Grassroots Unionism and Conflict Transformation in Northern Ireland

Lee A. Smithey

A sustainable peace in situations of intractable conflict means that groups of people, distinguished from one another along familiar lines of ethnopolitical division, feel they have the wherewithal and opportunities for collaboration and opposition without resorting to violent coercion. Conflict is thus transformed, not simply resolved. Grievances, prejudices and collective identities hardened over decades of violent conflict cannot be quickly pacified or dissolved, especially among those who have borne the brunt of violent conflict. Without the space and ability to organize effectively and nonviolently around collective interests, the temptation to retreat or employ defensive or intimidating tactics under conditions of uncertainty or perceived threat will remain. Whether polarized communities are prepared to engage effectively in transformed conflict remains an important question. How groups with strong ideological or cultural commitments become prepared to engage in a shared nonviolent future warrants close examination.

The research presented here takes up the challenge of assessing the extent to which and the ways in which organizations within the Protestant / Unionist / Loyalist (PUL) population are seeking to adapt themselves to new political circumstances by building social and cultural capital and organizing capacity, in some cases through a kind of local single-identity work that involves modifying cultural expressions, undertaking historical education projects, and precipitating shifts in collective identity.

Ethnographic research conducted over the course of 2005-2007 focuses on unionist and loyalist community organizations in Northern Ireland that are undertaking to build capacity for social change by developing community organizing skills, and in many cases, aim to build confidence by reflecting on and strategically expressing their collective ethnic and historical identities. Parades, bonfires, murals, commemorations, and Ulster-Scots events are being developed or modified, in many cases with the participation of ex-combatants, to encourage greater public participation and awareness of PUL heritage.

Paramilitary murals have been redesigned, art projects developed, bonfires downsized, and some initiatives have been undertaken to make parades suitable for tourism and broader public participation. Projects such as these reflect an attempt to shore up communal solidarity, improve community esteem and confidence, and reframe collective identity in ways that are more widely palatable to the general public, funders and other sources of local and international support. Whether this identity work can be considered an important contribution to conflict transformation in Northern Ireland warrants attention. To the extent that historical, cultural, and identity work helps to diminish a sense of uncertainty, develops organizing skills that allow grassroots organizations to advocate effectively for collective interests, and enables cross-community cooperation, it might be considered part of conflict transformation. However, we must also consider the countervailing trends that act as obstacles to such a process.

Sixty semi-structured interviews have been conducted in Northern Ireland since June 2005, involving sixty-seven interviewees, with fifty-one of them coming from within grassroots unionist organizations or communities, either through residence, membership, employment, or participation in specific projects or initiatives (see Appendix A). The research presented here draws primarily on interviews with twenty-five individuals conducted during the summers of 2005 and 2006 and fieldnotes detailing participant observation at cultural events and organizational meetings, along with relevant documentary evidence.

Peacebuilding, Constructive Conflict, and Cultural Traditions

Conflict transformation is a broad concept that takes an expansive view of the challenges involved in recovering from intractable ethnopolitical conflicts. According to John Paul Lederach, effective conflict transformation requires that space for inter-community dialogue, negotiation, and cooperation must take place among political elites, mid-level leaders, and grassroots organizations.[1] Advocates of conflict transformation appreciate that distinct periods of political negotiations are important but not sufficient to develop sustainable peace. According to Kumar Rupesinghe,

> *Ultimately, transformation can be meaningful only if it is not merely a transfer of power, but if sustainable structural and attitudinal changes are also achieved within the society and new institutions emerge to address outstanding issues. Applied to conflict transformation, non-prescriptive methods of analyzing root causes and exploring mutually acceptable compromises involve empowerment of local people.*[2]

I would add that new shared political arrangements become possible in the first place because nonviolent action and politics are discovered to be powerful and productive means of conducting conflict, but even then some parties may not have made the same discovery or developed the skills and ability sufficient to feel fully empowered. Transitions from one mode of conflict into another are often uneven and burdened with old ways of understanding conflict and opponents, besides the obvious challenges of negotiating the transition with opponents. One of the primary tasks of building peace is ensuring that a new nonviolent and political mode of conflict is effective for all communities and fully undermines the insecurity that fuelled violent conflict.

