

Religion and the patterns of conflict in Northern Ireland.¹

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Religious distinctions are key to social and symbolic boundaries in many societies, and most certainly so in Northern Ireland. The historical patterning of religious opposition, most particularly perhaps in the conservative character of the forms of Protestantism and Catholicism in Ireland, is clear.² Recent works have traced the many ways religion has fed into conflict in the present, and the groups for whom it is important for conflict.³ Building on this research, I will point to some general tendencies or mechanisms which have kept religion mattering for conflict, and to show the particular character this has given to conflict. This is intended to contribute to the analysis of the way multiplex symbolic boundaries can strengthen singular social boundaries and political oppositions and to help clarify the role religion can play in a multiply constituted conflict.⁴

The Northern Ireland conflict

The conflict in what is now Northern Ireland lies in a direct line of descent from the English reconquest and colonisation (plantation) of Ulster in the early 17th century.⁵ This colonisation was never separable from religious differences. Counter reformation, via Irish priests trained on the continent, came to Ireland before the English reformation had taken hold, so that by the early 17th century, when the bulk of plantation took place, religious conflict was already underway. Colonisation required not just ethnically distinct (English and Scots) but also *Protestant* settlers, and subsequent power relations were tied around the religious distinction, legally in the Penal Laws, informally in Protestant resistance to reform.

The result was a multiply-constituted conflict, where power relations (expressed in military force, economic resources, class position, law and political representation) were partially organised by formal and informal religious organisation and networks, and where symbolic boundaries were multiplex, with religion, moral-political norms and civilisational values, historical narratives of plantation, and ethno-national identities overlapping if never quite coinciding.⁶ This configuration generated interests among Protestants, Catholics and the British state which reproduced the broad contours of the social and symbolic distinctions through the radical social, institutional and constitutional changes of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and led to endemic conflict between the groups so constituted.⁷ In this paper, I focus on the period I know best, late 19th century to present, and within this on the contemporary phase of conflict and settlement, 1969-present.

Conflict between Protestants and Catholics was persistent from the late 19th to the end of twentieth century. It varied in intensity and in institutional and organisational form. There were periods of more or less extreme violence (actual or threatened) from

1912-22, and 1969-94, with intermittent violent episodes throughout. As actors attempted to secure their interests, they entrenched symbolic and social boundaries, while they also came to define their interests in terms of these distinctions. It was a tightly structured conflict, with mutually reproducing feedback between symbolic distinction, social organisation and power relations, giving the conflict an intractable quality. Within this pattern I will argue that religion played a role in making conflict more meaningful, more intense, more totalising. The 1998 settlement, which signalled an end to violence and a more pervasive relaxing of conflict and beginning of a new political order, could have left symbolic and social boundaries intact. It didn't. Instead it saw a remaking of the symbolic packages, with different roles for religion. How settlement became possible is a question for another venue.⁸ That it had these effects shows something important about the ways religion works in conflict.

I want briefly to justify my focus in this paper on religion and conflict rather than religion and violence.⁹ Religion is not an important factor in explaining why some individuals opted for violent means while others didn't, nor in explaining when they so opted, nor in explaining what they did when they so opted: neither the actors nor the targets of violence were overtly or primarily religious.¹⁰ Joining the IRA after 1969 was a strategic choice in a situation perceived as deeply unjust in which there was neither exit nor voice.¹¹ Law abiding Catholic citizens shared the same experiences and many of the same aims as republicans and understood their motivations. Rev. James McEvoy, Professor of Scholastic Philosophy in Queens University Belfast, pointed out that both the Catholic church and republican paramilitaries believed that Catholics in Northern Ireland faced a stark alternative – to accept a measure of injustice and live with that, or to revolt – they simply made different choices.¹² The IRA itself was informed by a political rather than primarily religious ideology, and its stated aims were constitutional rather than religious or cultural.¹³ Loyalists, for their part, judged that effective repression of the republican threat to the union required informal paramilitary as well as state security response. Unionists and Protestants shared the aim but rejected the paramilitary means: indeed many joined and almost all supported the state security forces in this task. Well over 90% of the voting population consistently backed parties which were so opposed in their policies that they could not agree institutions which would allow violence to be marginalized: when such a polity was temporarily achieved in 1974, over half voted for parties which worked to undermine it. The most interesting question is not why, in this situation, a minority of people resorted to violence, but why the mass of the population was so polarised in its politics and perspectives, and how religion contributed to this.

Disentangling the role of religion in conflict. .

If, in the contemporary period, religion plays one part in conflict, it does not play the determining part. The same religious oppositions coexist with quite different patterns of social relations and political organisation in, for example, the Irish state or in some areas of France.¹⁴ Religious opposition is at most one strand of causal patterning, where institutionalised power differentials, inequalities, ethnic differences and nationalist aims also play a part. In what follows I attempt to show some of the processes and mechanisms by *religion* plays a part in conflict, and to isolate (although this is necessarily imprecise) its effects.

There is a strong tendency in the contemporary literature not even to attempt such a task. Contemporary comparative political science takes a broad concept of ethnicity, which bundles together ethnicity narrowly conceived as people-hood, as a descent-defined group with a distinctive origin myth, and religion, race, caste, region and sometimes even class.¹⁵ In the presently dominant interpretation of the Northern Ireland conflict, it fits neatly into this conceptualisation, with religion understood as an 'ethnic marker'. This, in my view, is a mistake, cutting short analysis before adequate explanations are reached.

First, to take a broad and inclusive notion of ethnicity is to focus on boundaries rather than on the meaning of those boundaries (religious, or racial, or narrowly ethnic). This dissociation of boundary from content is, I would argue, a wrong turn in the social sciences.¹⁶ Symbolic boundaries and symbolic content are intrinsically interrelated.¹⁷ Barth who insisted that ethnic groups had no homogenous or unique set of cultural practices or beliefs and refused to reduce ethnicity to 'cultural stuff', also described the 'basic value orientations : standards of morality and excellence' which defined boundaries.¹⁸ In Northern Ireland, whether (and which) actors define themselves in terms of theological beliefs and religious practices, or in terms of ethnic descent groups, in terms of nationality or of key moral-political values affects not only the persistence of difference and the prospect of eventual integration (via immediate conversion, or long-term intermarriage, or gradual convergence) but also the precise place of boundaries, those marginals who are included and those excluded.

Second, once one acknowledges the relevance of content to boundaries, one would expect conflicts informed by religious distinctions to have a distinctive symbolic logic different from other forms of conflict.¹⁹ This of course leaves open how such conflicts are patterned, how symbolic distinctions do or don't translate into patterns of behavior, a question that becomes the trickier as we look at real conflicts which have ethnic/religious/national/class/political/civilisational components in different degrees.

