher among the families of the Catholic leavers, the Protestant leavers were more successful in obtaining employment”. This was certainly true in the 1980s and the early 1990s.

Moreover, this was even more evident in the earlier decade when between 1982 and May, 1989, the Fair Employment Commission (predecessor of the Equality Commission) published “thirty-two investigations of employment patterns in individual companies or areas of economic activity”. The data from these reports failed to provide a proof of an existence of a system of indirect discrimination. Nevertheless, it was evident that in many instances there was a widespread imbalance of the Catholic and the Protestant workforces within one given company.

This situation was mostly due to the fact that the informal networks played a significant role in recruiting workers for many companies. However, this was to change with the advent of the globalised economy and the yet again, e.g. in 1989 and 1998, reviews and changes of the equality legislation.

Direct discrimination

The 1976 Fair Employment Act “made direct discrimination, on the basis of religious affiliation or political belief, illegal in Northern Ireland, even in circumstances where an employer denied someone a job for benign reasons: for example, an employer might have felt that in a predominantly Protestant workforce, it might not be safe for a Catholic to be employed

(or vice-versa)". However, certain jobs like teachers or clergy were exempt from this legislation and the Secretary of State could also exempt any given person on security grounds.

The Fair Employment Agency dealt with a relatively low number of 1 000 allegations of discrimination between 1976 and 1981. For some it was a justification for their opinions on the lack of actual discrimination in Northern Ireland.

Throughout the 1980s "those most likely to be unemployed were the lower socioeconomic groups, Catholics, those without qualifications, the young and those with many dependent children". Moreover, "there was a fairly uniform tendency for Catholics to have a higher chance of being unemployed, in comparison with comparable Protestants, throughout Northern Ireland". In addition to this "those in lower socioeconomic groups were more likely to be unemployed as the number of dependent children rose: this indicated the importance of the 'poverty trap' ".

Unemployment levels in the 1980s

In 1989, according to the poll commissioned by *Employment Gazette*, almost forty per cent of the Belfast unemployed were concentrated in West Belfast (predominantly Catholic) and "only" 16.3% lived in East Belfast (predominantly Protestant).

The unemployment rate among Catholic males did rise significantly throughout the Troubles: from 17% in 1971 to 30% in 1981, 35% in 1984 and as high as 36% in 1987. These figures were much lower for the Protestant males: from 7% in 1971 to 12% in 1981, 15% in 1984 and 14% in 1987.

The differences were less visible in the field of female unemployment rates – in 1971 only 4% of Protestant females and 7% of Catholic females were unemployed. These numbers did rise to 10% and 17% in 1981 and 11% for the Protestant females in 1984 (the percentage of Catholic unemployed females was roughly the same in 1981 and 1984). However, in 1987 a significant decrease in the number of unemployed females from both communities was visible: the numbers stood at 9% and 15%.

It has to be remembered that this change happening in the late eighties must have been the result of the new trend in Northern Ireland: the rising employment figures from circa mid 1980s onwards e.g. in 1987 the male unemployed figure started to decrease and this trend has continued since then. The same thing has been happening, also from 1987, with the female unemployed figure. Of course, these changes might have looked only “cosmetic” at the beginning: in 1987 21.9% males were unemployed and two years later the figure was as high as 19.3%. These figures for females were 12.5% and 10.3% respectively. However, if we remember that in late 2007 only 4.3% of all of the working age people were unemployed, this represents a remarkable change from mid 1980s. It is a pity that there is no coherent data from the 1980s. This could give us a viable answer on when the trend of increase in employment for both communities began to assert itself. On the basis of what we were able to find, we would cautiously conclude that this must have happened between 1985 (the Anglo-Irish Agreement) and 1990 (the Fair Employment Commission began publishing the Monitoring Reports).

NISRA statistics from 1990s validate this trend, of continuous rise in the employment for both communities, but they also point out that there was a break in it in 1992 for both communities when the Protestant unemployment did rise from 7.8% to 9.1% and the Catholic unemployment stood still at 18.4%. Moreover, the Catholic unemployment did rise in the previous year from 16% in 1990 to 18.4% in 1991. However, throughout the rest of the 1990s, the early years of the 21st century and even most of the 1980s, when the Catholic unemployment was reduced from 25.5% in 1981 to 16% in 1990 and the Protestant unemployment fell from 11.4% to 8.6%, the aforementioned trend was fully visible¹⁴⁹.