I would like to highlight two important issues within conflict transformation. Firstly, the empowerment to which Rupesinghe refers can be considered a continuation of conflict by constructive, nonviolent means.[3] Secondly, we should recognize the centrality of culture and collective identity to grassroots opinion about what kind of collective or representative action is acceptable and thus how conflict is conducted.[4]

With regard to the first issue, peacebuilding aims not only to encourage prejudice reduction but to facilitate more constructive interaction between groups in conflict. We often think of important activities such as relationship building, dialogue, or mediation. However, in ethnopolitical conflicts, the ways in which disputing parties represent themselves and the public actions they undertake can constitute ongoing conflict, even while ceasefires hold and demilitarization is underway. In Northern Ireland, we know only too well how public events, symbols, murals and slogans can project claims and threats. In much the same way that peacemakers seek to de-escalate violence, negotiate ceasefires and encourage opponents to engage in democratic politics, peacebuilders encourage activists at grassroots level to reconsider how they represent themselves and how to adopt alternative means of pursuing group interests. As they become empowered, they also become less defensive and less prone to resort to destructive or intimidating actions that break down trust and make cooperative politics impossible. As groups become more confident in their ability to pursue their interests nonviolently, through effective grassroots organizing or democratic politics, they can begin to engage around interests that cut across racial and ethnic divides over which conflict was previously waged destructively.

Secondly, the adoption of new more constructive tactics and strategies requires changes in worldviews since collective action agendas and collective

identity are so closely related. Fundamental shifts in how groups perceive their identities and *modi operandi* will nearly always come slowly since to introduce new ideas or strategies too quickly risks dissent and fractures, a trend that seems prevalent in the Protestant population to begin with. This can take a great deal of careful work and constitutes a significant challenge among Protestants where community esteem and confidence has been placed outside of local communities in institutions such as the state and its security services, both of which have undergone significant change over the course of the political peace process. The grassroots process of developing and negotiating new practices and rationales for those practices within organizations and communities constitutes an important facet of conflict transformation.

Grassroots Unionism

In order to gauge the prospects of conflict transformation, it is helpful to look at those conservative segments of the PUL population for whom ethnic identity is considered most important and expressed most prominently. The loyal institutions, bands, Ulster-Scots enthusiasts, historical and cultural enthusiasts, and loyalist paramilitaries constitute nodes of self-conscious expression of ethnopolitical identity within the PUL population. Along with some churches and other voluntary or community development associations, this constellation of organizations reflects a 'grassroots unionism'[5] that is by no means unitary, but shares general unionist political and cultural preferences.

The descriptor 'constellation' expresses a loose but discernible clustering of interest groups among which there is often little or poor communication, and in some cases, tension. Despite relatively low levels of cohesion within grassroots unionism the research presented here identifies a discernible interest in developing organizing capacity, a more coherent sense of collective identity, and an ability to articulate and project that identity effectively into public discourse. To the extent that grassroots unionists and loyalists are able to use the space provided by the ceasefires and devolution to adopt and develop the skills necessary to engage in constructive community relations, advocate for their interests, and engage in grassroots politics, we can say that conflict transformation is taking place, even if the process develops more slowly than many would like. Indeed, significant countervailing dynamics must also be taken into account.

Conflict Transformation and Grassroots Unionism

According to many interviewees, the PUL population, and loyalists in particular, have been significantly slower than nationalists in developing a collective sense of alignment with the 'new Northern Ireland' that is emerging both politically and economically. They are sometimes referred to as 'at sea' and yet, organizational leaders and community workers are increasingly aware of a need to engage in public discourse in order to advocate effectively for their interests. Consequently, a range of often disparate community organizations have undertaken initiatives to modify traditional cultural expressions, often alongside other community development projects. Simultaneously, however, one finds a persistent frustration at their capacity to build coalitions and engage more effectively with the media, statutory bodies and, in some cases, nationalist neighbours.

