Community Relations Council

Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report

Number Three

March 2014

Paul Nolan

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Data sources and acknowledgements

This report draws mainly on statistics that are in the public domain. Data sets from various government departments and public bodies in Northern Ireland have been used and, in order to provide a wider context, comparisons are made which draw upon figures produced by government departments and public bodies in England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland. Using this variety of sources means there is no standard model that applies across the different departments and jurisdictions. Many organisations have also changed the way in which they collect their data over the years, which means that in some cases it has not been possible to provide historical perspective on a consistent basis. For some indicators, only survey-based data is available. When interpreting statistics from survey data, such as the Labour Force Survey, it is worth bearing in mind that they are estimates associated with confidence intervals (ranges in which the true value is likely to lie). In other cases where official figures may not present the full picture, survey data is included because it may provide a more accurate estimate – thus, for example, findings from the Northern Ireland Crime Survey are included along with the official crime statistics from the PSNI.

The production of the report has been greatly assisted by the willing cooperation of many statisticians and public servants, particularly those from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, the PSNI and the various government departments. On occasion data tables have been drawn up in response to particular requests and such assistance has been invaluable. Thanks are also due to Dr Robin Wilson for his forensic editing skills, and to Ciaran Hughes for the skills and integrity he brought to the task of research assistance. Marc Steenson and Paul McDonnell from Three-Creative deserve great credit for their production skills and Paul is owed a special word of thanks for his work on creating the infographics for this third report.

Cover pic: Cathal MacNaughton

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Foreword

This is the first time I have the privilege to introduce the Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report. Like most people who take an interest in the unfolding drama of Northern Ireland's journey to become a post-conflict society, I have found these annual reports to be a reliable benchmark to the process. In fact, they have become such an established source of information that it seems surprising there have only been two previous reports. It is so obviously a good idea to compile all the data in this way to provide a reminder of how far we have come, how far there is still to go and point to key lessons.

And it also has to be remembered that, however obvious the idea sounds now, this was not always the case. In fact, back in 2009 when the CRC first began to discuss it with the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, there was no model to draw on. Full credit then to those who first began to sketch out the idea, and in particular to the two Rowntree organisations who were prepared to back the idea with the resources needed to turn it into a reality.

The Community Relations Council and those who have worked on the report must be commended for it taking its place as an exemplar in peace monitoring, as one of many examples of innovative good practice that this region can bring to the world. Since the measurement of peace is a new field we were fortunate to have the range of experts who sat on the Advisory Board. They included some of the most distinguished academics and commentators to have published on Northern Ireland: Professor Jennifer Todd from UCD, and from Queen's University Professor Adrian Guelke, Professor Paddy Hillyard, and Professor Frank Gaffikin. They were joined by Professor Neil Gibson and Professor Gillian Robinson from the University of Ulster.

Not all members of the Advisory Board are academics – Kathryn Torney is a journalist with the online investigative platform, The Detail, and from the very beginning of the project the CRC personnel have been key. Former CEO, Duncan Morrow and the current CEO Jacqueline Irwin have brought their unrivalled knowledge of community relations. The Joseph Rowntree representatives brought a different frame of reference, and these perspectives together have given the reports the balance that comes from such a range of disciplines. Core support was provided by my predecessor, Tony McCusker, who did much to create an understanding of the value of the Peace Monitoring Report.

Finally, I must thank the author of the report, Paul Nolan, who over the last three years has brought energy, skills and commitment to the task of creating a dispassionate analysis of Northern Ireland politics and society. The result of all this commitment is contained in the pages that follow. I commend it to you.

Peter Osborne
Chairperson
Community Relations Council

Contents

Ten key points

1. The moral basis of the 1998 peace accord has evaporated

Dr Richard Haass has warned that Northern Ireland can no longer be held up as a model of conflict resolution. The evidence he puts forward for that view – divided neighbourhoods and divided schools – is examined in this report. Despite some movement in terms of residential segregation and shared schooling, the fundamental divisions remain unchanged. Over 93 per cent of children are educated in separate schools, interface walls still divide communities and sectarian riots are accepted as routine annual events. Twenty years on from the first ceasefires the terms of trade have been set by deals and side-deals. These have prevented the return of large-scale violence but the model on offer from the top is peace without reconciliation. A culture of endless negotiation has become embedded and, without a vision of a shared society to sustain it, the peace process has lost the power to inspire.

2. The absence of trust has resulted in an absence of progress

The Belfast Agreement put in place a system of mutual vetoes to ensure that one community could not be dominated by the other. The use of these vetoes has led to a silting up of the legislative programme of the Assembly. While useful co-operation takes place in its committees, the Northern Ireland Executive been unable to make progress on the key areas where a devolved parliament might show its worth. This does not just concern the intractable issues of flags, parades and dealing with the past. There has also been a failure to make progress on 'bread and butter' issues: health, welfare and education. The logjams have continued to build up. A stand-off on welfare reform is costing Northern Ireland £5 million per month, the Education and Skills Authority (first announced in 2006) still does not exist, failure to agree on education selection has allowed two versions of the '11+' to co-exist, there has been no progress on an Irish Language Act and the project for a Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre has been jettisoned.

3. There has been some increase in polarisation

The turbulence of the flags dispute generated an increase in sectarian acts. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive recorded a sharp increase to 411 in 2012/13 in the number of people intimidated out of their homes and accepted on to the Special Purchase of Evacuated Properties (SPED) scheme – up from 303 in 2011/12. Likewise, the Equality Commission has seen an

increase in harassment cases in the workplace. These increases have to be kept in perspective: there were fewer people accepted on to the SPED scheme than in 2005/06 (494) and workplaces did not experience the same upheavals as in the early 1990s when fair-employment legislation meant all flags and insignia had to be removed to create a neutral space – reflecting gradual acceptance since of the need for a working environment free from any displays of communal identity. The most recent evidence from the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey however suggests that the flags dispute has heightened the temperature, with a very sharp drop in Protestants and Catholics expressing a preference for mixed-religion workplaces and neighbourhoods, particularly among young people.

4. A culture war is being talked into existence

Among anti-agreement unionists there is now an acceptance that the Belfast Agreement has secured the constitutional position of Northern Ireland within the UK. The focus of concern is no longer about Northern Ireland being taken out of Britain, but of 'Britishness' being taken out of Northern Ireland. This is a concern that resonates within the wider body of unionism and the fear that there is a 'culture war' that will take away loyalist symbols and traditions informed much unionist behaviour during the year, including Orange Order speeches on 12 July. Yet there were more loyalist marches in 2013 (2,687) than ever and only 388 were contested. The number of marching bands (660) is also at an all-time high. Official recognition of and funding for Orange cultural themes and 'Ulster-Scots' are also at unprecedented levels. But talk of a culture war could become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

5. The City of Culture year presented a different understanding of culture

The UK City of Culture events in Derry-Londonderry presented a different possibility – culture as a means to overcome division. When it was launched there was considerable scepticism that a city with a nationalist political majority could reconcile itself to the 'UK' prefix or that cosmopolitan art forms would find an audience in a place on the periphery of the established circuit. Such fears were dispelled by the popularity of the programme, with its emphasis on outdoor participatory events, but perhaps the most heartening aspect of the year was the way the city was able to model a post-conflict society. One highlight was when the Apprentice Boys played their tunes at the Fleadh Cheoil; another was when the PSNI band was applauded as it made its way into the Guildhall Square. Ultimately the success of the year came down to the long-term vision of those in Derry City Council and civil-society organisations who saw concord as an achievable goal, showing how a generous majority can engender a generosity of spirit in return.

6. Failure lies in wait for young working-class Protestant males

The educational under-achievement of a section of socially disadvantaged Protestant males is a seedbed for trouble. Using the standard measure of five 'good' GCSEs, Protestants boys with free-school-meal entitlement achieve less than any of the other main social groups in Northern Ireland and hover near the very bottom when compared with groups in England. By contrast, Catholic girls from Northern Ireland not on free-school-meal entitlement vie with the Chinese students at the top of the tree of educational attainment in England. The latest analysis by religion of the Labour Force Survey found that 24 per cent of Protestants aged 16 to 24 were unemployed, compared with 17 per cent of their Catholic counterparts. Young Protestant males were much in evidence in the hyper-masculine confrontations with the police during the year, and in the subsequent court cases.

7. Front line police have been the human shock absorbers for failures elsewhere

Between 1 July and 28 August 2013 approximately 682 PSNI officers were injured in public order disturbances – one in ten. Of these, 51 required hospital treatment. Violence against the police has become once more accepted as part of life in Northern Ireland, whether in the form of an under-car booby trap bomb planted by dissident republicans, or street violence by loyalist protesters. Politicians may condemn it in the abstract but seldom challenge their own constituencies. Yet if the human consequence is experienced by the police, in political terms it is the rule of law which suffers.

8. The rebalancing of inequalities unbalances unionism

Catholics still experience more economic and social disadvantage than Protestants. According to the Labour Force Survey they are more likely to be unemployed, according to the census they are more likely to be in poor health and, according to the Family Resources Survey, they out-score Protestants on almost every measure of social deprivation. But the rates of Catholic and Protestant participation in the labour market are now in line with population shares. Catholics predominate in higher-education institutions and this meritocratic advance is rebalancing the communal shares of professional and managerial occupations. The advance of the Catholic middle-class is evident in the religious-background data for more affluent housing areas. If viewed as a zero-sum game, these advances can be seen as a retreat among the Protestant population – the flags controversy acted as a lightning rod for such Protestant unease. As Belfast moved from being a majority Protestant city to a city where Catholics have the largest population share, the demographic change was experienced by some in terms of loss.

9. At grassroots level the reconciliation impulse remains strong

The people of Northern Ireland escape sectarian identities as often as they are trapped by them. Much of what takes place in neighbourhoods defies stereotyped notions. In January 2014 an Irish-language centre was set up on the Newtownards Road, home of the flags dispute. The venue, the Skainos Centre, later participated in the Four Corners festival organised by the churches to bring the different parts of the city together. These small events often occur below the line of public visibility: the Shankill Women's Centre and women from the Falls Culturlann centre have collaborated over the past year and a half on an interface walk and a community festival to celebrate International Peace Day. Richard Haass and Meghan O'Sullivan may have become very familiar with the political intractability around Orange marches going past the Ardoyne shops, but one night just before Christmas they listened to a cross-community choir which had come together at the Ardoyne fire station to sing carols. Reconciliation continues to be stronger at the grass roots than at the top of society.

10. No one picks up the tab

Failure in Northern Ireland comes cost-free. The whole society may pay, but not particular political actors. When the multi-party talks on flags, parades and dealing with the past ended in failure, none of the political parties had to pay a political price. When the policing costs for contested marches and events spiral into millions, the organisers never receive a bill. The disconnect between the gathering and spending of taxes means no one feels responsible for the shortfall in revenue caused by, for example, not introducing water charges or tuition fees. The 'marching season' cost £18.5 million in additional policing costs in 2013, compared with £4.1 million the previous year. The consequences have been felt at the sharp end of education and health, with the accident-and-emergency unit at the Royal Victoria hospital recurrently unable to cope with demand. Devolution, which was supposed to bring responsibility closer to local level, has failed to do so in Northern Ireland.

INTRODUCTION

In July 2013 when Richard Haass agreed to accept the invitation to chair multi-party talks in Northern Ireland he said there was surprise in America about his new mission, as most people there thought the Northern Ireland problems had been solved a long time ago. In March 2014 when he addressed a sub-committee of the American Committee on Foreign Affairs he left no-one in any doubt that the problems are still very real. "If you walk down parts of Belfast, you are still confronted by concrete barriers separating communities. Upwards of what, 90% of the young people still go to divided, single tradition schools, neighbourhoods are still divided." He also added an ominous warning, that if progress was not made on the key political issues then "violence, I fear, could very well re-emerge as a characteristic of daily life." Dr Haass was expressing what has become the settled view in Washington, London and Dublin. The Northern Ireland peace process is seen to be in trouble.

The fact that this opinion is widely held does not, of itself, make it right. The evidence gathered in this report however suggests that on the issues outlined by Dr Haass, the facts are as he described them. Twenty years on from the paramilitary ceasefires, Northern Ireland remains a very deeply divided society. A fault line runs through education, housing and many other aspects of daily existence. These facts however do not provide the complete picture. There is another side to the balance sheet. In some ways huge progress has been made. Levels of violence are at their lowest for forty years. In the past year no British soldier has been killed, no police officer has been killed, no prison officer has been killed, and there was not one sectarian killing. In fact Northern Ireland is emerging as one of the safest places to live in these islands. And the progress to date is not just to do with the absence of violence. Throughout 2013 Derry-Londonderry presented a vision of what a post-conflict society might look like. Its year as City Of Culture provided a glimpse of the life-affirmative spirit that allowed culture to unite, rather than divide.

These two conflicting realities co-exist in Northern Ireland, and run alongside each other in ways that can be difficult to understand. How do we know which one is stronger? Is the peace process now set to backslide, or is there a positive momentum that can keep moving it forwards? The Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report was set up to provide a year-by-year, dispassionate analysis of the dynamics within the society, looking not just at the surface events but at the deeper stresses within the society. This year's edition covers a very complex set of dynamics and tries, as before, to balance out the positive and the negative.

1.1 The indicator framework[1]

How do we measure peace? When the Peace Monitoring project began in 2010 this was the first question that had to be faced . There were no obvious models. None of the large global observatories had devised an indicator framework that could be used to track the journey of a post –conflict society. And peace is too loose and baggy a concept to lend itself to easy measurement. The indicator framework therefore breaks it down into four domains, each of which is open to empirical testing year-on-year. These four domains, which provide the structure to this report, are:

1. The sense of safety

The simplest measure of how peaceful a society is comes from the sense of security experienced by the individual citizen. This has to be assessed in different contexts: the home, the neighbourhood, the workplace and in public space. Evidence comes from crime statistics, but on their own these can only describe what the father of peace studies, Johan Galtung, calls 'negative peace' – meaning just the absence of violence. Further insights have to be sought from attitude surveys and academic articles which explore the quality of lived experience.

2. Equality

The Troubles erupted against a backdrop of structural inequality in housing, employment and life chances between Protestants and Catholics. The 1998 Agreement emphasised equality as the core part of the settlement, and an Equality Commission followed soon after. In the past inequality was associated with discrimination; now it is the blind forces of the market that can shape the differential experiences of Protestants and Catholics, women and men and people from different ethnic backgrounds. Change is an inescapable part of the modern world, but has to be monitored to see if inequality gaps are opening up which could threaten the cohesion of the society.

3. Cohesion and sharing

A cohesive society is one where people feel they belong to what Benedict Anderson referred to as an 'imagined community' – that is, they recognise each other as their fellow citizens. This ideal balances the celebration of diversity and tolerance of others' cultural practices with a commitment to sharing and solidarity. The annual monitor has to explore whether cultural practices are feeding a sense of hostility towards those from different backgrounds, or whether they are helping to create an open, pluralistic and inclusive society.

1 A fuller explanation of the indicator framework and how it was devised can be found in the first Peace Monitoring Report, which can be accessed on the CRC website (www.community-relations.org.uk) An article on the same subject can be found in Shared Space journal, Issue 16,November 2012, also available on the CRC website.

4. Political progress

Progress in this sense does not have to measured against any particular constitutional destination, such as united Ireland or further integration with Britain. Instead it can be seen as the ability of political opponents to use dialogue to arrive at mutually satisfactory outcomes – or perhaps more realistically, what Henry Kissinger described as 'balanced dissatisfactions'. The report therefore looks at the extent to which the political institutions set up by the Good Friday Agreement are performing this function.

1.2 The limitations of the research

The Peace Monitoring Report aims to present an evidence-based approach to peace and conflict in Northern Ireland but some humility is in order. The first caveat concerns the reliability of the data. The various sources produce statistics of varying reliability. This is no reflection on their honesty or integrity: in some areas of human experience it is very difficult to establish clear facts. Apart from the Census that takes place every ten years and collects information from every household, most official statistics are based on sample surveys. The precision of the numbers, sometimes presented down to the second or third decimal point, suggests an exactitude that simply is not there. The unemployment figures, for instance, studied carefully each month, are based on asking a sample of the population about their personal circumstances and work. The Labour Force Survey is careful to point out that the findings are open to sampling error but the final figures are nonetheless accepted in the public domain as simple fact.

Crime poses even more of a problem. The widespread perception that police figures for recorded crime are inaccurate is not one the police choose to protest. It is accepted by the Police Service of Northern Ireland and all other forces that the official statistics do not cover those crimes which, for whatever reason, are not reported. For this reason, another set of figures is produced by the Crime Survey for England and Wales and its regional counterpart, the Northern Ireland Crime Survey, and here respondents are asked about their experience of crime, including those crimes they did not report to the police. But criminologists point out that this still excludes 'victimless' crimes like tax or corporate fraud and therefore skews the figures towards a law-and-order view of how crime is to be understood.

The Peace Monitoring Report approaches this uncertainty by indicating where the data may not be as robust as they appear and by spreading the net wide to capture as many sources as possible. If each dataset may only provide part of the picture, the 154 charts and tables together provide a much larger composite and the volume of data and diversity of sources narrow the margin of error.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.1 The Economy

Northern Ireland has a weak economy. Its dependence upon a low-skills / low-pay equilibrium and its high rate of economic inactivity mean that it has never been able to generate sufficient tax income to cover its expenditure. The latest figures on the Net Fiscal Balance, released by the Department of Finance and Personnel in November 2012, showed aggregate public expenditure of £23.2 billion, while tax revenues were only £12.7 billion. This left a gap of £10.5 billion covered by the Treasury and usually referred to in Northern Ireland as the British subvention – a fiscal deficit per head of £5,850, compared with an average of £2,454 across the UK.

The restructuring of the UK economy does make such comparison misleading. Increasingly there are two economies, one based in London and the south-east of England and the other comprising the rest of the UK – including regions like Northern Ireland and the north-east and north-west of England with economies that require large fiscal transfers from the Treasury. During the boom from 1997 to 2006, London and the south-east were responsible for 37 per cent of the growth of UK output. Since the crash of 2007, however, their share has rocketed to 48 per cent. (Guardian, 23 October 2013). A report by the Resolution Foundation showed that of all regions Northern Ireland suffered worst during the recession: Its gross value added per head fell in the five years from the crash in 2008 through to 2013 by 10 per cent.

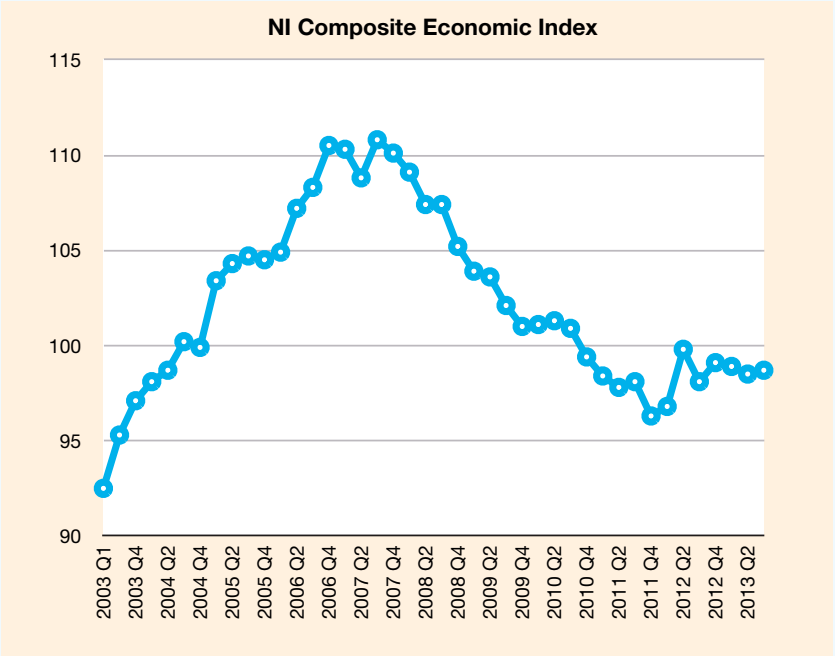
During the recession NI's decline in gross value added was greater than any other UK region

	2008	2011	% drop
Northern Ireland	£17,910	£16,130	-10.0
Scotland	£21,650	£20,010	-7.6
Yorkshire & Humber	£18,960	£17,560	-7.4
East of England	£21,050	£19,660	-6.6
London	£39,650	£37,230	-6.1
West midlands	£18,450	£17,430	-5.5
South-west	£20,100	£19,020	-5.4
North-east	£16,990	£16,090	-5.3
East midlands	£18,360	£17,450	-4.9
North-west	£19,340	£18,440	-4.7
South-east	£24,000	£23,220	-3.3
Wales	£15,870	£15,400	-3.0

Source: The Resolution Foundation, 'The State of Living Standards', February 2014

GVA measures the contribution to the economy of each producer, industry or sector and in the absence of a regional Gross Domestic Product figure is commonly substituted. Even then, regional GVA figures are only published 11 months after the end of the year and so the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has derived an experimental quarterly Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index (NICEI). As of February 2014 this remains 9 per cent below its peak in the second quarter of 2007. This compares unfavourably with UK GDP, which by 2013 was just 2 per cent below its 2008 high. Having experienced the worst recession, Northern Ireland is lagging in recovery too.

