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Chapter 2

DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN IRISH CATHOLIC AND PALESTINIAN MUSLIM NATIONAL IDENTITIES AND THE ROLE OF COMMON HISTORIES

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, comparative analysis of the processes behind the social development of Catholic and Muslim nationalist identities in Northern Ireland and the Palestinian territories respectively is undertaken. This is designed to try to enhance levels of understanding about the maintenance and duration of nationalist conflicts and ultimately the likelihood of resolution. Particular attention is placed on the social processes that recreate and reinforce 'common histories' and religio-nationalist identities. Important commonalities are identified including the role of historical memories, religious institutions, education, family members and peers in transmitting messages and images about the 'other' and physical divides that collectively contribute to geographical and social demarcation.

INTRODUCTION

Considerable research has been undertaken into the multifarious religious, historical, economic and political reasons behind the nationalisation of Northern Irish Catholics and Palestinian Muslims. Comparative analysis between the social processes through which their collective identities develop and are internalised have been neglected. This paper seeks to contribute to addressing this neglect by examining the social development of religio-nationalist identities and the interwoven ‘common histories.’ Particular attention is placed upon processes that result in the social development and transmission of historical memories and the roles of religious institutions, schools, family members and peers in connecting with the past, explaining the present and providing solutions for the future. To establish the

significance of history, the paper examines the evolution of the conflicts. There is not the scope to undertake this exploration in depth; instead a brief review of the major developments which have remained instrumental or became repositioned within modern settings is provided. More detailed readings are recommended for any reader wishing to gain a more thorough knowledge. Catholic and Muslim experiences in Northern Ireland and the Palestinian territories respectively, are explored throughout. Important commonalities are identified, including the role of similar socialising agents in transmitting messages and images about the 'other', physical divides that collectively contribute to geographical and social demarcation and the impact of 'legitimising' factors. Yet despite these similarities, the peace process in Northern Ireland has become widely accepted within the province while few are confident that the conflict over the Palestinian territories will be resolved in the foreseeable future. Developing upon the preceding points, the paper concludes by identifying the significant differences in the social development of common identities and feelings of belonging that have been instrumental in these different outcomes.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL IDENTITIES

Without wishing to engage heavily in the primordialist[1] and modernist[2] debate, this section aims to explore the development of Western societies, nationalism and subsequently other nation-states. The modern nation-state is strongly associated with industrial modernisation and the associated processes of technological advancement, growth of commerce, urbanisation, rapid expansion of bureaucracy, the division of labour and increased literacy. Modernists like, Anderson (2006), argue the development of 'print capitalism' was instrumental in 'national consciousness.' However if printed material was to become so influential, it had to be accompanied with growing rates of literacy, which required educational programmes. Through the widespread introduction of schools' curricula and other forms of socialisation, national identity was diffused throughout the designated region (Halliday 2000). Crucially, for modernists, despite the modern nature of national identities, these forms of consciousness share a sense of collective belonging that is connected to the past. The extent to which this past is mythologized is part of the debate within the studies of nationalism, but for the purposes of this chapter the accuracy is secondary. For this study, the primary importance is allocated to the W.I. Thomas (1928) maxim, if people think a situation is real then it is real in its consequences. This study is much more concerned with the processes through which people connect with 'historical memories' rather than their accuracy and extent of selection, reformulation and fabrication. Nevertheless there is considerable evidence to suggest that the events that are described occurred; the precision of the interpretations and their significance maybe somewhat more contested. Across the debate within nationalist studies, it is generally agreed that collective consciousness around a 'nation' was solidified through symbols and narratives with the printed history of the nation which connected the past and present, the living and dead, around discrete parameters. For

[1] Primordialism is most commonly associated with Shils (1957) and Geertz (1963).

[2] Anderson (2006) is the foremost proponent of the modernist approach. A discussion of the academic struggle over the origins of nationalism can be found within (Guibernau 2004, Halliday 2000, Smith 1991, 2003) Vertigans (2008b)

Smith (2003) these interconnections are essential: people's perceptions of the past are instrumental to them understanding the present. If perceptions are to be widely shared and part of a collective consciousness, a common history is required that revolves around memories of battles, poets, heroes and heroines, and very often a 'Golden Age'. This is a period that is considered to consist of culture, religion, moral purpose and knowledge which are drawn upon in the present. For groups encountering oppression or division, these connections to 'historical memories' are crucial and can be noticed in nationalist attempts to generate popular support for independence by emphasising a cultural legacy, national characteristics and associated territory (Dieckhoff 2005).

Because of the strong association between nationalism and Western modernity, there is a tendency to only categorise secular groups as nationalists, even though there are innumerable examples of religious organisations who share common consciousness around the concept of a 'nation' with defined boundaries. Religio nationalist groups are also proficient at connecting with the past with the intended additional benefit of theological justification. For example, militant Islamic groups emphasise the origins of Islam and the activities and rhetoric of Muhammed and the four *caliphs* and their consequences when the religion quickly developed to become the dominant regional power. Contrary to McCrone (1998, discussed below) militants tend to emphasise the primacy of their designated discourse, and to which other loyalties e.g. family, gender, socio-economic, should be subsumed (Vertigans 2008b).

Looked at from this perspective, Catholic and Islamic nationalism or transnationalism discourse associated with 'al-Qa'ida' provides a sense of identity around an 'imagined community' that places emphasis upon shared similarity with others and distinctions from others. By implication, emphasis upon similarities as the basis for collective solidarity excludes the different 'other,' people, groups and 'nations' that do not possess the requisite characteristics. As Mennell (2007: 40) suggests, 'the intellectual and emotional construction of a group's "we-image" and "we-feelings" always takes place in tandem with the construction of a "they-image" about some other group or groups of people, and with the development of feelings about them.' This process is also accompanied by explicit denunciation of the 'other', whether Jews, Protestants, Israelis, Westerners or 'Brits' or even moderate nationalists or Muslims. Yet this behaviour is consistent with and shares similarities to the historical involvement of earlier applications of their discourse within struggles against colonial control.

At this point, it should be emphasised that the national identities are not simply a consequence of the application of history to the present day. On the contrary, nationalism has to connect with contemporary experiences. Consequently collective loyalties that are prominent today within Palestinian and Northern Irish religious and nationalist groups are partly a consequence of recent developments within societies, international relations and processes of globalisation. Socialisation processes, for example through peers and the media, are utilised by groups to try to shift levels of allegiance and belief and often embed the heroes and sacrifices of the 'Golden Age' within contemporary discourse. Nevertheless despite considerable efforts to integrate nationalist loyalties, identities remain diverse. This is not unusual. McCrone (1998: 183) suggests that 'the power of nationalism in the modern world lies in its capacity to reconfigure personal identities and loyalties in a way more in tune with the social, cultural and political realities… .' But this is not to state that nationalism is inevitably the paramount form of identity. Instead McCrone acknowledges that nationalism

may not have priority over multiple identities and other forms of social identity like socio-economic class or gender.

Within both Northern Ireland and the Palestinian territories, and it should be stressed, other parts of the world, people hold a multitude of beliefs and loyalties with different forms of behaviour that can overlap and yet be distinctive. For example, in both regions people belong to a range of collectivities, including religious, ethnic, national, gender and socio-economic. There is, as Todd et al. (2006: 329) remark with regards to Northern Ireland, a complex national identity that incorporates hybridity and fluidity in identification. Some individuals have internalised values that support the use of violence on behalf of a struggle for independence. Examples in the case studies include the republican IRA and INLA and loyalist UVF and UFF in Northern Ireland[3] and to varying degrees, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Fatah in the Palestinian territories.[4] In this sense, members of opposing groups may share views about the justification of violence and willingness to undertaken activities. Others within the same regions have abhorred acts of violence committed, the protagonists argue, on behalf of their community. Yet despite these differences it is being argued that people within the communities share common norms and values that provide them with a collective sense of identity and often part of a broader movement.[5] Such people will also be differentiated through other collective groupings to which they belong and possibly disagree over aspects of group members' identities. Through different forms of communication, shared activities and spatiality, commonalities and feelings of belonging develop and are transmitted across generations that revolve around existing characteristics, namely a combination of religious, ethnic and national loyalties. For the purposes of this study, across Catholics in Northern Ireland and Muslims in the Palestinian territories, there are shared, whether real or imagined, allegiances based upon aspects of religion, ethnicity, nationalism and/or encounters that contribute to feelings about who people are as individuals and groups. Such a collective framework for identification is meaningful to its members, providing reference points that are the basis for distinguishing between people who share these values and 'others' who do not. And the classifications frequently exaggerate both 'flattering' similarities between members and derogatory and distinctive characteristics of 'others'. Barth (1969, 1981) develops the significance of this for ethnic identities, suggesting that messages about identity have to be accepted by both individual and 'significant others'. And on the reverse of this identification,

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[3] Republican groups are defined as those that used violence in order to achieve a united Ireland, loyalists are organisations using violence to prevent a united Ireland and generally to remain part of the United Kingdom.

[4] Both Hamas and Islamic Jihad are associated with militant forms of Islam. Hamas is currently the elected 'governing' party within the territories, although power tends to be concentrated within the Gaza Strip, and has a military wing, the al-Qassam Brigades. Islamic Jihad tends to concentrate upon military activities. The Fatah Party, until recently the dominant party, is more secular, placing greater emphasis upon more secular forms of nationalism (Frisch 2005). Nevertheless the party is associated with the al-Aqsa Brigade which Cunningham (2003) and Saikal (2003) note, utilises Islamic rhetoric and symbols, thereby blurring the religious/secular divide. Further details can be found in Abu-Amr (1994), Esposito (2002), Tamimi (2007) and Vertigans (2008a).

[5] Within the Palestinian territories, the struggle for independence is increasingly associated with Islam, albeit with differing interpretations and practice, often broken down by allegiance to the political parties and groups discussed in footnote 4. In Northern Ireland, there have been two distinct broad, opposing movements. The Unionists generally seek to retain the status of the province as part of the United Kingdom and are overwhelmingly Protestant. Across the spectrum of Unionism, most people do not use violence but the more extreme level would include loyalists. By comparison, nationalists seek a unified Ireland and are predominantly Catholic. Again most people have not used violence but the broader movement includes republicans who share similar goals with different means of attaining them.

Cohen (1986) argues that groups are also categorised by 'outsiders' which contributes to a strengthening of boundaries and inner loyalties and external distancing. Therefore, as will be discussed later, how the group is considered and categorising by the 'other' will impact upon collective identities.