Often the obstacles are internal as new ideas and agendas are met with suspicion. A loyalist ex-combatant who has become a community relations worker illustrated the persistence of in-group attitudes when he described the tension that is created as individuals develop new attitudes about the conflict and the communities in which they live:

> If you say to them, point blank, 'have you changed?' they're going to say, 'no.' One, they don't want to admit it to themselves. Two, they don't want anybody else to know it … You, as a person, even if you have changed, you still have to live in a community that hasn't been through this process [of critical reflection], and you have to defend these new views in the pub, and at work, and with family. … You can't bring people in, do this work with them, and then say, 'alright, off you go, defend that.'

If this is a challenge for individuals, how can communities adopt new ideas and strategies without counterproductively tearing the fabric of their collective identities? Jackie Redpath, a long-time community worker on the Shankill Road, described the challenge in a document entitled *The Shankill: A Minority Experience:*

> We need to discover a dynamic which will enable us not only to reach into the past but to embrace the future. There have been a whole number of factors which have stopped the unionist community from doing this. So, the question is how do we turn a community around to face and to shape the future? The first and only the first step has been the ceasefires.

We need to know what is being done to "turn" the community around, and what is required.

Much attention is paid to loyalist paramilitaries and the difficulties of forging a path to decommissioning and 'standing down' organizations, and recent research addresses transitional projects undertaken by these organizations.[7] To focus only on paramilitaries, however, bypasses a range of organizations where one finds a persistent perception that unionists and loyalists are misunderstood, 'behind' and in need of empowerment.[8] These include community development organizations, local churches, Orange lodges, bands, historical and cultural societies, and youth clubs. Outside the memberships of loyalist paramilitaries, the stakes may be less sensational, but among unionists and loyalists an ability to maintain a sufficient level of ontological security while adapting to new political and economic circumstances is crucial to prospects for their full participation in a sustainable peace in Northern Ireland.

Cultural and Historical Work

Redpath's comment alludes to a dilemma that has received considerable attention in community relations circles: how to encourage full participation in 'shaping the future' nonviolently. More specifically, some have asked whether cultural traditions and perceptions of history that have often served to heighten ethnopolitical fears, generate stereotypes, and raise social psychological barriers can play a role in 'shaping the future' and improving community relations. The Cultural Traditions Group (CTG), established in 1988, undertook to promote richer explorations of history and opportunities for cultural expression to build confidence and a sense of legitimacy in a bid to undermine the kind of anxiety that underpins out-group alienation. Maurice Hayes, the first chairperson of the Northern Ireland Community Relations Commission, expressed the basic theory of this approach in a lecture delivered in 1990 to the MSSc Irish Studies Forum at the Queen's University of Belfast:

> *In the same way as an individual needs to be secure in himself, and this indeed is one sign of maturity, so groups, especially minority groups in society, need to develop self-confidence. A self-confident group, secure in its own values, can deal with other groups much more constructively than a group which is insecure, lacking in self-confidence, or which sees itself as oppressed or undervalued by the wider society.*[9]

The confidence-building model is essentially the same as the one that Hayes attributed to the work of the Northern Ireland Community Relations Commission when it was established twenty years earlier:

The Commission decided to work in local communities as it found them, whether they were Catholic, Protestant or mixed, and to raise whole communities to a level of self-confidence whereby they could deal with other whole communities without a feeling of insecurity.[10]

Some critics have feared that encouraging historical exploration and traditional cultural expressions risks compounding ethnic division or producing saccharine versions of history.[11]   Others have felt that cultural traditions work perpetuates a false dichotomy based on fundamentally opposed popular myths that should instead be deconstructed and relegated in an increasingly modern and diverse array of identifications.[12] Richard English expressed concern that offering equal legitimacy to both unionist and nationalist cultural (and thus inevitably political) agendas could perpetuate the potential for violence by unintentionally heightening loyalist anxieties and encouraging republicans engaged in armed struggle.[13]

Those interested in cultural traditions work have focused on whether critical reflection on the building blocks of collective identities – such as literature, music, historical narratives, and rituals – can lower anxiety about intercommunity contact and thus reduce prejudices, encourage dialogue and improve community relations. Their critics question whether the most politically entrenched corners within the Protestant and Catholic populations are susceptible to such liberal aspirations. Both may be right. Building a sense of ontological security and confidence through critical reflection may well encourage cross-community dialogue, but it is unlikely to mean that loyalists or republicans suddenly abandon their political positions. Instead, we have seen continuing conflict, even around cultural issues (such as parading and the Irish language).