Chart 2: Peaks and troughs: the NI economy 2003-13



Source: NISRA Economics Bulletin, January 2014

The size of the public sector

Successive secretaries of state, Labour as well as Conservative, have drawn attention to the size of Northern Ireland's public sector in relation to the private sector. In some commentaries a picture is painted of a Soviet-style economy in which everyone is working for the government. A useful perspective was given by the Office for National Statistics in a paper entitled Subregional Analysis of Public and Private Sector Employment (2011). This showed very little variation in the distribution of public-sector employment across the UK:

> *"This is not a surprising result. Many jobs in the public sector are in health, education or public administration and these jobs are likely to be spread relatively evenly across the country in order to serve local populations. By contrast, there are a number of private sector occupations in which firms are not required to locate adjacent to their customers and this gives them a freedom to choose where in Britain (or elsewhere) they wish to locate."*

In other words, when there is a very high ratio of public- to private-sector employment this is often to do with the small size of the private sector. London has a high concentration of private-sector investment; Northern Ireland does not.

Green shoots?

The year 2013 did offer some indicators of regional economic recovery:

- The number claiming unemployment benefits fell for thirteen consecutive months to March 2014 (Labour Force Survey).
- The fall in house prices gave way to a small upturn: the NISRA Northern Ireland Residential Property Price Index showed a 4 per cent increase in 2013.
- There was a 5 per cent drop in house repossessions recorded by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service in the year to September.

The Department of the Environment reported that new private car registrations in July-September were 15 per cent up on the corresponding period in 2012.

The Quarterly Employment Survey, published in December, showed that employment increased by 1.2 per cent in the year to September.

The Consumer Confidence Index from Danske Bank was at its highest in the fourth quarter was at since 2008, when first published.

Output in Northern Ireland has begun a long, slow recovery from a very low point.. As the Northern Ireland Composite Index shows, the economy has merely returned to the level of 2004, while the peak in the third quarter of 2007 now looks like an Everest.

The stubborn problems

Certain problems in the regional economy remain so persistent they have come to define it:

Low productivity GVA per hour worked in Northern Ireland was 82.8 per cent of the UK average over the past year, the weakest of the UK regions. Northern Ireland relies much more on low-productivity sectors like agriculture.

Low wages Linked to low productivity are low wages. Earnings in 2013 remained 88 per cent of the UK average. According to the February 2014 Economic Commentary from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, full-time workers in Northern Ireland have the lowest median gross weekly earnings of the 12 UK regions.

Low economic activity The economic inactivity rate of 27.2 per cent in December 2013 was as ever significantly above the UK average of 22.2 per cent and again the highest of the UK regions.

Low living standards Living standards in Northern Ireland have consistently been belowthe UK average. The ONS regional GVA figures for 2013 show Northern Ireland with the third lowest living standards in the UK, just ahead of Wales and the north-east of England.

For Northern Ireland to make the step change to an innovative economy, significantly greater commitment to research and development would be required. A report commissioned by NISP CONNECT estimated that the knowledge economy in the region had grown by 20 per cent between 2009 and 2012, thanks to increased investment by government, business and the universities. But other regions are growing their knowledge-based businesses much more quickly from a much higher base.

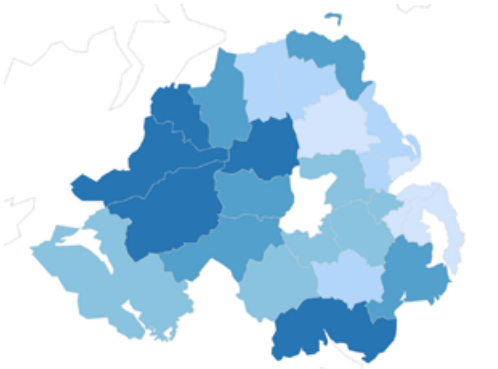
1.2 Demography

Initial data from the 2011 census were released in December 2012. The headline result was the narrowing of the gap between Catholics (45.1 per cent) and Protestants (48.4 per cent).

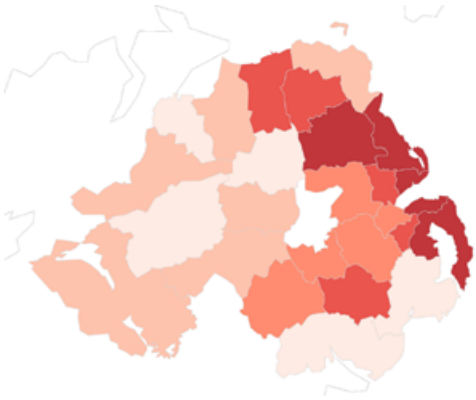
Staged releases over the past year have allowed key trends to be identified. While Protestants predominate in the older age cohorts, Catholics prevail in the younger: In 2011, 52 per cent of usual residents who were or had been brought up Catholic were under 35, compared with 40 per cent of those who belonged to or had been brought up Protestant. NISRA has estimated that 95,000 Protestants and 46,000 Catholics died between 2001 and 2011, while there were 89,000 Protestant and 118,000 Catholic births. Catholics are in the majority in all age cohorts up to and including 35-39. In the very youngest, 0-4 years, the Catholic proportion was 12.9 percentage points higher than for Protestants in 2011, whereas among those aged 65 and over, 64 per cent belonged to or had been brought up in Protestant denominations, only 34 per cent Catholic.

Chart 3: Spatial distribution

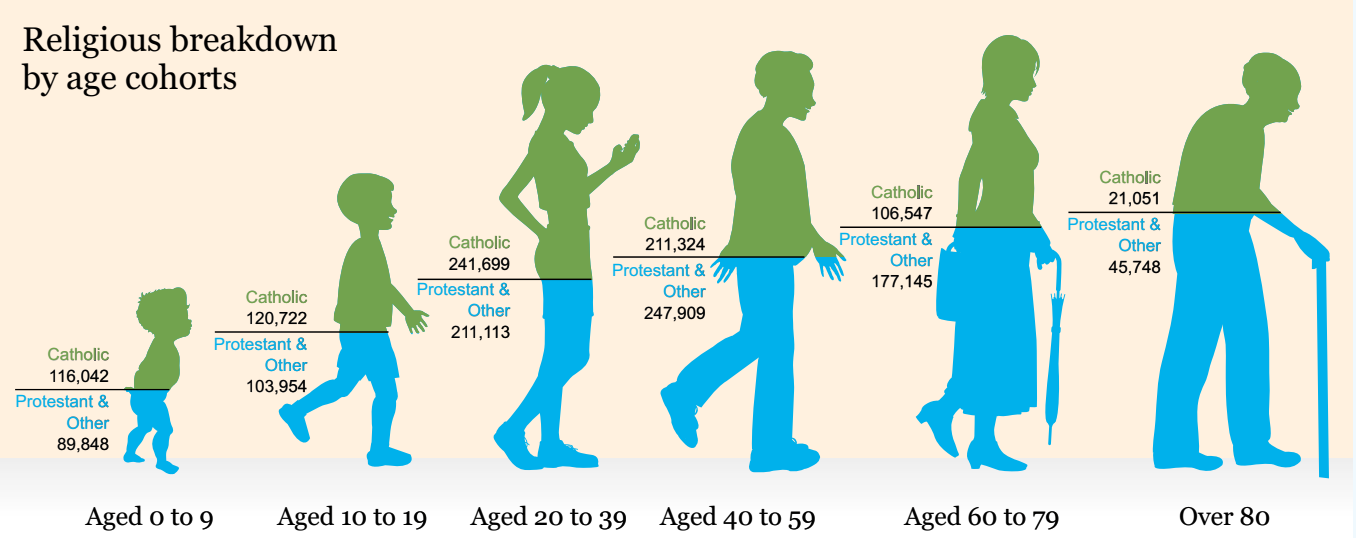
Catholic population 2011



Protestant population 2011

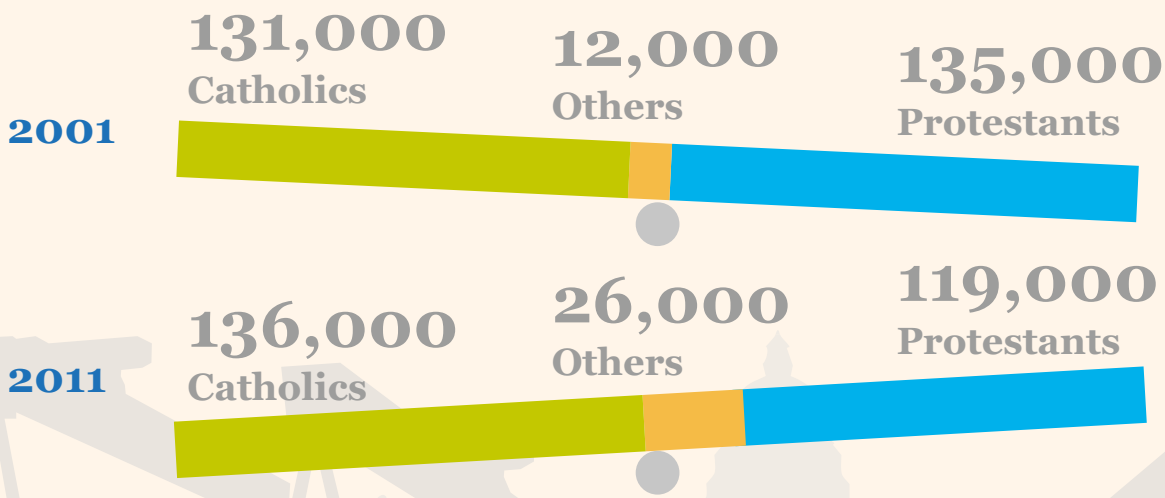


Religious background: a comparison between 2001 and 2011					
	Census 2001		Census 2011		
Religion (or religion brought up in)	Number	%	Number	%	Change (%)
Protestant and other Christian	895,377	53.1	875,717	48.4	-2.2
Catholic	737,412	43.8	817,385	45.1	10.8
Other religions	6,569	0.4	16,592	0.9	152.6
None	45,909	2.7	101,169	5.6	120.4



Catholics predominate in the west, north-west and south of Northern Ireland and in the district council areas Newry & Mourne (79 per cent), Derry (75 per cent), Omagh (70 per cent) and Magherafelt (66 per cent). Protestants are heavily represented in the east, north-east and Greater Belfast and so in Carrickfergus (79 per cent), Ards (77 per cent), North Down (73 per cent) and Castlereagh (68 per cent). The east-west divide has become more pronounced but the significant changes in 2001-11 were in the east, where a rise in the Catholic population was accompanied by Protestant decline. In Belfast, Catholics now account for

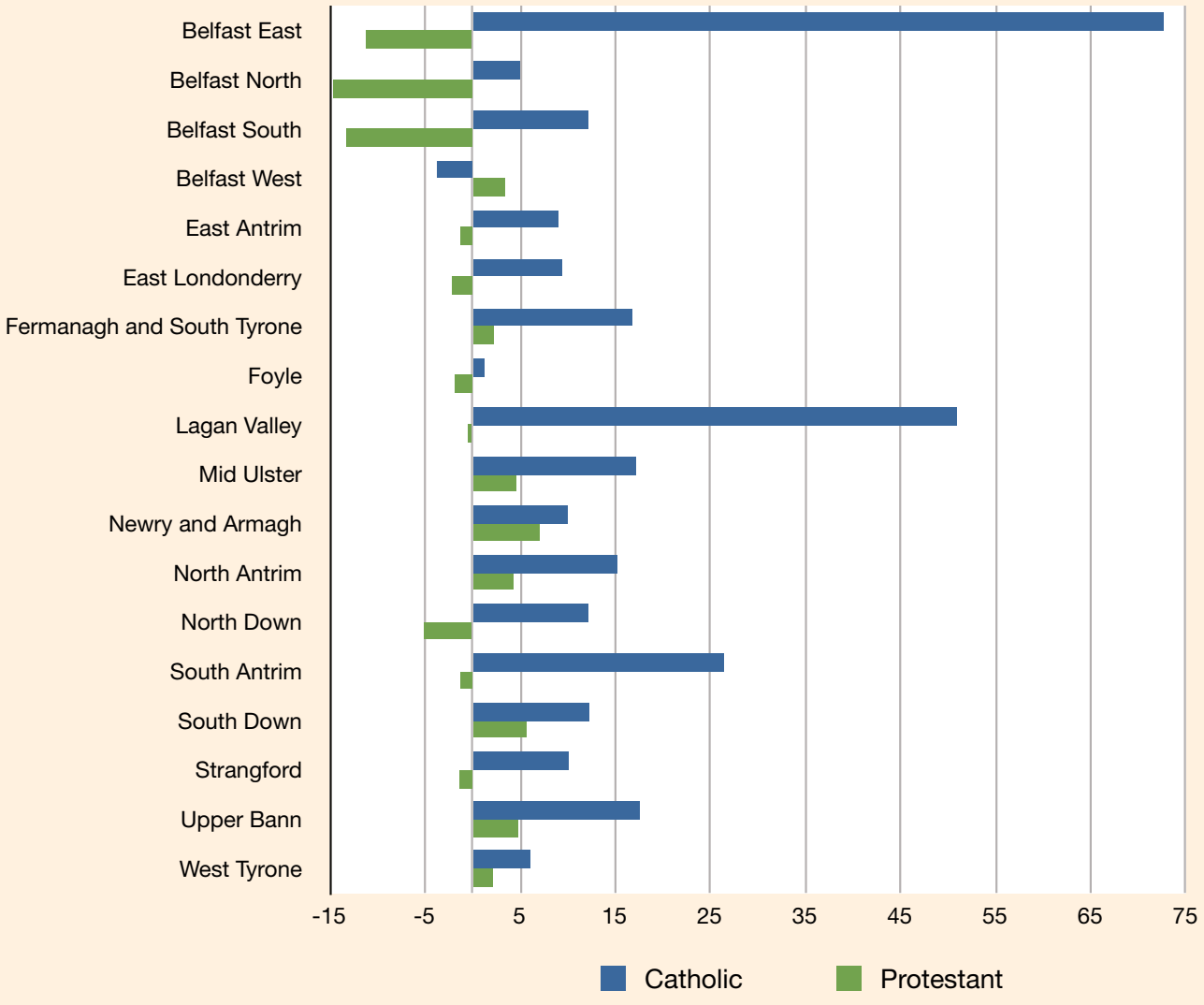
Belfast - The demographic tipping point



Between 2001 and 2011 the demographic balance in Belfast went through a small but decisive shift. The Catholic population increased by approximately 5,500, or 4.2%. Much more significant however was the decline of the Protestant population, from 134,797 to 118,856 – a decline of 15,941, or 11.9%. Those in the Other category doubled in numbers, and the net effect of these changes was that the demographic balance tilted in such a way that Belfast which had, from its origin, been a Protestant majority city became a city where the Catholic population has the largest share. The new district boundaries for the enlarged Belfast area (see page 149), show the following breakdown: Catholics 49 per cent, Protestants 42 per cent and Others 9 per cent.

136,000 residents (49 per cent), a rise of 4.3 per cent since 2001, compared with 119,000 Protestants (42.3 per cent), a decline of almost 12 per cent. While the number of Catholics increased in 17 of the 18 Assembly constituencies, the Protestant count fell in ten. The proportionally largest increase in the number of Catholics was in Belfast East (73 per cent), followed by Lagan Valley (51 per cent) and South Antrim (26 per cent), while there were significant Protestant declines in Belfast North (15 per cent), Belfast South (13 per cent) and Belfast East (11 per cent).

Chart 7: Percentage change in community background by Assembly area 2001-2011

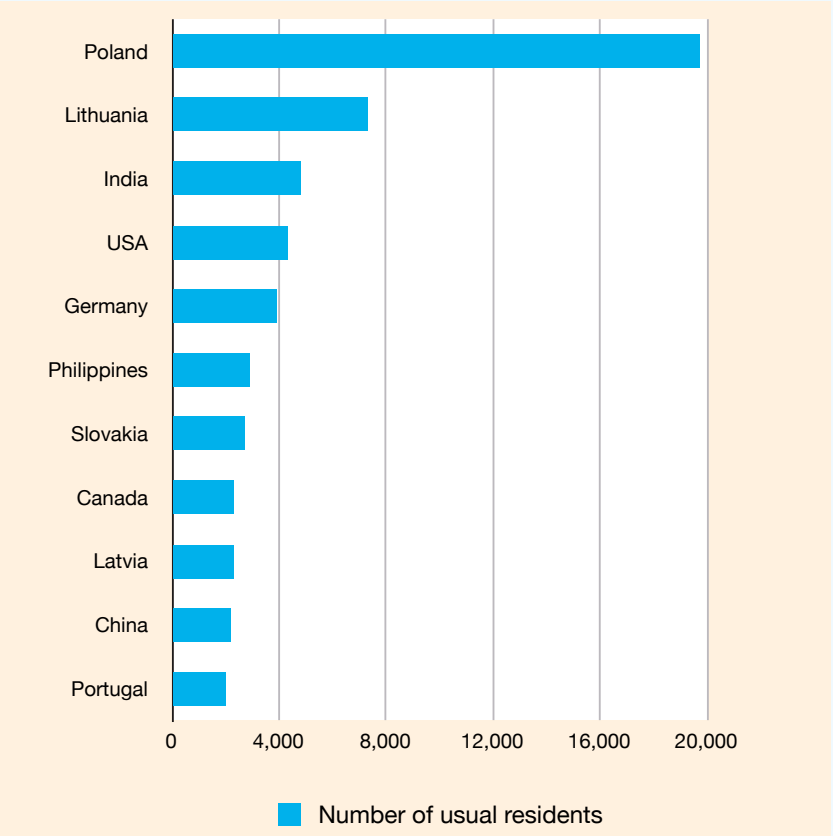


The growth of new communities

The arrival of new communities, and in particular since 2004 'A8' migrants from central and eastern Europe, has shifted the population ratios of Catholics and Protestants. If the census had counted only the indigenous population, then Protestants would have accounted for 50 per cent and Catholics 45. The ratios were nuanced by the religious background of the 202,000 usual residents born outside Northern Ireland, 34 per cent identifying

as having Protestant backgrounds while 48 per cent identified as Catholic (Russell, 2013). The proportion of the usually resident population born outside Northern Ireland rose from 9.0 per cent in April 2001 to 11 per cent in 2011.

Chart 8: Number of usual residences born outside UK and Ireland

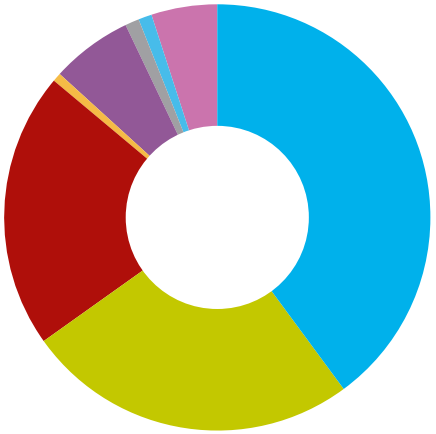


Source: NISRA Statistics Bulletin – Census 2011: Detailed Characteristics for Northern Ireland on Ethnicity, Country of Birth and Language

National identities

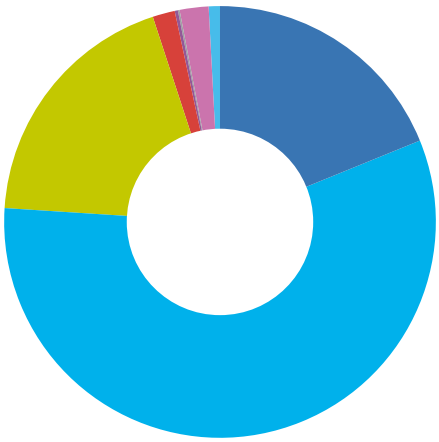
The growth of the Catholic population has not translated into a growth of Irish identity, This was claimed by only 25.3 per cent of the population and only 18.9 per cent held exclusively an Irish passport. For the first time the census allowed for a Northern Ireland identity and this accounted for 21 per cent.