¹⁴⁹ Please see the statistics in B. Osborne et al, *Fair Employment in Northern Ireland. A Generation On*, Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 2004.

Appendix Four – House Prices

House prices in Northern Ireland have steadily increased over the past decade, and this can be attributed to the peace process and the Belfast Agreement, however it can also be attributed to general trends in the UK housing market.

There are significant trends within Northern Ireland detailing where house prices have increased the most. The highest rate of growth has been in the city of Lisburn, with house prices rising by 44% in 2006 from 2005. Belfast has also shown a high rate of growth, with prices rising in the same period by 23.6% to an average of £145,051. South Belfast has the highest house prices on record at an average of £188,069, with Lisburn not far behind at £188,000. Although South Belfast could be expected to have higher house prices due to some very wealthy middle class areas such as the Malone Road and Stranmillis, there are also more deprived areas such as the Village¹⁵⁰ and Annadale as well as the lower Ormeau area of the Markets. What is surprising is how close in house prices East Belfast is to South Belfast at an average of £165,432. East Belfast is traditionally considered a working class area, so the rise in house prices here have an immediate impact on the economy of the area. West Belfast and North Belfast have also shown a steady growth with average house prices in West Belfast now at £113,052 and £107,673 for North Belfast.

Looking at Northern Ireland regionally there are also distinct trends in the growth of house prices. East Antrim has shown the lowest growth in prices at only 15% from 2005 to 2006 with house prices averaging at £120,163, the lowest in Northern Ireland. Derry and Strabane, Belfast, and Craigavon and Armagh all have average house prices in the £140,000 region, Ballymena and Antrim have average house prices in the mid £150,000, Mid Ulster in the low £160,000 region and Coleraine, Limavady and the North Coast, North Down, Mid and South Down and Eniskillen, Fermanagh and Tyrone all with average house prices in the late £160,000 region. As mentioned before, average house prices in Lisburn reach over £188,000. Apart from

¹⁵⁰ According to the BBC “a third of the housing in the Village area, off the Donegall Road, is officially considered unfit for human habitation”: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/5053938.stm.

East Antrim, all regions of Northern Ireland have shown a growth of between 20% and 40% between 2005 and 2006, a rate of growth which is well above the rate of inflation¹⁵¹.

Rising house prices demonstrate a certain confidence amongst investors in the Northern Irish peace process, however the growth in house prices can also be linked to general economic conditions across the UK and globally¹⁵². Rising house prices have also benefited investors disproportionately to the detriment of first time buyers or single owners who are finding it increasingly difficult to step on to the property ladder due to house prices rising far above the level of inflation, and far above the level of salaries in Northern Ireland¹⁵³. This then does not appear to be affecting Protestants and Catholics differently, as traditionally Protestant working class areas such as East Belfast are benefiting from rising house prices, as are the typically Catholic areas of Derry and Strabane. What can be argued is that rising house prices are disadvantaging working class people, those who rent privately or from the housing executive, first time buyers and single people looking to step on to the housing ladder. Although there is an estimate that home owners have benefited by gaining up £125,000 on the average price of their property¹⁵⁴, the price of houses has also increased in all areas, so while homeowners have a greater profit potential from selling their houses for what they paid for them, the cost of buying a similar sized house in Northern Ireland will be equal to the price for which they have sold their own home. This means that there is not a greater spending potential for those whose house prices have increased, if they wish to buy a new house of a similar size or value.

The table below does demonstrate a trend that Protestant outright ownership of housing has increased since 1997, however Catholic outright ownership, and both Catholic and Protestant mortgages have remained generally steady. More noticeable is that private renting has decreased for both Protestants and Catholics, while Protestant and Catholic social renting has seen an increase¹⁵⁵.