Third, the dominant view tends to slip between a broad, inclusive (and therefore empty) concept of ethnicity – where it makes good sense to ask if ethnicity matters for conflict - and a narrow concept of ethnicity as descent, lineage, quasi-kin consciousness which, it is believed, trumps all other categories.²⁰ This slippage is justified in terms of a socio- psychological or socio-biological explanation of why broadly-conceived-ethnicity has these narrowly-conceived-ethnic-characteristics. This sort of explanation not only elides those cases where it doesn't have such characteristics but also, in my view, fails adequately to describe or explain those cases where it does.²¹

However, to start to pull apart the role of religion in a multiply constituted conflict like that in Northern Ireland, is exceeding difficult. On all objective indicators, divisions in Northern Ireland are deep: there are comparatively strong correlations between religion of origin, party-political support, constitutional preference, national identification and a set of political views about security, law and equality of treatment.²² When one makes finer tuned distinctions within the broad categories of Protestant/Catholic, unionist/nationalist, British/Irish there are no evident correlations of type of religion with type of politics. In reporting his 1968 survey, Rose notes the general doctrinal conservatism, and the lack of correlation between specific religious and specific political views, with one exception : a greater willingness to resort to

political violence among extreme fundamentalist Protestants than among extreme liberal Protestants; by the 1990s even this correlation is no longer apparent.²³

Qualitative and interactional studies show a radical variety of ways of combining positions on religious, political, ethnic, national and moral dimensions, and of giving meaning to these categories.²⁴ Multiply constituted conflicts invite symbolic trade-offs where blurring on one boundary (eg a Protestant with an Irish identity) is compensated for by insistence on another (eg that same Protestant's strong unionism). In everyday discussions there are consistent shifts in emphasis and slippage between categories of nationality, religion, and ethnicity.²⁵ Clustering exists but it also changes over time: Catholic unionists are interesting in this regard, but the better researched are Protestant evangelicals who cluster into two, relatively balanced, groups of, on the one hand, liberals and radicals, and, on the other, conservatives, and the political positions of each have changed very significantly in the last decade.²⁶

In light of these well-known facts, some have argued that religion does not matter for conflict, that it is essentially an ethno-national conflict.²⁷ However very similar arguments – relying on slippage, symbolic trade-offs, everyday cultural variation, and the lack of correlation between varieties of Britishness, Irishness and Northern Irishness, ethnic-self-definitions and political views – can be used to argue that ethnicity (understood in a substantive cultural sense) does not matter for conflict, that national political division is imposed on a cultural plurality and that scholarship inappropriately echoes this imposition of binary categories on a plural cultural reality.²⁸ On this view, the political division is a product of effective rhetoric and organisation by political entrepreneurs, aided by a political system which gives incentives to individuals to join 'blocs' either in terms of political power or in division of the spoils. A variant of this argument sees the political division based on group solidarity, social boundaries that are clear even though they are constantly cross-cut by symbolic boundaries, and posits a strong but substantively empty sense of ethnic-groupness.²⁹

These debates falsely oppose cultural plurality (of elements, categories and repertoires) and opposition, as if, in emphasising the substantive, meaningful, opposition of whole populations one has to deny cultural plurality. Rather, as the classic works in the field show, it challenges us to show how distinctive and oppositional perspectives can be formed out of common elements.³⁰ Once one opens this path, the prospect of showing how religion contributes to conflict is clear. First, however, it is useful to show why a direct analysis of the material and political incentives to bloc formation is insufficient to explain the continuation of conflict.

That the political system in the period of unionist rule (1921-72) gave incentives for bloc formation, benefitting the Protestant population in terms of division of the spoils and access to influence, is not in any doubt.³¹ It also gave Catholics incentives to associate together in defence, and the church was their only well-resourced organisation.³² Significant though lesser benefits for bloc formation continued through the period of British direct rule, diminishing more rapidly post 1985.³³ Today the benefits are slight: a bias in the Assembly voting system (key votes can be passed with a bare majority of self-designated nationalists and self-designated unionists and an overall majority) which may give a slight incentive to voters to vote for the unionist and nationalist blocs. In addition, the desire of the British and Irish

governments to keep the major parties in agreement gives those parties considerable bargaining power and capacity to distribute resources to their supporters. Can bloc formation and behaviour be explained solely by the actual or anticipated material benefit? One test is what happens when the benefits decrease. The result, in the 2000s when benefits and expectations of benefit have definitively decreased, is that the political cleavage is even clearer and more defined than before, even while political conflict is less intense.

If, however, we need to look at the socio-cultural patterning of conflict, we need to look at cultural trajectories, not simply empirically observable (synchronic) cultural plurality. In Northern Ireland, as elsewhere, the categories of division are only one set of categories used in daily life, and oppositional interpretations of them are only one set of available repertoires. Other things equal, one would expect experimentation with new ideas, a blurring of symbolic boundaries, gradually over time the development of a range of different religious, political, national, historical perspectives and a range of different ways of combining them, a move away from oppositional perspectives. Instead, despite consistent experimentation and boundary blurring which is obvious from a micro-interactional perspective, oppositional perspectives have persistently been reaffirmed whenever collective decisions are necessary. For example, in a whole series of small and large decisions over the last forty years, ordinary people began by blurring boundaries, experimenting with new ideas, moving towards compromise, then wavered, then opted for opposition and division. No obvious material interests were involved, nor was this a following of leaders: the Northern Irish are notorious for rejecting their one-time leaders.³⁴ The large decisions include a series of choice-points for the public as well as for elites in the late 1960s in the emergence and early period of the civil rights movement, the Bannside by-election of 1970 when liberal unionists were defeated, the UWC strike of 1974, the fall-off of mass support from the peace-people in the late 1970s, the reactions to the hunger strikers in 1981, the successive crises of implementation of the 1998 agreement and the plumping for the extreme bloc parties in 2003-7.³⁵ In what follows, I sketch some very general mechanisms which explain this type of reaction, and emphasise the role of religion.³⁶ To test the value of these schema in explaining these particular decisions would require a longer empirical analysis.

Multiplex symbolic boundaries and the tendency to opposition

Given the plurality of dimensions or categorisations by which distinctions are made – Protestant/Catholic, unionist/nationalist, British/Irish, even settler/native - the plurality of repertoires within the religious, national-political, ethno-national and historico-colonial fields, and the constant experimentation with new views which goes on in Northern Ireland as elsewhere, what leads towards an emphasis on opposition? I suggest that there is a practical-cognitive mechanism which provides a weak tendency towards opposition. It is founded on the human need for coherence, and the tendency to highlight, internalise and frame the world in terms of those concepts/oppositions which continually reappear in our practical experience.³⁷ The historical and contingent fact that the same family of concepts and oppositions are highlighted in each of the practical cultural spheres – religion, politics, ethnic, historical narratives – gives a disposition for ordinary people to highlight and internalise these concepts and oppositions.³⁸

This is neither a structuralist argument nor a Weberian one. It is not structuralist in that the binary oppositions are empirical, historical - rooted in the fact that the same or closely linked groups of people in each generation were making and remaking political, religious and historical narratives; the experience of them in practical life varies between groups, as does the internalisation of them; the tendency to internalise is weak rather than strong, and can be counteracted in predictable ways (see below). It is not the Weberian argument in that the affinities posited are with a particular culturally and communally weighted interpretation of modernity, rationality and progress whose *actual* progressiveness, rationality and modernising tendencies are rightly contested.

The forms of religion which evolved in Northern Ireland have been on the extreme ends of the reformation division: Calvinism or low church, evangelically oriented Anglicanism; Roman Catholicism with little anti-clericalism and no routine challenge to hierarchical authority. Protestants tended to see themselves as rational, progressive, modern, as opposed to Catholic superstition and backwardness. Within this, brands of Protestantism emphasised old testament chosen-people themes, and the covenantal tradition.³⁹ The parallels with the dominant brand of unionism are striking: unionism sees nationalism as superstitious, traditionalist, backward, and itself as global, progressive, modern, rational.⁴⁰ Within this, there is a sub-group of loyalists, those working class and rural Protestants (in the past in the Orange Order) who emphasise a covenanting, contractualist political tradition pursued by the loyal (chosen) band. Akenson shows how the religious sense of chosen people was historically intertwined with the sense of being a settler, and how this tends to make recessive those aspects of the religion that could criticise inequality and injustice.⁴¹ Miller shows the interrelation of religious notions of covenant, political notions of contract and conditional (non-national) loyalty.⁴² Todd shows affinities between the religious notions of modernity and progress and the way liberal unionists see the state.⁴³ Brewer and Leichty and Clegg show a pervasive intertwining of religion and political and ethnic opposition.⁴⁴ Mitchell and Ganiel each show how individuals intertwine their religious and political trajectories.⁴⁵ Catholics, on the other hand, saw themselves in the one true church with the one truth. In parallel, the nationalist tradition has a singular, centred self-understanding with a coincidence of ethnic background, religious faith and national belonging. Particular brands of nationalism emphasise a messianic vision of history, with golden age, fall and redemption through suffering.⁴⁶ The concepts of justice and equality used to criticise the Northern state were often informed by Catholic social thinking, and sometimes by a more generalised and simple 'basic' Christianity: the Campaign for Social Justice (CSJ) policy statement in 1964 concludes: 'Our aim is, we think, both basic and Christian but, nevertheless, has not been realised here for hundreds of years, namely equality for all'.⁴⁷ It is highly significant that the same concepts (for Protestants, rationality, modernity, loyalty) are used to distinguish different classes and sub-groups within the community as are used to distinguish the communities, thus reinforcing overall communal opposition.⁴⁸