Chart 9: National Identity



- British only 39.89%
- Irish only 25.26%
- Northern Irish only 20.94%
- British & Irish only 0.66%
- British & Northern Irish only 6.17%
- Irish & Northern Irish only 1.06%
- British, Irish and Northern Irish only 1.02%
- Other 5%

Chart 10: Passports



- No Passport 18.85%
- United Kingdom only 57.18%
- Ireland only 18.94%
- UK & Ireland only 1.67%
- UK & other (not Ireland) 0.24%
- Ireland & other (not UK) 0.13%
- EU/EEA (not UK or Ireland) 2.16%
- Other 0.84%

DIMENSION ONE:
The Sense of Safety

1. Overall Crime Rates

1.1 The decline of crime in Northern Ireland

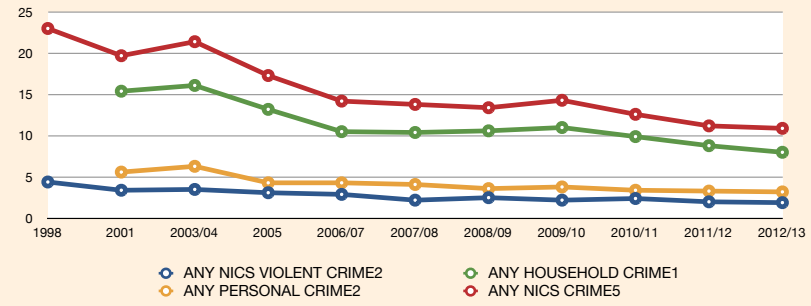
In 2013 Northern Ireland experienced what may have been the lowest recorded crime for several decades. The method for recording crime in Northern Ireland changed in 1998/99 with the introduction of the revised Home Office Counting Rules and certainly these are the lowest crime rates since. A peak was reached in 2002/03 with 142,496 crimes recorded. By 2011/12 that had fallen to 100,389 – a drop of 29.5 per cent. The 2012/13 figures show a further reduction of 2.9 per cent. In proportion to population, in 1998/99 there were 65 crimes recorded per 1,000, rising to 84 per 1,000 in 2002/03 before falling in 2012/13 to 55 per 1,000, the lowest since 1998/99.

How does Northern Ireland compare?

Northern Ireland is not the only place where crime has fallen. In Britain, crime has fallen by an unexpected 10% over the past year. The authoritative Crime Survey of England and Wales, published on 23 January 2014 estimates 8 million offences were committed in 2013 – the lowest level since it started 32 years ago. The picture is the same across almost all the advanced industrial countries. On 29 November 2012 New York experienced no violent recorded crime of any kind. Murder there is at an all-time low. In 1990, during the height of the city's problems with crime, officials recorded 2,245 murders, an average of six per day. In 2012 the figure was 414.

Criminologists have a range of speculative theories to explain the trend. First, there are more obstacles to a range of crimes: car theft is down because of immobilisers, just as PVC windows have reduced housebreaking. Secondly, policing methods, surveillance and forensic technology have all changed over the past ten years in ways that discourage crime. A third explanation for the drop in crime in Britain was offered in November when police officers told a committee of MPs at Westminster that manipulation of the figures was now 'an ingrained part of police culture'. The drive to reduce the crime statistics was explained as the unintended consequence of targets being set by government and police oversight bodies. After hearing the evidence the Chair of the committee, the Conservative MP Bernard Jenkin, said he was 'shocked that apparently such manipulation of police statistics could happen on such a wide scale and become so institutionally prevalent" (BBC, 20/11/13). In January 2014 the UK Statistics Authority, the watchdog that oversees the publication of official data, said it could no longer approve crime figures based on information recorded by the police in England and Wales.

Chart 11: Households / adults victims of crime once or more in Northern Ireland for household, personal, violent or any NICS crime (%)



There is no evidence that these practices have been present in Northern Ireland but it is widely accepted that official figures for recorded crime give only a partial picture. Crime surveys – the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CWES) and the Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS) – offer a more reliable guide. The 2012/13 NICS showed that only 52 per cent of crimes in Northern Ireland were reported to the police – though that is a larger percentage than in England and Wales (44 per cent). Its findings, based on interviews with 4,055 adults, are consistent with the official, recorded-crime trends. The most notable is that overall crime is indeed down: 10.9 per cent of households were victims of crime in the preceding 12 months, the lowest rate since the NICS began collecting data in this way in 1998/99. The really big drop has come in the last ten years. During 2002/03 the estimated number of crimes arrived at by grossing up the NICS survey was 295,000. In 2012/13 it had dropped by 50.5 per cent to 146,000 crimes –149,000 fewer.

The household victimisation rate for Northern Ireland is also considerably lower than that for England and Wales, which the CSEW for 2012/13 put at 18.7 per cent. As Chart 12 shows, incidence is lower than in England and Wales for most of the main crime categories:

Chart 12: Comparing NI with England/Wales for crimes per 10,000 households

Crime category	Northern Ireland	England/Wales
Vandalism	375	737
Vehicle vandalism	195	510
All personal crime	461	755
Vehicle-related theft	143	431
All personal crime	461	755
Overall crime	1,090	1,870

Source: NI Crime Survey, 2012/13, Department of Justice

This mirrors the official figures for recorded crime: the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) recorded 55 crimes per 1,000 people in 2012/13, while in England and Wales the comparable figure was 66. Northern Ireland no longer has the lowest crime

rate in the UK however – that distinction now belongs to Scotland. Scottish government statistics for the year to March 2013 show a 13 per cent drop in recorded crime, with violent crime falling by 21 per cent. The crime rate per 1,000 was the lowest for 39 years – 52, three lower than Northern Ireland. Comparisons with the Republic of Ireland are not possible as the Central Statistics Office in Dublin does not publish overall crime figures. The CSO takes the view that overall figures bundle together the serious and the trivial and it chooses just to publish data for particular crime categories.

One other indicator of the fall-off in crime in Northern Ireland comes from the data for hospital admissions due to assault. This is particularly true of assaults involving a firearm, which have fallen by 74.7 per cent since 2003/04.

1.2 Changing patterns of crime

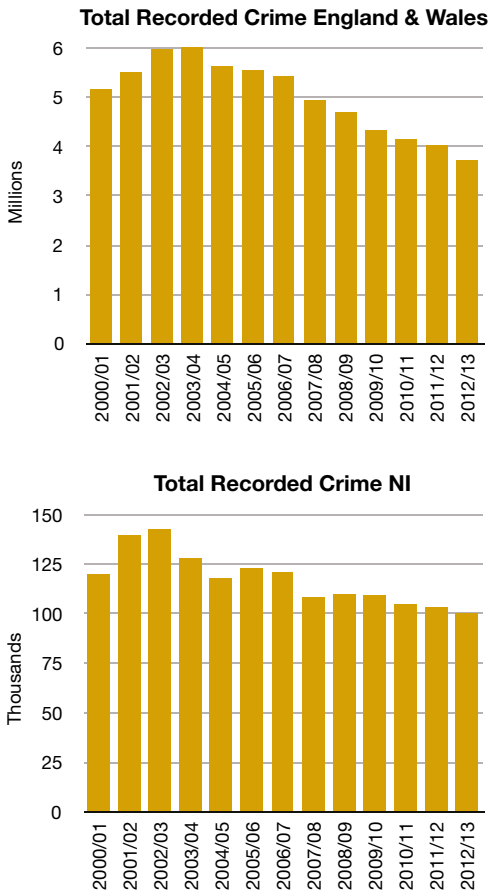
Perhaps surprisingly, the recession has seen a decrease within the categories of acquisitive crime. Business robberies, personal robberies and burglaries are all down, as is car theft. Violent crimes against the person have gone up, from 28,425 in 2002/03 to 30,305 in 2012/13, although so too has the population and the number of violent crimes per 1,000 has remained at 17. The fall-off in other crimes has however led to a long-term change in the overall pattern. In 1998/99 violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery accounted for 20 per cent of recorded crime, while theft (including burglary) and criminal damage amounted to 73 per cent. By 2012/13 the former group of offences had come to represent 33 per cent of recorded crime, and the latter 56 per cent.

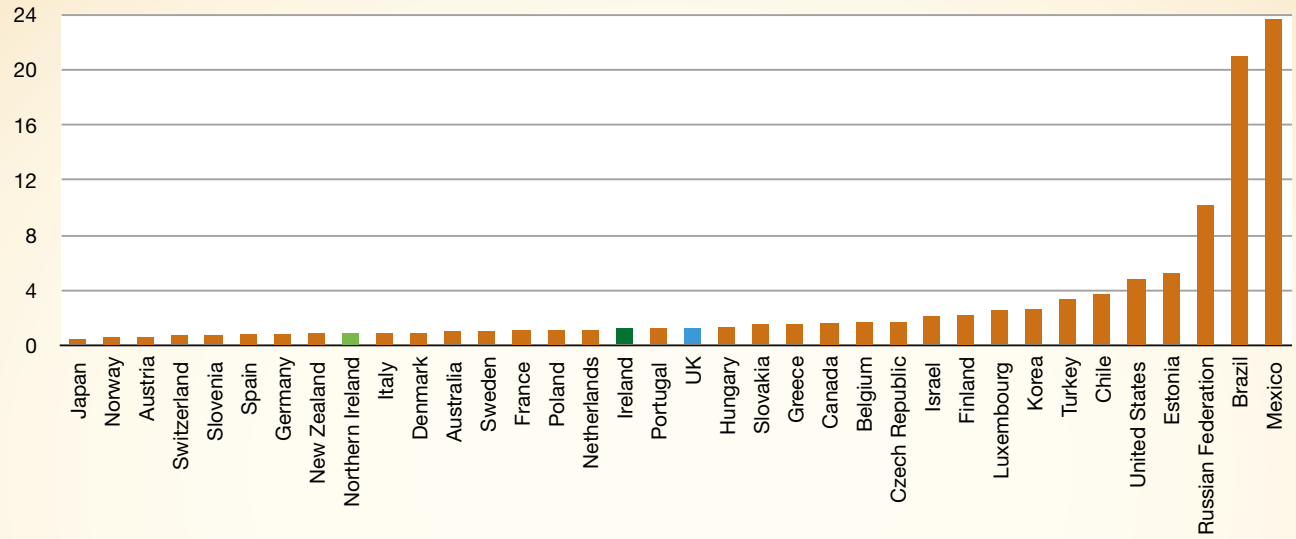
Homicide is very much an exceptional crime but it is a key category when international comparisons are made simply because, unlike other crimes, it is almost always reported. Care must still be taken with the data because of differences in how the term is applied. The OECD applies it to murder, manslaughter and infanticide but does not include deaths caused by dangerous driving (categorised in the Republic of Ireland as a form of homicide). For consistency the Chart overleaf uses the OECD definition.

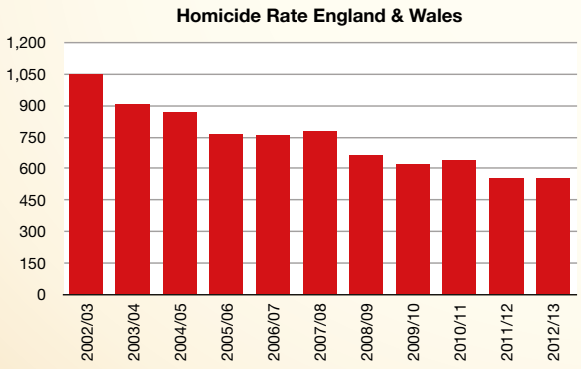
Northern Ireland once stood out because of its murder rate but this is no longer the case. Since 1998/99, the number of homicides has fallen, although there was a slight increase from 16 in 2011/12 to 17 in 2012/13. According to the latest data (see Chart overleaf), the average homicide rate in the OECD is 2.2 per 100,000 inhabitants, yet the Northern Ireland rate has dropped to 0.9. Eurostat's most recent figures compare homicides per 100,000 averaged over the years 2007 to 2009. Scotland's average rate was 1.9 and now stands at 1.7. Between 2007 and 2009 the rate in England and Wales was 1.2. In the year ending March 2013 police in England and Wales recorded 552 homicides, a drop to 1.0 per 100,000 but still fractionally above the Northern Ireland level.

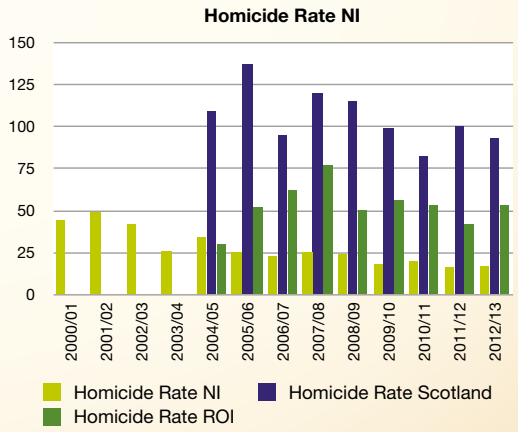
Chart 13/14: The Decline in Crime

Sources: Office of National Statistics, PSNI Statistics









2. HATE CRIME

The PSNI first began recording figures for hate crimes and incidents in April 2004. Initially only data connected to racist and homophobic crime were collected but in 2005 figures were produced for three other categories: sectarian offences, faith/ religion offences and disability offences. In 2006 a sixth category was added, that of transphobic crime. All are now monitored and the PSNI publishes quarterly and annual statistics. Chart 16 and 17 show the trends from 2006/07 to 2012/13.

Prosecution of hate crime is governed by the Criminal Justice (No 2) Order 2004. While in England and Wales there are specific offences in law of racially or religiously aggravated assault, in Northern Ireland the crime is prosecuted as assault with a motivating factor related to hate (racist, homophobic etc), and where a person is convicted of a crime with this 'aggravating' factor a heavier sentence will be imposed. There is in fact no statutory definition of hate crime but the Northern Ireland criminal justice system follows the lead taken by the police in England. Policy there, now standard across the UK, came out of the 1999 report of the inquiry into the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence in London six years earlier.

It allows the victim to decide whether or not the crime should be treated as a hate crime in the first instance, although when it comes to prosecution an evidence test is applied.

Chart 16: Number of incidents with a hate motivation

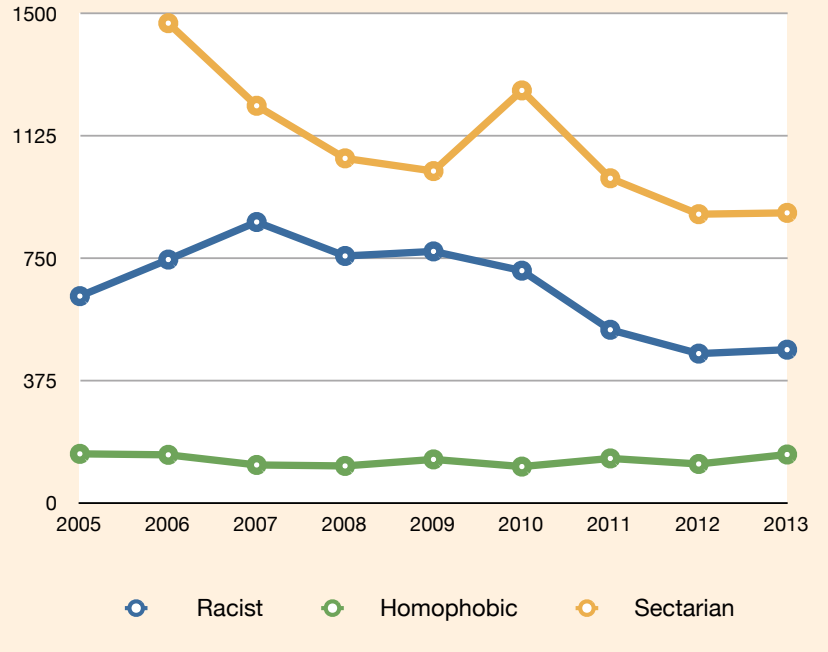
Motivation	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Racist	1,047	976	990	1,038	842	696	750
Homophobic	155	160	179	175	211	200	246
Faith/religion	136	68	46	23	21	8	22
Sectarian	1,695	1,584	1,595	1,840	1,437	1,344	1,372
Disability	48	49	44	58	38	33	74
Transphobic	32	7	10	14	22	3	15

Chart 17: Number of crimes with a hate motivation

Motivation	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Racist	861	757	771	712	531	458	470
Homophobic	117	114	134	112	137	120	149
Faith/religion	120	62	35	15	17	6	14
Sectarian	1,217	1,056	1,056	1,264	995	885	889
Disability	26	62	35	15	31	15	35
Transphobic	14	4	2	4	8	3	6

Source: PSNI Hate Crime Statistics

Chart 18: Number of crimes with a hate motivation 2004/5 - 2012/13



How much can we trust these figures?

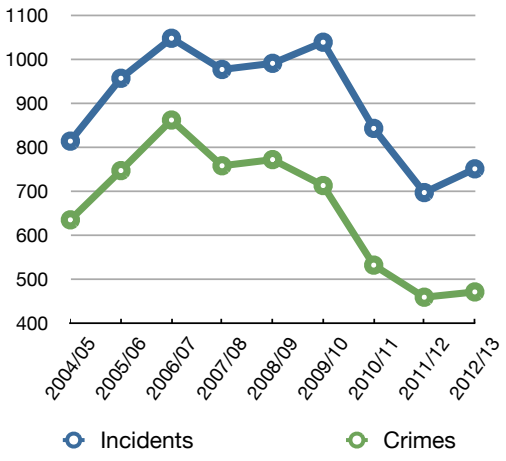
The figures produced by the PSNI are an accurate account of the number of recorded crimes but we know that this is only a percentage of the total – we do not however know what percentage. In 2012 the Home Office began a report with the

caution 'Research suggests that hate crime is hugely under-reported.' The British Crime Survey last year found that the public experienced 260,000 hate crimes – more than six times the number reported. The equality campaign group Stonewall published a report in October 2013 which said that more than three quarters of gay, bisexual and lesbian hate-crime victims did not report to the police. There are no comparable studies in Northern Ireland but in 2009 the Rainbow Coalition and the PSNI issued a joint report on homophobic crime estimating that 64 per cent of incidents went unreported. So, at minimum, more than half of hate crimes and incidents appear to go unreported and the true ratio is probably over 60 per cent. The reasons most commonly given are that victims may be afraid of attracting further abuse, may fear their concerns will not be taken seriously or may doubt the ability of the authorities to take effective action.

Underreporting also varies according to the crime. Some crimes are almost always reported. For example, when symbolic premises like those belonging to the Orange Order or Gaelic Athletic Association are attacked, insurance requirements alone guarantee the incidents will be recorded; the PSNI statistics on such can therefore be taken as robust. At the other end of the spectrum, crime surveys suggest that crimes against the person are least likely to be reported.

Race hate crime

Chart 19: Trends in racist motivated incidents and crimes 2004/05 to 2012/13



Racist incidents and crimes recorded during 2012/13 were the second lowest since the data series began in 2004/05. The greatest concentration (42 per cent) was in Belfast, which has seen the greatest increase in its newcomer population. Worryingly, the Tension Monitoring Group, which brings together the City Council, the PSNI and neighbourhood groups, highlighted an increase of 87 per cent in reported racist incidents (from 115 to 215) between April and November 2013, compared with the same period of the previous year. Most were in South Belfast, the part of the city with the highest proportion of members of ethnic minorities.

The victims of race hate crime are not easily characterised. When described in terms of ethnicity, the largest group is white, a category that includes different national groupings such as Polish, Lithuanian and Portuguese. Poles are the most heavily represented in the list of victims by nationality; perhaps more surprisingly, the second largest nationality group is UK/Irish – allowance must be made however for confusion in the self-categorisation and recording of national identities.