However, if local leaders discover that they can develop effective organizing strategies, and cultural activities become vehicles around which leaders can mobilize a collective sense of efficacy, then insecurity will have been replaced with civic engagement and the potential for further transformation and cross-community cooperation. Effective strategies will often require modifying cultural activities to attract broader support as well as the development of new rationales. These processes are likely to be contentious as they play out within organizations and communities, but I would argue that this is where much of the action of peacebuilding is found.

Interviews with a range of leaders, activists, and community workers in PUL organizations and communities (see Appendix A) reveal a consistent conviction that unionists and loyalists have failed to develop the social capital or organizing skills necessary to undertake the kind of advocacy and community development work that would counter the oft-cited sense of Protestant alienation. Comparisons to levels of social cohesion and advances in advocacy and organizing in nationalist and republican areas abound. Nonetheless, one also finds a prevailing sense of determination that lost ground can and should be made up and that, with careful work, the sense of exclusion felt by many unionists and especially working class loyalists can be replaced with a sense of engagement and civic participation. Cultural traditions activities and traditional cultural expressions such as parades, bonfires, murals, historical tours and cultural festivals are by no means the only vehicles used to challenge the common sense of division and inefficacy among committed unionists and loyalists. However, they provide a useful window into areas where long-held cultural schema intersect (and sometimes collide) with new collective action agendas with serious implications for community relations.

The belief that historical and cultural work can encourage greater civic participation emerged from many of the interviews suggesting that the theory of cultural traditions work has filtered into the local scene. Reflection on the data also suggests other ways in which cultural initiatives can translate into instances for adopting or trying out new practices that support community development and efficacy and improve the environment for improved community relations.

Building Confidence

The theme of confidence-building that underpins the community relations and cultural traditions models discussed above often emerged over the course of the research. David Burrowes, a former District Master of Portadown District Lodge, speaking at an Orange-themed art exhibit hosted by the Millenium Court Arts Centre in Portadown in 2005 described a new resolve to engage the public more openly regarding Protestant or Orange culture:

> *To be doing some of the things that have been done in the last couple of years, to have been doing them ten years ago, if we even talked about them, the district would have probably had a difficulty. … What we had to do was to make people [feel] that there is no threat by opening up, but also have this confidence and try to move …and make them [feel] that they are confident, and also that they have a culture, and that's what we've been trying to do. So, we have got a culture, let's not be afraid of it. And bring it to somewhere like this [art centre] to be open.*

During interviews, representatives from a variety of organizations expressed their aspirations to build their communities' esteem on cultural and historical grounds. The West Belfast Athletic and Cultural Society, an organization founded by loyalist ex-prisoners, places collective identity at the centre of its mission:

> To help reverse the decline of the Greater Shankill community following three decades of violent conflict by providing positive, creative outlets for individual and collective self-expression. To promote the history and culture of the Greater Shankill to its own people and to export this rich cultural heritage beyond the Shankill's boundaries. To create a Greater Shankill at ease with its own identity where aspiration and endeavour characterise a community in a period of regeneration. West Belfast Athletic and Cultural Society is keen to play its vital role in the Conflict Transformation process in the Greater Shankill and beyond.

Identity and its expression are thus closely linked with recovery from the Troubles and community development.