In demarcated territories, mutual identifications, categorisations and reinforcements are quickly apparent within physical and psychological barriers. Within these environments, history, which is always embedded within collective memories, becomes even more significant. As Jenkins (2004: 26) elucidates, 'the past is a particularly important resource upon which to draw in interpreting the here and now and forecasting the future.' In situations where that history is associated with 'grave injustice' narratives reverberate throughout environments. Consequently children have been growing up within these communities, immersed within social relations and activities that are embedded with images, symbols and the narrative of collective identities, highlighting common descent, injustices and value orientations. And the criterion for group membership becomes a form of social constraint, heavily influencing individuals' beliefs and behaviour in both their relations within the group and perceptions and interactions with the 'other'. To behave in a manner in which the 'other' was considered the 'same' would challenge the foundations on which the group was based and, without shifting allegiances, would make continued membership difficult and could, in certain situations, result in punishment. This explanatory and experiential framework becomes the basis for individual and collective identification and the categorisation of the 'other'.

Before the social development of these frameworks within the respective regions is outlined, it is important to discuss the approach to identity formation that is being applied. My starting point is that identity forms through social interaction in processes that are both intentional and unintentional. We may wish for children, employees, students or citizens to be responsible, trustworthy, hard working, humane individuals and instigate methods and institutions that are designed to cultivate people with these characteristics. However beyond extreme instances of isolation and incarceration, socialisation can never be completely controlled and no agent irrespective of the extent of their power and authority can prevent interaction with other socialising agents. As Barth (1969) explains, identities are socially constructed during interaction within and across boundaries that are shared with other identities. Nor can any agent precisely determine the extent to which their messages will be internalised by individuals who will interpret the missives alongside those transmitted by family members, friends, work colleagues and the media. And of course, all these messages will also interact with the individual's existing personality and levels of cognition.

Historical Roots of Palestinian and Irish Catholic Collective Identities

Both nationalist struggles are long-standing and considerable research[6] has been undertaken into contributing economic and political factors. There is not the scope in this

[6] Important texts include, for Northern Ireland, Bishop and Mallie (1988), Bruce (1992), Coogan (1995), Crawford (2003), Cusack and McDonald (1997), English (2003), McDonald and Cusack (2005), Moloney (2002), Taylor (1998 and 2000), Toolis (1995) and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Bregman and Jihan (1998), Cohn-Sherbok and Dawood, (2003), Fraser (2007), Gresh and Vidal (1990), Oren (2002), Said (1994), Smith (2007) and Tessler (1994).

chapter to explore the issues in depth. Instead it is intended to provide enough information about the historical evolution of the conflicts in order to make recent violence and the role of common memories understandable. The analysis commences with Northern Ireland where multiple events have been symbolised, redefined to give meaning to the present, including for nationalists, the plantations, Potato or Great Famine, Bloody Sunday and Hunger Strikes and for unionists, King Billy, the Apprentice Boys and Bloody Friday. In terms of chronology, the struggles in Northern Ireland have the longest historical origins, arguably stemming from the twelfth century when King Henry II of England established control in an area close to Dublin. For the next four centuries, the English sought to impose their rule and by the sixteenth century, this had been achieved over large sections of the island. One area that was not under English control was the northern province of Ulster. To strengthen their dominance over the region, the Plantation of Ulster was introduced in 1609 which encouraged predominantly Protestants from England, Scotland and Wales to migrate. The migrants were attracted by the promise of land with previous Catholic landowners exiled to the mountains or less fertile ground. From this point, the Protestants were competing for limited resources with the indigenous Catholics who were disadvantaged by the implementation of discriminatory penal laws which favoured the migrants (Bishop and Mallie 1988, Coogan 1995). This quickly led to the physical and psychological separation of the two 'communities' which was reinforced by different languages and cultural pastimes. Both sides viewed the 'other' negatively; Catholics, resentful about the loss of their territory, periodically rebelled, while Protestants lived in fear of attack. In 1800 the relationship between Britain and Ireland was formalised in the Act of Union which allocated responsibility for the governing of Ireland to the British Parliament. Despite the ongoing discrimination, most notoriously during the 1840s famine, and early republican groups aiming for independence, including the United Irishmen, the Fenians and Irish Republican Brotherhood, the union remained in place over one hundred years later. Nevertheless it was becoming apparent to the British government that concessions were required in order to quell republicanism. Although these failed to overcome discriminatory practices, Protestants were concerned that their advantages were being threatened and formed their own military groups.

When Home Rule for Ireland was proposed, the island was to be granted its own parliament with the power to govern within the broader British framework, unionist concerns rose dramatically, resulting in the formation of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) to resist the forecasted Irish independence. However with the intervention of the First World War, the UVF enlisted as a division in the British Army and many of their soldiers were killed, especially during the 1916 Battle of the Somme. In the same year, Sinn Féin, at that time a small republican group, led by Padraig Pearse and James Connolly, seized the General Post Office and declared themselves to be the provisional government of the new republic. The Easter Rising, as it became known, was not widely supported, was badly planned and quickly defeated. A number of republicans were killed and some of the leaders including Pearse and Connolly were executed. At the time Pearse predicted that through their willingness to sacrifice themselves for a united Ireland they would be 'remembered by posterity and blessed by unborn generations' (Bishop and Mallie 1988: 26). This was to prove prescient because the rebellion and the British reaction raised levels of awareness about republicanism and support for Sinn Féin increased. And when general elections were held, after the end of the war, the party won an overwhelming majority of seats in the island and abstained from attending Westminster. Seemingly with a popular mandate, an Irish Parliament was

established and a declaration of independence issued. This was rejected by the British and Irish unionists and between 1919 and 1921 the Anglo-Irish war was fought. Ultimately the war ended in a stalemate and a settlement was agreed that in 1922 portioned Ireland into Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State.[7] The former was to consist of six counties in the north east that were part of the county of Ulster which had previously consisted of nine. By selecting six counties where Protestants were a majority, unlike in the excluded areas, Protestant dominance was guaranteed and Britain retained ultimate control. The remaining 26 counties of the island became part of the republic. Initially the division was not universally accepted by nationalists and a civil war ensued between the Irish government military and the Irish Republican Army (IRA). With limited popular support, the IRA lost and became marginalised within Irish politics. Yet the matter of a unified and independent island was not discarded, indeed there was a widespread belief based in part upon the Government of Ireland Act, passed by the British Government, that an Irish parliament for the whole island would be established.

After partition, the demarcation boundaries promptly became embedded and optimism that a united island could be achieved peacefully began to disappear. The geographical division was also instrumental in the fracture of Irish nationalism. Morag (2008) comments on the different impact of being an overwhelming majority having autonomy to create national identity through state institutions in the 'south' and experiences in the 'north' where people were part of a minority subjected to British and Protestant control. Unsurprisingly in these contexts, very different forms of Irish nationalism developed, with militarism increasingly stemming from the northern counties. The IRA sought to connect to the diminished hopes and organised violent campaigns between the 1920s and 1960s. During the 1930s, the struggle with the republican government which had lingered after the civil war, was formally ended and subsequent campaigns concentrated upon British and Northern Irish targets. Throughout this period, the IRA proved ineffective and after the failure of their Border Campaign (1956-62), the group de-militarised and concentrated upon Marxist ideology and discursive consciousness. The lack of popular support for armed conflict should not however be construed as Catholic popular support for the Northern Irish construct. Catholics remained discriminated against across political representation, employment, housing and human rights. In order to address the rising Catholic protests, which connected into growing awareness of ethnic and egalitarian tensions in other parts of the world, a number of concessions were made by the Northern Ireland government (Bruce 1992, Coogan 1995). Overall, the concessions were part of an approach that had raised Catholic hopes that were not fulfilled, described by Moloney (2002: 53) as 'cosmetic, patronizing, and at times insulting'. Feeling that electoral politicians were not going to deliver structural reforms, many Catholics chose to participate within the burgeoning civil demonstrations that were to become incorporated within the civil rights movement led by the Northern Irish Civil Rights Association. Conversely, Unionists were fearful about the implications both of the concessions and the mobilisation within NICRA which largely attracted Catholic support despite many Protestants sharing similar experiences. The association of NICRA with sectarianism[8] resulted in confrontation between the demonstrators, the Royal Ulster

[7] The Free State was nominally a part of the British Empire until 1949 when it became a Republic.

[8] Contrary to this popular perception, the movement only campaigned on civil rights issues (Disturbance in Northern Ireland).

Constabulary and protesting unionists. Rallies became scenes of violence between the competing groups and spiralled to rioting, intimidation, firebombing and house burning, often engaging children (Cairns 1987). Attacks were particularly venomous in mixed residential areas where the minority group, both Catholic and Protestant, were forced to leave, creating thousands of refugees who relocated to their 'own' communities for security and lack of other alternatives. These experiences were to contribute to the radicalisation of the respective communities, and recruitment to the emerging paramilitary groups increased rapidly (Fairweather et al. 1984, MacDonald 1991, Taylor 1998, 2000).

Levels of violence escalated in part due to developments catching the British government by surprise; a problem that was magnified by the lack of attention that had been placed upon the province. Subsequently this meant that there was inadequate understanding about the nature of the problems and a range of ill-advised policies was introduced that further inflamed the troubles. When British troops were deployed to assist the RUC who were failing to control the violence, it has been well documented that Catholics were supportive, considering the army an important means to achieving peace. This perception was influenced by the relative weakness of the IRA who struggled to react following their disarmament in 1962. Following an internal disagreement over the use of violence, the organisation split into two groups, the Official IRA who wanted to concentrate upon democratic solutions and the Provisional IRA "the Provos" who argued that the armed struggle must be allocated prominence. As the Provos became dominant and the British army was increasingly considered to be invasive and pro-Unionist, feelings changed. Now the Provos were becoming embedded within communities, patrolling streets, leading Martin Meehan, an IRA leader, to declare that the role in defending Catholic areas legitimised the paramilitaries,[9] because 'the whole broad spectrum of nationalist people actually supported what the IRA were doing.'[10] The extent to which the whole community supported the paramilitaries is somewhat contestable. Nevertheless there does appear to be a widespread belief that neither the police nor the army could be relied upon to protect Catholics against loyalist attacks. Therefore the IRA rose in prominence to become viewed as defenders of the community. By comparison, the British military were considered to be part of the problem, unfairly imposing unjust restraints; an obstacle to a united Ireland.

Republican and loyalists sectarian emphasis upon the requirement for defence unsurprisingly contributed to a strengthening of community unity and collective effervescence in the face of fear, threats and attack, arguably in the name of communal protection. At the same time that people like Brendan Hughes were joining the IRA because 'we had to do something to protect ourselves with … I wanted to be involved too because our whole community felt that we were under attack,'[11] opposing loyalist paramilitaries like William Smith 'believed that if loyalists did not take on that [proactive] role, then eventually the Provos would have their way because the British government would just bow to the pressure.'[12] Thus a vicious circle emerged of attack and retaliation where loyalists felt threatened by the rising numbers of, and activities by, Republican paramilitaries and felt

[9] In Northern Ireland, members of the armed groups were called, although by no means universally, 'paramilitaries'. This term is used throughout while acknowledging that for many people, these are 'terrorists'.