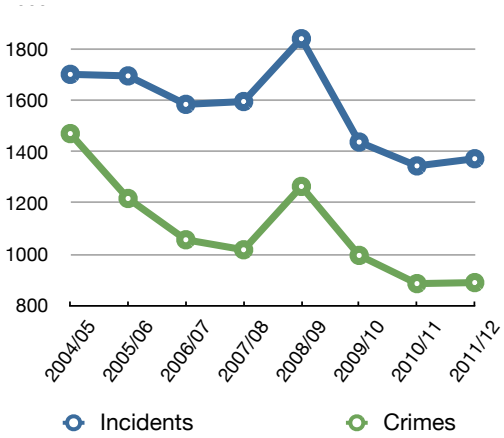
Chart 20: Racist crime victims by ethnicity and nationality, 2008/09 to 2012/13

Ethnicity/nationality	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Asian: of which	135	123	91	78	68
India	40	28	26	16	13
UK and Ireland	21	22	20	17	16
China	25	14	14	13	15
All other nationalities	33	43	24	22	24
Nationality missing	16	16	7	10	0
Black	57	42	46	47	61
Mixed/other	17	30	20	30	36
White: of which					
Poland	178	129	88	45	65
UK and Ireland	81	97	78	55	63
Lithuania	37	38	20	17	18
Slovakia	28	12	3	7	4
Latvia	12	8	10	8	2
Portugal	21	10	5	7	9
Romania	5	7	10	15	5
All other nationalities	62	59	41	30	30
Nationality missing	35	33	19	20	13
Ethnicity missing/unknown	57	71	72	77	61
Total crimes with a person victim by year	**725**	**659**	**503**	**436**	**435**

Sectarian hate crime

This category, which accounts for more than half of all hate crimes in Northern Ireland, does not exist in the legislation for Scotland or England and Wales – though a category of 'religiously motivated' hate crime accounts for a small number of offences in these jurisdictions each year. The number of sectarian incidents for 2012/13 was virtually the same as for the previous year: 1,372 as against 1,344 for 2011/12. The number of recorded crimes also showed little or no change: 889 in 2012/13 as against 885 in 2011/12. That might suggest that sectarianism neither increased nor decreased in the 2012/13 period. In reality, as reported in the Cohesion and Sharing part of this report, sectarianism showed a dangerous escalation following the start of the flags dispute.

Chart 21: Trends in sectarian motivated incidents and crimes 2004/05 to 2012/13



The months between December 2012 and March 2013 saw nightly roadblocks, pitched battles in east Belfast between the flags protesters and residents of the mainly-Catholic Short Strand, and the crudest form of sectarian abuse and hatred exchanged online. The paradox is that the more saturated in sectarianism the society becomes, the more natural it comes to seem to its citizens and the less it is reported. For example, in 2012 it was made clear that the burning of the Polish flag on bonfires was regarded as racial intimidation by the Polish community and it was denounced by the First Minister, Peter Robinson. However, in a radio interview on 27

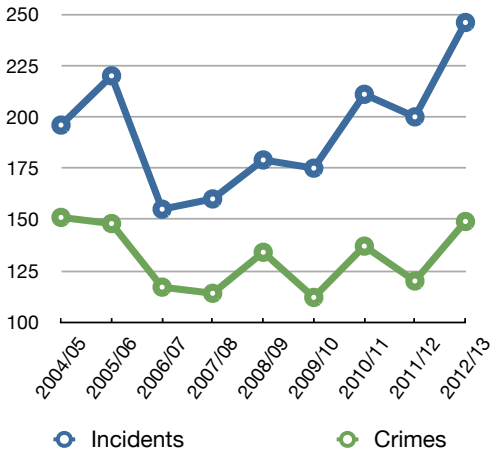
June 2013, his DUP colleague, Paul Girvan, explained he had 'no problem' with the burning of tricolours on Orange bonfires as 'it is part of their culture'. The statement was later retracted but the burnings took place as usual at the 2013 '12th' bonfires, going as ever largely unremarked. This custom, like many of other sectarian practices in Northern Ireland, occurs below the waterline of what is considered a crime and is not to be found in the PSNI statistics.

Attacks on symbolic premises

Attacks on symbolic premises are treated as a sub-set of sectarian crime by the PSNI. In 2012/13 they constituted 5 per cent of all sectarian crime, the lowest since this data series began in 2007/08. The largest number of attacks, as in previous years, was on Orange Order or Apprentice Boys premises but the total for the year, 27, was five below that for 2011/12 and considerably below the peak incidence of 2007/08 and 2008/09. For the first year since the series began there were no attacks on schools or on the premises of the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

Premises type	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Catholic church	19	37	24	23	12	14
Ancient Order of Hibernians hall	6	10	15	8	8	*
Orange/Apprentice Boys hall	63	61	72	58	32	27
School	6	13	15	*	4	*

Chart 23: Trends in homophobic motivated incidents and crimes 2004/05 to 2012/13



Homophobic hate crime

The number of homophobic incidents rose by 23 per cent between 2011/12 and 2012/13, at 246 comprising the highest since record-keeping began in 2004/05. The number of homophobic crimes increased at almost the same rate, 24.2 per cent, to 149, and is just below the peak in the first year of recording, when there were 151 crimes.

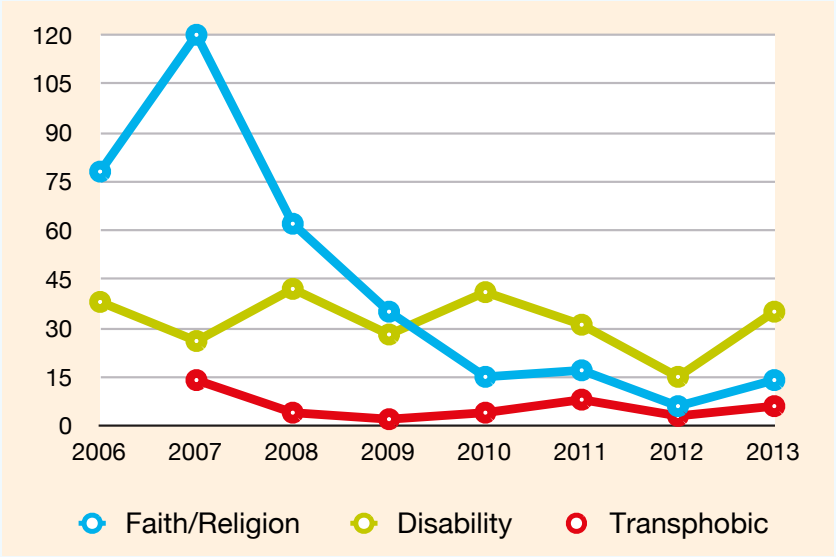
The increase over the past year has two possible explanations: increased prevalence or increased reporting, and it is impossible to be definitive about how far each has contributed. Links between the police and the gay community have been facilitated by the appointment of an advocacy officer to the LGBT umbrella organisation the Rainbow Project, recognition by the PSNI of the Gay Police Association and the creation of a PSNI Independent Advisory Group which brings a range of LGBT organisations into a structured relationship with the police. The development of third-party reporting, where someone other than the victim can report a crime, has also helped.

Other hate crimes

The other three forms of hate crime, faith/religion, disability and transgender, between them account for 4.5 per cent of all hate crimes. The largest cluster relates to disability and numbers here have more than doubled in the past year, from 15 to 35. This is consistent with a UK-wide pattern: disability hate crime is on the

increase, a trend that disability organisations attribute to the way in which the vilification of the 'welfare scrounger' has become part of mainstream political discourse. The number of faith/religion crimes seems to show a precipitous drop since the early days of data recording, but the PSNI accepts that there may have been problems of definition in 2005/06, and more rigorous data checks have resulted in lower numbers: 22 incidents and 14 crimes in 2012/13. The figures for transphobic crime show a percentage increase of 100 per cent, but from a base of three crimes in 2011/12 to six in 2012/13.

Chart 25: Disability, Transphobic and Faith/Religion Hate Crimes



Detection rates

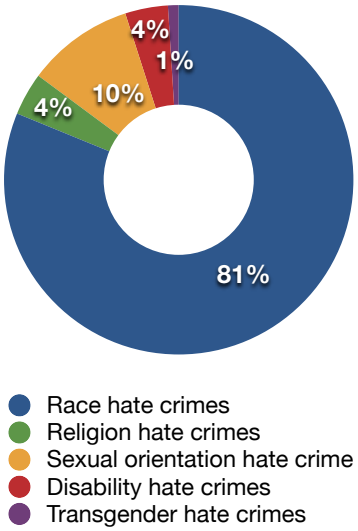
A crime is considered detected when the police have identified the person or persons responsible and that person has been charged or summonsed, cautioned or issued with a warning or penalty notice. Not all detections lead to prosecutions and not all prosecutions lead to convictions. Detection comes at the start of the criminal-justice process, not the end; without it, the other parts of the process cannot take place. The detection rate for hate crime is lower than for crime overall. In 2012/13 the rate for all crimes was 26.4 per cent but was considerably lower for most forms of hate crime. The hate crime with the highest level of detection was that with a racist motivation; the lowest was transphobic crime. None of the six transphobic crimes in 2012/13 was subject to detection – in fact, there have only been two detections since this data series began in 2006/07.

A lack of conviction?

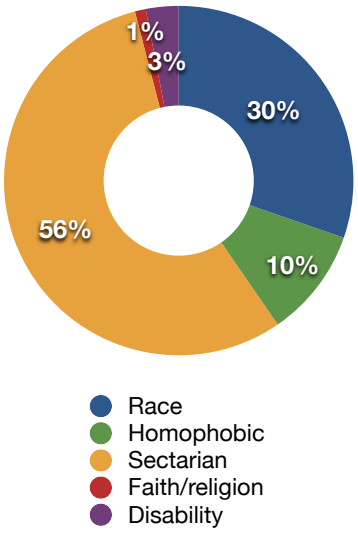
Controversy dogs the official statistics for hate crime. This area was given detailed investigation in last year's Peace Monitoring Report. A report prepared by the Institute for Conflict Research in 2012 for NIACRO tracked 13,655 reported hate crimes and showed that only 12 resulted in a criminal prosecution using the 2004 Criminal Justice Order. An alternative set of figures from the Public Prosecution Service argued that it should not be inferred

Chart 24: The different faces of hate crime

Hate crimes England and Wales



Hate crimes Northern Ireland



Hate crimes Scotland

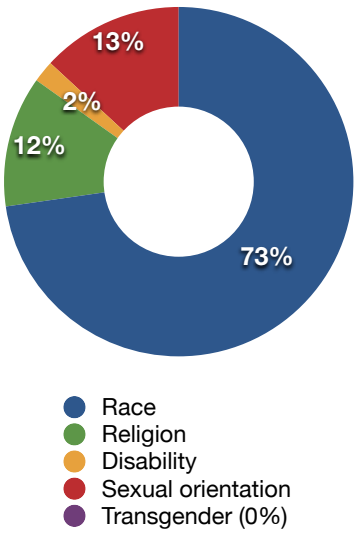
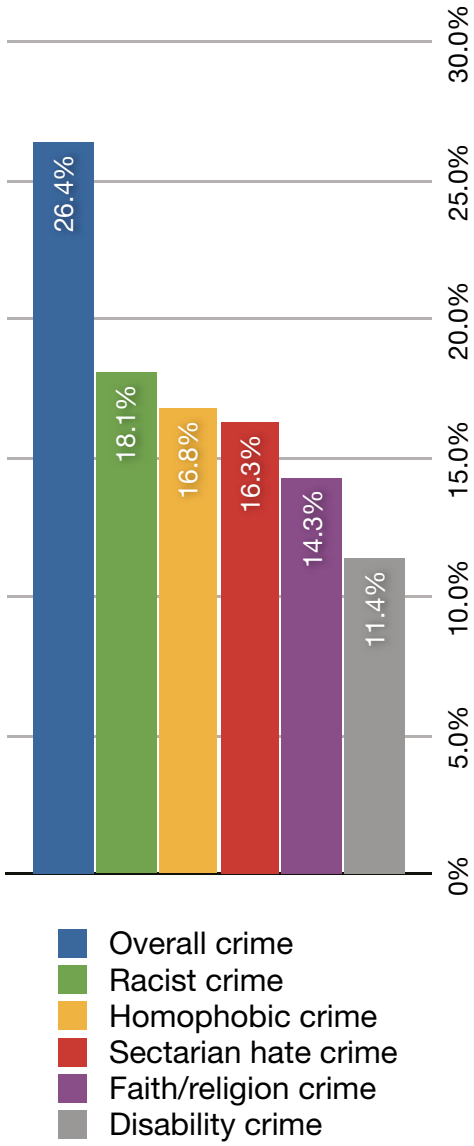


Chart 26: Detection rates for hate crime



that hate crimes escaped prosecution: the PPS said that in 82 per cent of cases a prosecution did go ahead but without any hate motivation attached to the charge.

In the past year a similar situation has arisen. A report issued by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission in September 2013, *Racist Hate Crime*, said that between April 2007 and January 2012 only five race hate crimes had resulted in the use of the 2004 order to enhance the sentences. The NIHRC argued that the order had been underutilised. When hate crimes are investigated the legislation allow for both 'motivation' and 'demonstration' on the part of the accused to be considered. The Commission said that the PSNI over-relied on motivation – by nature difficult to prove. The *demonstration* of hostility, as it manifests itself in language and other behaviours, sets a lower bar for the attachment of the 'aggravated by hostility' descriptor, and the NIHRC argued that greater use of this part of the legislation would result in more hate crime being prosecuted.

Does Northern Ireland have more hate crime than other places?

It is very difficult to make comparisons with other countries. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Human Rights ranks Finland, Sweden, and the UK as the only three EU countries recording racist crime 'comprehensively'. The recording of other strands of hate crime, such as religious, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability, is even less developed. The statistics produced by the Central Statistics Agency in Dublin provide a case in point. While the PSNI recorded an average of 2,300 hate crimes for the period 2009/12 the corresponding figure for the Republic of Ireland was a fraction of of that number, 141. This is partly because the Garda Síochána hate crime definition is much more limited and partly because the figures only refer to crimes where the perpetrator has been charged and convicted.

How then does Northern Ireland compare when judged against other parts of the UK? Last year's Peace Monitoring Report looked at the prevalence of race hate crime and concluded, contrary to a widely-held belief, that the level in Northern Ireland was not higher than the UK average. This has been borne out by a study conducted by the Scottish Government, *A Strategy for Justice for Scotland*, which shows that incidence in Northern Ireland is much lower than the (broadly comparable) levels in England, Scotland and Wales. Racist incidents recorded by the PSNI per 10,000 of the population usually run between four and six in Northern Ireland, while the figures for Scotland, England and Wales are almost double that. As the report points out, however, it is important to bear in mind the relative size of the ethnic-minority population. According to the 2011 census, 86 per cent of the population in England was white, while for Wales the figure was 95.6 per cent and for Scotland 96 per cent. In Northern Ireland it was 98.2%. And when sectarian crimes are added to the total, the Northern Ireland level of hate crime moves from being half the UK rate to the middle band of the figures produced by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) for UK regions.

Chart 27: Racist incidents per 10,000 of the population across the UK

	Scotland	England and Wales	Northern Ireland
2007/08	10.4	10.8	5.5
2008/09	9.7	10.2	5.6
2009/10	9.5	10.0	5.8
2010/11	9.3	9.3	4.7

Source: Scottish government: 'A Strategy for Justin in Scotland', 2012

3. Domestic Violence and Sexual Crime

Each year the Peace Monitoring Report examines domestic abuse and sexual crime as these are often taken to be indicative of deeper stresses in society. There is a well-established connection between ethnic violence and sexual crimes, and post-conflict societies tend to see an upturn in the prevalence of domestic violence and the reporting of abuse after a peace deal has been signed. The main reason for the increase in prevalence is usually given as the return of militarised males to a domestic environment. The main reason for increased reporting after a peace settlement is to do with the legitimation of the police by communities that had previously rejected their authority.

Northern Ireland's domestic abuse figures are higher than they have ever been and are now the highest in the UK.

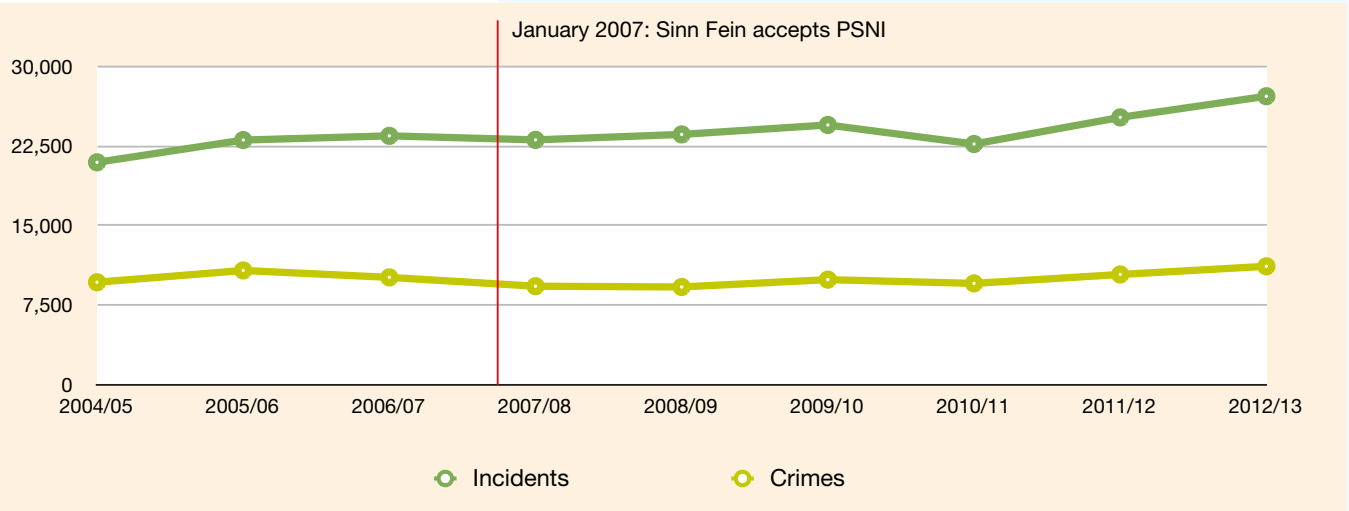
A spike might have been expected to have followed the decision by Sinn Féin in 2007 to endorse the police: this gave permission for republicans to report cases of domestic abuse or sexual crime. But police statistics show no evidence of any impact. The pattern rather is one of small fluctuations year on year, with the largest decrease, 8.2 per cent, occurring between 2006/07 and 2007/08, the period just after the 2007 decision by SF. The figures for 2012/13 are the highest for incidents and crimes since 2004/05 and show Northern Ireland continuing to run ahead of other parts of the UK. In 2011/12 there were 12 domestic-abuse cases reported to the police per 1,000 of the population, rising to 15 in 2012/13 – much higher than the figures for Scotland (11.3) or England and Wales (10).

The figures for recorded crime as ever tell only a small part of the story. A study of three years data from the Northern Ireland Crime Survey, 2008/09 to 2010/11, found that police were made aware of less than one-third (31 per cent) of the 'worst' cases of domestic abuse, meaning that seven out of ten cases went unreported. The NICS data implied that when partner and family abuse are combined around one in five adults had experienced some form of domestic violence in their lifetimes. Women were twice as likely as men to be victims of domestic abuse. The vast majority of 'worst case' incidents of partner abuse took place within a heterosexual relationship, with around four-fifths involving a female victim and a male perpetrator. While most victims of abuse (56 per cent) regarded their worst incident as a criminal offence, over two fifths did not, with more than a quarter (28.8 per

cent) believing it was 'wrong, but not a crime' and a further one in seven accepting it as 'just something that happens'.

Chart 28: Trends in domestic abuse incidents and crimes

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Incidents	20,959	23,059	23,456	23,076	23,591	24,482	22,685	25,196	27,190
Crimes	9,656	10,768	10,115	9,283	9,211	9,903	9,546	10,387	11,160



The most worrying figures on the prevalence of sexual violence came in the third National Survey of Sexual Attitudes, published in November 2013. One in ten women in Britain admitted they had at one time or another been forced into having sex – a much higher figure than the 3.8 per cent who declared themselves to have been victims of rape in the Crime Survey of England Wales. The NATSAL report explained the discrepancy as arising from the fact that the women were not always sure that a crime had been committed. ''The NICS provides a much more accurate picture of domestic abuse than the official statistics, but comparisons with Crime Survey England and Wales (CSEW) data are not possible because of different definitions of domestic abuse and age parameters. The same problem occurs when attempts are made to compare rape statistics across the UK. The raw data show that Northern Ireland is close to the England and Wales figure for reported rapes in 2012/13: 29 per 100,000 in both cases, higher than Scotland which reports 26 per 100,000 for the same year. But the first fully comprehensive review, *An Overview of Sexual Crimes*, published by the Ministry of Justice and the ONS in January 2013, warned against making comparisons across the UK, because of cultural differences and different recording systems.

In all parts of the UK rape figures now have to take account of the changed culture since the revelations of widescale sexual abuse by the former BBC celebrity Jimmy Savile. This has resulted in more historic cases being reported. In Northern Ireland 40 per cent of all cases reported in 2012/13 took place more than 12 months earlier. The number of recorded rapes reached its highest level in 2011/12 with a total of 553 offences; in 2012/13 it dropped by 20 (3.6 per cent) to 533.