Why this seeming gravitational pull to opposition, even while there are so many non-oppositional strands in the (contemporary) Christian religions? Steve Bruce explains it in terms of the need for a clear sense of belonging which is given (for Protestants) in evangelical Protestantism and the sense of being a chosen people.⁴⁹ But the sense of belonging (and the felt need for such a sense) varies very dramatically. The extremes

within Northern Ireland have shown little sense of solidarity or belonging beyond their immediate group: republicans, in particular, have little solidarity with or affection for their fellow nationals. I have suggested a simpler cognitive explanation: logical coherence is found in the oppositional interpretations of religion, politics, ethnicity, history, not in the inclusive interpretations: there is a clear coherent oppositional 'package', whereas breaking with opposition on any one dimension does not imply a particular way to break with it on others.⁵⁰ For those who want coherence – and this is particularly important when one needs to make sense of extreme, unexpected events - they are drawn to the oppositional attitudes. There is also an interactive, mimetic aspect: where one side, or one person, generalises opposition across politics, religion, history etc, their counterpart has to respond across the range of dimensions and thus tends too to generalise opposition.

Within this symbolic matrix, religion gives repertoires of opposition rooted in sacred history and it gives depth and value to what might otherwise appear as mere prejudice. It does this explicitly, but it also does it implicitly: in the way religious understandings informed the dominant political traditions, the type of modernism, the rejection of superstition and backwardness, the sense of truth. It did this not just for the particular unionist and nationalist traditions in Northern Ireland but for the values embodied in the (British and Irish) states themselves.⁵¹ This allows even those who do not practice their religions to find a sense in the oppositional religious tradition because it resonates with their political and national understandings.⁵² Coherence explains why people are drawn back to their religion in self-identification and in legitimisation.

Of course these are socialised rather than intellectualised understandings, a practical sense of coherence, not a coherently articulated ideology. The embodied practical concepts of rationality and modernity allow a merging of religious and other distinctions. The young modern liberal Protestant girl filmed by Desmond Bell in the late 1980s goes into a Catholic church and is visibly shocked and displeased by 'all the statues'.⁵³ Meanwhile Catholics are shocked by the 'polish' of Protestants in their religious practices as if formality and showy-ness is all, and this spills over into judgement of Protestant dress and make-up.⁵⁴ Such embodied religious differences, can exist without being generalised to politics or wider social attitudes.⁵⁵ In Northern Ireland, however, they are so generalised. Harris describes how there is a Protestant and Catholic position on just about everything, including international relations.⁵⁶ In the past, at least, unionists were concerned that this package not be unpicked at any level, on any dimension, lest this should be generalised across the entire spectrum: in the telling phrase of one unionist councillor, 'once you start going Paddy, you have to go all the way'.⁵⁷ . . .

Socially embedded boundaries..

This symbolic fusion of opposition on political, religious, ethnic, and historical dimensions is made possible by the informal social networks which usher individuals into social practices which interrelate nationality/religion (the Gaelic Athletic association, the Orange Order) or which take for granted such interrelations (schools, youth associations like Girls Brigade, charitable organisations like St Vincent de Paul, the Womens Institute). Religion, as Whyte and others show, organises the communities, creating dense informal social and communication networks,

contributing to social capital.⁵⁸ It did so especially in the Stormont period, where leisure activities, charity activities, schooling, and medicine were religiously segregated, and often organised by the religious orders (among Catholics) or overseen by the Protestant clergy. Work places were largely informally segregated until the last decade. There was strong opposition to exogamy, and where it (fairly frequently) took place, mixed marriage couples moved firmly into one community and all but severed linkages with the other.⁵⁹ This had the following consequences:

- (a) social capital was within each religious group. With this went reliance and trust: who one was likely to believe in a situation of contestation was firmly determined by religion.
- (b) communication patterns were within each group. This was of particular importance as violence began and as information flows became specific to each side.

It is well attested that rumours play a major role as triggers and precursors to violence, in particular to riots.⁶⁰ The prevalence of single-religion organisations and meeting places in Northern Ireland facilitates two sets of rumour-networks. People are exposed primarily to rumours from 'their own side' and where there is conflict of information, they tend to believe 'their own'. Part of the reason individuals were not more shocked by a paramilitary killings was because they were 'told' that the victim was a republican, a supplier to the state, or simply a 'bad one'.⁶¹

- (c) The social basis for mobilisation was given by these working, socialisation and communication patterns and this affected the form of mobilisation.⁶²

For unionists, the interlocking networks of unionism and the Orange Order allowed province-wide mobilisation which marginalized modernisers within the Protestant community.⁶³ For nationalists, it meant that mobilisation took place by leafleting areas with GAA halls, parish halls and de facto excluding Protestants: this was equally the case for the new (1970) explicitly non-sectarian SDLP as for the old happily-sectarian Nationalist party.⁶⁴

Mitchell (137-9) points out that the centrality of religion to social division allows that division to 'penetrate everyday life', and permits the clergy to play an important role in socio-political organisation. Taken by itself, religious organisation of social division does not necessarily affect the political goals of the mobilised population. It is, however, likely to highlight the religious dimensions of political opposition: the funerals for the hunger strikers were mass religious rituals with immediate political connotations: terrible suffering and grief, hope of resurrection.⁶⁵ Once interrelated with the cognitively-based tendency to generalise religiously-informed oppositions, however, it has greater effects. It gives immediate social confirmation to this fusion of religious-political-social values and embeds it in group-belonging. It separates 'people like us' from those who breach the most basic norms of rationality and morality: in the words of one of Millar's (Catholic) respondents, '*They're awful wicked. See I think we're not as wicked because we're Catholics, because we know si..[breakage], things are sins. We have a conscience. I don't know whether they [ie Protestants] have a conscience*'.⁶⁶ It rules out any checks on this sort of generalisation; the norms of social interaction in Northern Ireland mean that even the presence of a small minority of the other religion stops overt statement of any potentially oppositional

perspective;⁶⁷ that doesn't stop people thinking them, but it rules out the social confirmation that embeds beliefs as self-evidently true.