[10] Meehan is quoted in Taylor (1998: 74).

[11] Hughes is quoted in Taylor (1998:53).

unable to trust the British army and government which led to more people joining loyalist groups. Concomitantly increasing actions by, and support for, loyalist groups and a deepening distrust and hatred of the British army, contributed to growing recruitment to the IRA. Levels of support grew still further after ‘Bloody Sunday’ when the British Parachute Regiment shot dead 13 civilians in January 1972. This event became hugely symbolic, with many joining the republicans in the emotive aftermath (Bishop and Mallie 1988, Coogan 1995, Moloney 2002, Taylor 1998). Later that year, the IRA killed nine people in a serious of explosions on what became known as ‘Bloody Friday’ and was equally influential in the mobilisation of recruits to loyalist groups (Crawford 2003, Cusack and McDonald 1997, Dillon 2004 and McDonald and Cusack 2005). Within this environment, retaliation became the tactic of both sides, although it was not always apparent who had committed the initial attack.

The escalation of violence obviously impacted upon communities and feelings of conflict fatigue became notable. Some among the IRA leadership began to question the effectiveness of the violent campaign and called a truce. During this period, republicans began to negotiate with the British government while the loyalists fearing British concessions continued with their campaign. However the peace talks failed to achieve progress and from 1976 the republicans re-introduced the campaign of violence. 1976 was also notable because of the removal of the ‘special status’ category of paramilitary prisoners in order to criminalise rather than politicise. Over the longer term, the policy was to be instrumental in the formulation of a new type of republican politics which became prominent during, and particularly in the aftermath of, the Hunger Strikes. Following the changed status, attention shifted away from military operations to the prisons. Republican prisoners imprisoned after the policy had been introduced, rejected the criminalised status and initially refused to wear prison clothes. Instead the prisoners clothed themselves in blankets, a practice that became known as living ‘on the blanket’. The campaign became extended into the ‘dirty protest’ when republicans prisoners refused to wash and smeared excrement on the walls of their cells. Considerable media and public attention was attracted by these actions which were to gradually diminish. After four years it was decided that a new approach was required and the hunger strikes were introduced. The first strike commenced in 1980 and although it was driven by secular demands, the symbolism of sacrifice and fasting connected with, and interwove, republican and Catholic history (Coulter 1999, Fairweather et al. 1984 and McKeown 2001). On believing that the British government would be making necessary concessions the strike was ended without loss of life. However the concessions failed to materialise and a second fast began in 1981 led by Bobby Sands. Shortly after he first refused food, Frank Maguire, the nationalist MP for Fermanagh-South Tyrone died and there was considerable debate within the republican movement over contesting the vacant seat. Eventually it was agreed to nominate Bobby Sands and to campaign on the prisoners’ demands. Sands was duly elected and his victory, alongside the symbolism and sacrifice of the hunger strike, reignited nationalism. In total ten men died in the hunger strike commencing with Sands. His death attracted massive media attention and his funeral was attended by tens of thousands of mourners. However the strike’s impact diminished with each death and when nationalist support for them decreased and some families authorised medical attention, in October 1981,

[12] Smith is quoted in Taylor (2000: 79).

they were stopped. The prisoners' demands had not been met[13] but by this stage the significance of the strike went way beyond prison boundaries. Impressed by the strikers' dedication and sacrifice, support for the republican movement was energised and many new recruits joined the IRA and INLA (Irish National Liberation Army who were also represented in the strike). In addition to the mobilising of armed members, the strike was also instrumental in the politicisation of the nationalist struggle and the twin track approach of 'armalite and ballot box'. Finally global media coverage was instrumental in internationalising the conflict, arousing awareness and support, especially among Irish Catholic Americans, and increasing criticism of the British approach.

Conversely the roots of peace were firmly planted at this time, although few would have confidently declared this. During the strike, support for loyalist groups had also risen with new members and former paramilitaries rejoining. As Billy Giles, a UVF member, stated, 'Protestants were fearful of what was going to happen… . They feared there was going to be an uprising and they were all going to be slaughtered … . Many of us who had left, came back.' The opposing paramilitaries continued to engage in their perceived retaliatory actions and the IRA pursued attacks against British targets, including most notoriously in 1984 blowing up the Brighton hotel where the governing Conservative Party were staying. Nevertheless, over time the seemingly endless cycle of violence and lack of any obvious progress contributed to feelings of conflict fatigue. This had a particular impact upon the republicans who were facing more concerted loyalist attacks and effective counter-terror tactics by the British army. Consequently when the Enniskillen bomb detonated prematurely killing civilians and causing widespread Protestant and Catholic anger, the republicans' position had been significantly weakened and they could not rely on uncritical community support for the continuation of the violent struggle. And with the British government also encountering public opposition and a desire to end the conflict, peace talks commenced, initially clandestinely and then openly culminating in the Good Friday Agreement (Taylor 1998). Despite stalemates, tortuously slow progress at times and continuing paramilitary activities, the peace has largely held.

Disputes between Palestinian Muslim, Christian[14] and Jews became prominent in the aftermath of the First World War. Prior to this time period, as Mansfield (1978) points out, the region was not a geographical or political entity with defined borders. Yet before the region became immersed in local, national and international tensions, relations between Arab Muslims, Christians and Jews had been relatively harmonious. Neither religion nor nationalism were prominent sources of conflict, with different religious denominations sharing common identification with a sense of 'Arabness'. However through integrated processes, tensions and national and religio ethnic identities emerged, solidified and became embedded over the first half of the twentieth century and have not improved since.

Demographic data for the period is lacking and studies have tended to rely upon estimates. Before 1914, there was calculated to be 600,000 Arab Muslims and Christians and 60,000 Jews. With the formation of the Zionist movement, led by Theodor Herzl, in the late nineteenth century, the demand for a home in the 'Land of Zion' became pronounced,

[13] Gradually and covertly paramilitary prisoners were subsequently granted special privileges that may have satisfied the hunger strikers.

[14] In 2006 there was an estimated 205,000 Palestinian Arab Christians (CIAa and b) or approximately five percent of the population, overwhelmingly concentrated in the West Bank. This paper focuses upon Palestinian Muslims.

although disputed within Judaism. Zionist activities became more noticeable, with Jewish businessmen spending millions of dollars in purchasing land and property, often from Arab and Turkish absentee landlords (Armstrong 2004) and developing communities. Relations between Arabs and Jews deteriorated. At this time, the region was governed by the Ottoman Empire who fought unsuccessfully alongside Germany and Austria-Hungary in the First World War. During the war, the victorious allies put forward three contradictory proposals in the event of the Ottomans being defeated and losing this territory:

1. The 1916 Syke-Picot agreement that was to dismember the Ottoman land. Part of Palestine was to be controlled by the British with the remainder controlled by a joint Allied government;
2. In order to attract Arab support in the war, Britain agreed to support Arab demands for independence;
3. Finally, the 1917 Balfour Declaration introduced the establishment of a 'Jewish national homeland in Palestine' with British backing.

At the end of the war, Britain gained a mandate over Palestine and the wider area, Transjordan, which was to gain independence as Jordan.

In 1918, a British census calculated that there were 700,000 Muslims and 56,000 Jews. Jewish immigration rose and by 1931 stood at 175,000 and surged during the 1930s, partly in reaction to developments in Germany and rising levels of anti-semiticism[15] Gradually reciprocal suspicion and fear of the two increasingly distinctive communities rose and the scale of violence escalated throughout the 1930s and 1940s. To try and resolve the conflict and address humanitarian and moral concerns that arose following the defeat of Germany in the Second World War, a resolution was passed by the United Nations to divide Palestine into two nation-states; Arab and Israeli. The former rejected the proposal which was accepted by the latter and in 1948 an independent state of Israel was declared and the British withdrew. Neighbouring Arab nations, Egypt, Jordan and Syria, under the pretext of saving the Palestinians[16], fought the first war with Israel and lost in 1949. Israel's victory led to an increase in Israeli territory and the end of the proposed Palestinian state with the remaining territory becoming the responsibility of Egypt and Jordan. At this point, 716, 678 Jews lived in what had become Israel compared to 1.3 million Muslims and Christians who lived within the previous Palestinian boundaries of whom over 700,000 were now refugees.[17]

The extent of the Jewish migration is highlighted by Behar (2007) who reports that over 90 per cent of Jews living in Israel at this time were of European origin. And in an interesting comparison, Behar observes that Jews who were living in the Middle East did not have similar experiences to recent European co-religion migrants, like racism, xenophobia and pogroms. In addition, European Zionism was formulated on Eurocentric principles that did not engage with non European Jews. Consequently and somewhat ironically there was a much less developed sense of a national Jewish consciousness in the region that became Israel. Cross cutting loyalties could also be noticed within the majority of 'Arabized-Jews' who lived in other parts of the Middle East, and continued to do so after 1948, although by this

[15] Figures provided in Mansfield (1978).

[16] Although there are clear indications that the Arab forces had their own designs on the land.

[17] Reported in Behar (2007).

stage, Arab nationalism was becoming consolidated and embedded with anti-Jewish sentiments.

Following the loss of land and the absorption of the remaining territory, Palestinians initially believed that the international community would be mobilised by the magnitude of the perceived injustice they had encountered. Onus was therefore placed upon other nation-states and agencies rectifying 'the Catastrophe' and restoring the territory and properties to the Palestinians. Additionally expectations were high that the Arab nation-states could resolve the problem, partly of their making, either through military conflict or diplomacy. These hopes were closely intertwined with the increasingly popular Arab nationalism during the 1950s and 1960s. In some respects the restoration of 'Palestine' was subsumed within the broader framework for a unified Arab nation, to be led by the Egyptian leader, Gamal Abdel Nasser. However neither the international community nor Arab governments provided solutions that were acceptable to the Palestinians. Gradually, Palestinians decided that independence could only be achieved by the actions of Palestinians, a process that arguably formally commenced with the formation of Fatah in 1959 and whose founders, including Yasser Arafat, were to subsequently be instrumental in the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) (Abdallah 2003, Halliday 2002, Saikal 2003). Towards the end of the 1960s the shift in allegiance accelerated through growing dissatisfaction with secular nationalism that stemmed predominantly from the 1967 defeat by Israel of Arab forces from Egypt, Jordan and Syria. At the end of the war, Israel occupied the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, Gaza and the West Bank, with the latter two areas overwhelmingly occupied by Palestinians and considered part of the Palestinian nation-state in the 1947 intended demarcation. Following Israel's victory, the United Nations passed a resolution calling for peace and the withdrawal of Israel from the land won in the war. Subsequently however prospects for peace, except for a period of optimism in the 1990s have been limited, and influenced by increasingly religious and nationalist political groups, Israel commenced its settlement policy[18] which resulted in property being built for Jews on the disputed territory in Gaza and the West Bank. Confidence in outside forces was further diminished following the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in 1979 which undermined broader Arab unity on occupied territories.