4. The Paramilitaries

4.1 Overview

The official position of the British government is that the security threat from paramilitaries in Northern Ireland is 'severe'. The security threat in the rest of the UK is pitched two grades lower at 'moderate'. When the dial is set to severe it means that violent attacks are highly likely. Moderate means that while an attack is possible it is not likely.

The Northern Ireland 'severe' grade has been in place since 24 September 2010, when a separate ranking was introduced for the first time. Hitherto the UK had been assessed as a single unit, but the actions of 'dissident' republicans produced a statistical effect which coloured international perceptions of Britain's vulnerability to jihadist attacks. In 2011, for example, the Terrorism Risk Index (TRI) produced by the respected global intelligence company Maplecroft placed Britain in the 'medium risk' category, far ahead of other western states which were deemed 'low risk'. In fact the TRI recorded that of the 26 'terrorist' attacks in the UK between April 2010 and March 2011, all but one had occurred in Northern Ireland. The 2013 report from Maplecroft reflected greater confidence about the UK's security overall and a reduction in the scale of the threat from dissident republicans. It downgradedthe UK from 'moderate' to 'low risk', a change attributed in part to 'a decline in successful attacks by republican terrorist organisations'.

Part of the confidence shown by Maplecroft derived from MI5 briefings. The British Security Service is confident that dissident republicans no longer have the capacity or, as the Secretary of State, Theresa Villiers, put it in a briefing to Parliament on 31 October 2012, the 'sophistication and potency' to pose a threat to 'national security' outside Northern Ireland. In oral evidence to the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament on 17 January 2013, the outgoing Director of the Security Service, Sir Jonathan Evans, portrayed the dissident-republican campaign as functioning at a low level: "In my judgement the threat is not, overall, going up. But equally it is not being extinguished". His successor, Andrew Parker, was if anything a little more bullish when giving evidence to the committee on 7 November 2013: "... the terrorists over there are a small number of people, a residue of terrorism from what I would call a bygone era".

The statistics issued by the PSNI support the idea there has been a decline but the figures also evidence something well understood in working-class communities on both sides of the sectarian divide: paramilitaries are still very much part of today's reality. Chart 30 shows how deaths, bombings and shootings have all been in a long-term decline since their peak in 2001-02, but still show no sign of going away. The figures for 2013 show:

- There was one security-related death, that of Kevin Kearney, killed by dissident republicans in north Belfast on 8 October.

Calibration of security threat

- **Critical**
  - attack expected imminently
- **Severe**
  - attack highly likely
- **Substantial**
  - attack a strong possibility
- **Moderate**
  - attack possible but not likely
- **Low**
  - an attack unlikely

Northern Ireland has still not experienced a year without a death since the outbreak of the 'troubles' but one is as low a figure as has ever been achieved.

- There were 27 paramilitary-style shootings, almost all by dissident republicans. This is six fewer than the 33 in 2012.
- There were 43 paramilitary assaults, a drop of 12 from the 2012 total.
- Shooting incidents decreased from 73 to 48.
- Bombing incidents went against the general downward trend. There was an increase from 34 to 73, with the big increase coming in the latter part of the year in a more concerted campaign by dissident republicans.

The Chief Constable has made a distinction between the 'political' activities of loyalist groups and their 'criminal' activities.

The dogs that didn't bark

As Sherlock Holmes observed great significance can be attached to the dog that didn't bark. Among the things significant by their absence over the past year:

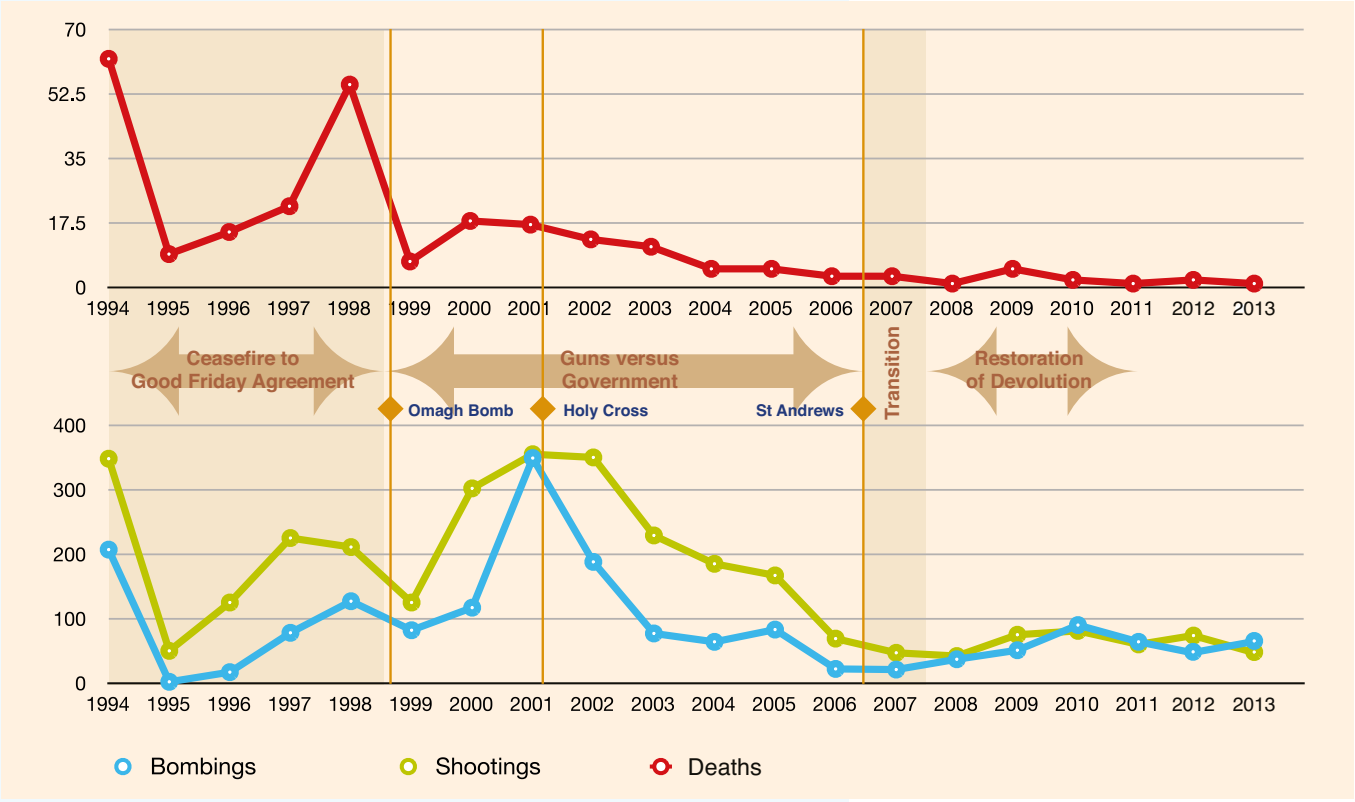
- No police officer was killed.
- There were no sectarian attacks where a Catholic was killed by a Protestant, or a Protestant by a Catholic.
- No-one was killed in a bomb explosion.
- There were no paramilitary assaults in March 2013, and no paramilitary shootings in the months of August or December 2013 or in January 2014.

Perhaps the most significant absence of paramilitary activity came during the G8 summit in Fermanagh in June. That the British government and the Security Service felt sufficiently confident to offer Northern Ireland as a host venue was in itself a statement more powerful than the briefings given to Parliament or its security committee. Previous G8 summits had attracted large-scale protests and public disorder. The British government took a gamble bringing the event to Northern Ireland. With the world's press in attendance any publicity-seeking action by dissident republicans would have benefited from having such a huge magnifying glass over it. In the event, with only two arrests it was the most peaceful G8 in living memory.

The scale of paramilitary activity in Northern Ireland needs to be seen in comparison with the statistics for deaths and injuries caused by the narco-gangs in the Republic of Ireland reveal much heavier casualties. An article in the *Irish Times* estimated that since the killing of the investigative journalist Veronica Guerin in 1996 almost 300 had been killed in 'gangland' killings – most by shootings (Brady, 10/10/13). In 2006, the peak year, 26 were killed. What comparisons with criminal gangs in the Republic or Great

Britain do not take into account, however, is the very different status enjoyed by paramilitaries in Northern Ireland – or, more precisely, loyalist paramilitaries, since the dispensation does not apply to dissident republican groups.

Chart 30: Security related deaths, bombings and shootings in Northern Ireland since the 1994 ceasefires



The Chief Constable has made a distinction between the 'political' activities of loyalist groups and their 'criminal' activities. Thus, while Assistant Chief Constable Drew Harris described the Ulster Volunteer Force to the Policing Board in October 2013 as an "organised crime group (with) involvement in drug dealing, all forms of gangsterism, serious assaults, [and] intimidation of the community", its representatives, along with representatives of the UDA have been involved in consultations with senior PSNI figures on community safety. They have also been involved in public fora with the political leadership of unionism, including the First Minister. The annual report of the Intelligence and Security Committee has taken the line from the Chief Constable, Matt Baggott, that the two main loyalist paramilitaries 'remain committed to the peace process'.

4.2 The dissident republicans

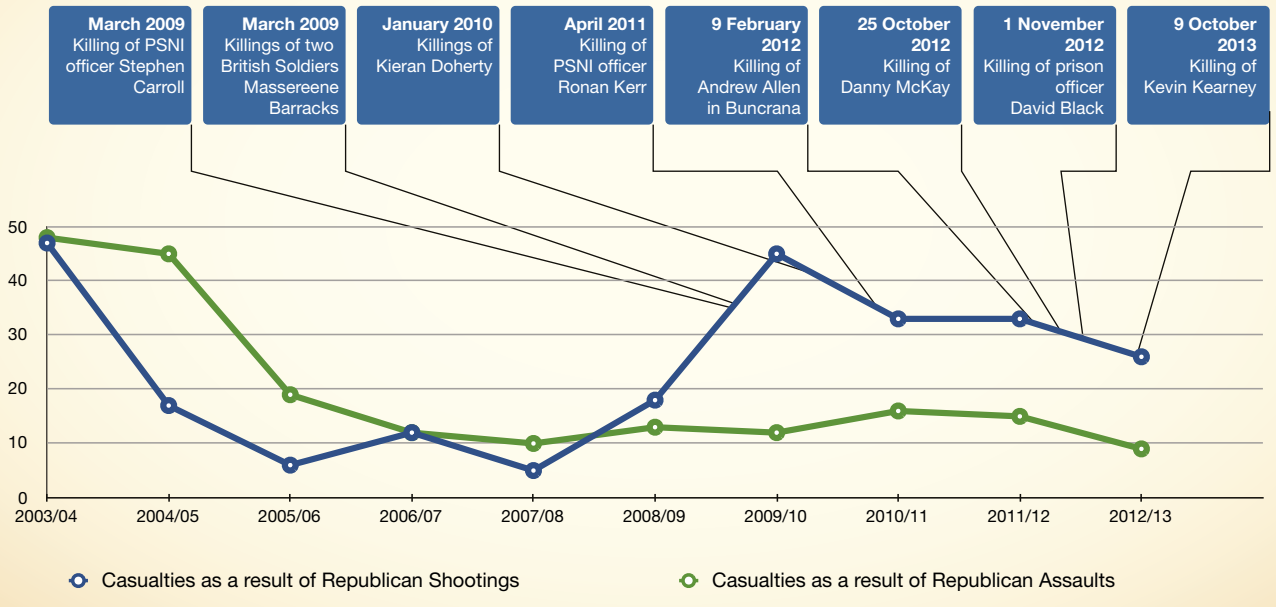
The campaign of the violent dissident groups has been weakened in the past year by its fissiparous nature. New groups, each claiming the mantle of the Provisional IRA, emerge regularly before fading back into obscurity. In August 2012 an attempt had been made to pull together an alliance of three different factions under the name the 'IRA' – or as it is described by the PSNI, the 'New IRA' – but despite its portentous statements the new organisation

failed to increase the tempo of attacks in the manner threatened. The capacity of the armed dissident groups decreased in 2013 and their political presence diminished in parallel. By the end of the year the new alliance was falling apart and the constituent parts returned to operate as autonomous local units.

The episode proved revealing of the strengths and weaknesses of dissident republicans. The dense local networks, often based on inter-generational family groups, have allowed a low-level military campaign to be sustained; the closeness of these networks however makes co-operation with others difficult for anything other than a very brief period (for a further analysis see Nolan, 2013). All those involved in violent activity are keenly aware that the Security Service strategy, led by MI5, is based on penetration by agents and informers, and the success of this strategy is seen in the number of thwarted operations and individuals brought before the courts. The arrests lead to mistrust and the mistrust is well-placed. Between 2010-11 and 2012-13 there were 511 arrests under the Terrorism Act, mainly of dissident republicans, and 130 were subsequently charged. The most significant breakthrough for the security forces came in 2011 with the discovery of huge cache of weapons in a lock-up garage in Coalisland. One dissident republican has already been convicted in relation to this but the scale of this investigation is huge. Up to January 2014 there have been 11,750 police tasks of actions (more than in the Omagh bomb investigation) and the Belfast Telegraph quotes a PSNI source as saying the whole investigation could take up to five years (Kilpatrick, 2014).

While dissidents can unsettle daily existence the intensity of the violence is very low. The trend in the latter part of 2013 was towards the disruption of commercial life, with tactics constantly shifting. In October and November there were phone hoaxes which had the effect of disrupting traffic, and in November and December bombs

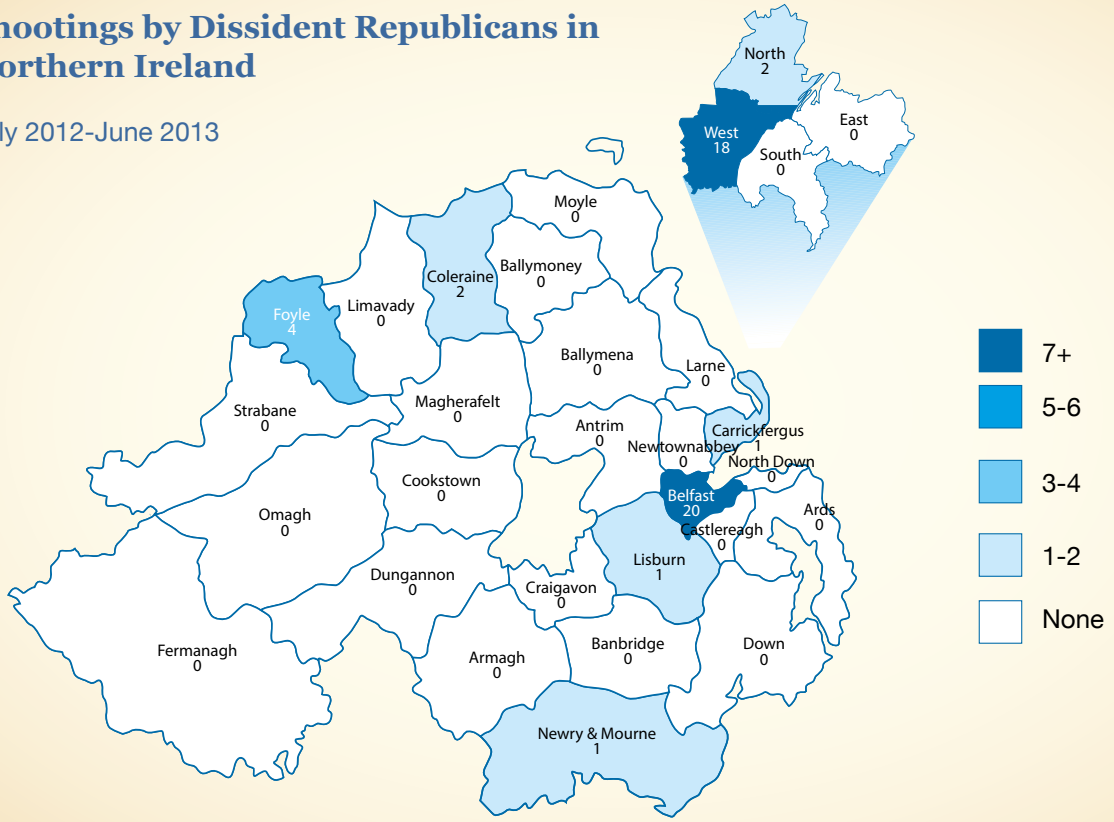
Dissident shootings, assaults and murders 2003-2013



were taken into Belfast city centre to create alarm among Christmas shoppers. The PSNI reintroduced road blocks on all main roads into the city and by 10 December had set up 323 checkpoints around Belfast and searched 1,784 vehicles. The bombers then carried a bomb in a holdall to deposit it near a busy restaurant in the Cathedral Quarter. This cat-and-mouse game followed the Provisional IRA, which in the 1980s and 1990s had no strategic goal other than to keep the 'armed struggle' going.

Shootings by Dissident Republicans in Northern Ireland

July 2012-June 2013



While the dissidents find it easy to dismiss criticism from Sinn Fein sources, there has been increasing public criticism of their tactics from anti-agreement republicans who are themselves highly critical of the Sinn Fein peace strategy. In December 2013 two high profile opponents of the Sinn Fein leadership, Anthony McIntyre and Richard O'Rawe told the News Letter that the dissidents' campaign was 'madness'. Even more significant was an interview in the Irish News with Dominic McGlinchey Jnr, whose late father remains legendary in dissident circles. McGlinchey explained that he didn't believe there was sufficient support in the nationalist community for an armed campaign: "That's not to say there is not considerable support among certain segments of republicanism for particular types of resistance, but what is very clear is that the appetite is not there for a full blown campaign."(Irish News, 8/1/14).

4.3 Loyalist paramilitaries

Twenty years after the Combined Loyalist Military Command declared the loyalist ceasefires in 1994 the two main paramilitary organisations, the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) are still very much in existence. In fact the past year has seen a revival of their fortunes, and the attainment of a new respectability. The turning point came in December 2012 with the beginning of the flags protest. Prior to that point the loyalist paramilitary organisations had difficulty explaining their continued existence. A benign narrative presented the loyalist leadership shepherding their followers into community development activities, often in partnership with republican former prisoners; a less benign interpretation took stock of their heavy involvement in criminal activities, and concluded that peacebuilding initiatives such as the painting over of murals were no more than a fig-leaf for their main business, racketeering. What has made the benign view increasingly difficult to sustain has been the fact while the paramilitary groups were ostensibly in the process of winding down, both the UDA and the UVF were continuing to recruit young people into their ranks.

If there is something incongruous about police sitting down with members of illegal organisations to discuss law-and-order matters, it is an incongruity that has lost its power to surprise

The flags protest changed the dynamic in quite a remarkable way. The ethnic solidarity by the unionist community allowed for a new tolerance of paramilitary structures by the DUP and the UUP. On 10 January 2013, just a month after the flags protest began, the Unionist Forum held its first meeting at Stormont. The First Minister Peter Robinson was photographed shaking hands with Jackie McDonald, the UDA Brigadier. A PUP member present at that meeting was subsequently named by the BBC as the UVF commander in north Belfast (a claim he denies). When asked by the BBC if the Unionist Forum was engaging with loyalist paramilitaries Peter Robinson replied: “We will talk to anyone who wants to talk to us about how we can move forward in an exclusively peaceful and democratic manner” (BBC News, 10/1/13).

This new respectability allowed the PSNI to include those publicly associated with paramilitarism to join them in the sessions of the ‘Cardiff group’. This group represented a coming together of police personnel with academics, politicians, civil servants and community leaders to look at issues of policing. The first meeting, held in the run-up to the 2013 marching season, was held in Cardiff and thereafter the name attached to the group. If there is something incongruous about police sitting down with members of illegal organisations to discuss law-and-order matters, it is an incongruity that has lost its power to surprise because the peace process has long accepted it as a modus operandi. For example, the individual named by the BBC as a UVF Commander had been a regular member of the North Belfast Community and Safety Partnership which exists to allow the PSNI to cooperate with local community representatives.

The historical commemorations during the year allowed the paramilitaries, and in particular the UVF, to take part in public parades like the one organised in April 2013 to commemorate the centenary of the founding of the original UVF, which went on to

fight in WW1 as the 36th Ulster Division. Many of the marchers dressed in period costume and the organisers insisted that the UVF being honoured by the march was the historical one and not the present-day grouping. Onlookers could have been forgiven for thinking the distinction between the two had been collapsed. As the Belfast Telegraph observed, well-known leaders of the present-day UVF marched not in period costume but in suits with armbands displaying their membership of the current structure. With another loyalist supergrass trial scheduled for 2014 the Belfast Telegraph saw this show of strength as a 'warning to the authorities' (Belfast Telegraph, 23/314).