Institutional confirmation

Religious division has also been formally and institutionally sedimented. There is an extensive literature showing how Protestantism, Protestant values and Protestant habitus came to permeate the British state and nation.⁶⁸ The devolved state in Northern Ireland was more explicitly Protestant in a Calvinist vein, with enforced sabbatarianism, and immediate and easy access and influence of the Protestant clergy on decisionmaking.⁶⁹ Employment in the public sector (as in private firms) favoured Protestants, and the reasons for this merit attention: Barritt and Carter report Protestant views that Catholics were 'not to be trusted', they were 'shifty, idle and unreliable, fit only to be employed on unskilled work' [the Protestant ethic?], they were resentful of authority, more likely to be troublemakers or to have 'a chip on the shoulder' [having insufficiently internalised authority structures in self-discipline?]; they could not be trusted with business secrets [presumably a reference to the religious practice of confession] and they would 'pack' the firm with other Catholics [being thought non-meritocratic in their mindsets];⁷⁰ they might upset customers or other workers;⁷¹ Protestants might not 'work well under Catholic supervision'.⁷² In the public sector, Catholics were not considered good candidates for promotion because in tough cases they would obey their church rather than their superior (eg in public hospitals, the reference is to abortion). Later again it was said that Catholics, and particularly republicans, could not be employed in industries of strategic importance because they would leak secrets.⁷³ Government commissioned research shows continued underrepresentation of Catholics in the civil service and in public bodies well into the 1980s, and considerably longer in the security services, and the reasons given (favouring ex-servicemen, attitude to authority, word of mouth references, the – intuitive evaluations of all-Protestant interview boards) echo those of the past.⁷⁴

As state institutions slowly changed, they gave differential incentives to different subgroups of unionists and nationalists to differentiate politics from culture, ethnicity and religion, or to re-connect it. Bew, Gibbon and Patterson note that in the interwar years, different positions in the state apparatuses distinguished the anti-populists (universalists and technocrats in the civil service, eg in the department of Finance, and occasionally in politics) from populists (whose major concern was keeping unity and solidarity in party and constituency and whose rhetoric was Protestant-particularist).⁷⁵ Later 'structural unionists' who differentiated unionist politics from religious belief and ethnic belonging and argued for fuller integration into a changing British state, were wrong-footed by the increasingly bi-communal and bi-national policies and institutions set in place from 1985.⁷⁶ In the 2000s, the unionist public – recognising that a bi-communal politics was now irreversible - left the UUP, plumping decisively for the communalist, religiously influenced DUP, to fight their corner within new institutions which they now also plumped for.

Different worlds.

This intersection of symbolism, social practice and institutions created two separate worlds, with different – opposed – values and assumptions, which intersected only

occasionally and at risk of violence. Conflict became more intense in the 1960s as the state increasingly penetrated the Catholic social world, and as Catholics increasingly asserted their position in the public (Protestant) world. The resulting conflict put at stake the world the Protestants had made, and by the same token changed that of Catholics. Religion was an important factor in making these worlds. Equally important, it made the worlds visible one to another on a weekly – sometimes daily – basis. Jenkins argues that ‘the ritual symbolisation of identity is an effective way to make collective identities matter to people’.⁷⁷ Church-going in Northern Ireland did just that.

In Catholic theology, God is present in the Communion, and the clergy play a mediating role between individual and God: in Protestant theology, the individual has a direct relationship with God who is not closer to the believer in church than outside. Church-going thus has quite different religio-social meanings in each community. For Protestants, it is a display of respect to God and to the religious community; it is a formal occasion of display, shown in clothing, stance, seriousness of demeanour, control of children in the family group. In some families, if the car is not washed or the clothes not properly ironed, church attendance has to wait. For Catholics on the other hand, the important thing is to attend, whatever the appearance. Moreover there is a radical asymmetry in church organisation and practice. In each small town or city neighbourhood, there are multiple Protestant churches each with a single long Sunday morning service. The congregation arrives at each church at a defined time, whole families together.⁷⁸ Catholics, in contrast, have one large local church which holds multiple morning services, so there are always people coming and going, usually walking, and different family members may attend different services, finding seats wherever available. Some arrive late and leave early.

These differences cohere well with the different class and authority profiles of Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. Protestants often display their position in the community in and through church attendance; the best clothes, the dignified and upright stance appropriate to people of authority and substance.⁷⁹ Church is also an occasion to show one’s own respect for authority – the authority of the state, of the security forces, of the monarchy, symbols of which may be displayed in the form of flags or plaques. Mass-going plays a role in community bonding for Catholics.⁸⁰ It does not, however, have the same status resonances as it does for Protestants, not least because social position has not been a source of pride for most Catholics, and the churches never display symbols of the state. Behavior in church varies accordingly. In Protestant churches, children are kept with their families, under strict control; in Catholic churches, children are omnipresent, babies crying, toddlers climbing.

Church-going thus expresses and reproduces much more than simply religious difference. It is of crucial importance in forming perceptions of difference-as-opposition, since it is where Catholics and Protestants were – and are - seen in large numbers, as communities rather than as individuals. In the past, part of what Catholics disliked about unionist rule was being governed by the sort of people they saw going to church on Sunday, dark, polished, formal, humourless, and being made fit into a society in their image.⁸¹ Part of what Protestants feared was being governed by the sort of people they saw walking to church, as if randomly, at all hours, without clear order or formality, in all sorts of clothes, in great numbers, or later pouring out of church, or later again going to the Gaelic football match (not much distinguished from

church-going in terms of clothing or style but even more threatening because of the numbers, predominantly male attendance and lack of formal authority).

Secularisation is important less because it makes religious values unimportant to individuals – Mitchell argues that they outlast the ending of religious practice by more than a generation - than because it removes religious practice from the public eye and it becomes easier to privatise and segment its values.

Predictions:

If – as sketched above - the generalisation of oppositional religious concepts and values through the political and social sphere is a product of symbolic and social mechanisms, certain predictions follow.

1. Argument and evidence alone will be insufficient to break the cognitive frame. The very meanings of terms like ‘rationality’, ‘progress’, ‘modernity’ are communally-loaded. [An example of this is the capacity of even the most intellectually able and sophisticated of unionists and nationalists to describe their respective states in utterly opposing ways. Until very recently, unionists perceived the Irish state, in David Trimble’s words, to be ‘sectarian, mono-ethnic and mono-cultural’, economically weak and globally inconsequential compared to the British state.⁸² For nationalists like Garret FitzGerald, on the other hand, the British state is seen as traditionalist, conservative and class-bound, incapable of fully participating in the European and global economy; the Irish state is a small, independent open economy and polity with strong guarantees of human rights, providing the sort of institutional context and social capital that allows full use to be made of its resources.⁸³]
2. Secularisation alone will not break the pattern, since the oppositional concepts are already embodied in politics, notions of identity, views of history, thus creating a continued openness to religion. [Mitchell argues this with evidence for example in chapter 6 of *Religion, Identity and Politics*]
3. Since the ‘practical-cognitive-coherence’ mechanism depends in turn on other social mechanisms, it may routinely be set aside where these mechanisms don’t exist, for example where individuals’ social practices in one field involve a quite different set of concepts and values than in others. [So, for example, one could predict that sportspeople (perhaps boxers, since boxing is a cross-community sport in Ireland) working in organisational contexts of intercommunal and cross-border interaction would have significantly different cognitive packages than others : as far as I am aware this has not been tested systematically, although there is certainly anecdotal evidence to this effect. Where we do have systematic evidence, however, is in respect to the informal segregation of the workplace, which has been challenged by fair employment legislation since 1989. Studies show that desegregated workplaces – initially by law, but now by the clear wish and self-policing of the workers – take on a culture of ‘neutrality’.⁸⁴ This at once ends the role of the workplace as network of communication and differentiates work-practices from religious and political practices. In the middle class public sector (where desegregation has existed for longest), it has affected perceptions, for individuals now in principle refuse to ‘tell’ who is Protestant and Catholic in the workplace.]
4. Change is more likely to be provoked by a breach of institutional and social networks than directly by a challenge to the symbolic equivalences. [Thus, one could point to the inefficacy of liberal and ecumenist arguments over many years, and the more radical effects of recent structural changes (see below,).]