Perhaps surprisingly, as Tamimi (2007) observes, in the decade after Israel assumed responsibility for the now disputed Palestinian territory, in socio-economic terms, the Palestinian's position, especially in Gaza, improved. Border controls were relatively lax, there were considerable higher paid employment opportunities in Israel and communications and transportation between the two separate Palestinian areas improved. Gradually however through interrelated developments like the introduction of the settlement policy, increased influence of the religio, right-wing in Israeli politics, rising Palestinian radicalism, most noticeable in terror groups like the PFLP, more invasive and restrictive controls and rising community surveillance, tensions became increasingly noticeable.

Since 1967, there have been numerous attempts to attain peace, with the closest following the 1993 Oslo Peace Process. This agreement outlined that in return for the Palestinians recognising Israel as a nation-state, there would be a phased Israeli withdrawal from the territories. The most difficult issues, namely the creation of a Palestinian nation-state, the Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, the rights of refugees, the status of Jerusalem

[18] The policy was not formally announced until 1977.

and the distribution of water were to be resolved during a five year interim period. Despite the principles being widely supported by most Palestinians (Oliver and Steinberg 2005, Tamimi 2007) militant groups continued to attack Jewish targets. Simultaneously Jewish radicals were also mobilised by the 'threat of peace' and attacked Muslims[19] and ultimately the Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, who had been instrumental in the process. The death of Rabin, against a backdrop of rising tensions and volatility on both sides was in many ways the end of the peace process. Subsequent Israeli leaders, Binyamin Netanyahu and Ehud Barak, met with Arafat under American-sponsored talks, but none of these leaders possessed the necessary political support to be able to address the outstanding difficult issues that were now becoming exacerbated by increased violence by Palestinian groups and the Israeli army and ongoing settlement building. Palestinian frustrations were to be more broadly translated into anger and militancy following the controversial visit by Ariel Sharon to the extremely sensitive al-Aqsa/Temple Mount complex, prior to his election as Israeli Prime Minister. Mass demonstrations followed and quickly escalated to the al-Aqsa *intifada*. Unlike the first *intifada* (1987-1993), which was initially a civilian uprising, the second *intifada* was dominated by militants. Violence and not diplomacy became the main method of communication with militants undertaking terror attacks, most prominently suicide bombs and Israel adopting a more militaristic approach and aggressive role for their armed forces. At the time of writing, the latest peace proposal, the 'road map' which provided a timetable for negotiation has been driven off the tracks and a stalemate ensues. The Israeli 'wall' built inside the West Bank for 'security purposes' is arguably proving successful in terms of limiting the number of suicide attacks. However the 'wall' is hugely controversial, not least as further Palestinian land has been claimed by Israel, local populations have been greatly inconvenienced and there is a suspicion that the barrier is part of a longer term strategy to demarcate the West Bank. With conditions deteriorating inside the territories, anger and resentment remain prominent, but with less opportunities to target Israel within the 'asymmetrical war', loose allegiances that had formed around national consciousness are fracturing as traditional divides between Gaza and the West Bank, city dwellers, refugees and rural areas re-emerge. In the political arena, this is most noticeable in the violent disputes between Hamas and Fatah supporters and has contributed to a further undermining of national unity with neither group possessing sufficiently broad support in order to address the obstacles to peace.

RELIGION IN THE TERRITORIES

Religion within the Catholic and Muslim communities has become integral to their ethnic nationalism, a main determiner of status and loyalties and dividing factor from the 'other.' Both Islam and Catholicism have been able to evoke senses of the sacred and provide explanations, frameworks of meaning and theological justification for actions. Religious symbols, rituals, doctrinal teachings and organisations are instrumental in processes of ethnic identification. Similarly the prevalence of religion impacts upon the identity formations of Catholics and Muslims and their senses of collective belonging to the Palestinian or Irish

[19] Prior to the death of Rabin, the most notable attack was undertaken by Baruch Goldstein who killed 29 Muslim worshippers in 1994.

"nation". For the Catholics, since reformation religious denomination has been interwoven with Irish ethnicity as the main source of demarcation and basis for national identity. For the Palestinians emphasis was also placed upon Arab ethnic identity which has gradually diminished through greater religiosity which is increasingly bound with Palestinian nationalism. In these instances both Sunni[20] Islam and Catholic Christianity and the struggles for independence can be described collectively as forms of 'religio-nationalism'. The religious and ethnic values interconnected within this form of nationalism become, to varying degrees, integral components of supporters and activists' identities, helping to shape their beliefs and behaviour (Vertigans 2008a).

As in other parts of Western Europe, sectarianism in Ireland became an integral part of the society following the Reformation but unlike other regions, 'the specific conditions of political and religious movements… resulted in ingrained communal divisions, where the lines of religious division ran almost parallel to political divisions' (Morrow 1995: 153). By the nineteenth century, political divisions had been consolidated according to religious loyalties and today people are inclined to classify themselves according to religious denomination. Even older children and young adults, whose formative years have largely been more peaceful than other generations over the last 35 years, continue to overwhelmingly identify with being either 'Catholic' or 'Protestant' and around 80 per cent believe that religion will always impact upon how people in Northern Ireland consider each other (Young Life and Times Survey 2004, 2005).

The influence of religion differs within the Catholic and Muslim communities. Catholicism has been a main source of collective identification in Northern Ireland, holding a symbolic role within the 'Troubles' as they are euphemistically called. Arguably the influence of religion upon identities, operating outside the interwoven relationship with nationalism and, impacting upon moral behaviour and political influence, has diminished as part of broader processes of secularisation and the secular nature of Northern Irish society. Yet a close relationship between religion and culture remains and Protestants continue to associate acts of violence by republicans and nationalist symbols with Catholicism whilst Catholics will make similar associations with loyalist attacks and unionist marches (Murray 1995). By comparison, Islam within the Palestinian territories has become more prominent, grounded within versions of history and growing in significance across religious, cultural, economic, legal and political spheres. Religious behaviour and support for political Islam has grown markedly since the 1980s. Today both Hamas, the leading religious organisation, governing party and, widely considered outside the territories, 'terrorist' group, and the more secular Fatah Party, utilise Islam to arouse nationalist support and justify actions.

Contrary to popular perceptions of the region as being one dominated by religious allegiance, arguably religion did not become politicised until the aftermath of Israel's victory in the 1967 war. Within Israel and the Jewish diaspora, many Jews considered the victory to be a sign from God of support for their endeavours and the captured territory, particularly the West Bank, was considered to be part of the biblical Land of Israel. Consequently the success of the secular military became interwoven with historical territory and the 'Golden Age' of Judaism, resulting in the strengthening of religious and nationalist ties. At a pragmatic level, Jews were relocated to the occupied land as part of the settlement programme. In the West Bank, settlements attained significance for political, economic and religious factors. The

[20] The overwhelming majority of Palestinian Muslims belong to the Sunni denomination.

association with the Land of Israel has become embedded within perceptions of the territory, particularly amongst the ultra nationalist parties, making discussions about the withdrawal or deconstruction of the settlements hugely emotive. Within the Knesset there is neither the inclination nor authority to challenge this association and withdrawal looks extremely unlikely for the foreseeable future.

For Muslims in the region, the war was also viewed through the prism of religion with very different conclusions drawn. Instead of their actions and political developments being considered to be legitimised by God, for many Muslims the defeat was the opposite: namely, that the humiliating loss proved the moral bankruptcy and inappropriateness of secular Arab nationalism, which was epitomised by the defeated Egyptian leader, Gamal Abdel Nasser. Contrary to the Jewish response, Muslims therefore considered the defeat to be the outcome of the weakness of Islam across Arab societies and concomitant attempts to modernise based upon Western models. The solution was therefore to be found with greater piety and integration of religion within the nation-state and civil society. Thus the 1967 war was to legitimise both Judaism and Islam.

The widespread political shift to greater religiosity was not immediate. Secular structures remained, and largely remain, in place. Policies that were predominantly secular in intention continued to be implemented by Israeli governments and Palestinian movements. For the latter, defeat did not initially result in the same degree of mobilisation of religious sentiments that occurred in neighbouring parts of the Arab Middle East. This is in part because prior to the war, the primary representative of the Palestinians was the secular Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO). The PLO had been established by the Arab League in 1964 and was dominated by ‘Arabs’. After the 1967 war, younger Palestinians gained control and shifted the emphasis from the now discredited Arab to Palestinian nationalism. Even allowing for this, within these ‘secular’ groups and Israel, greater reliance was placed upon their respective religions to justify actions and to denounce the ‘other.’ This political utilisation of the religions connected into, and enhanced, rising levels of religiosity amongst the respective populations.

During the period of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation’s (PLO) secular dominance, religious norms, values and practices continued to form the basis for many aspects of personal life and identities. By comparison, towards the latter stages of Yasser Arafat’s leadership (1969–2004), secular nationalism associated with Fatah and the then Palestinian Authority (PA) was undermined by a multitude of factors that included the failure of the peace process, and association with corruption, human rights’ violations, bureaucratic ineptitude and failing public services.[21] The extension of religion from individual consciousness to political identification happened as people became disillusioned both with the PA’s policies and more broadly Arab nationalism. For the first time the conflict with Israel became Islamicised. Today, Hamas is the leading political party in the territories and Islam is central to individual, social and political behaviour. Within militant groups and government justifications of military actions or attempts at recruitment, religion and politics are entwined. Abu-Surur, a leading figure within Hamas, provides a good example of this interrelationship when outlining how Palestinians should ‘make our blood cheap for the sake of Allah and out of love for this homeland… in order that Palestine remains Islamic, and be liberated.’[22] People

[21] A more detailed discussion of these points can be found in Abu-Amr (1994), Reuter (2004).

[22] Abu-Suror is quoted in Oliver and Steinberg (2005).

are encouraged to die altruistically for religion and the homeland and egotistically for salvation (Pedahzur et al. 2003, Sutton and Vertigans 2005). And this use of religion to mobilise support and justify violence is not restricted to Islamic militant groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad. For example, Frisch (2005: 398) notes how the main secular party within the Palestinian Authority, Fatah, 'uses religious belief and emotion as a mobilizing tool on behalf of Palestinian nationalist goals… Fatah recognizes the significance of Islam as an important component of the collective identity and culture of Palestinians.' The party is also linked to the al-Aqsa Brigade militant group that emerged during the second intifada. Despite these secular links, the group also utilises Islamic rhetoric and symbols as the basis for resistance (Saikal 2003) and as Cunningham (2003) notes the lines between secularists and Islamists have become blurred.