Building Capacity

Beyond the social psychological dynamics, cultural and historical activities or public expressions may provide useful opportunities for developing social capital by building coalitions between organizations in communities (bonding capital) and with external actors, such as statutory agencies and funding bodies (bridging capital).[14] Mervyn Gibson, a prominent Orangeman and Presbyterian Minister in East Belfast related a story that illustrates the potential for bonding capital to develop around cultural activities. The District Orange Lodge in East Belfast made a decision in recent years to open its doors more often to facilitate community meetings and activities but soon found that dry rot required hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of repair. Local bands approached the lodge and suggested that they produce a CD containing songs performed by every band in East Belfast in order to raise funds for the Orange hall. Rev. Gibson explained that the project provided an unusual opportunity to partner with local bands:

> It was the initiative of the bands which actually pleased us as much as the money and the CD, because I don't know that would have happened ten years ago with the bands.[15]

In some cases, cultural activities may become vehicles for developing bonding capital in communities that many observers consider chronically fragmented.

Organizing events such as festivals, cultural exhibits and projects such as mural redesigns may also provide opportunities for bridging capital and capacity building as local organizers develop contacts with funders and learn the ropes of constituting organizations and committing to strategic plans. Plans to hold a summer cultural festival in East Belfast, for example, have brought representatives from a range of local organizations together in order to seek funding and guidance from the Ulster Scots Agency.

In some cases, international relationships are being cultivated, through interest in Scots-Irish immigration to the United States and historical tours to World War I battlefields. During the 1990s, the Orange Order began to seek international ties, especially in the U.S.[16] Recent participation in the Smithsonian Festival in the United States has been perceived as an unexpected success within the Orange Order and has encouraged leadership in the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland to continue to build trans-Atlantic relationships. The Orange Order's cooperation with the Republic of Ireland government over the development of the Boyne River battle site offers another example of how historical initiatives can provide the grounds for otherwise unlikely partnerships.

Legitimacy

Turning to cultural and historical work can constitute a means of tapping into an alternative source of communal legitimacy for leaders attempting to introduce new agendas. In a rather spectacular example, Ian Paisley's first carefully-staged visit as First Minister outside of Northern Ireland entailed meeting with the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, at the site of the Battle of the Boyne, where Ahern called for all to embrace a "complex history," and Paisley presented him with a musket carried by James' forces .[17] Ahern and Paisley returned to the site in May 2008 with a contingent of Orangemen (notably on Ahern's last day in office) to jointly open a new visitor centre.[18]

Another illustration of this process lies in the extent to which historical and cultural activities have been adopted or supported by paramilitary leaders and members. In summarizing the work of the Conflict Transformation Initiative (CTI), which has been supported by the UPRG and UDA, Frankie Gallagher, CTI's Project Director, has presented a range of historical and cultural activities alongside community development efforts.[19] Projects to diminish the flying of paramilitary flags, redesign murals, steward bonfires and parades, and develop a historical archive are presented as benchmarks in the development of loyalist communities.

Developing and refining cultural activities serves several functions. It provides an alternative source of symbolic capital for ex-combatants, and allows them to tap into a different source of credibility within their own community.[20]   Instead of relying on militaristic notions of valour and the projection of threat into their own communities, they aim to become stewards of cultural heritage. As Rev. Gary Mason of the East Belfast Mission remarked about a mural redesign project:

> *I think it's given them a standing in the community as well that they're not just looked upon now as military leaders, but people see them genuinely working with people like myself and others to say 'look we want to kind of make a difference.'*[21]

Historical and single-identity work is also seen to offer a range of benefits outside of paramilitary organizations. Baroness May Blood, a member of the House of Lords based in the Alessie Centre on the Shankill Road, described historical education as a means to divert youth away from paramilitary recruitment or other anti-social activities:

> *Bobby Foster's trying to rejuvenate that whole interest in why do we beat drums, why do we burn bonfires on the eleventh night, why do we march on the twelfth of July? …. For years, that would not have really got an audience. Today, Bobby is doing valuable work, and so we hope the new generations and young people coming up through the ranks now, rather than turn to paramilitaries, would be turned to legitimate organizations.*[22]

In this view, historical education provides an alternative source of interest and legitimacy for youth work that can compete with the local esteem previously generated by paramilitary membership.