At the beginning of December the Chief Constable warned the Policing Board of a 'potentially volatile' situation within the loyalist paramilitary groups. Some of this had already been made public: the UDA Brigadier Jackie McDonald had been mocked on Twitter and other UDA leaders had their homes picketed by dissident who identified with a more militant form of loyalism. The tensions between the UVF Commander in East Belfast and the Shankill-based leadership feature regularly in the lurid red-top Sunday papers which are fed a regular diet of this material from within the ranks. In September the shooting of a young female care worker who had at one time been the girlfriend of the East Belfast Commander brought the situation to the brink. The woman was not killed, but the injuries to her abdomen and lower limbs were serious and the victimisation of a female in this way raised questions about the latitude allowed to the UVF. Similarly, the UDA shooting a 15-year old in Coleraine in November created an outrage about the activities of that organisation.

On 30 January 2014 the Irish News carried a photograph of the PSNI in riot gear guarding a pub on York Road Belfast. Inside the pub a meeting of the UDA was taking place; outside was a group of local people, mainly women, protesting about UDA intimidation in the area. The paper was contrasting what appeared to be the protection of the UDA meeting with an incident in 2006, again on York Road. On that previous occasion, when Sir Hugh Orde was Chief Constable, the bar was raided, 17 people were arrested and convictions followed for membership of an illegal organisation. The official thinking on this disparity was given, coincidentally, in a statement on the security situation by the Secretary of State to the House of Commons on 30 January, the same day as the Irish News ran its story. In her statement she said that loyalist paramilitaries continue to be heavily involved in crime, drug-dealing, racketeering and intimidation, but, she added, "We continue to assess that the collective leaderships of the UDA and UVF remain committed to the peace process and reform of their organisations".

5. Policing

5.1 Strength and composition

In the past year the PSNI has found its capacity severely tested. The pressures of the G8 summit in June 2013 were foreseeable,

but the protracted public-order crisis that ran throughout the year had not been anticipated. The Patten Commission had recommended significant downsizing, and the workforce has been reduced from 16,000 in 1999 to just under 7,000 in 2014. Patten tended to use police officers (as opposed to total staff) as the measure and set a target of 7,500. This was achieved in 2004 and by January 2014, following a freeze on recruitment, the number of officers had dropped to 6,860.

While workforce numbers fell, the budget however rose: in 2001 it stood at £652 million but by 2011/12 had almost doubled, reaching £1.2 billion. Payroll costs accounted for 46 per cent of this but in Northern Ireland other staffing costs are particularly burdensome – chief among them the very high pensions bill which followed from Patten. This accounts for 24 per cent of total resource spending which, with other personnel expenditure, brings the staffing costs of the PSNI close to 80 per cent of its budget (CJI, 2013). A further, extraordinary cost was revealed in January 2014 in response to a Freedom of Information request by Relatives for Justice. The PSNI issued a statement saying that more than £135m was paid to settle claims by former officers who said their hearing was damaged during the course of their duties. The payout, which went to 8,461 former officers (more than are currently in the force) was split between the officers who provided medical evidence of deafness caused by firearms training, and their lawyers. The officers have been paid £70m, and the lawyers £65m. The total, £135m, comprises approximately 10% of total spend.

Reductions in the budget are likely to continue to put a squeeze on workforce numbers. The Comprehensive Spending Review extended the government's austerity programme to policing: the PSNI was required to make savings of, coincidentally, another £135 million in 2011/15. Even before the public-order disturbances had begun to eat into the annual budget, concern had been expressed. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has assessed that any cuts above 15 per cent would require transformational change. The Chief Constable, Mr Baggott, has argued that police numbers cannot be allowed to fall further and must be 'maintained around the 7,000 mark'.

What size should the PSNI be?

A Home Office staffing model based on geographical and population estimates suggested the PSNI should have around 4,300 officers and 1,700 civilians – around 62 per cent of current officers and 72 per cent of other staff. The HMIC uses a comparison model based on what is known as the most similar group (MSG) of forces. The MSG for Northern Ireland includes Nottinghamshire, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, Northumbria and West Midlands. The HMIC recognises however that policing in Northern Ireland faces unique challenges - not least because over one-third (34 per cent) of the budget is given over to dealing with the security situation. If the analysis is based on officer time that proportion goes up: a Freedom of Information request revealed that 43 per cent of officer payroll expenditure was dedicated to security duties.

The number of officers in An Garda Síochána stands at 13,150 (as of October 2013), almost 1,500 below the peak of 14,600 which obtained before the economy collapsed. With natural wastage through retirements of between 250 and 450 per year, the total will drop to below 13,000 before the next planned intake in late 2014 or early 2015.

Chart 33: Numbers of Police officers in relation to population size

	Population	Police officers 2012	Police officers 2013	Population per officer
England & Wales	56,567,796	13,4101	129,584	436
Scotland	5,313,600	17,436	17,496	304
NI	1,823,634	7,086	6,860	265
ROI	4,593,100	13,150	13,150	344

Sources: ONS, PSNI, An Garda Síochána

The dissident threat prompted an increase in the PSNI budget in 2011. The Westminster government agreed a temporary increase of £199.5 million from the Treasury, augmented by a further £45 million from the Northern Ireland Assembly, bringing the increase to roughly £60 million per annum over four years. This money is expended primarily on the workforce, and has funded 260 officers and 100 civilian staff. Recruitment of the latter through an agency created a crisis for the PSNI in October 2012, when an Audit Office report drew attention to the number of former Royal Ulster Constabulary officers being brought back into the service without going through the usual equal-opportunities procedures (see Peace Monitoring Report 2) and as a result the Chief Constable was admonished by the Policing Board.

As part of the restructuring of public services, however, many policing functions continue to be outsourced or privatised. About a quarter of the PSNI workforce comprises civilian staff, significantly less than in England and Wales where civilian staff make up one in three of the police workforce (CJI, 2013). Civilianisation and outsourcing complicate staff comparisons with other forces but if the figures are based on police officers alone Northern Ireland still has the highest ratio of officers to population (Chart 33).

Adding to the numbers

As part of the policing of the G8 summit in Co Fermanagh in June 2013, the PSNI brought in 3,600 officers from English, Scottish and Welsh forces under 'mutual aid'. As this was a 'national security' operation the costs of the additional police were covered by the Treasury. In July 1,000 mutual-aid officers were drafted in to cope with the riots that accompanied the marching season – on this occasion the costs fell to the PSNI. The additional police were given special training to cope with disorder they would not previously have encountered and with forms of force not used in Great Britain, such as armoured Land Rovers and water cannon.

"Our mutual aid colleagues have done a tremendous job, but many have been surprised by what they have seen," one senior PSNI officer told the BBC. 'The threat level is very different to what they have faced before. In the rest of the UK, rioters tend to run away from police lines and avoid confrontation, while here they actively target police. It is a very different dynamic."

The Chief Constable reported to the September 2013 meeting of the Policing Board that 689 officers had been hurt between July 2012 and August 2013, 10 per cent of the total. Mr Baggott highlighted that policing disorder had cost £15.4 million in April to July alone, drawing the PSNI away from normal policing duties: he claimed there had been 3,000 fewer arrests, compared with the same period of 2012, because officers were being regularly diverted to the frontline of street protests. The Police Federation for Northern Ireland called for 1,000 officers to be recruited ''as a matter of urgency".

New recruitment began in the autumn of 2013 with an initial intake of 100, with a further 378 recruits scheduled to follow in 2014/15. With the average age now hovering around 40 and an estimated 1,200 officers eligible to maximise their pension benefits and to retire by 2016, the new trainees have been brought in simply to maintain capacity. The recruitment drive has also been planned in such a way as to meet other targets. The then Deputy Chief Constable Judith Gillespie told the May 2013 meeting of the Policing Board that the recruitment exercise would target women, Catholics and members of ethnic minorities. Recruitment will also focus on geographical imbalances, particularly in Foyle, Strabane and Omagh, predominantly Catholic areas in the north-west where it is important that the PSNI is seen to be representative of both main religious communities.

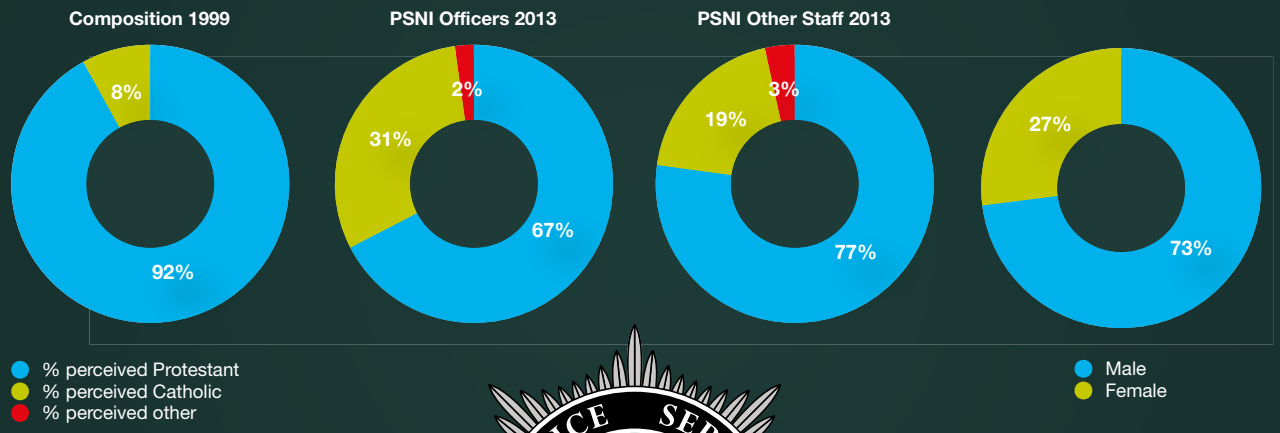
5.2 Religion, gender and ethnicity

The Patten Commission saw religious balance as crucial to the success of the new police service and set a 50/50 Catholic/non-Catholic quota for new recruits, to apply until a threshold of 30 per cent Catholic composition had been achieved. In March 2011 the then Secretary of State, Owen Paterson, determined that with the meeting of the threshold the quota arrangement should be terminated. This decision was supported by the Justice Minister, David Ford. In 2013 the proportion of Catholic officers still stands at just over 30 per cent. The target had however only been reached for officers. The Patten commission had applied the quota to all staff but, as we can see from the chart, Catholics still comprise less than a fifth of the support staff.

Catholics make up 45 per cent of the population as a whole. The quota system which saw a 50/50 intake during the ten years from 2001 to 2011 should be tilting the proportions more towards a balanced workforce by now, but the re-balancing started from a very low base – 8% at the time of Patten.

Strength and Composition of the PSNI

Religious composition of PSNI



Gender composition of PSNI

1999

In 1999 when the Patten Report was issued the security presence in Northern Ireland was made up in the following way:

13,000 RUC officers

8,500 regular officers
2,500 Full-time reserve officers
1,300 Part-time reserve officers

In addition there were

11,400 British soldiers

The strength of the British Army varied with circumstance. At its peak in 1972 there were 27,500 soldiers in Northern Ireland. At flashpoint moments like the Drumcree disturbances of the mid-1990s the total security force was 30,000.

2014

In 2014 the PSNI numbers

6,888 officers

Chart 34: Religious composition PSNI officers

	% perceived Protestant	% perceived Catholic	% perceived other	Total
2012	67.4	30.4	2.2	7,086
2013	67.1	30.7	2.2	6,888

Chart 35: Religious composition-other staff

	% perceived Protestant	% perceived Catholic	% perceived other	Total
2012	77.9	18.9	3.2	2,486
2013	77.2	19.4	3.47	2,476

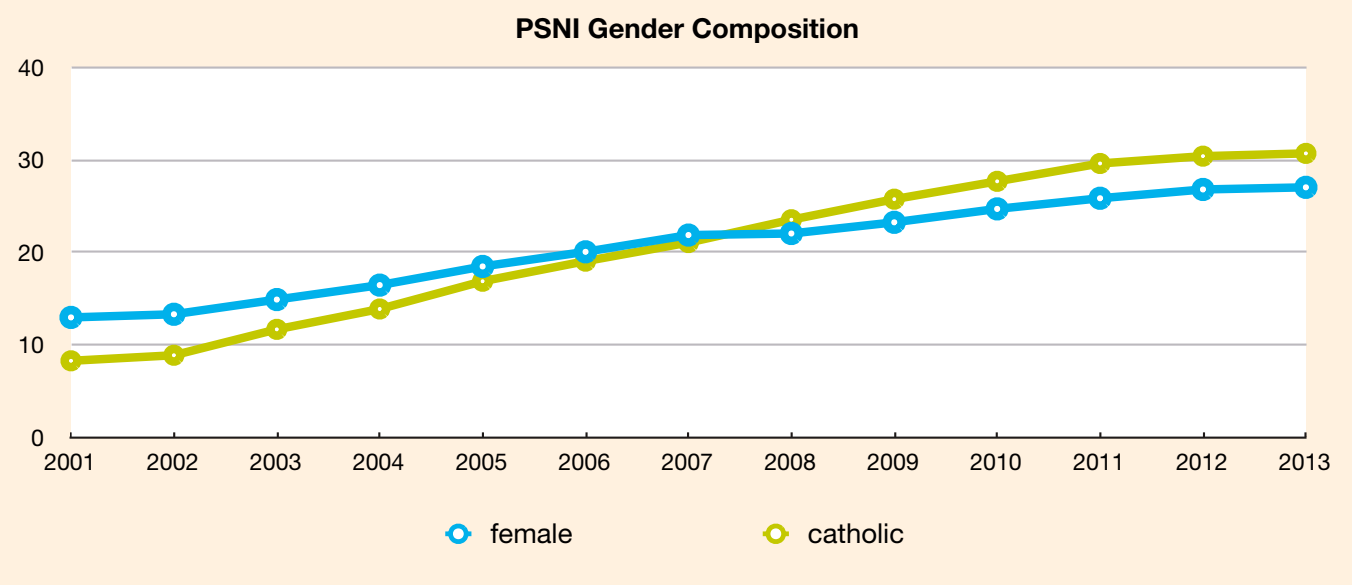
Gender was not an issue for the Patten Commission but, in line with societal trends, has become more prominent in policing debates since. In 2001 when the PSNI was established 13 per cent of officers were female; that had increased to just over 27 per cent by 2013, on a par with other forces in the UK. The gender breakdown (below) shows the highest proportion in the lower, more recently recruited ranks – one in four sergeants and 42 per cent of constables.

Chart 36: Gender in the PSNI

RANK	MALE	FEMALE
Chief Constable	1	0
Deputy Chief Constable	0	1
ACC	5	0
Chief Superintendent	16	1
Superintendent	37	11
Chief Inspector	72	16
Inspector	289	51
Sergeant	810	207
Constable	3,776	1,577
Total	5006	1864

Source: Figures supplied to the PMR on request

Ethnic-minority recruits to support or officer roles remain disproportionately low. The 25 or so individuals include Chinese, Pakistanis, Africans and Indians. They represent only 0.6 per cent of support staff and 0.5 per cent of officers.



Retention rates – who is leaving?

The first Peace Monitoring Report drew attention to the fact that from 2001 to 2011 Catholics were disproportionately represented in the numbers leaving early: 58 per cent of those leaving after one year were Catholic. That trend has reversed itself and now Protestants are leaving in greater numbers. Between January 2008 and December 2012 1,846 officers left the PSNI. This stemmed mostly from natural wastage and, with Protestants predominating in the older cohorts, it is not surprising that they accounted for 1,497 or 81 per cent.

Through a Freedom of Information request the *Ulster Herald* discovered that 193 police officers were expected to leave in the 2013/14 financial year. The paper estimated that between April 2010 and March 2014 the PSNI would have lost 1,029 officers. If so, the momentum will have increased but the annual turnover is still comparatively low. The number of voluntary leavers averaged 274 per annum for 2008/12, about 4.3 per cent of staff. This appears to be lower than in other UK police forces although reliable comparisons are difficult to make because the figures for voluntary departures in England, Scotland and Wales are now tied up with the reductions enforced by austerity budgets. The best source for figures before the redundancy programme is a 2004 report, *Retention of Police Officers*. This concluded that 'wastage rates were comparatively low for the police service as a whole', giving the annual figure as 6 per cent.

Community background	2008	%	2009	%	2010	%	2011	%	2012	%	Total
Protestant	407	82.2%	391	80.8%	351	81.3%	216	81.5%	132	77.6%	81%
Catholic	78	15.8%	75	15.5%	67	15.5%	44	16.6%	34	20%	16.1%
Undetermined	10	2%	18	3.7%	14	3.2%	5	1.9%	4	2.4%	2.8%
Total	495		484		432		265		170		1,846

How does the Garda Síochána compare? An article in the *Irish Times* (16/10/13) put the average annual figure for leavers at between 250 and 450. Taking the mid-point, 350, as the basis for a calculation, the turnover out of a total of approximately 13,000 officers is 2.7 per cent, a remarkably low figure. Across all employment sectors in the UK voluntary turnover in 2012 was 10 per cent. The journal *HR Director* reports than in the public sector the average rate is lower (8.1 per cent) than in private companies (12.2 per cent). Voluntary departure from the PSNI may therefore be seen as high when compared with the Garda Síochána but looked at against other comparators it is low – particularly remembering that one in ten suffered physical injury last year amid public disorder and that all officers live with the death threat from dissident republicans.

5.3 The use of police powers

Stop and Search

The use of stop-and-search powers continues to be a source of friction between police and communities across the UK. According to a report from the HMIC in July 2013, more than a quarter (27%) were conducted in England and Wales without any reasonable grounds for the procedure to be used. The report, *Stop and Search Powers: Are the police using them effectively and fairly?*, was commissioned as a response to criticism in the wake of the 2011 English riots. The survey, based on interviews with 19,000 people, found that over a million stop-and-search encounters had been recorded every year since 2006, but in 2011/12 only 9 per cent had led to arrests. A low arrest rate can imply police harassment. Following the 2011 riots the Metropolitan Police set an arrest target of 20 per cent for those subjected to search procedures. In 2012 the numbers subjected to stop-and-search went up by 6 per cent, but the arrest rate of 9 per cent was considerably below that target that had been set and represents a falling back: the HMIC concluded that the priority given to ameliorating stop-and-search had fallen even since the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report in 1999. Following its report, the Home Secretary Theresa May announced a consultation in England and Wales, saying that it was 'important to get stop and search right'.

In Northern Ireland the proportion of arrests to encounters is even lower: in 2012/13 it was just under 6 per cent. This marked an increase on previous years, against a fall in those subjected to stop and search from 37,210 in 2011/12 to 31,468 in 2012/13, but considerable concern about the application of these powers remains. A report from the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) in November 2012, *Still Part of Life Here?*, argued that on occasion the PSNI used the powers not to search for weapons but for the 'disruption' of persons suspected to be dissident republicans. The code of practice which governs the use of the Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT) specifically bars the use of stop and search as a 'deterrent or intelligence gathering tool'.

No such guideline was in place to govern the use of a separate piece of legislation, the Justice and Security Act (2007), which became the core issue in the cases of Canning and Fox. Marvin Canning, brother–in-law of Martin McGuinness, had been stopped more than 100 times by the PSNI. While Canning acknowledged he was a member of the 32 County Sovereignty Movement, he argued that this was not an illegal organisation. Bernard Fox, a former hunger striker, also claimed that the use of stop and search against him constituted a breach of his right to privacy. Their claims were upheld in the Court of Appeal on 9 May by Lord Justice Girvan, who ruled that the absence of a code of practice under section 21 of the JSA allowed for arbitrary use of the legislation. “Pending the introduction of such a code the PSNI does not have a proper convention law compliant basis for exercising the section 21 power,” he ruled. The PSNI suspended resort to sections 21 and 24 of the act and a code of practice was drawn up which took effect from 15 May 2013. An attempt by the PSNI to challenge the Court of Appeal decision, on the basis that the legislation had been amended, was abandoned in September.

A full review of stop-and-search legislation from a human-rights perspective was provided by the Human Rights Adviser to the Policing Board in October 2013. The report came down firmly in support of special stop-and-search legislation in Northern Ireland in light of the threat from dissident republicans. That conclusion echoed the view of the Independent Reviewer of the JSA, Robert Whalley, who, in his most recent report, said the legislation was a necessary and proportionate response to the security threat. Both however considered the application of the legislation and the perception in a section of the Catholic community that its day-to-day working was oppressive and counter-productive. The report from the Human Rights Adviser noted that during 2012/13 more than half of those stopped had been under 26: “That does not of itself demonstrate that the powers are being used inappropriately but it certainly should alert the PSNI to that possibility”(page 92).