By comparison Catholicism has been integral within Irish nationalism since the earlier stages of the conflict and the manner in which religious denomination was used to distinguish ethnicity and privilege. Both Catholic and the rival Unionist nationalisms have, as MacLaughlin (2001) has argued, provided real meaning for many 'ordinary people', informing attitudes towards identity, community and work. Kelly and Sinclair (2003) suggest that religious identity provides a strong basis for community or political affiliation. Religion is immersed within versions of Irish history, nationalist discourse and sacramental references with symbols noticeable within loyalist and republican rhetoric and murals. And in one of the most influential events of the Troubles, the republican prisoners' hunger strikes, while ostensibly for secular demands, utilised the symbolism of sacrifice and fasting within nationalist history and Catholicism to enhance support and levels of legitimacy (McKeown 2001, Fairweather et al 1984, O'Malley 1990).

The ongoing impact of religion within Northern Ireland is noticeable within studies of rates for church attendance which is considerably higher than in other parts of the UK.[23] But as Coulter (1999) points out the conflict is not primarily a Holy War as is widely perceived outside Northern Ireland. This is supported by research (Fairweather et al 1984, Toolis 1995, Mitchell 2006) into the perceptions of Protestants and Catholics who report making and remaining friends with the other denomination and stress that the conflict is political and economic and not religious. However as Coulter remarks, the involvement of religion should not be understated. While religion is not the cause of the troubles, 'it has exercised a palpable influence. Religious belief and practice within the six counties have served to promote those secular identities and disputes that form the basis of the "Northern Ireland problem"' (Coulter 1999: 58). And both Catholic and Protestant nationalisms, and the history on which they are based, have utilised religion to provide legitimacy for sectarianism and the reinforcement of nationalist loyalties.

In summary, therefore as McLaughlin et al. (2006: 599) remark with regards to the Northern Irish conflict but which also applies to Palestinian Muslim communal identities, religion acts as 'a socially determined boundary. However religion is only one dimension of the conflict.' The remainder of this chapter concentrates on the other dimensions.

[23] A SOL survey (2002) identified that 67 per cent of Catholics attend religious services at least once per week compared to 39 per cent of Protestants. The figures for daily prayer were 58 per cent and 41 per cent respectively.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Within working class divided communities in Northern Ireland, the influence of unionist and nationalist groups is immediately apparent. For many children and young adults these communities are where their encounters occur and levels of knowledge about events and other groups with whom they have at best limited contact internalised. Strong networks of inter generations and extended families in areas consolidated by perceived threats of attack add to peoples' attachment and sense of identity embedded within the locality (Connolly and Healy 2004). Spatially, within these communities, opposing British and Irish flags are prominent, streets are decorated in red, white and blue or green, orange and white and murals decorating house gable end walls depict slogans and scenes of mythology, martyrdom, heroes and victory and demonise the 'other' (Dillon 2004, Rolston 1991). Graffiti is also prominent in the Palestinian territories. Particular groups and actions are promoted and rivals, Jews, Israel and the United States denounced (Abu-Amr 1994, Oliver and Steinberg 2005). Violent deaths have become part of common experiences, graphically represented within local cultures that are permeated with the concept of martyrdom. Across the Palestinian territories, suicide bombers posthumously become heroes and heroines, commencing with a public funeral. On walls and lampposts, 'martyr of the month' calendars and pocket sized cards showing images of martyrs are prominent and individuals immortalised within pre attack visually recorded 'living wills' and children's chanting. These rituals of communal affirmation are designed to translate into collective effervescence, to develop and reaffirm collective identifications based both upon the heroism and sacrifice of 'our' heroes' and the brutality and injustices of the 'other'. Such symbolism is therefore strengthening identification with the 'we' community and distance from the 'other'.

There are numerous social consequences to these developments within communities. Over time, ways of thinking and behaving about 'our' communities and the 'other' has become routinised, permeating the local culture and is a major influence upon formative development. There is particular concern over the extent these influences affect the development of children's identity and the challenges this causes to contemporary perceptions of childhood. As Cairns (1987), Connolly and Healy (2004) and Fraser (1974) have shown, these processes have had a significant impact upon both Protestant and Catholic working class children. These children possess negative attitudes and prejudices towards the 'other' and play games depicting localised violence. In the past they frequently progressed to undertaking the activities for real as they become older. Lanclos (2003) notes how children's play provides training that is often applied immediately or in the near future within the environment. Crucially internalisation commences very early in the child's life. Children aged between three and four were discovered by Connolly and Healy (2004: 63) to recognise 'certain cultural events and symbols associated with their own community and are internalising preferences towards these.' The impact of the environments continued throughout childhood resulting in children, particularly boys, identifying strongly with particular paramilitary groups. For these children segregation determined by sectarian categories was considered to be inevitable. And although the children were exposed to new information and encounters and gained greater awareness of historical events and political issues and ideologies as they matured, these tended to be interpreted 'in a way that tends to confirm and explain their existing experiences' (Connolly and Healy 2004: 64).

The socialisation processes of children in the Palestinian territories also develop and reinforce social divisions, demarcations that are arguably even more firmly rooted and rigid than their Northern Irish peers. There are a number of reasons for this. Many children become involved in youth groups associated with militant groups, are playing *Intifada*, fantasizing over their deaths and becoming martyrs. Children are growing up with the constant fear of attack, sharing the sense of incapacitation, with disrupted education and limited career prospects. These conditions result in many children developing post-traumatic stress disorder which can cause severe emotional problems and lead to neuroticism, high risk taking and low self-esteem (Elsarraj 1997, Moughrabi, Post *et al* 2003, Victor 2004). It is also worth noting that important formative stages of today's younger adults occurred when they were children of the first *Intifada* with many participating in stone throwing and demonstrations. Within these environments violence has been normalised. Relationships with Israelis are dominated by perceptions of the conflict with little or no opportunity for Palestinians in the territories to meet Israeli citizens which would help breakdown the stereotypes and ignorance that exist between the two populations.

PHYSICAL DIVISIONS AND BEYOND

Across the two regions, demarcations exist within rural areas, towns and cities, as mentioned above, that create physical separation between communities and contribute to the ethnic religious processes of identification being applied to specific geographic milieu. Spatial divisions of the populations can also be found within particular regions and sub regions reducing opportunities for everyday social contact. Within Northern Ireland, the religious denominations are concentrated in particular areas, with Catholics being based in parts of Belfast and western parts of the province, and Protestants tending to be located within other areas of Belfast and Antrim, Down and Armagh in the eastern part of the province. Perhaps surprisingly, the physical separation has not reduced markedly since the cessation of violence, exemplified by the existence in 2004 of 26 barriers, 'peace walls.' The barriers are designed to physically divide the two populations with most of the walls being erected after the Good Friday Agreement (McDonald and Cusack 2005). Demarcation is not restricted to geography. On the contrary it continues to extent into childhood friendships and later relationships with the overwhelming majority of marriages in the province being endogamous. Within sporting activities, the denominations tend to engage in different sports, with Catholics associated with Gaelic games and Protestants with cricket, rugby and hockey which are closely connected to British traditions. There are some sports in which both populations participate. Football is the most popular but is riddled with sectarianism with teams divided according to community loyalties and intense rivalry often spilling over into violence that involves not only opposing teams but supporters (Coulter 1999).

Within the Palestinian territories, social relationships between Muslims and Jews are severely restricted, dominated by military/militia or military/civilian interactions with little or no mechanisms for social or cultural interaction. The physical divisions have been rigorously applied across the territories with Jerusalem split according to religious denomination and Jewish settlements heavily fortified. In the Palestinian territories, the restricted mobility across socio-economic categories and heavily concentrated populations means that the middle

classes are also closely integrated within the conflict; a point reflected by the high proportion of well educated people who become suicide bombers. And following the collapse of the peace process, the onset of the second *Intifada* in 2000, construction of what is variously called the "separation barrier," "security fence" or "apartheid wall" within the West Bank by the Israeli government, and concomitant collapse of economic interaction and employment opportunities, mutual contact points between Palestinians and Jews in the territories have further receded. For all the communities involved in both territories, this physical separation has contributed to greater ignorance, 'suspicion, fear and ultimately the potential for sectarian violence' (Murray 1995: 219). After violence became commonplace, siege mentality formed within the communities and created a further rigid division to overcome.

TRANSMITTING RELIGIO-NATIONALISM

Across the respective communities, people have internalised religio-nationalist values and beliefs in conditions that place considerable emphasis upon communal identities and loyalties. With limited geographical mobility, particularly for the poorly educated, peoples' social networks tend to be restricted to their area and consist of religious institutions and family and friends who share similar experiences and life chances. The intensity of these localised networks contributes to the development of strong attachments both to the areas and social relations and conversely maintains de-attachment from the 'other' across generations. The longevity tends to contribute to its legitimacy becoming part of local customs and integral to social identity that emphasises inner group similarity and outer difference. Religion is the most immediate source both of unity and division and is taught most explicitly through religious institutions.

Within the Palestinian territories, the physical landscape is dominated by mosques and associated buildings. After generations of diminishing authority, these religious institutions have an increasingly important socialising role. These buildings, like churches, are meeting places for cultural, political and religious purposes and are integral parts of the social and community infrastructure. Within mosques, collective memories and myths are shared with many *imams* undertaking socialisation, lambasting the West and Israel and advocating the fight for Islam. Hamas and Islamic Jihad both have arrangements in place to recruit members at religious institutions (Burdman 2003). It should however be stressed that many *imams* are not militants and oppose acts of violence. Mosques more generally also have an important role to play within the broad spectrum of religiosity with worship and religious festivals generating bonds of solidarity and symbolism across the territories. They are also environments in which people meet and socialise within an atmosphere of religiosity. Both militant and moderate preachers are therefore contributing to greater range and depth of religiosity within the territories.

Involvement by religious leaders and preachers within the Catholic clergy is by comparison more ambivalent. Protestant unionists[24] tend to consider that 'the Roman Catholic Church…dominates Irish politics and social life,' (Davis 1994: 118). Yet republicans have largely viewed the same institution to be antagonistic to the cause since the nineteenth century

[24] The most vitriolic and consistent critic of Catholic clergy has been Ian Paisley. Perhaps most notoriously, in 1972 he claimed that the Roman church was 'drunk with martyrs' blood' (quoted in Davis 1994: 132).

(Davis 1994, Morrow 1995). These differing perspectives highlight the dilemmas that the Roman Catholic hierarchy face within Northern Ireland. Davis (1994) suggests the clergy's engagement with national governments and the nationalist community restricts their options and they cannot be seen to either defend the union with Britain or support a united Ireland. And when exploring the past, ambiguities can be noticed. When under British control, at one level, there was intense pride in the achievements of Catholicism. Nevertheless as Fitzpatrick (1988) remarks, this did not result in inevitable support for nationalism. At a senior level the bishops tended to be extremely conservative and were more concerned about secular nationalism than they were about British governance. Yet contrary to opinions within loyalism and republicanism, employees of the Catholic Church have not responded homogenously to the Troubles. For example, republicanism has been endorsed by some priests. Overall though, sentiments tend to reflect the difficult balancing of opposing interests and criticism has been directed across this spectrum at Republican, loyalist and British army acts of violence,[25] particularly from cardinals, bishops and on occasion Pope John Paul II.