Strategy and Pragmatism

The adaptation of traditional cultural expressions such as the downsizing of bonfires or making parades more festive can also serve pragmatic interests.[23] Modifying cultural expressions can serve strategic purposes. Compromises over cultural expressions such as changing parading routes or downsizing bonfires can be traded in favor of other goals, such as community development agendas or attracting funding. One community development worker in East Belfast offered a specific case to illustrate:

> *I think there's definitely a greater pragmatism arising. For instance, at the bottom of this street you have Pitt Park, and part of the plans for the*

regeneration of this area include the building of public housing in Pitt Park. But, the implications of that is the loss of waste ground down there for the gigantic bonfire every year. But, the community did a trade-off with the housing executive and [were] willing to see community facilities going in like play facilities for children, young people, and a much reduced piece of purpose built ground for a small bonfire.[24]

This pragmatic approach may seem distasteful to many grassroots unionists and could potentially bring the authenticity of their cultural expressions into question by those who charge them with opportunism. However, it may also contribute to a symbolic landscape that is less polarizing and intimidating than in the past, thus improving the environment for community relations.

Community Relations

Several contacts report that local organizing around historical and cultural work is opening doors for improved community relations. Dawn Purvis, an MLA and leader of the Progressive Unionist Party, describes a relatively new willingness to engage with republicans that she attributes to organizing around cultural concerns:

> *It's given the community a new sense of confidence … particularly the people who are gripping on to this culture that has the nasty aspects to it, but they'll grip on to all of it. It's given those types of people a wee bit more, something to say 'Hmmmm, we do have a bit of pride in this' or we do have a bit of pride in that. And it's actually drawing them out and saying 'Look, we live in a divided society, but we have to learn how to share this space and the way we have to learn how to share this space is to be tolerant of each other, and we do that by filing down the edges of what is not so pleasant and building up what is' and that's what it's doing to those type of people.*[25]

Purvis' comments illustrate the kind of incremental work of mitigation proposed by Liechty and Clegg[26], who call on all corners of society in Northern Ireland to examine which beliefs and practices that cause offence or are perceived by others as sectarian can be relinquished. In those cases where beliefs or practices are in some way fundamental, they encourage people to explore how they might be mitigated or made less offensive. In the best-case scenarios, the offending group can maintain a reasonable sense of internal authenticity while allowing for critical reflection and diminishing barriers across the sectarian divide.[27]

Critiques and Countervailing Dynamics

Having presented a model of conflict transformation in which grassroots unionists play an important role in the transformation of their own attitudes, their ability to engage constructively in conflict, and community relations, we should also consider pitfalls that could undermine the transformative potential of grassroots cultural and historical work.

There are limits to the speed and extent to which polarizing cultural expressions can be modified. Overly ambitious proposals are likely to meet internal, and sometimes external, resistance. As it turns out in the case of mural redesigns, for example, external actors in the form of tour guides have requested that paramilitary murals not be replaced.

A rather thin line exists between the value of authentic political expression and commemoration and the exclusion or intimidation that Catholics might perceive. Cultural expressions such as murals or Twelfth parades, will not contribute to improved community relations if they continue to alienate or intimidate Catholic nationalists despite other innovative modifications. This is inevitable to a certain extent, as organizations across the ethnopolitical divide use cultural practices to express grievances and commemorate victims who died during the Troubles at the hands of those from the other community. As confidence is built and room is made for increasingly complex discourse around the past, critical history can be introduced that contributes to reconciliation and truth recovery. In the interim, a risk of glossing over the atrocities of the Troubles remains.

Finally, we must remember that cultural work and the mitigation of polarizing cultural expressions is only one facet of work being undertaken by grassroots unionist organizations to build confidence and capacity. When asked about the importance of local cultural organizations to community relations in East Belfast, the late David Ervine, former leader of the Progressive Unionist Party, replied:

> *I think it's going to be difficult to evaluate long into the future, but for the moment I think they're of relative value. … I think it does channel interest, and it does channel a sense that something is happening. Beyond that it's hard to tell. The people who are much more valuable at the moment are the Inner East Forum who are managing the interface, who are having dialogue with the nationalist community and yet you hardly ever hear them mentioned. They're probably more valuable in the longer term, but nevertheless, those people who are changing the vehicle of expression are clearly valuable, there's no doubt*