The community background of those subjected to stop and search is not however monitored. The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has asked the British government to provide ‘detailed statistical data disaggregated by ethnicity and community origin’ on its use of stop and search. In England, Scotland and Wales monitoring for ethnicity is now routine; Northern Ireland is the exception. The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the CAJ have urged the PSNI to monitor for ethnicity and religion and, in the *Thematic Review of Stop and Search Powers*, the Human Rights Adviser recommended that the PSNI ‘should as soon as reasonably practicable but in any event within 3 months of the publication’ (by the end of January 2014) introduce effective monitoring by community background of all those subjected to stop and search.

Chart 39: The arrest rate following stop and search (%)

	2010/11	2011/2012	2012/13
Police and Criminal Evidence Order (PACE)	6.8	7.6	8.1
Terrorism Act (TACT) s43	1.3	4.7	6.6
Terrorism Act (TACT) s44	0.6	-	-
Justice and Security Act s21	0.5	1.2	1.3
Justice and Security Act s24	0.8	0.9	1.1
Overall arrest rate	3.8	4.8	6.0

Source: PSNI stop-and-search statistics

The arrest rate following stop and search is very low in Northern Ireland – even lower than the 9 per cent in England and Wales which the Home Secretary has deemed unacceptable. There are a number of legislative powers governing stop-and-search encounters. The Justice and Security Act (JSA) empowered the PSNI to stop and search without reasonable suspicion as a criterion. Unsurprisingly, the arrest rate in JSA cases is significantly lower than in Police and Criminal Evidence Order (PACE) cases where reasonable suspicion is required. Until July 2012 no authorisation was required for the use of JSA; afterwards the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 required an internal authorisation. Following its introduction the use of JSA has fallen by 40 per cent.

Covert policing

Following an arrangement arrived at in October 2006, the lead role in providing intelligence on dissident republicans is carried out by MI5. Its new Northern Ireland headquarters, Loughside – far bigger than its eight other regional UK stations – was constructed inside the British army's former base at Palace Barracks, Holywood. The cost was estimated at £20 million and the size of the building (it has capacity for up to 400 people) was explained by the fact that it is MI5's number two base and would become its operational centre in the event of any attack on the London headquarters. The bedding down of MI5 in Northern Ireland is the result of a negotiation conducted after the St Andrew's Agreement of 2006, the product of talks among the British and Irish governments and the main Northern Ireland political parties. Although the arrangement is sometimes described as part of the Agreement (and referred to as 'Annex E' of the document) it was in fact the result of a subsequent and separate agreement between the two governments, 'building on useful discussions between the parties on the issues'.

In essence, the arrangement gives MI5 lead responsibility for 'national security' within Northern Ireland, and that means

giving MI5 the primary responsibility for intelligence-gathering on dissident republicans. This remit does not extend to loyalist groups. Writing in the March 2008 edition of *Monitor*, the journal of the Royal United Services Institute think-tank, Margaret Gilmore, a fellow of the institute, explained the rationale: "Security sources admit MI5 officers in Northern Ireland will focus almost exclusively on republican dissident groups that they deem a threat to national security, while they believe loyalist dissidents are more a law and order / serious crime problem and should be dealt with by the police'.'

The operational details of MI5 activity are, officially, state secrets. As a consequence it is difficult to document them in any way, but the few glimpses that have found their way into the public record seem almost out of a futuristic TV crime series. For example, when veteran republican Colin Duffy was in court in December 2014 charged with paramilitary offences it emerged that tiny listening devices had been placed in his clothing, and that even the green where he went for a walk had been fitted with micro surveillance devices. In an interview with the Guardian (McDonald, 2014) the veteran republican Gerard Hodgkins said that the use of surveillance technology had made military activities by republicans 'extremely difficult...the widespread use of this technology gives the British almost permanent eyes and ears in places the dissidents would frequent'. Intriguing as it is, the technology side of MI5's operation is still the lesser part; the main effort is still directed through Covert Human Intelligences Sources, known through the acronym CHIS but more commonly thtough a term familiar throughout Irish history, informers. In the MI5 budgets presented to the Security and Intelligence Committee at Westminster all financial details of these payments are redacted.

To nationalists, the focus on one side of the community seems lop-sided and reminiscent of the biases displayed in an earlier period by the Ulster Defence Regiment and the RUC Special Branch. In 2012 the CAJ published a report, *The Policing You Don't See*, in which it criticised the lack of transparency in the accountability arrangements. The NGO argued that if the old Special Branch had operated as 'a force within a force', MI5's relationship to the PSNI was that of a force outside a force (see Peace Monitoring Report 2). This concern was given additional force in August 2013 by a new report on the 1998 Omagh bomb. Commissioned by the families of the victims and compiled by security experts through the London law firm SBP, this concluded that MI5 and the US FBI had 'starved' the police in Northern Ireland of information and that had there been more centralised intelligence-gathering vital information would have been fed through to the police. While the Omagh bomb predated the current arrangements, the allegations of MI5 secrecy matched concerns about its present-day operations. Such concerns have though been tempered by recognition of the success of MI5 in keeping the lid on the dissident threat.

'the widespread use of this technology gives the British almost permanent eyes and ears in places the dissidents would frequent.'

National Crime Agency

The National Crime Agency (NCA) is a law-enforcement body set up to replace the Serious Organised Crime Agency. It has been described as a British FBI, bringing together a range of policing operations under centralised command and able to target criminals across local, national and international borders. It came into being under the Crime and Courts Act, which received royal assent in April 2013, was launched in October and became fully operational in December– except in Northern Ireland. Sinn Féin and the SDLP blocked the attempt to have the new agency operate in the region, on grounds of accountability. The NCA head will be directly accountable to the Home Secretary for the agency's actions – not to the chief constable of the PSNI, the Policing Board or the Police Ombudsman. Gerry Kelly of Sinn Féin said this lay outside the mechanisms set up under the Good Friday Agreement and amounted to another police force. "Legislatively they are not accountable," he said, "and they should be accountable."

The PSNI was very publicly in favour of the NCA operating within Northern Ireland, as was the Justice Minister (and Alliance Party leader), David Ford. Assistant Chief Constable Drew Harris said that the decision would leave the PSNI as the 'poor cousins' in the fight against serious organised crime gangs operating within and beyond the region.

5.4 PSNI – audit and accountability

The PSNI is subject to inspection by a number of bodies:

The Policing Board: The Northern Ireland Policing Board was set up in 2001 and, following the devolution of policing and justice in April 2010, became an executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) of the Department of Justice. Its statutory duty is to ensure that the PSNI is effective and to hold the Chief Constable to account. Its 2012/13 annual report provides a broadly favourable account of how PSNI performed against its targets: all but one (staff absenteeism) of the 44 performance targets was deemed to have been 'achieved' or 'partly achieved'.

The Northern Ireland Audit Office has responsibility for auditing the work of the Policing Board and this includes an assessment of the accuracy of the board's own report. Its *Review of Continuous Improvement in Policing*, issued in September 2013, was critical of the board. It pointed out that of the 44 performance targets 40 were not quantifiable and movement was described using such vague terms as 'increase' or 'decrease'. The Comptroller General, Kieran Donnelly, wrote: "I do not consider that those standards are reasonable and am qualifying my audit opinion accordingly'.'

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is entitled to conduct investigations of the PSNI, assessing its performance against that of other UK police forces. Even taking account of the unique challenges facing the PSNI, the latest (2011) report still gives the PSNI only a qualified approval. Overall, it says, the PSNI is delivering 'mixed performance' against the Policing Plan targets.

The service is praised for reducing non-domestic injury and violence, sectarian crime and deaths and injuries on the roads. Areas listed for improvement include the need to tackle anti-social behaviour and to increase detections for domestic violence and hate crimes. In July 2013 the HMIC published a special report, commissioned by the Chief Constable, into the operation of the Historical Enquiries Team (HET). – see below.

Criminal Justice Inspectorate (CJI): The CJI was set up to oversee the wide range of agencies which make up the criminal-justice system, principally the PSNI, the Prison Service, the Public Prosecution Service, the Court Service, the Probation Board and the Youth Justice Agency. In 2013 the CJI published two reports which commented on the PSNI's operational capacity. *Public Disorder* was published in June in the aftermath of the flags protest and considered whether the PSNI had sufficient 'surge capacity' to deal with widespread disorder. Despite some mildly critical comments, the overall assessment was very positive: 'Most notable is the fact that during the recent disturbances there were, in fact, no serious injuries and relatively minor damage.' The second report, *Finding the Balance*, addressed the need to review human-resource strategies to deal with shrinking budgets. It argued that PSNI workforce planning had been based on the historical allocation of resources and should move to the 'demand modelling approach' of other UK police forces, projecting how resources could be attached to future needs.

HET

The Historical Enquiries Team, a policing project unique to Northern Ireland, was set up in 2005 to review all deaths between 1968 and 1998. It was conceived as part of a broader societal move to come to terms with the past and, in the original plan, it was to work alongside the proposals of the Consultative Group on the Past (otherwise known as Eames-Bradley). Those other attempts to deal with the past foundered and in 2013 the HET hit a very large rock. In July the Policing Board expressed no confidence in the leadership of the unit. The Chief Constable conceded that the head of the HET, Dave Cox, and his deputy, Paul Johnston would have to resign. He subsequently reported that they would leave their posts by the end of December. This did not however satisfy the board, which demanded at its next meeting on 4 September that the two senior officers vacate their posts by the end of that month. Under protest, the Chief Constable had to accede to the request. This extraordinary development followed a report by the HMIC into the operations of the HET. The board had demanded the inspection because of concerns raised by a University of Ulster academic, Dr (now Professor) Patricia Lundy, about the working practices of the unit.

In essence, the concern expressed by Dr Lundy was that the HET treated state cases –those involving shootings by police or soldiers – differently from other deaths. The HMIC supported that claim, saying that the HET's approach was inconsistent and had serious shortcomings. It had, according to the report, investigated

such cases with "less rigour" than others and had done so because of a misinterpretation of the law. The Chief Constable said that he would reopen 13 cases of military killings, to see "if any evidential possibilities had been missed". An acting Chief Superintendent from the PSNI took over as head of the HET in September 2013, but for some of its critics the HET was beyond reform.

The net effect was one that no one had argued for – the return of the review of historic cases to PSNI personnel, albeit under the name of the HET. The original purpose of the unit was to provide a system of review outside of policing structures. As is discussed in Political Progress section of this report, this has very damaging implications for the larger project of dealing with the past.

Prosecutions from HET Cases

2,555 **Number of cases in the HET remit**

1,850 **Number of cases reviewed by time of HMIC Report, August 2013**

84 **Number of cases referred from HET to Crime Operations** (relating to 184 deaths)
Military 16 **Republican 55** **Loyalist 13**

11 **Number of cases passed from PSNI to PPS**
Military 0 **Republican 6** **Loyalist 5**

4 **Number of Prosecutions**
Military 0 **Republican 2** **Loyalist 2**

2 **Number of successful Prosecutions**
Military 0 **Republican 0** **Loyalist 2**

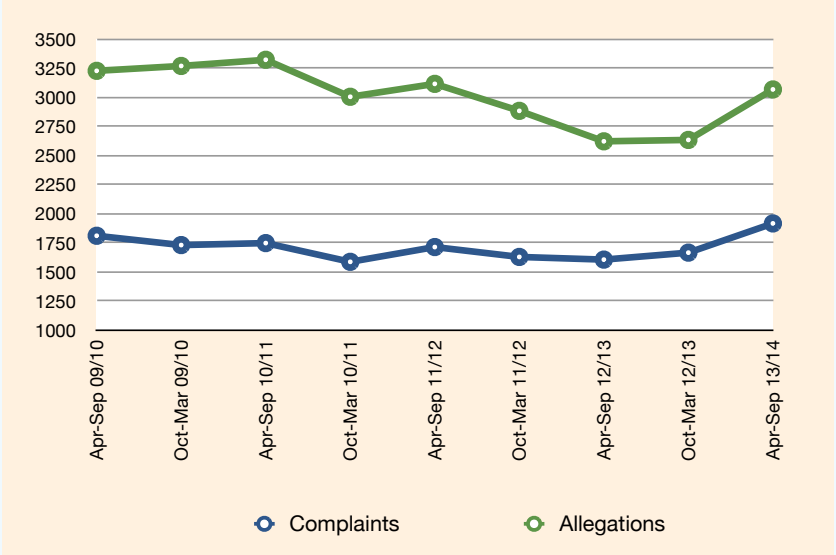
Source: Freedom of information request (F-2013-02621) and Chief Constables written response to Policing Board, Nov 2013

Complaints and allegations - the Police Ombudsman's report

The *Statistical Report of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland Six-Monthly Update to September 2013* notes that the number of complaints against the police was particularly high in 2009/10 but fell until 2012/13. The street clashes of the flags protest pushed the graph back up: in the first six months of 2013/14 the number of complaints increased by 17 per cent compared with the same period in 2012/13. There were 356 complaints received in July 2013 – 50 per cent more than in July 2012, 27 per cent more than in July 2011 and 8 per cent more than in July 2010.

The Ombudsman's report affirms that some of this increase arose from public protests. Over the previous three years the most common factor underlying a complaint had been 'Criminal Investigations'. For complaints received during the first six months of 2013/14, however, the most common factor was 'Arrest'. From 2009/10 to 2011/12 the main factor underlying around 1 per cent of complaints had been 'Parade/Demonstration'; this proportion rose to 5 per cent in 2012/13 and 6 per cent during the first six months of 2013/14. Unsurprisingly, the increase in complaints was most apparent in District B (52 per cent), which comprises south and east Belfast, where the flags protests were concentrated. The number of allegations received in July 2013 (571) was 46 per cent higher than in July 2012 and 24 per cent higher than in July 2011.

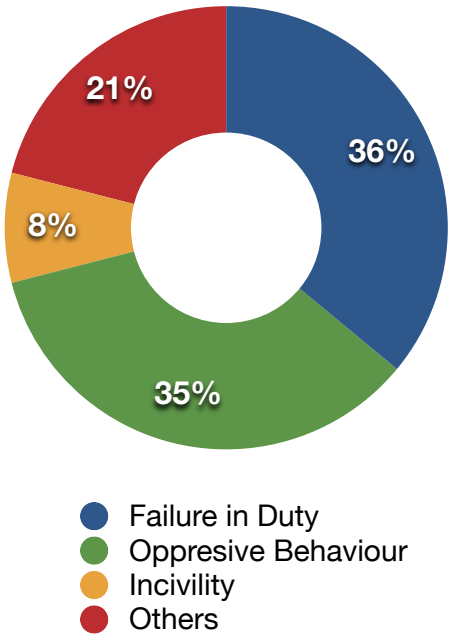
Chart 41: Complaints and allegations received by six-month period (2009/10 – April to September 2013)



Source: Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

There was an increase in allegations of 'Oppressive Behaviour' in the first six months of 2013/14 – 38 per cent more than in the same period in 2012/13 and 8 per cent more than in the same period of 2011/12. There were more allegations across all categories of Oppressive Behaviour, within which, the greatest proportion were of 'other assault' (unjustified force or personal violence by the police); the number of such allegations received in the first six months of 2013/14 was much greater than in the same period during the previous four years. Of those who gave their political allegiance the highest number of complaints came from people who identify with the DUP.

Chart 42: Nature of allegations received, April to September 2013



Who complains about the Police?

Chart 44: Political affiliation of complainants

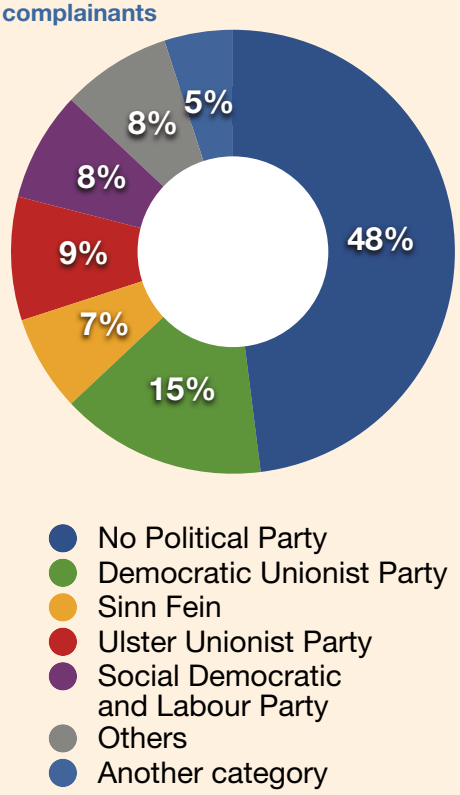
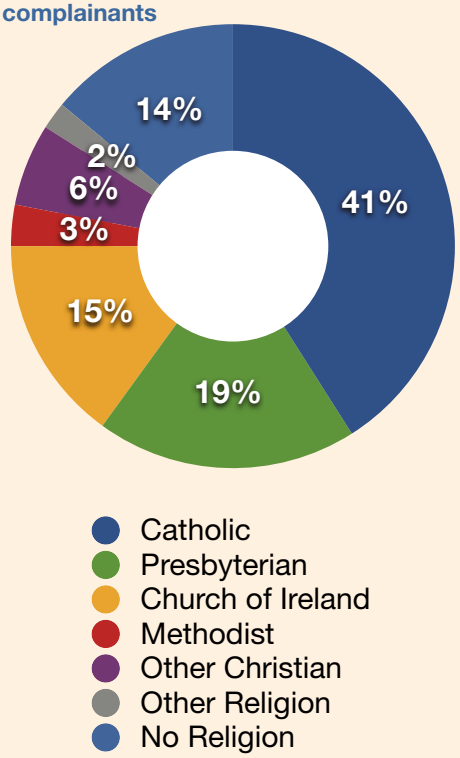
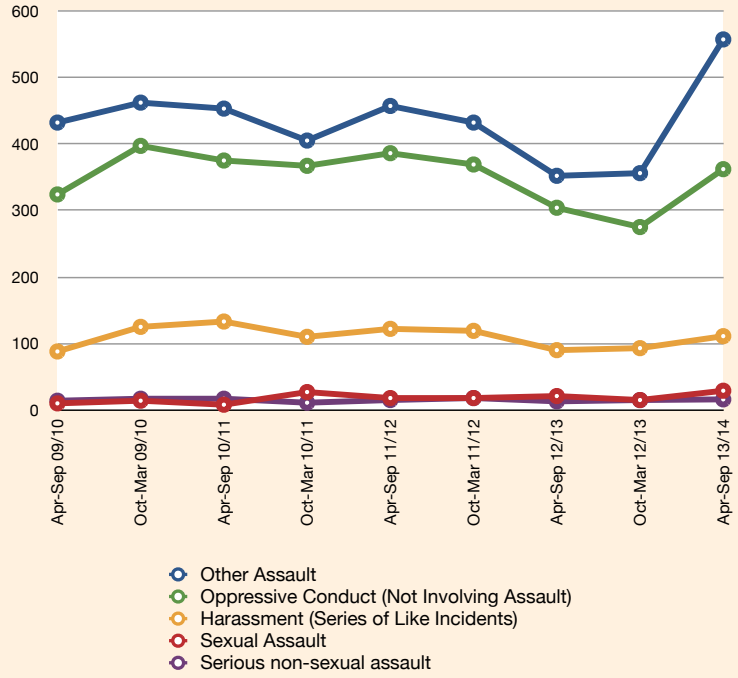


Chart 45: Religious affiliation of complainants



Source: Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

Chart 43: Oppressive behaviour sub-type allegation



Public perceptions of policing

The past year has seen sharply differing reports on support for the PSNI. The policing of the flags dispute led to strong criticisms from both unionist and nationalist politicians. On 4 March 2013 the First Minister led a delegation of senior DUP figures to the Chief Constable to complain about police tactics. The PSNI must work hard, he said, to 'regain the confidence' of a section of the Protestant community. His DUP colleague Ruth Patterson put it more bluntly when addressing a rally in Carrickfergus in May: "[I am] ashamed of the PSNI at the minute. The political policing and persecution of our Protestant people must stop. They beat our women and our children off the streets, they throw our pensioners into jail. They jail our young kids for waving the Union Flag of the country provocatively. That in my book is wrong and they must be held accountable for that." From nationalists came the opposite complaint: that the PSNI had been unduly lenient in handling loyalist protesters. SDLP and SF spokespersons contrasted the arrests of the sit-down protesters in Ardoyne during the July 2012 disturbances linked to the Orange Order parade through the area with the non-interventionist role taken by the PSNI in the early weeks of the flags protest when roads were blocked by loyalists. When Gerry Kelly of SF was involved in an altercation in July that led to him being carried forward on the front of a police Land Rover, his party colleague Francie Molloy, MP for Mid Ulster, tweeted: "PSNI still the old RUC when they get the chance." It is perhaps not surprising that the Chief Constable, Matt Baggott, emerged in the *Belfast Telegraph* poll published in September 2013 as the least popular public figure in Northern Ireland, with a net approval rating of -13.1 per cent.