Conversely the Church of Ireland has contributed to the maintenance of sectarianism despite this lack of active support for republicanism and to a lesser extent nationalism. The church's functions, processions and celebrations have tended to be embedded within symbols and procedures, emphasising common religious identities within gatherings, and by extension in Northern Ireland, nationalist. Symbolically Catholicism in Northern Ireland is also strongly associated with dying and mourning processes which are again designed to solidify community ties and loyalties. When the cause of death is violent attack by a member of the 'other' the church becomes integral to the process of mourning, bringing together people under the auspices of God to remember and mourn. And against a conflict and emotive backdrop, through services and collective gatherings, both fear and hostility can be generated, usually unintentionally. As Irvine (1991) MacDonagh (1983) and Morrow (1995) detail, priests share dilemmas and connect with the concerns, experiences and prejudices of congregations but rarely address them. Yet ironically this lack of confrontation has resulted in loyalists arguing that the performance of the last rites on paramilitaries and the reluctance to excommunicate, awards these people implicit Catholic church approval.

Beyond the mosque and church, religion has also permeated other social processes involved in identity formation, commencing with the family. Within the Palestinian territories, children are exposed to Islam from birth, with people 'born Muslim'. Since 1948, there has been widespread support for national liberation which is communicated from adults to children. After religion became more widely practised during the 1980s, children were exposed to greater piety and devotion. Signs of religiosity are more noticeable beyond the growing number of mosques and increased attendance levels. 'Morality squads' have become visible, patrolling the streets and confronting perceived irreligious behaviour, appearance and institutions, for example, places of gambling and alcohol (Oliver and Steinberg 2005). Bearded men and veiled women are much more prominent and religious practices are more noticeable within social relations. Family lives, and the perceived role of women within, have increasingly been influenced by Islamic interpretations and religion provides behavioural frameworks for adults and children. And because Islam has grown in popularity as a political

[25] For example, during the 1980 Hunger Strike, Davis (1994) points out that there was support for some of the aims of the strikers but not the methods. This instance highlighted one of the central disputes between the clergy

discourse, there is also considerably more emphasis upon religion beyond individual identity and outside the private sphere. At a practical level this can be noticed in the widespread penetration of Islamic social services and at an extreme political level, through the emergence of groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad and their association with acts of violence.

Across the territories, the ways in which childhood is penetrated with images, and rhetoric, of violence is striking. Oliver and Steinberg (2005) report on babies and toddlers dressed and photographed as suicide bombers, children marching with 'toy' bomb belts attached to their chests and emotive posters of children in distress facing death and freedom that are widely displayed. These factors have contributed to children being socialised in more radical contexts. Normative levels of religious practice within familial environments have shifted to standards that would previously have been considered immoderate and incorporate strong opposition to the role of Israel and Jews and its perceived contribution to the problems that Islamic believers were encountering. Unsurprisingly enhanced religiosity and associated denigration of the 'other' has permeated familial socialising processes and in many instances has resulted in various family members recruiting relations to be suicide bombers (Victor 2004).

A number of studies have highlighted how Irish history and sense of 'Irishness' interwoven with Catholicism and cultural values are transmitted across generations by families. These processes help to perpetuate and reinforce hostility against the 'other' (Fairweather 1984, MacDonald 1991). It is the family that first introduces children to Catholicism and often this introduction also includes discussion about Protestants. A Young Life and Times Survey (2004) showed that the family was the most important source of information about the 'other' religious community. Different studies discovered that family members have introduced children to the Troubles in a prejudicial manner, teaching them negative aspects of the religious 'other' and encouraging sectarianism. A number of young people have recalled how their parents encouraged them to participate in riots and petrol bombings, for example, 'My father told me stories of when he was younger he bricked da prods (British] now it has passed down through the generation to me and my brothers and sisters' (McLaughlin et al. 2006: 610).[26] Within these conflict areas, McLaughlin et al. (2006: 611) suggest that the inter-generational transmission of 'opinions and beliefs was often construed as a form of protection and aimed at maximizing family safety and security.' Taylor and Quayle (1994: 42) remark that 'the family connections that emerge when discussing terrorist organisations are considerable.' This is borne out when examining the republican linage of the prominent paramilitaries of the Troubles, particularly within the IRA with the parents and grandparents of many being involved in previous IRA military campaigns and the Anglo-Irish war. Gerry McGeough, a convicted IRA member, provides an illuminative account when describing his childhood where Republican resistance,

> was something which I certainly was very conscious of from a very early age and something which instilled considerable pride in me. The fact was that I was of this Gaelic Irish stock which had for generation after generation resisted foreign rule in our country (quoted in Taylor 1998: 37).

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and republican movement, namely the willingness of the latter to accept death for the broader social goal while the former emphasise the sacredness of life.

[26] See also Smyth et al (2004).

The significance of extensive family ties is expounded by Taylor and Quayle (1994: 42) who suggest that events carried out within families, often across generations, connect the past with the present. Such events and accompanying narrative can become the cornerstone for legitimising terrorism. 'The present therefore has continuity with the past, and the young person growing in this environment absorbs the ethos of terrorism as part of his early socialisation.' However transmission of nationalist, religious or republican values and behaviours were not necessarily intended. McLaughlin et al. (2006: 610) report on their research into Catholic adolescent views about religion, ethnicity and group identity. In their study, they discovered that parents were often not deliberately trying to teach their children about religion and ethnicity. Instead 'everyday activities assisted in inadvertently reinforcing difference and division.'

Like the processes of socialisation in non conflict regions, the radicalisation of younger Catholics and Muslims is not simply an intergenerational phenomenon, not least as children are actively involved in the construction of their identities. Post *et al* (2003) discovered that the majority of both secular and Islamic Palestinian 'terrorists' came from families whose levels of activism were average or less. In the study, it was discovered that just over 30 per cent of militant Muslims and 15 per cent of secular 'terrorists' attained similar beliefs from their families. Thus close to 70 per cent of militant Muslims developed their more extreme religious interpretations from other socialising agents. In Northern Ireland, many members originated from families that were apolitical, unsupportive of republicanism and who were subsequently shocked and even horrified when they found out about their relatives' involvement (Dillon 2004, MacDonald 1991, McDonald and Cusack 2005). And in many instances, as McDonald and Cusack (2005) report, in this example with respect to loyalists but which applies also to Catholic and Muslim communities, children can hold more sectarian views than the older generations, in part because unlike their parents and grandparents, they have rarely interacted with the 'other'.

Peer groups are also important socialising agents at various stages of radicalisation. Within these groups, individuals share encounters and discuss events. Peers are also influential within processes of identification and stigmatisation because of the different dynamics that form between individuals of similar ages. Across Muslim and Catholic communities young children play exclusively in the company of their religious and ethnic peers and quickly develop a sense of 'us' and 'them' that connects with familial messages. With little opportunity for less insular and more integrative interactions, this distinction becomes reinforced by other agencies like education and the media as the child matures. Social loyalties become associated with religious divisions and interactions within groups encourage conformity to sectarianism. For example, Ewart et al's (2004) study of Northern Ireland's young people identified that sectarianism resulted in them having 'restricted social spaces' with limited opportunities to develop cross community friendships. Peer pressure was also instrumental in the participation of sectarian behaviour and the formation of same-religion friendships. Decisions to join clubs, societies, cults and even 'terrorist' organisations can also be influenced by peers. Recruitment into Palestinian 'terror' cells is also strongly influenced by friendship networks, with friends often responsible for introducing individuals into militancy, vouching for their trustworthiness and reliability. For example, Olimpio[27] reports on the Hebron football club that provided eight suicide attackers out of its team of

[27] Olimpio's study is discussed in Ricolfi (2006).

eleven players. Attacks on friends by the 'other' have also been important motivating forces behind individual processes of radicalisation through generating feelings of anger, hatred and a desire for revenge.

Imprisonment has also been instrumental in strengthening collective nationalist and religious identities. Abu-Amr's (1994) examination of Palestinian Islamic extremism, including recruitment in prisons and Post *et al*'s (2003) study of prison found that the peer group was of considerable influence in the intensification of religious belief and for some the decision to undertake 'terror' activities. Similarly the imprisonment of republican paramilitaries within Northern Ireland resulted in 'political' prisoners freely associating, with the time and opportunity to discuss and develop political issues and ideologies that may not otherwise have been possible outside. In these environments, loyalties and commitment to the cause were often further strengthened (Adams 1996, Dillon 2004, Taylor 1998).

Educational institutions like schools, adult education centres and libraries across communities are also important in the transmission of religious and associated nationalist norms and values that become integral components of identities, particularly for younger generations. Governments sought to implement secular criteria that needed to be internalised with particular levels of competence achieved and measured through qualifications. These systems of learning would deliver graduates capable of undertaking the required roles that would enable the nation-state to develop. And at the level of the hidden curriculum, they would contribute to the development of modern, rational identities. The internalisation of these forms of knowledge became central to individual progression. McCrone (1998: 47) adds that the main purpose of schooling was to 'imbue pupils with the new patriotism… . This can be seen in the mobilisation of "national" history, geography and the "national curriculum." The continuing, and in the Palestinian territories increasing, influence of religion and opposing ethnic loyalties can be noticed within a range of national school curricula. Smith (2003) identified that within these settings, religion is used to help define and underpin ideas and policies and reinforce national loyalties. In some respects, the intentions connect with Gellner's (1983) view that cultural homogenisation occurs as schools are introduced across territories teaching the dominant language and emphasising national loyalties.

For the two case studies, it is immediately noticeable that the forms of nationalist doctrine that are espoused contradict that of the dominant 'other'. This is because within these settings social boundaries are routinised or institutionalised, overwhelmingly segregated according to religious affiliation and include sectarian images and messages. For example, Burdman's (2003) study into Palestinian children and martyrdom discovered numerous anti-Semitic statements demonising Jews and references to a religious obligation to sacrifice and the fight for 'Palestine' within school literature. When discussing why people joined the first *Intifada* MacDonald (1991: 85) was informed, 'Everyone was angry, especially at school because there we learned that the whole world was free except us.' Some teachers have also been associated with the recruitment of pupils to undertake acts of political violence (Victor 2004). In higher education, many student associations are dominated by militant Muslims and leaflets and posters are widely distributed within campuses. Both lecturers and student movements have central roles in recruiting support amongst their peers in places of higher education like al-Najah University.[28] Radical teachers are employed in private and public

[28] Al-Najah University is considered to be the most radical institution, supplying at least 135 suicide bombers between 2000 and 2003 (Victor 2004).

schools and prove instrumental in providing meaning and explanation for religious and Palestinian experiences. Lessons often discuss past and recent events, the superiority of Islam and denunciation of Israel, Jews and the West. At the opposing end of the learning spectrum, Oliver and Steinberg (2005: 60) discuss revolutionary fervour within kindergartens and songs and chants that children are taught that promote violence against America and Israel and identify the Jews as having stolen 'our country.'