5. Where change is radical, there is likely to be a tendency to look for new coherences, and to embed these in new social networks. [This is the case for the small groups of bridgebuilding activists and radical evangelicals.⁸⁵ The specific class and religious tenor of these networks, however, means that they are not easily opened more widely.]

Change.

Since 1998, quite radical institutional and social changes have given widespread incentives to change/breach the cognitive equivalences noted above. The ways this is being done casts light on the specific role of religion in the past and present.

1. The political system and power relations have been radically changed with the following as the key events: 1985 (Anglo-Irish Agreement), 1989 (Fair Employment Act) 1998 (Good Friday Agreement), 1999-2003 (reform of policing). Since 1998 this has begun to percolate down to everyday experience, for example in republican participation at all levels of decision making and in a visible nationalist presence in every aspect of the public sphere.
2. Social networks have been diffused. This has occurred in three ways. First, by increased funding for cross-community venues and integrated schooling, although such cross-networking remains relatively small-scale (only 4% of students attended integrated schools in 2002). Secondly, as already mentioned, fair employment legislation has stimulated more widespread change in work relations. Third, and more pervasive again, general cultural trends and consumerism (from foreign holidays to non-place shopping malls to home cinema) have led to greater individualisation, a lesser reliance on social capital, although separate religio-leisure networks remain.
3. The older social worlds are challenged and increasingly problematised. For Protestants, the new political order disconfirms their previous expectations and rules out their habitual ways of acting: they can no longer march where they want, their world (and their control of it) has changed. For Catholics, once isolated 'Catholic' and 'republican' worlds are increasingly integrated into the public world: for them, their beliefs (in the need for public equality) are confirmed but their practices are changed.

These changes give individuals incentives to rethink and reframe their worlds, to cast adrift older assumptions and conceptual equivalences, to pull apart the cultural matrix or to change it altogether. How they do this, and the patterns of change that emerge, is the topic of some of my own recent research.⁸⁶ Whether and how they deal with the religious dimensions of opposition is relevant to our question of how deep, how important, those religious elements are. Here I want very briefly to describe four typical patterns.⁸⁷

1. One-time Protestant fundamentalist extremists have changed much more quickly than was expected, as is seen by the DUP's cohabitation with Sinn Féin in the new executive. Recent research shows phases of this change: first a clear sense of political defeat, a prioritisation of religious values over political and a 'purifying' of religion of its failed political resonance; second a changing of political assumptions – which no longer matter so much to them;

third, a finding of new religious opportunities as well as economic ones in the new cross-border structures or in moral activism ('saving Ulster from sodomy') within the newly egalitarian Northern Ireland.⁸⁸

2. One-time Protestant extremists who have no explicit religious belief find it harder to orient themselves to the new situation. They fear being swallowed up by Catholic, nationalist, republican expansion: '*The Protestant is very, very simple, they see their culture, their identity gradually being taken away from them*'.⁸⁹ They have few alternative cultural resources from which to renegotiate their self-definitions. Some privatise, emphasising everyday values (motherhood, increasing affluence, a hard day's work). The new opportunities in Northern Ireland, however, require engagement with erst-while opponents (republicans) with clear public projects by whom they feel easily out-manoeuvred. Some reassert the old values in increasingly desperate protest.
3. Some attempt to adapt, moderate, come to a strategic compromise. But this too raises moral issues which are not easy to resolve: if they can compromise now, what of the principles that they fought for in the past? Were they not important? Or is political compromise war by other means, with the long-term aim still defeat of the opponent? Have the values which gave dignity and depth to an otherwise horrific struggle now been jettisoned in an unprincipled fashion? Or have they been replaced, in a sort of conversion? Republican electoral success and international favour has been gained by a public silencing of the questions. It remains as yet unclear if the older oppositional mind-sets are being worn away by the practice of peace and compromise, or whether they remain: as one respondent eloquently put it, referring to memories of injustice and repression "*The ceasefire is very important.... it's the biggest thing you know, its so important that that's sustained, but when wee things happen you know that that memory is still somewhere buried in your brain*".⁹⁰
4. One cluster of respondents reflexively reassessed many of the oppositional contents of their self- and world- understandings - typically through intense if short-lived personal crises - and dispensed with them. These individuals reported a helter-skelter of change, with initial movement leading to new levels of cognitive dissonance and further change. This group typically re-found aspects of their familial and religious traditions which allowed them to legitimate these changes, and to reinvent a continuity with their personal and wider historical past. Many were in mixed marriages. Even in non-conflictual societies, mixed marriage respondents often narrate a refinding of more open aspects of their religious tradition, using ecumenical networks as support.⁹¹ In Northern Ireland, however, this feeds back into political and ethnic questioning and redefinition.

These sorts of responses suggest that when religiously informed conflict ends, the individuals who most quickly come to terms with both conflict and settlement are those who re-find aspects of the religious tradition by which to reinterpret it.⁹²

Conclusions:

I have argued that religion has played a key symbolic role in the Northern Ireland conflict, where opposition is generalised between the religious, political, ethnic, normative, historical spheres. This is not primarily driven by the actions of clerics, or the events in particular churches, or even by changing religious orthodoxies. The generalisation was made likely by the historical development of the traditions, and the highlighting of the same or very similar conceptual oppositions within each. The process of generalisation is in turn underpinned by social networks and communication patterns which prevent the 'normal' change and challenge of key sets of beliefs. In the past it was sedimented by state and institutional norms, although as these norms and related practices have changed, so too have the incentives for changing the oppositional understandings and identities in Northern Ireland. The religious values and concepts involved are sometimes explicit, sometimes already secularised, religion-ising values in the political tradition. They are – perhaps paradoxically – the more changeable when they are reconnected to religious tradition than when they are embedded in secularised ethno-political particularity.

Religion, I have suggested, makes conflict much more than a conflict about constitutional claims or political policies. It makes it into a conflict that touches on, resonates with and is informed by whole ways of life, with their constitutive assumptions and values. It makes it an existential conflict. In the Northern Ireland case, it does not make it a total, genocidal conflict – the state is too strong, there are many informal social constraints – but it drives ordinary people with other preoccupations into a conflict that they would much prefer did not exist.

What theoretical conclusions follow? Is religious conflict just another form of ethnic conflict? This case study shows that there is certainly an overlap. But not all religious conflicts are ethnic, in the sense of being between historically defined and distinctive 'peoples'. Nor are all ethnic conflicts about ways of life. Some are about getting 'our men' into power, or grabbing resources for 'us', with the 'we' defined instrumentally, whichever way gets most 'pork'.⁹³ Nor are all national conflicts about ways of life: many are about territory and resources. To use Sharma's categories, ethnic and national conflicts may be about which group rules, rather than about the rules themselves.⁹⁴ When they are informed by religion, if this case can be generalised, they become about the content of those rules. The recent history of Northern Ireland also makes clear that while religiously informed conflicts may be fought to protect or to gain recognition for ways of life and identities, the fighting of them, and the process of institutional change involved in settlement, itself changes those ways of life and identities.

¹ This paper borrows freely in arguments and occasionally in text from a much longer joint work – in its final stages of completion - on the conflict and settlement processes in Northern Ireland co-authored with Joseph Ruane. An IRCHSS senior research fellowship 2006-7 gave time to refine some of these arguments. Thanks are due to Joe Ruane, Gladys Ganiel and Christopher Farrington for comments at very short notice.

² F. W. Boal, M. C. Keane, D. N Livingstone, eds, *Them and Us? Attitudinal Variation among Churchgoers in Belfast*, Belfast, Institute of Irish Studies, 1997, 20 ff., 94ff. find that half of churchgoers are 'conservative' Protestants or highly orthodox Catholics. S. Bruce and F. Alderdice, 'Religious belief and behavior', in P. Stringer and G. Robinson, eds, *Social Attitudes in Northern Ireland, The Third Report*, Belfast, Blackstaff, 1993. .