*about that, but I put it in terms of relativity because I think there are a lot of
other things going on which are clearly equally advantageous or even much
more advantageous.*[28]

In other words, conflict transformation at the grassroots or community
level can be supported by a range of activities that empower, introduce new
perspectives, and contribute to meaningful dialogue and politics. However,
those who are 'changing the vehicle of expression' within PUL communities
may contribute to a more conducive environment for good relations and
prepare individuals and groups for undertaking dialogue and building
coalitions. The process could actually prove important in the long term even
as it contains many potential pitfalls in the short term.

Conclusion

The transformation of polarized ethnopolitical identities has been the
subject of much important community relations work in Northern Ireland.
Understanding how such processes might occur *within* local organizations and
communities deserves close attention. The project presented here documents a
movement within grassroots unionist and loyalist organizations to modify
traditional expressions of ethnopolitical identity, alongside attempts to build a
sense of collective self-assurance and the capacity for effective civic
engagement.

Negotiating new practices and rationales is bound to be incremental and
contentious, but the outcome holds significant implications for the future of
community relations and a shared future. If modifying and developing cultural
projects builds social capital and civic organizing capacity and prepares
people to engage in cross-community interaction, then it can serve an
important if partial role in authentic conflict transformation. However,
significant pitfalls can derail the process. If the mitigation of cultural practices
that are perceived as offensive does not go far enough, and old forms of
symbolic exclusion are replaced with new ones under the cover of 'heritage',
little progress will be made in improving community relations. For the
promise of cultural traditions work to be met, historical explorations will
eventually have to be shared across ethnic divides and will have to 'deal with
the past' in ways that address issues of justice and forgiveness.

Appendix A

Profile of interviewees*	2005-2006	2005-2007
Men	22	52
Women	3	15
Community Worker	6	20
Paramilitaries or Ex-combatants	4	12
Loyal Orders	6	12
Cultural Worker or Enthusiast	2	11
Politicians	8	10
Ulster Scots	1	7
Clergy	3	6
Muralist	1	4
Band members	1	3
Civil servants	0	3
Nationalists	3	3
TOTAL INTERVIEWEES	25	67

* The sum of profile characteristics does not equal the total number of interviewees as some individuals could be represented in two or more rows in the table.

Notes

1   Lederach, 1997, pp. 37-55.
2   Rupesinghe, 1995, p.77.
3   Kriesberg, 1998.
4   Northrup, 1989; Ross, 1993, pp 152-160; Ross, 2007.
5   James McAuley (1997:158-175) uses a similar term, 'communitarian unionism', to describe an emerging trend of political and cultural reflection among working class loyalists.
6   Redpath, 1995.
7   Gallaher 2007; Gribbin, Kelly, and Mitchell, 2005; Mitchell , 2008; Shirlow, Graham, McEvoy, Ó hAdhmaill, and Purvis, 2005.
8   Hall,1994.
9   Hayes, 1990, p.5.
10 Quoted in Bloomfield, 1997, p.54.
11 Bruce, 1994.
12 Finlayson, 1997.
13 English, 1994.

14 Morrow, 2006.
15 Interview, July 2006
16 Kaufman, 2007.
17 Connolly, 2007.
18 Fleming, 2008.
19 Gallagher, 2007.
20 See Mitchell, op.cit., on the ambiguous legitimacy of loyalist
    ex-combatants in local communities and in relations with
    statutory agencies.
21 Interview, July 2005
22 Interview, June 2006
23 Smithey and Kurtz, 2003.
24 Interview, June 2006
25 Interview, July 2006
26 Liechty and Clegg, 2001, p. 229.
27 cf. Ross, 2007.
28 Interview, July 2006

References

Bloomfield, David (1997), *Peacemaking Strategies in Northern Ireland:
Building Complementarity in Conflict Management Theory*, MacMillan Press
Ltd.

Bruce, Steve (1994), 'Cultural Traditions: A Double-Edged Sword?' in
Causeway (Autumn), pp21-24.