Within the Palestinian territories, political parties and religious groups place considerable emphasis on controlled learning. This connects into Islamic groups' emphasis upon *da'wa*, 'a call to God' through preaching and proselytising that seeks to reshape individual consciousness. As part of this remit, Hamas has delivered religious education through mosques, schools, summer camps, evening classes, sports clubs and youth groups as a long-standing integral part of its approach to conflict (Abu-Amr 1994, Esposito 2002, Levitt 2006). For Hamas, *jihad* to attain independence requires 'the propagation of Islamic consciousness among the masses on all local, Arab and Islamic levels… It is necessary to instil in the minds of the Muslim generations that the Palestinian problem is a religious problem and should be dealt with on that basis.' Children are given 'an Islamic education based on the implementation of religious precepts, on the conscientious study of the Book of Allah…' (Hamas 1988). As part of this approach, there is considerable penetration of Islamic learning institutions within the territories. Religion is now prominent across types of learning institution with schools[29] and universities heavily influenced by militants.

Education and the broader schooling experience have also been instrumental in the formation of sectarian identities within Northern Ireland. For Whyte (1986) defining and reproducing ethno-religious demarcations is endemic within the education system. Over the last 30 years, there has been a dramatic increase in opportunities within higher and further education. However within schooling, the demarcations to be found within wider society continue to be replicated and have been prominent within institutions of education since at least the 1820s. And when the island was partitioned, separate schools were established in the north. Each denomination became associated with different sports, music and literature and both the formal and hidden curricula connected explicitly with the respective populations (Coulter 1999, Davis 1994, Gallagher *et al* 2003). Eighty years after partition, these divides remain with 96 per cent of primary educated Protestant children attending a Protestant school and 94 per cent of their Catholic peers attending Catholic schools (reported in Gallagher *et al* 2003).[30]

In Catholic schools pupils are informed, as one respondent told Cañás Bottos and Rougier (2006), 'right from the start: "Catholics are right and Protestants are wrong...[the priests] were very cumbersome, the majority of them and they instilled a fairly anti-British idea.' These schools are 'imbued with a Catholic religious atmosphere and imbibe an Irish nationalist version of history' (Irvine 1991: 193). It is therefore unsurprising that alongside the formal school curriculum Catholicism litany and scripture is espoused. Songs, ballads, dances and stories continue to be performed grounded in nationalist traditions and customs. And at what may initially appear to be a more superficial level, school uniforms are distinctive between the denominations. The significance of this however goes beyond differences in colours or

[29] The PA's Ministry of Education estimated that in the Gaza Strip, 65 per cent of educational institutions below secondary level were provided by Islamic institutions (International Crisis Group 2003).

[30] For secondary school attendance the figures were slightly reduced.

design, the uniforms strengthen collective identification and expose individuals to sectarian attacks (Smyth et al 2004). The impact of the curricula within schools is much debated and shares some commonalities with the broader debate about the role of formal education. However in Northern Ireland, Gallagher (1995) argues that irrespective of this wider debate, segregation in schools emphasises group differences and reinforces ignorance and suspicion. It has since been acknowledged that 'unless the children meet and learn about each others' traditions at school, the odds are against a peaceful and secure future in this country' (Integrated Education Fund 2003: 2). In order to achieve this, integrated schools have been introduced. However the policy has struggled, with limited popular appeal and only three per cent of primary school children are attending these institutions.

The last socialising agent to be discussed is the media which has been influential in the development of distinct ethnic religious identities since the development of 'modern' printing forms and the advent of publishing houses. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Donnelly (1980) identifies the roles of Catholic Irish and Ulster British publishing houses and widespread availability of newspapers, pamphlets and books in the development and reinforcement of distinctive identities. During the Troubles, the media has provided images and information and many paramilitaries, particularly republican, have delved into history books to help understand and legitimise their struggles. Today while international types of media are prominent within Northern Ireland, newspapers, magazines and books that are predominantly designed for one of the populations remain popular and widely available. Media sources have also been utilised and owned by paramilitary organisations to communicate with their supporters and to generate greater community support. In addition to the intentional purposes of the media, there is the unintentional consequence of news reporting. Cairns (1987) has analysed television news reporting and found that the emphasis on incidents associated with the Troubles led to an over concentration of violent images and terms with inadequate attention placed upon contextualising the items resulting in inflated fears and hatreds. This would not necessarily be problematic if the media was not many children's main source of information about the Troubles (Cairns 1987 and Connolly and Maginn 1999).

Similarly within the Palestinian territories, the media has been influential in identity formation generating support for greater religiosity and nationalist commitment. From the 1990s onwards, advancements in communicative technology have aided the transmission of images, reports and discussions through satellite technology that have mobilised support both within the region and beyond. Today, in addition to more traditional forms of media like newsletters, newspapers and children's magazines, which tend to portray America and Israel negatively (Frisch 2003), militant religious groups also communicate through their own satellite station like Hamas' al-Aqsa television. This is part of an attempt to overcome what is seen as global American and Zionist media control. Radio and television programmes are transmitted that support their religious discourse, providing narrative and images that reinforce the justification for greater religiosity within individual and collective identities and the nationalist struggle. Programmes are aimed at both adults and children, with the latter catered for by specialised programmes, cartoons, songs and music videos that promote

violence,[31] the symbolism of childhood martyrdom[32] and glorify suicide bombers (Oliver and Steinberg 2005, Victor 2004). Modern technology has also provided further opportunities to communicate messages, values and through the internet within websites and chat-rooms (Aouragh 2003, Bunt 2003). Through these different methods of communication, Palestinians, like the majority of the world, are now provided with information and graphic images about events and policies that can contribute to the widespread feelings of anger and incapacitation whilst reinforcing religious loyalties and antagonisms (Vertigans 2008a).

LEGITIMISING FACTORS

Socialisation processes can be seen to be providing Palestinian Muslims and Catholics in Northern Ireland with religious loyalties that are connected to political and community allegiances and the maintenance of Jewish and Protestant 'others.' However, these processes do not operate in isolation. To be instrumental in the psychological separation between the groups, the messages and symbols have to be legitimised (Vertigans 2008a, 2008b). In the Palestinian territories this happens through interpretive knowledge about a combination of historical and recent events. These include at a broader level the formation of Israel, the inability or reluctance of the international community or Arab nations to address concerns diplomatically or through warfare and the failure of secular ideologies to achieve Palestinian liberation and deliver sustainable development in the territories. At an individual level, religious and political messages have been legitimised by personal or friends' experiences including humiliation at omnipresent roadblocks, isolating towns and villages, death, arrest or detention of family members and friends, employment restrictions, malnourishment and poverty and desire for revenge.[33] The cross cutting nature of these issues helps explain the diverse support base[34] for more radical forms of Islam.

Across Catholic communities, religio-nationalist loyalties are legitimised and strengthened within a range of similar similarities in experiences. These include pervasive patrols and partisan military operations, curfews and internment which were often experienced as 'raiding and wrecking homes and precious possessions, dragging children from their beds, abusing women, beating men and boys' (Fairweather *et al* (1984: 15). Because of this emphasis upon the roles of the British army and RUC, nationalists felt their communities to be under siege. In these circumstances in Northern Ireland and elsewhere, solidarity was reinforced as a defensive mechanism and on the reverse, British policy and

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[31] For example in a Palestinian TV programme recorded on 2 May 2001 the narrator tells seven and eight year old children that 'The time for toys and games is over, throw away your toys, pick up rocks' (quoted in Burdman 2003: 103).

[32] Burdman (2003: 104) draws attention to a clip shown on PATV in 1998 which showed a military camp for children who repeated after the coach 'Children of my country, I am the suicide squad.' The highly sensitive death of Mohammed al Dirrah at the start of the second *intifada*, has also been dramaticized on Palestinian television. In the post death scenes the boy informs his father 'I shall go to my place in heaven, how sweet is the fragrance of the Martyrs'.

[33] Further information about these feelings can be found in Khosrokhavar (2005), Post et al. (2003) and Victor (2004).

[34] For instance the popularity of Hamas is spread across poor areas, municipal and professional associations, chambers of commerce and student associations with leaders including religious officials, professionals and technocrats.

presence was de-legitimised and animosity of the Protestant 'other' enhanced. Donohue (2000) explains that measures like arbitrary detention and the demarcation of a suspected community sustained Catholic grievances, deterred many individuals from assisting the British and contributed to the radicalisation of others. These events and encounters tended to be concentrated within working class zones which were predominantly divided according to denomination. Nevertheless although middle class homes were less likely to encounter such extensive army presence and police tactics, their effects crosscut socio-economic boundaries. The relatively small population and geographical proximity means that most people, irrespective of socio-economic classification, have known people who have been harassed, injured, arrested and in some instances killed and adversely affected by the economic problems and limited employment opportunities that occurred throughout the Troubles. In summary, the mobilisation of support and legitimisation of paramilitary actions and rhetoric, was a consequence of multiple factors that included economic, social, cultural, political and military experiences.

Social Boundaries for Personal Experiences and Common Histories

Within Northern Ireland and the Palestinian territories, the above analysis identified a range of social processes through which a sense of communal identity formed for the 'excluded' groups. This is not to state that the individuals involved shared the same identity. What they did share was a sense of collective identity based values derived from ethnicity and religion interwoven within a framework of nationalism. In other respects there is considerable difference between individual identification that includes gender, racial, socio-economic, habits, emotions, education and generational loyalties. These allegiances also influence discursive consciousness and have to be negotiated along with national connections and very different perceptions of what that means and how these feelings are to be extended from individual and groups into territories.

Common history across the regions is also widely shared and contested by the 'other'. Indeed interpretations of history can often be traced as the roots for the stigmatisation of the rival group. Elias and Scotson (1965) have outlined how perceptions of the past can be instrumental both in sustaining a sense of group solidarity in the present and the longevity of social and psychological boundaries. By connecting with the past, groups' discourse gains continuity and feelings of shared fate that transcend generations, ensuring that the socially constructed barriers and unifiers continue, in many instances, long after the original cultivators have died. For Elias and Scotson these distinctions became embedded within stereotypes which were used by the powerful 'established' to denigrate the 'outsiders' based around characteristics of 'group disgrace' in order to protect their identities and status and to which could be added resources. 'Outsiders' were all categorised according to the 'minority of the worst' with the behaviour of the least desirable characters applied to the whole group. The reverse of this negative stereotyping, is unsurprisingly positive. The established based their self-perceived superiority upon their common histories and a 'minority of the best' that stemmed from the most highly regarded aspects associated with the group; less desirable features were overlooked. Consequently the 'established' collective identity was based both

upon their own identified sources of 'group charisma' and characteristics applied to outsiders who compared unfavourably and which became the basis for their stigmatisation. Gossip was an integral part of these dynamics, reinforcing positive group feelings and negative images about the 'other'. In Elias and Scotson's study of a town in the English midlands the emphasis was upon informal social dynamics between two distinctive groups within the working class. One group 'the villagers' were able to retain a sense of superiority over people who lived in the 'estate' and who in some respects, internalised the 'established' perceptions. Sutton and Vertigans (2005) adapted this explanatory framework to help illuminate some of the processes behind the stigmatisation of radical Muslims but extended the application because it was argued that attempts to create 'group disgrace' can be unsuccessful and often unintentionally contributed to a greater sense of 'group charisma' among 'outsiders'. Some parallels can be drawn with the development of conflict in the two territories.