³ Claire Mitchell, *Religion, Identity and Politics in Northern Ireland*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006 ; Gladys Ganiel, 'Finding their place in the kingdom : evangelical Protestants and the shaping of Northern Irish civil society after

the Belfast Agreement', PhD dissertation, University College Dublin, 2005, revised version forthcoming as *Evangelicalism and Conflict in Northern Ireland*, Contemporary Anthropology of Religion series, Palgrave: New York, June 2008. R. Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity*, second edition : Sage, 2008. F. W. Boal, M. C. Keane, D. N Livingstone, eds, *Them and Us ? Attitudinal Variation among Churchgoers in Belfast*, Belfast, Institute of Irish Studies, 1997 ; S. Bruce, *God Save Ulster, The Religion and Politics of Paisleyism*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1986. John Brewer with G. Higgins, *Anti-Catholicism in Northern Ireland 1600-1998 : The Mote and the Beam*. Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1998. C. Mitchell, 'Is Northern Ireland abnormal ? An extension of the sociological debate on religion in modern Britain', *Sociology*, 2004, 38.2, 237-54. Gladys Ganiel and Paul Dixon, 'Religion, pragmatic fundamentalism and the transformation of the Northern Ireland conflict', *Journal of Peace Research* forthcoming, 2008 .

⁴ M. Lamont and V. Molnar, 'The study of boundaries in the social sciences', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28, 2002, 167-95. I follow Mitchell, *Religion, Identity and Politics*, 10-11 in taking a broad concept of religion, to encompass both belief and practice, and to include substantive and functional dimensions.

⁵ Rather than refer to the voluminous historical literature, I refer to chapter 2 of Ruane and Todd, *Dynamics of Conflict in Northern Ireland*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, where much of this literature is cited.

⁶ Once again the literature is voluminous. This characterisation is uncontentious among specialists.

⁷ For a schematic explanation how these interests were continually regenerated, see Ruane and Todd, *Dynamics*, 1996, pp. 30-37 and forthcoming.

⁸ See J. Ruane and J. Todd, 'Path dependence in settlement processes: explaining settlement in Northern Ireland', *Political Studies*, 55, 2, 2007, 442-458 where we argue that a threshold level of structural reform of inequality plus believable change in historical patterns (through the opening of new geopolitical opportunities), made the difference.

⁹ A definition of conflict of comparative use is not attempted here. For the Irish/Northern Irish case the meaning is clear enough: a major social division which creates competition over the very shape of state, law, major institutions, leading to institutional breakdown as soon as the dominated group is strong enough to effect this. In Jenkins' typology of types of religious conflict: missionary conflict; holy war; religious persecution; religious competition; religious politics the Northern Ireland case is 'religious competition' with two religious groups coexisting in the same space and struggling for dominance. Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity*, Second edition, 112-14)

¹⁰ John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, *Explaining Northern Ireland*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1995, pp. 171-213. Neither churches nor clergy were targeted, nor did clergy, with only a handful of (listable) exceptions, actively support the paramilitaries

¹¹ Robert W. White, 'From peaceful protest to civil war : Micromobilization of the Provisional Irish Republican Army', *American Journal of Sociology*, 94(6) 1989, 1277-1302. Recent work by Neil Burgess, Mark Ferguson and Ian Hollywood appears to confirm this : see for example bibliography in Burgess, Ferguson and Hollywood, 'Rebel's perspectives on the legacy of past violence', *Political Psychology*, 28, 1, 2007

¹² J. McEvoy, 'Perspectives of a Northern Catholic', in Enda McDonagh, ed, *Irish Challenges to Theology*, Dublin, Dominican Publications, 1986, p. 24.

¹³ Richard English, *Armed Struggle. A History of the IRA*. London: Macmillan, 2003.

¹⁴ J. Ruane, 'Majority-minority conflicts and their resolution' in Todd et al ed, *Political Transformations and National Identity Change*, London, Routledge, 2008; J. Ruane and D. Butler, 'Southern Irish protestants: An example of de-ethnicisation?', *Nations and Nationalism*, 13.4, 2007, Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity*, 118; See also forthcoming special issue of *National Identities* on Protestant minorities in Europe, expected publication date autumn 2008.

¹⁵ The tendency is common. Kanchan Chandra makes it explicit in 'Does ethnicity matter' *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2006.

¹⁶ J. Ruane and J. Todd, 'The roots of intense ethnic conflict may not in fact be ethnic : Categories, communities and path dependence', *Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, XLV (2) 209-232, pp. 216-9. For parallel arguments see S. Cornell, 'The variable ties that bind', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 19, 1996. Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity*.

¹⁷ Michèle Lamont and Virag Molnar, 'The study of boundaries in the social sciences', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28, 2002., 167-95 map how 'symbolic resources' (including cultural traditions, conceptual distinctions, moral repertoires) help create, fix or dissolve 'institutionalised social differences' (class, gender race etc) p. 168.

¹⁸ See Jenkins's admirably clear argument to this effect in *Rethinking Ethnicity*, pp. 121-2. Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, Boston, Little Brown and Company, 1969, pp. 14, 15, 30.

¹⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, revised edition, London, Verso, 1991, p. 6..

²⁰ For the broad concept, see Chandra, 'Does ethnicity matter' ; for the narrow concept, see W. Connor, *Ethno-nationalism: The Quest for Understanding*, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1994. .

²¹ For an extended argument why this is a mistake, see Ruane and Todd, 'Roots of intense ethnic conflict'

²² John Whyte, *Interpreting Northern Ireland*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991. John Coakley, 'National identity in Northern Ireland : stability or change' *Nations and Nationalism*, 13.4 2007, 573-598. Muldoon et al, 'The nature and meaning of identity in Northern Ireland after the Good Friday Agreement', *Political Psychology*, 28, 1, 2007, pp. 89-103

²³ Richard Rose, *Governing Without Consensus*, London, Faber and Faber, 1971, pp. 261-2 ; Boal et al, *Them and Us* ; C. Mitchell and J. Tilley, 'The Moral Minority: Evangelical Protestants in Northern Ireland and Their Political Behaviour.' *Political Studies*, 52(4): 585-602. This also appears to be the case historically, while it seems a plausible hypothesis that the New Light Presbyterians should be more likely to be United Irishmen in the late 18th

century than Calvinist conservatives, a study of clergy involved in the United Irishmen found no such correlation. (Reference)

²⁴ See references below.

²⁵ See also the school essay study reported upon by McLaughlin et al, 'Religion, ethnicity and identity' in Todd et al, *Political Transformations*. Given the prevalence of the phenomenon, its meanings and functions deserve fuller study.

²⁶ (Mitchell and Tilley, 'Moral minority'; Mitchell and Todd, 'Between the devil and the deep blue sea', G. Ganiel 'Ulster Says Maybe: The Restructuring of Evangelical Politics in Northern Ireland.' *Irish Political Studies* 21(2), 2006: 137-155. Gladys Ganiel, 'Emerging from the Evangelical Subculture in Northern Ireland: A Case Study of the Zero28 and ikon Community.' *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 6(1), 2006: 38-48

²⁷ McAllister has so argued on the basis of survey evidence I. McAllister, 'The devil, miracles and the afterlife: the political sociology of religion in Northern Ireland', *British Journal of Sociology*, 33, 1982, 330-47.; McGarry and O'Leary, *Explaining Northern Ireland*, give a more nuanced view, but conclude that it is not a primary cause of conflict.