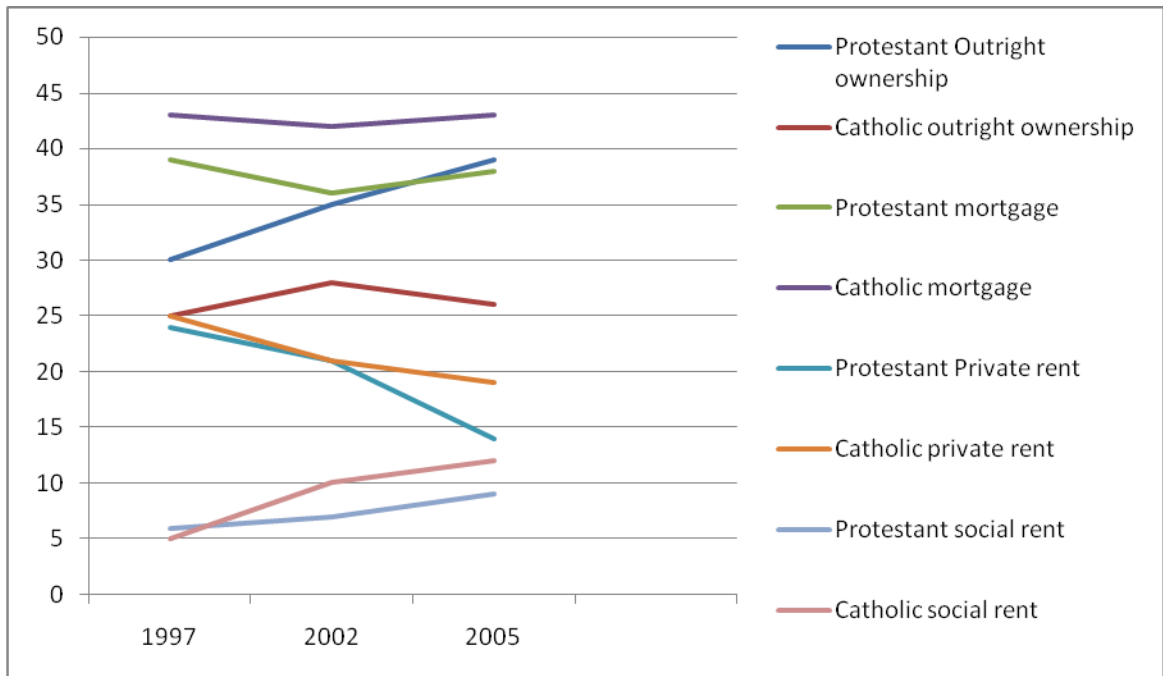
¹⁵¹ All statistics from: http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/5048288.stm.

¹⁵² Graham Gudgin, private email with Nicky Cahill, 5th February 2008.

¹⁵³ <http://www.variant.randomstate.org/29texts/liam29.html>.

¹⁵⁴ Graham Gudgin, private email with Nicky Cahill, 5th February 2008.

¹⁵⁵ Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister 2005 *Labour Force Survey Religion Report*, June 2007.



Appendix Five – Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland

The following statistics and charts are all taken from the *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* and demonstrate the similarity of Protestant and Catholic perceptions of ethnic minorities and migrant workers in Northern Ireland.

The first three charts ask about racial prejudice and ethnic minorities. A similar number of Catholics (53%) and Protestants (47%) responded that there is a lot of prejudice in Northern Ireland nowadays, but almost identical amounts of Catholics (70%) and Protestants (71%) believe that there is more prejudice than five years ago. This undoubtedly reflects the vast influx of ethnic minorities and migrant workers following the expansion of the European Union in 2004. Until then ethnic minorities in Northern Ireland were a distinct and very small minority, mostly made up of the Chinese and Asian communities. More than half of both Catholics and Protestants believed that more racial prejudice in the next five years than currently.

Thinking of people from minority ethnic communities in N Ireland, do you think there is a lot of prejudice against them in Northern Ireland nowadays, a little, or hardly any?

	%		
	Catholic	Protestant	No religion
A lot	53	47	55
A little	36	44	38
Hardly any	8	8	7
Don't know	3	2	0

Do you think there is generally more racial prejudice in Northern Ireland now than there was 5 years ago, less, or about the same amount?

	%		
	Catholic	Protestant	No religion
More now	70	71	68
Less now	8	4	7
About the same	18	22	21
Don't know	5	3	4

Do you think there will be more, less or about the same amount of racial prejudice in Northern Ireland in 5 years time compared with now?