Both in Northern Ireland and the Palestinian territories, common memories that revolve around lost territory, the 'others' aggression, international injustice and hypocrisy are fused within 'group disgrace' and processes of stigmatisation that are very much based upon the 'minority of the worst'. For the Palestinians, the Israeli Defence Force became representative of Israel. Hass (2003: 151) suggests that 'for this generation, Israel is no more than a subsidiary of an army that knows no limits and settlements that knows no borders.' Similarly for Irish nationalists, loyalist paramilitary and the British army were to exemplify Protestants and the British. The categorisations share a tendency to concentrate upon perceived levels of violence, discrimination and excessive and unwarranted intrusions into lives and communities that arouse emotions which provide further stimuli for collective solidarity and distinctions. The same processes have also been instrumental in creating and strengthening 'outsider' group solidarity and a sense of communal identity frequently around the legacy of 'common history', symbols and cultural ways of life that are considered to be attacked or threatened. By formulating group allegiance in part through comparison with the 'other' unity is achieved and means that internal differences reduced in magnitude through the emphasis on the 'minority of the best' and minimised by comparison with the "others' minority of the worst." And unlike Elias and Scotson's outsiders, Palestinian Muslims and Northern Irish Catholics have not internalised negative self-images but from positions of weakness with regards to national power, possess superior self identification that connects closely to common histories. Even during colonialism, as O'Farrell (1975) remarked, while the English sought to emphasise the alleged inferior, uncivilised barbarity of the Irish Catholics in order to justify their domination, such attempts at stigmatisation tended to fail. On the contrary, Irish Catholics would respond by emphasising their levels of religiosity, scholarship, saints and monasticism. Arguably by challenging British attempts to impose 'group disgrace' the Catholics' 'group charisma' strengthened and became established within nationalist culture even when Ulster became the dominant and prosperous part of Ireland pre partition and Protestants prospered, considerably assisted by discrimination in education, employment and legislation. By comparison, Catholics' resources and positions had both diminished and were underdeveloped. Connections are made with periods when their ethnic and religious group was dominant and events which emphasised military or moral superiority. Emphasis upon morality and sacrifice is particularly interesting because these are images that are drawn not from episodes that are successful in a military context but as examples of sacrifice and the willingness of group members to give up their lives on behalf of the wider community. An obvious example would be the 1981 hunger strikes in Northern Ireland, discussed above. The

deaths reinvigorated the republican movement and as a consequence mobilised massive support for the opposing loyalists whose own interpretations of the event as 'common history' were very different. By focussing upon the reciprocal dynamics that interweave historical and contemporary common memories, the outsider groups are able to establish the markers of identification for their own 'charisma' and the established's 'stigma'. The same processes provide mechanisms through which to understand and explain the perceived injustices and atrocities encountered and help reinforce the processes of collective solidarity and enmity and by extension the prospects for peace. In addition to the experiences of subjugation and perceived injustices, images and narrative of 'Golden Ages' can also be invoked which connect with peoples 'common histories' and which provide the basis for the future.

PROSPECTS FOR PEACE

Within Muslim and Catholic communities, it has been established that religio nationalist identities have been socially constructed through a range of socialising processes that provide the basis for identification. Nevertheless nationalist identities are not immutable or as Todd et al. (2006: 341) point out polarisation and conflict 'is not rooted in a primordial and unchanging ethnicity: it is rather a question of the triggers and resources for identity shift … .' National identities may be rooted individually and socially but within flexible, evolving relations and communities that both enable and constrain. Consequently identities change through reflexivity and negotiating local, national and international cultural, economic, political and social processes and activities. In other words, shifting figurations within ongoing socialisation can result in shifting perceptions of self and common history, levels of national consciousness, group demarcations and commitment to peace. What were once clearly defined and widely accepted boundaries of identification can become blurred and the distance between groups diminishes.

Today, Northern Ireland is slowly progressing along a route to peace. It is extremely unlikely that peace between the Palestinians and Israelis will be achieved for the foreseeable future. Optimism is greater within Northern Ireland, in part because paramilitaries representing both Catholics and Protestants were losing community support, experiencing conflict fatigue and high profile acts of violence were increasingly seen to be counter productive. Neither the Israeli government nor leading Palestinian groups have reached this conclusion. In addition, Northern Irish society is more closely integrated with, and influenced by, the international community, immersed within the European Union and processes of globalisation. Kerr (1996) comments on how the globalisation of culture has impacted on the province, with much music, literature and sporting allegiances originating externally and being shared across the communities. Globalisation has also impacted upon greater integration within employment. Sectarian employers like the ship builders are increasingly disappearing and multi-national organisations locating to the region have no interest in religious loyalties. Consequently these incoming organisations are not making appointments based upon sectarian connections. McLaughlin et al's (2006) study reflects this, identifying that religious identity is no longer considered to be significant in relation to employment or workplace behaviour. Therefore the extent of discriminatory practices within employment has significantly reduced. By comparison, international investment in the Palestinian territories is

low, there is little confidence and trust in international political institutions and global cultural representations are increasingly dominated by religious images and symbols. These factors have contributed to feelings of anger, frustration and desperation that exceed the excesses encountered during Northern Ireland's Troubles. These feelings and experiences are allied to increasingly popular interpretations of Islam that seek to legitimise violence in the cause of Palestinian nationalism with militants extolling the virtues of martyrdom and salvation on behalf of the nation.[35] The growing influence of absolutist forms of Islam makes compromise even harder to attain. Religion is therefore instrumental in the conflict in a way that is not noticeable in Northern Ireland, although Catholicism has contributed to an atmosphere of distinction, separation and maintenance of the collective identities that paramilitaries emerged from and utilised.

The strengthening of religio-national identities within socialising processes in conditions that are seen to justify violence, suggest that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will not be resolved without major international engagement and shifts in approach both from the Israelis and Palestinians. In Northern Ireland, socio-economics and the political situation have improved yet there are grounds for considerable caution. Sectarianism remains prominent across generations as Leonard's (2006) study of teenagers in Belfast showed. The Peace Agreement has not addressed these processes, indeed on the contrary it has been criticised for providing the two communities with 'autonomy over matters of central concern to their sense of identity … endorses social segregation … giving equal legitimacy to "British" and "Irish" cultural identities … in "separate but equal" terms (Wilford 2001: 60-1). And while McLaughlin et al. (2006) showed that employment practices had changed, religious identity remained instrumental within the individual, familial and group spheres. Mutual processes of stigmatisation have been routinised within everyday life and continue to be communicated daily through gossip and institutions across generations. This is partly because physical separation between communities continues and impressions of the 'other' are based upon 'common histories', indirect relations or the behaviour of the 'minority of the worst'. Yet in both regions demarcations have been recently reinforced by the increase in the 'peace walls' and apartheid/security wall/fence. Segregation across communities, schools and cultural activities are reinforcing exclusivity and difference when inclusion and commonalities are required if peace is to become firmly embedded. Peaceful overtures have to also overcome generations of socialisation processes that provide senses of support and belonging and social barriers. People have internalised a fusion of religion, historical events, images and symbols and recent cultural, political, social and economic experiences and widespread destruction, injuries and killings committed by the 'other'. In other words much greater attention needs to be placed on addressing the social processes that continue to contribute towards the internalisation of fundamentally opposing norms and values across the regions.

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[35] Discussed in more detail in Khosrokhavar (2005), Vertigans (2008a; 2008b) and Victor (2004).

CONCLUSION

Recent experiences within Northern Ireland and the Palestinian territories have clearly differed. While the former appears to be on a peace trajectory, the latter remain firmly rooted in conflict. Both territories have concentrated peoples in relatively small geographical areas. In such environments, it is easier to identify and communicate what the people share and how they differ from the 'other' than within huge nation-states or across the world in trans-national organisations. Through regular interaction, intermingling and shared experiences and memories, social processes become embedded with narratives and practices and collective identities can be reinforced and sustained. The nature of the related socialising processes is non conformist in comparison with universally recognised nation-states whose socialisation aims for individuals to internalise dominant norms, values and practices on which the stability of societies rely. However in the discussed regions, the outsider processes of identification construe and define beliefs and behaviour that challenge the established status quo while conversely remaining loyal to localised expectations. The legitimacy of this opposition and the breadth of nationalist support are heightened if contemporary experiences connect with 'common history' that helps to construct and constrain experiences and behaviour and the attribution of charisma and stigma. In the process, previous and long lasting accounts of repression and injustice and a lineage of protest and sacrifice are provided that justify the challenge.

Religious institutions, norms, values, behaviour and perceptions are integral to these community loyalties, group unification and the struggle for national independence. Processes commence during childhood with children exposed to deeply rooted beliefs that are communicated by a range of institutions including family, friends, media and schools. Many children have, and continue to, internalise sectarian discursive consciousness because this has been legitimised at a number of levels and remains so throughout adulthood. And because of the pervasive nature of the nationalisms, the level of internalisation of these challenging, if not confrontational, precepts will determine the extent to which the individual will be assimilated within the outsider group. Thus it is only by holding values that would ensure their ostracism from the established that individuals will attain acceptance and a sense of solidarity with outsiders. If peace in Northern Ireland is to become permanent and introduced within the Palestinian territories, groups must become convinced that peaceful political participation is the most appropriate way forward, be willing to negotiate with the support of their communities and in the longer term breakdown the stereotypes of the 'minority of the worst'. In Northern Ireland the first two stages have been reached yet concerns remain about the likelihood of overcoming rigid divides and different common histories when the communities continue to be separate. By comparison, the prospects for peace over the Palestinian territories have regressed with no Israeli or Palestinian political party possessing the popular mandate to be able to resolve the seemingly intractable problems which are further complicated by the increasing religiosity and the inherent difficulties of negotiating over matters through the prism of absolutism. This intractability is further reinforced by the ongoing evidence both sides accumulate about the 'minority of the worst' which strengthens still further their processes of stigmatisation. In other words, the prospects for the Palestinian territories look extremely bleak.

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