²⁸ Edna Longley, *The Living Stream: Literature and Revisionism in Ireland* Newcastle upon Tyne, Bloodaxe Books, 1994. Mairead Nic Craith, *Plural Identities, Singular Narratives*, Oxford, Berghahn, 2002. See also the various works by Robin Wilson, both as editor of *Fortnight* and in *Democratic Dialogue*,

²⁹ Occasionally McGarry and O'Leary retreat to this position (eg *Explaining Northern Ireland*, pp. 356-8, but their early work is clear that conflict is not just meaningful but rational, and in some of their later work they focus on the substantive cognitive and moral perspectives which inform it.

³⁰ Barth is the obvious initial reference.

³¹ P. Bew, P. Gibbon and H. Patterson, *The State in Northern Ireland, Political Forces and Social Classes, 1921-79*, Manchester, MUP, 1979. P. Buckland, *The Factory of Grievances*, Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, 1979.

³² M. Harris, *The Catholic Church and the Foundation of the Northern Ireland State*, Cork, Cork Univ. Press, 1993. E. Phoenix, *Northern Nationalism: Nationalist Politics, Partition and the Catholic Minority in Northern Ireland, 1890-1940*, Belfast, Ulster Historical Foundation, 1994.

³³ Ruane and Todd, *Dynamics of Conflict*, chapters 5-7.

³⁴ They also have comparatively weak loyalties to political parties, John Curtice and Tony Gallagher, 'The Northern Irish Dimension', in R. Jowell et al, *British Social Attitudes, the Seventh Report*, London, Gower, 1990, p. 192-3.

³⁵ See respectively Marc Mulholland, *Northern Ireland at the Crossroads: Ulster Unionism in the O'Neill Years 1960-9*, Houndsmills, Macmillan, 2000; Graham Walker, *A History of the Ulster Unionist Party: Protest, Pragmatism and pessimism*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2004; Michael Kerr, *Imposing Power-Sharing: Conflict and Coexistence in Northern Ireland and Le banon* Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2006 Ciaran McKeown, *The Passion of Peace* Belfast, Blackstaff, 1984; Robin Eames, *Chains to be Broken*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1992; Pdraig O'Malley, *Biting at the Grave*, Belfast, Blackstaff, 1990; J. Ruane and J. Todd, 'The Politics of Transition? Explaining Political Crises in the Implementation of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement', *Political Studies* 49 (5), 2001, pp. 923-940

³⁶ What follows is a summary of some of the arguments in chapters 3 and 4 of the forthcoming book by Ruane and Todd.

³⁷ Whether or not this is hard-wired (see J. Bone, 'The social map and the problem of order', *Theory and Science*, vol 6, no 1, 2005) is not my concern here.

³⁸ Mitchell makes a closely related point in different terminology (the importance of 'religious ideology') in chapter 6 of her *Religion, Identity and Politics*.

³⁹ For discussion, see Ganiel and Dixon, 'Religion, pragmatic fundamentalism and the transformation of the Northern Ireland conflict', *Journal of Peace Research* forthcoming, 2008

⁴⁰ For sympathetic comment on one of Trimble's speeches which expresses this well, see Dean Godson, *Himself Alone: David Trimble and the Ordeal of Unionism*, London, Harper Collins, 2004, pp. 707-710 For other examples, see Dennis Kennedy; *The Widening Gulf: Northern Attitudes to the Independent Irish State 1919-1949*, Belfast, Blackstaff, 1988. There is considerable disagreement in the literature on the readings of unionism given in this paragraph. Much of this criticism misinterprets the status of the claims, which focus on dominant themes and concepts as identified in interpretative approaches to whole bodies of literature, speeches, and a contextualised reading of the presuppositions of discourses and the meanings of self-categorisations. (Since the mid 1980s, for example, almost all Protestants have self-defined as 'British' in surveys and political rhetoric but this obvious fact – contra much published comment – says nothing about the issues in debate which require interpretation of what they mean by the term, how it is used, with what resonances, associations and presuppositions). Serious debate, however, exists in readings of unionism which emphasise the autonomy of political discourse, for example Aughey, *Under Siege*, Belfast, Blackstaff, 1989; Farrington, *Ulster Unionism and the Northern Ireland Peace Process*, Macmillan, 2006, and differences in interpretation require more sustained discussion than is possible here

⁴¹ D. H. Akenson, *God's Peoples: Covenant and Land in South Africa, Israel and Ulster*. Ithaca NY: Cornell U. Press, 1992.

⁴² D. W. Miller, *Queen's Rebels: Ulster Loyalism in Historical Perspective*. London, Gill and Macmillan, 1978.

⁴³ J. Todd, 'Two traditions in unionist political culture', *Irish Political Studies*, 2, 1-26

⁴⁴ Brewer, *Anti-Catholicism*. Joseph Liechty and Cecelia Clegg, *Moving Beyond Sectarianism: Religion, Conflict and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland*. Dublin: Columba Press, 2001.

⁴⁵ See references footnote 3 above.