Connolly, Kevin (2007), 'Paisley visit shows nothing is impossible' *BBC
News*. Retrieved July 19, 2007
(http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6647193.stm).

English, Richard (1994), 'Cultural Traditions and Political Ambiguity' in
Irish Review (15), pp97-106.

Finlayson, Alan (1997), 'The Problem of 'Culture' in Northern Ireland: A
Critique of the Cultural Traditions Group' in *Irish Review* (20), pp76-88.

Fleming, Diarmaid (2008), 'Day of symbolism at Boyne site', *BBC News*.
Retrieved May 7, 2008
(http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/7386906.stm).

Gallagher, Frankie (2007), *A Danger to No One, an Opportunity for Everyone: Report on the Background and Work of the CTI - Loyalism in Transition Project*, Belfast, Conflict Transformation Initiative.

Gallaher, Carolyn (2007), *After the Peace: Loyalist Paramilitaries in Post-accord Northern Ireland*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

Gribbin, Vincent, Roisin Kelly and Claire Mitchell (2005), *Loyalist Conflict Transformation Initiatives*, Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

Hall, Michael (1994), *Ulster's Protestant Working Class,* Belfast, Farset Community Think Tanks Project.

Hayes, Maurice (1990), *Whither Cultural Diversity?* Presented at *MSSc Irish Studies Forum* November 29. Queen's University of Belfast. Retrieved (http://www.nicrc.org.uk/filestore/documents/Whither_CD.pdf).

Kaufmann, Eric P. (2007), *The Orange Order: A contemporary Northern Irish history,* Oxford, Claredon Press.

Kriesberg, Louis (1998), *Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution,* Lanham, Md., Rowman & Littlefield.

Lederach, John Paul (1997), *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, Washington, D.C, United States Institute of Peace Press.

Liechty, Joseph and Cecelia Clegg (2001), *Moving Beyond Sectarianism: Religion, Conflict, and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland*, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, Columba Press.

McAuley, James (1997), 'Flying the One-Winged Bird: Ulster Unionism and the Peace Process' in P. Shirlow and M.McGovern (eds.), *Who are the People?: Unionism, Protestantism and Loyalism in Northern Ireland*, pp158-175, London, Pluto Press.

Mitchell, Claire (2008), 'The limits of legitimacy: Former Loyalist Combatants and Peace-building in Northern Ireland' in *Irish Political Studies* 23(1), pp 1-19.

Morrow, Duncan (2006), 'Sustainability in a Divided Society: Applying Social Capital Theory to Northern Ireland' in *Shared Space* (2), pp63-77, Belfast, Community Relations Council.

Northrup, Terrell A. (1989), 'The Dynamic of Identity in Personal and Social Conflict' in L. Kriesberg, T. A. Northrup, and S. J. Thorson. (eds.), *Intractable Conflicts and Their Transformation*, pp 55-82, Syracuse, New York, Syracuse University Press.

Redpath, Jackie (1995), 'The Shankill: A Minority Experience' presented at *The Shankill and the Falls: The Minority Experiences of Two Communities in West Belfast (Fifth Public Discussion),* June 1, 1995. Central Library, Belfast. Retrieved July 7, 2006 (http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/segregat/temple/discus5.htm).

Ross, Marc Howard (1993), *The Culture of Conflict : Interpretations and Interests in Comparative Perspective*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

—. 2007. *Cultural contestation in ethnic conflict*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Rupesinghe, Kumar (1995), 'Conflict Transformation' in K. Rupesinghe (ed.), *Conflict Transformation*, pp 65-92, New York, St. Martin's Press.

Shirlow, Peter, Brian Graham, Kieran McEvoy, Félim Ó hAdhmaill and Dawn Purvis (2005), *Politically Motivated Former Prisoner Groups: Community Activism and Conflict Transformation*, Belfast, Northern Ireland Community Relations Council.

Smithey, Lee A. and Lester R. Kurtz (2003), 'Parading Persuasion: Nonviolent Collective Action as Discourse in Northern Ireland' in *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* 24, pp319-359.