	%		
	Catholic	Protestant	No religion
More in 5 years	52	56	52
Less	22	15	20
About the same	18	25	25
Don't know	8	5	3

The next chart examines the question of which ethnic minorities are perceived to face the most prejudice in Northern Ireland. The largest group agreed by 27% of Catholics and 26% of

Protestants was the Polish ethnic minority. This could also reflect the influx of Eastern Europeans since the expansion of the European Union.

Some people say that there is more prejudice towards some groups of people from minority ethnic communities. Looking at the groups on this card, which group do you think there is most prejudice against?

	%		
	Catholic	Protestant	No religion
Black (African, Caribbean)	9	6	9
Chinese	5	8	5
South Asian (Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi)	13	12	12
Irish traveller	16	12	18
Portuguese	5	6	5
Polish	27	26	29
Other eastern European	9	13	10
Filipino	1	2	2
Other, please specify	0	0	0
Don't know	12	11	6
None of these	3	4	4

Examining the particular concerns of Eastern Europeans is useful because this is the group that is considered to face the most prejudice. More Catholics and Protestants would not

accept Eastern Europeans as colleagues compared to the number that would accept Eastern Europeans as a colleague.

In relation to people from Eastern Europe, I would willingly accept them as a colleague at my work.

	%		
	Catholic	Protestant	No religion
Yes	41	36	46
No	59	64	54

When asked on their own personal prejudice, most respondents (81% of Catholics and 67% of Protestants) claimed not to be prejudiced at all.

How would you describe yourself?

	%		
	Catholic	Protestant	No religion
Very prejudiced	0	2	1
A little prejudiced	18	31	14
Or, not prejudiced at all	81	67	85
Don't know	1	1	0

How much do you agree or disagree with each of these statements about minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland? People from minority ethnic communities are less respected in Northern Ireland than they once were:

	%		
	Catholic	Protestant	No religion
Strongly agree	16	8	15
Agree	41	41	36
Neither agree nor disagree	24	29	27
Disagree	12	12	7
Strongly disagree	2	1	1
Can't choose	6	8	13
Not answered	1	1	1

The next three charts are slightly contradictory in that the majority of Catholics agree in some sense that migrant workers are good for the economy however more Catholics agree that migrant workers take jobs away from people in Northern Ireland than disagree with the statement. Only 43% of Protestants agreed in some sense that migrant workers are good for Northern Ireland's economy but the majority of Protestants believe that migrant workers take jobs away from people who were born in Northern Ireland.

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Migrant workers are generally good for Northern Ireland's economy:

	%		
	Catholic	Protestant	No religion
Strongly agree	11	9	19
Agree	49	34	45
Neither agree or disagree	19	20	20
Disagree	13	24	12
Strongly disagree	5	10	3
Don't know	3	4	2

Migrant workers take jobs away from people who were born in Northern Ireland.

	%		
	Catholic	Protestant	No religion
Strongly agree	10	19	11
Agree	35	36	27
Neither agree or disagree	9	13	13
Disagree	37	28	42
Strongly disagree	9	3	8
Don't know	1	1	0

Migrant workers mostly take up jobs that Northern Ireland workers don't want

	%		
	Catholic	Protestant	No religion
Strongly agree	22	22	24
Agree	57	58	57
Neither agree or disagree	7	8	6
Disagree	10	10	10
Strongly disagree	2	2	2
Don't know	2	1	0

The following table shows a sense that both Catholics and Protestants think migrant workers make Northern Ireland open to new ideas and cultures. In the sectarian atmosphere of Northern Irish politics, it is encouraging to think that both Catholics and Protestants think that diversity is good for the country.

Migrant workers make Northern Ireland open to new ideas and cultures.

	%		
	Catholic	Protestant	No religion
Strongly agree	14	10	21
Agree	57	50	56
Neither agree or disagree	13	14	11
Disagree	11	21	11
Strongly disagree	1	4	0
Don't know	4	2	2

There is very little difference between Catholic and Protestant perceptions of ethnic minorities and migrant workers in Northern Ireland. Both agree that they are discriminated against and both agree that there is more discrimination now than five years ago; however both also agree that migrant workers makes Northern Ireland open to new ideas and cultures. This seems contradictory but hopefully it represents a Northern Ireland that is becoming less sectarian, more diverse and more globalised in the 21st century.

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