- ⁴⁶ (The classic texts are the early twentieth century writings of Patrick Pearse and James Connolly. See O'Malley, *Biting at the Grave*, for the entwined religio-political understandings of the hunger strikes)
- ⁴⁷ *Irish News* 16 January 1964, quoted Purdie, *Politics in the Streets*, p. 94. For other examples, see J. Todd, 'Northern Irish nationalist political culture', *Irish Political Studies*, 5, 1990, 31-44. Claire Mitchell, 'Catholicism and the Construction of Communal Identity in Northern Ireland', *Irish Journal of Sociology*, 14(1), 2005, 110-130
- ⁴⁸ See the essays by Buckley in A. D. Buckley and M.C. Kenny, eds, *Negotiating Identity: Rhetoric, Metaphor and Social Drama in Northern Ireland*. Washington DC, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996.
- ⁴⁹ First stated, I think, in Bruce, Wallis and Taylor, 'No surrender: Paisleyism and the politics of ethnic identity in Northern Ireland', Belfast, QUB, 1986.
- ⁵⁰ One might argue that a bridge-building, ecumenical 'package' is available but it is new, less embedded in a wide range of everyday practices and institutionalised discourses, and it has clear middle-class resonance.
- ⁵¹ Add references
- ⁵² Mitchell *Religion*, chapter 6.
- ⁵³ D. Bell's film, 'We'll fight and no surrender',
- ⁵⁴ Mitchell, *Religion*, p. 110. F. Burton, *The Politics of Legitimacy: Struggles in a Belfast Community*, London, Routledge, 1978, pp.52-3; Polly Devlin, *All of Us There*, ref *Rattle of the North*, ed P. Craig pp 380-1. For more examples see Leichty and Clegg, *Moving Beyond Sectarianism*;
- ⁵⁵ A point made definitively by D.Laitin, *Hegemony and Culture: Politics and Religious Change among the Yoruba*, University of Chicago Press, 1986.
- ⁵⁶ Harris, *Prejudice and Tolerance in Ulster*, Manchester, Manchester UP, 1972, pp. 146-8. Harris's research was done in the 1950s. Even then there was variation and contest. Exactly how far they are generalised now and how this varies requires to be mapped: much of the basic work for such an exercise has been done: see work by Burton, McKay, O'Connor, O'Dowd, Taylor, Coulter, Donnan, Macfarlane, Millar, Shirlow, Murtagh, Shirlow, Ganiel, Mitchell.
- ⁵⁷ Frank Millar senior, in the context of his opposition to awarding the freedom of the city of Belfast to freed Lebanon hostage, Brian Keenan, a Belfast Protestant who travelled on an Irish passport.
- ⁵⁸ Key texts include: D. P. Barritt and C. F. Carter, *The Northern Ireland Problem: A study in Group Relations*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1962; John Whyte, *Interpreting Northern Ireland*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1991, ; D. Morrow, et al, *The Churches and Intercommunity Relations*, Coleraine, Centre for the Study of Conflict, 1991; Mitchell, *Religion*.
- ⁵⁹ On mixed marriages, see Harris, *Prejudice and Tolerance*. The permeability of social boundaries has slowly increased since the 1990s but meanwhile demographic segregation has increased and considerable organisational division remains. Mitchell, *Religion*, pp. 62-3 ; P. Shirlow and B. Murtagh, *Belfast: Segregation, Violence and the City*, London, Pluto, 2006 ; various governmental (OFMDFM) reports to be referenced.
- ⁶⁰ For example, Horowitz, D. L., *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001, 74-88. S. Kakar, *The Colors of Violence*, University of Chicago Press, 1996, 29-36
- ⁶¹ Participant observation, also Nelson, Millar. Occasionally politicians let such statements slip, causing outrage: eg reference to Trimble,
- ⁶² Cf Lamont and Molnar, 'Study of boundaries' 181-2.
- ⁶³ Mulholland notes that it was difficult even to get modernisers nominated as unionist candidates in the 1960s: they were loathe to 'kow-tow' to Orange dominated constituency associations, who were equally loathe to favour inclusive policies towards Catholics. Mulholland, *Northern Ireland*, pp. 142-5.
- ⁶⁴ Personal communication from one of the early SDLP activists
- ⁶⁵ Bernadette McAliskey's introduction to McKeown et al, *Nor Meekly Serve my Time*, shows the highly emotive quasi-sacred aura which surrounded the hunger strikers' deaths, even for this consummate socialist-republican strategist.
- ⁶⁶ Adrian Millar, *Socio-ideological fantasy and the Northern Ireland Conflict*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006, p. 111.
- ⁶⁷ The classic discussions are Barritt and Carter, *Northern Ireland Problem*, Harris, *Prejudice and Tolerance*. The point has consistently been substantiated in later studies.
- ⁶⁸ L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*. New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1992; A. Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997; S. Mews (ed.) *Religion and National Identity*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982.
- ⁶⁹ One early example is the education controversy, resolved, as the clergy desired, by ensuring that state schools gave (only) Protestant religious instruction.
- ⁷⁰ Barritt and Carter, *Northern Ireland Problem*, p. 94.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 102.
- ⁷² Significantly this was not taken to imply a negative attitude to authority among Protestants.
- ⁷³ John Doyle, 'Workers and outlaws: unionism and fair employment in Northern Ireland', *Irish Political Studies*, 9, 1994, 41-60.
- ⁷⁴ For discussion, see Ruane and Todd, *Dynamics*, chapter 6.
- ⁷⁵ Bew, Gibbon, Patterson, *State in Northern Ireland*; ; Graham Walker, *A History of the Ulster Unionist Party: Protest, Pragmatism and pessimism*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2004.
- ⁷⁶ For discussions see Christopher Farrington, *Ulster Unionism and the Peace Process in Northern Ireland*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. Arthur Aughey, Under Siege: *Ulster Unionism and the Anglo-Irish*

Agreement, Belfast, Blackstaff, 1989 ; Dean Godson, *Himself Alone : David Trimble and the Ordeal of Unionism*, London, Harper Collins, 2004.

⁷⁷ Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity*, p. 126, citing Jenkins *Social Identity* (third edition) 2008, chapter 14.

⁷⁸ Boal et al, *Them and Us*, note that Protestants, but not Catholics, typically travel to church by car – itself a fact that crystallises many of the differences outlined above.

⁷⁹ Significantly, while working class protestant church attendance is predominantly female and over-65s, Protestant professional-managerial church attendance is spread across the genders and generations. Boal et al, *Them and Us*, 114-5.

⁸⁰ Mitchell, *Religion, Identity and Politics*, pp 76-81

⁸¹ Still the images used by Catholics to describe the Protestant religion involve above all formality, see Mitchell, *Religion, Identity and Politics*, p. 110.

⁸² Initially stated at a meeting of Ulster Unionist Council of March 9th 2002. David Trimble affirmed the essence of his judgement the following November in an interview in the US: Abdon M. Pallasch, 'Northern Ireland politician visits here', *Chicago Sun Times*, November 15th, 2002. For sympathetic commentary see Dean Godson, *Himself Alone : David Trimble and the Ordeal of Unionism*, London, Harper Collins, 2004, pp. 707-710 For other examples, see Dennis Kennedy; *The Widening Gulf: Northern Attitudes to the Independent Irish State 1919-1949*, Belfast, Blackstaff, 1988

⁸³ For some of these themes voiced in a way that is perfectly commonsensical for moderate nationalists, see Garret FitzGerald, 'Introduction', pp. 1-4 in Paul Gillespie, ed., *Britain's European Question: The Issues for Ireland*, Dublin, Institute for European Affairs, 1996.

⁸⁴ D.A. Dickson, O.D. W. Hargie, *Relational Communication between Catholics and Protestants in the Workplace : A study of Policies, Practices, Procedures*. A report on research funded by the Office of the First and Deputy First Ministers (Northern Ireland) University of Ulster, Jordanstown, 2002.

⁸⁵ Gladys Ganiel, 'Emerging from the Evangelical Subculture in Northern Ireland: A Case Study of the Zero28 and ikon Community.' *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 6(1), 2006: 38-48. References for bridgebuilders to follow.

⁸⁶ Todd 'Social transformations, collective categories and identity change' *Theory and Society*, 34.4 2005, pp. 429-463 and other references below.

⁸⁷ These represent empirical types discernible in a large interview sample, which amounted to 80 interviews in Northern Ireland between 2003-6, conducted by four interviewers, in two separate, but interrelated projects. The results were analysed in a number of articles, cited below. I add to this conclusions from further sets of interviews (together over 80) with evangelical Protestants conducted independently by Claire Mitchell and Gladys Ganiel, with results published in articles already cited.

⁸⁸ Claire Mitchell, 'Protestant identification and political change in Northern Ireland', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 26.4 2003, 612-31. Ganiel, Gladys, 'Ulster Says Maybe: The Restructuring of Evangelical Politics in Northern Ireland.' *Irish Political Studies* 21(2), 2006: 137-155 ; Ganiel and Dixon, 'Religion, pragmatic fundamentalism and transformation'. C. Mitchell and J. Todd, 'Between the devil and the deep blue sea. Nationality, power and symbolic trade-offs among evangelical Protestants in Northern Ireland', *Nations and Nationalism*, 13 (4), 2007, 637-655

⁸⁹ From interview by Lorenzo Canas Bottos, discussed in Todd et al, 'Protestant minorities, minority Protestants and the remaking of Protestant identity in Ireland', unpublished manuscript.

⁹⁰ From interview by Nathalie Rougier, discussed in Todd et al, 'Fluid or frozen: choice and change in ethno-national identification in contemporary Northern Ireland', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 12 (3-4) 2006. 323-346. Todd, 'Implementing the Good Friday Agreement: civil society, the state and identity change' in Guy Ben Porat, ed., Guy Ben Porat, ed, *The failure of the middle east peace process. A comparative analysis of peace implementation in Israel/Palestine, Northern Ireland and South Africa*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008 195-218 .

⁹¹ Interviews conducted by Todd and Ruane in Nimes, 2007, still in process of transcription.

⁹² The point is argued strongly by Ganiel in all of her work, see Ganiel and Dixon, 'Religion, pragmatic fundamentalists and conflict transformation', 2008.

⁹³ D. Laitin, *Nations, States and Violence*, Oxford UP, 2007.

⁹⁴ V. Sharma, 'Social Institutions and warfare in Latin Europe'.