There is contrary evidence, however, which suggests that support for the PSNI has remained high. The evidence comes from three sources:

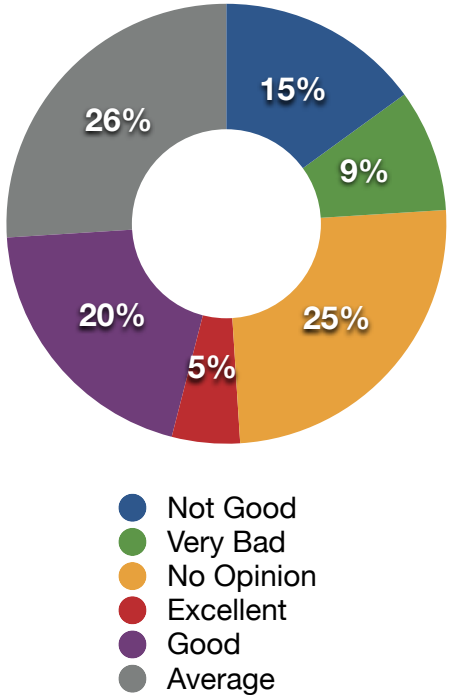
The Belfast Telegraph / Lucid Talk poll While this poll, published on 24 September, returned a very negative rating for the Chief Constable, that did not extend to the PSNI as a whole. A net approval of 1 per cent is lower than the service would like, but it is much more favourable than that for the Stormont Assembly which scored -60%. Protestants tended to be more favorably disposed to the PSNI than Catholics, giving a net approval of 16.5 per cent, compared with -2.5 per cent on the part of Catholics. If that contradicts the message from unionist leaders about Protestant alienation, the other unexpected lesson from this poll is that policing is not an issue which excites strong feelings. Over half of respondents (51.6 per cent) didn't express an opinion (25.3 per cent), or said they felt neutral and considered that the PSNI was doing an 'average' job.

The Policing Board Public Perceptions Survey, 2013. This is conducted each year by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency as part of the Omnibus survey. It was conducted between 31 December 2012 and 2 February 2013, the height of the flags dispute. More than two out of three respondents (70 per cent) considered that the PSNI was doing a very/fairly good job in Northern Ireland as a whole. This continued the upward gradient of recent years – slightly more than the January 2012 approval of 69 per cent and significantly more than the September 2009 figure of 63 per cent. Again here, Catholic support tends to lag behind Protestant support. While 76 per cent of Protestants thought the PSNI was doing a very/fairly good job as a whole in 2013, only 63 per cent of Catholics were of this opinion. But negativity in the Catholic population has decreased: in September 2009 almost one in five (19 per cent) thought the police were doing a very/fairly poor job but by January 2013 this had decreased to 10 per cent.

Distinctions between Catholic and Protestant respondents were sharpened in responses to the question about whether the PSNI treated all members of the public fairly. Protestant respondents were much more likely (80 per cent) than Catholics (67 per cent) to agree that all members of the public were treated fairly. Perhaps most surprisingly, given the public criticisms of the PSNI by political leaders while the survey was conducted, an increasing proportion of both Protestants and Catholics declared themselves very/fairly satisfied that the PSNI treated all members of the public equally. Among Catholics the proportion in this category increased from 66 per cent in September 2009 to 67 per cent in January 2013, among Protestants from 75 to 80 per cent. These may be small increases but allied to the levels they display more confidence in the PSNI's impartiality than is expressed by political leaders.

The Northern Ireland Crime Survey This provides the most detailed data and is based on the largest sample: 4,055 adults were interviewed for the 2012/13 survey. The focus is not on the Northern Ireland security situation, but the questions probe general perceptions of policing and allow responses to be

Chart 46: As a police force how would you describe the performance of the PSNI?



Source: Belfast Telegraph / Lucid Talk Poll, 24/9/13

Chart 47: PSNI do a very/fairly good job in your area

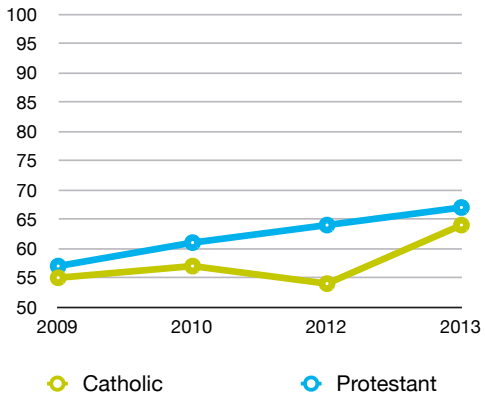
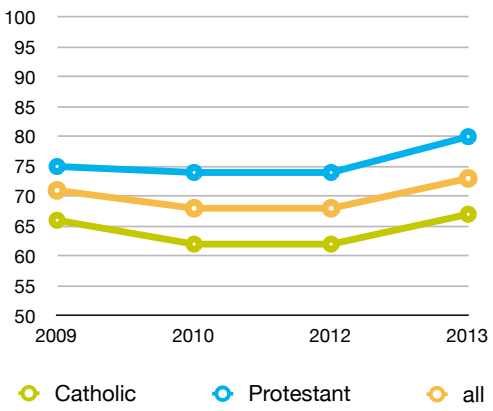


Chart 48: PSNI treat members of the public fairly



compared with those in other parts of the UK. An update on the 2011/12 survey conducted between April 2012 and March 2013 showed that the proportion of respondents who expressed overall confidence in policing was 80 per cent, on a par with that observed in 2011/12.

A critique of such surveys is that most respondents rarely have contact with the police – in the case of the Policing Board Perceptions Survey, only one fifth had had any contact in the previous year. When a class filter is applied, as in the *Belfast Telegraph* poll, it can be seen that the people most dissatisfied with the police are unskilled/unemployed,working-class respondents (social categories DE): 15 per cent rate policing performance as 'not good' and a further 9 per cent as 'very bad'. As these are people who live in the areas of highest crime incidence they are the ones most likely to be in contact with everyday policing. A breakdown of those with least confidence in engagement with the police, provided by the NICS 2010/11, shows a strong negative correlation between poverty indicators, such as high incidence of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders or single-parent households, and confidence in the police.

Those with least confidence in police engagement, as proportion of that category (%)

People in areas with high levels of anti-social behaviour	28
Men aged 25-34	31
Recent victims of crimes (within two years) reported to the police	33
Adults whose nationality is Irish	33
Single parents	34
People living in Policing District G (Foyle, Limavady, Magherafelt, Strabane)	34

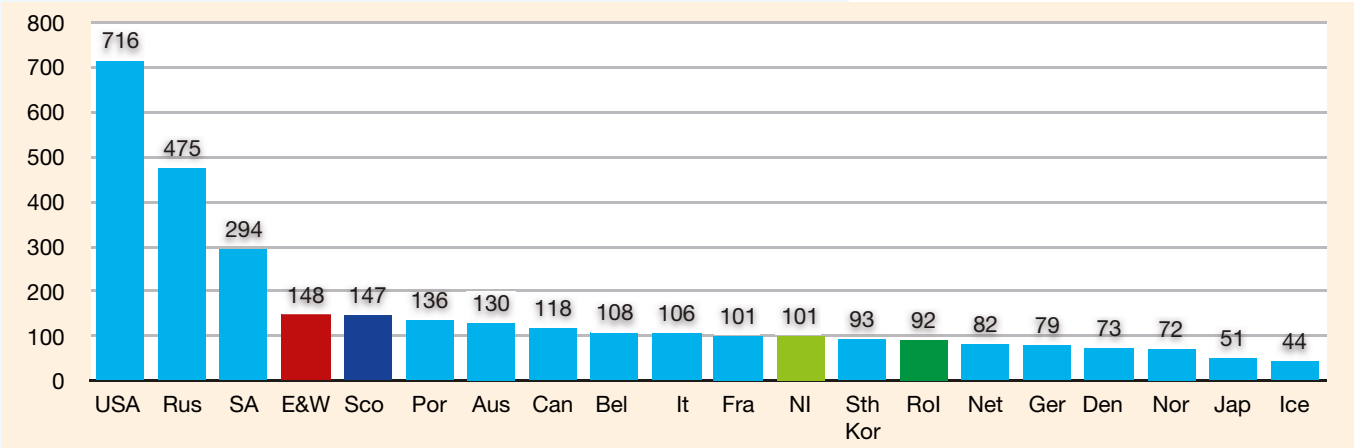
Source: NISC 2010-11, Department of Justice

6. Prisons

6.1 The prison population

Northern Ireland has a small prison population in comparison with rest of the UK, and indeed other OECD countries, but it has been increasing over the last decade. In 2002 the average population was 1,026, rising to 1,682 in 2011, followed by a further rise to 1,776 in 2012. and, according to Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) figures, to 1,849 in June 2013. The remand population as a proportion of the total has fluctuated over the last 10 years but was at its lowest in 2012 (31 per cent).

Chart 49: Prisoners per 100,000 of the population

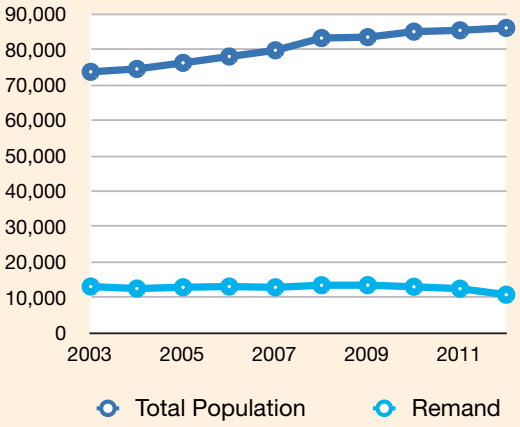


Source: Centre for Prison Studies, 2013

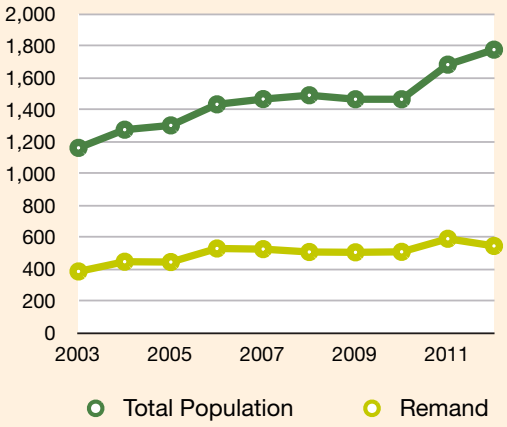
Chart 50: Total prison population in numbers

	Total prison population	Per 100,000
England and Wales	86,048	148
Scotland	8,420	147
Northern Ireland	1,776	101
Republic of Ireland	4,230	92

Prison population England and Wales



Prison population Northern Ireland



6.2 Prison conditions and reform

A startling insight into the culture of the NIPS was given by the former Governor of Maghaberry, Steve Rodford, while giving evidence in a criminal trial in October 2013. Mr Rodford quit his post in December 2009, just months after taking up duties. In his evidence he spoke of how the prison was 'out of control' and how he as Governor felt threatened by the prison officers under his command (Belfast Telegraph, 16/10/13). .

The Prison Service had not gone through the radical overhaul undertaken by the police following the Patten Report. In July

"Only the long-promised closure and replacement of Ash House would solve the problems we saw."

- Criminal Justice Inspectorate report on Ash House, Hydebank Women's Prison, October 2013

2010 the Minister of Justice established a Prison Review Team (PRT) to look at the 'conditions of detention, management and oversight of all prisons'. A wide-ranging review headed by Dame Anne Owers, published in October 2011, urged root-and-branch reform. The Minister also established the Prison Review Oversight Group (PROG) to oversee and assess critically the implementation of change. But in June 2013 the PROG told the Assembly's Justice Committee that, as to whether the reforms had changed outcomes for prisoners, 'if anything, there has been deterioration'. It said that 'we would like to have seen some improvements in relation to the hours of lock-up and association.'Reviews by the Criminal Justice Inspection (CJI) have also found progress disappointing.

Though the prison population of Northern Ireland is predominantly male, around 3 per cent is female, and women prisoners are housed in Ash House at Hydebank Wood Prison. The CJI's 2013 inspection of this facility found that though the physical conditions were mostly good and clean, they were also 'claustrophobic'. This, the inspectorate concluded, was mainly because the women's prison existed on the margins of an overwhelmingly male establishment. The inspection found that women prisoners were reasonably well cared for but that they were restricted in their access to facilities and services and there was insufficient purposeful activity. Security arrangements were also found to be overly restrictive, with evidence of excessive strip-searching and unpredictable lock-downs.

Substance-misuse and mental-health services for prisoners were also poorly co-ordinated and there had been a failure to learn lessons from deaths in custody. In 2012/13 there were eight such deaths and, whilst not all inquests have yet taken place, four are believed to have been self-inflicted. In support of its strategic aim of providing 'safe, secure and decent custody', the Prison Service set a target of reducing instances of self-harm by 10 per cent, yet in 2012/13 they rose by 4 per cent.

The CJI came to radical conclusions in assessments made during the year, arguing that 'only the long-promised closure and replacement of Ash House would resolve the problems we saw'. A 2013 inspection of the Young Offenders' Centre / Hydebank Wood also found inadequate care for prisoners at risk, poorly co-ordinated services and, again, inadequate opportunities for purposeful activity by prisoners. A further insight into conditions in the prisons came through a response to a Freedom of Information request from the *Irish News*. The paper reported on 28 October 2013 that, out of a prison population of approximately 1,700, a total of 1,550 complaints had been made by prisoners in just the three months from February to May.

A theme running through CJI reports since the 2012 inspection of Maghaberry is that of differential outcomes for Catholic and Protestant prisoners. Inequalities experienced by Catholic prisoners were repeatedly identified across a range of areas in Maghaberry, particularly where staff discretion applied.

They included access to better accommodation, use of force and adjudications, and segregation. These discrepancies, the inspector concluded, were in many cases neither investigated nor understood by the prison authorities and the response to identified inequalities 'lacked sophistication'. At Ash House new recruits received equality and diversity training but existing staff did not. The Inspectorate noted that the majority of staff are Protestant while the majority of prisoners are Catholic.

Prison staffing

One of the Owers recommendations was a review of staff numbers and composition. The programmes put in place as a result were not as far reaching as after Patten: there has been no interimquota system to rebalance the workforce. In October 2012 a new *target operating model* was introduced at all prison establishments to 'address staffing levels and working practices that were out dated and ineffective'. The PROG has reported that this has proved one of the most challenging aspects of the reform, with its implementation receiving mixed reviews from within the Prison Service and external stakeholders. To facilitate a culture change a generous retirement package has been offered in 2012/13 to existing staff and 360 took early retirement.

The 2012 recruitment campaign attracted more than 4,900 applicants for the new Prison Custody Officer grade. Yet still only 25 per cent were from members of the Catholic community and, as of March 2012, only 16.2 per cent of applicants appointed were Catholic. In its annual report the PROG expressed 'disappointment at the relative lack of balance in community representation' in applications received. As part of its diversity strategy, the Prison Service 'accepts that the delivery of cultural change within NIPS is central to addressing and ensuring a diverse workforce reflective of the society we serve'. The latest figures suggest this is still very much work in progress.

Chart 51: Religion of prison officers

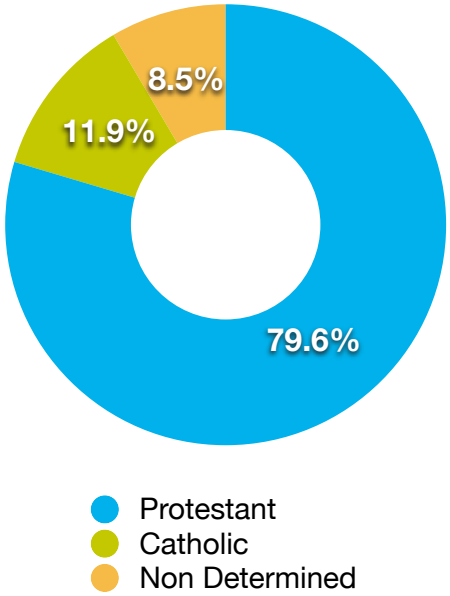
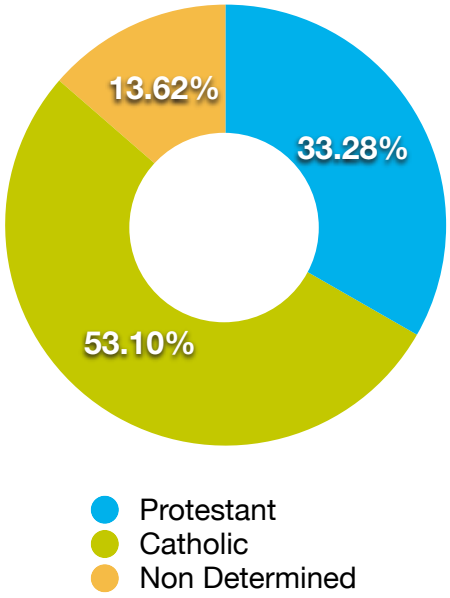


Chart 52: Religion of prisoner population



7. Safety in the Public Sphere

7.1 Internal perceptions

The NICS 2012/13 reveals a disparity between people's perceived likelihood of being a victim of crime and actual risk—the former far exceeding the latter. Though crime is lower in Northern Ireland, NICS 2012/13 respondents were more likely than their CSEW counterparts to express high levels of worry about certain types of crime: violent crime (17% v 12%); car crime (11% v 7%); and burglary (14% v 12%). In terms of worry about crime in general, however, levels of worry were higher in England and Wales (9% v 7%). Despite the higher levels of concern about crime in general, NICS 2012/13 respondents were less likely than their CSEW 2012/13 counterparts to perceive themselves to be at risk of violent crime (7%; v 11%) and car crime (12% v 15%); for burglary, a rate of 11% was observed in both jurisdictions.

Chart 53: Percentage of people who prefer to work in a mixed workplace

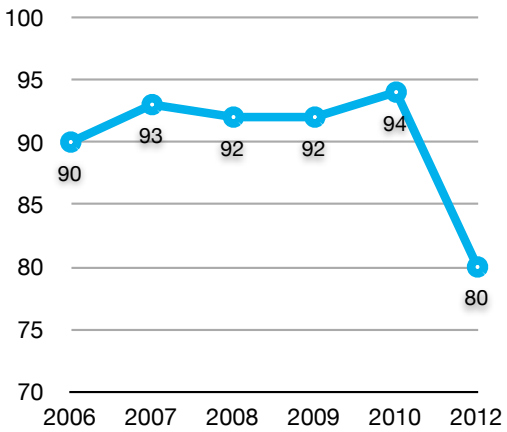
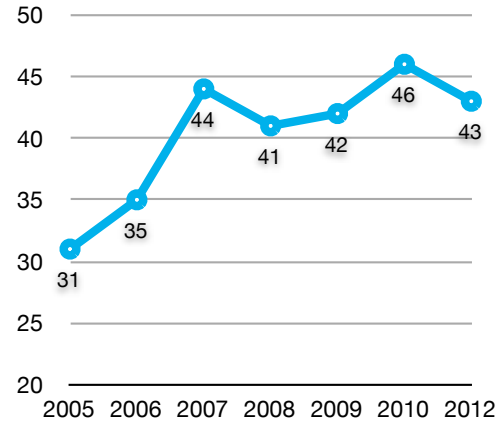


Chart 54: Town centres are safe and welcoming (% of respondents ranking 6 or above)



For both social and economic reasons, it is important for government that people in Northern Ireland perceive their town centres to be safe and welcoming. Government has sought to grow Northern Ireland's night-time economy and halt the decline of its high streets[9] and it has introduced legislation to foster a 'pavement café culture' in town centres.[10] In June 2013 the Minister for Social Development introduced the Licensing of Pavement Cafés Bill to the Assembly and Belfast City Centre Management developed a Café Culture 'Memorandum of Understanding' with businesses to promote good practice in the management of 'sitting out' areas. These efforts to promote a cosmopolitan atmosphere in Northern Ireland's town centres can be seen as part of a project of 'normalising' the public sphere in Northern Ireland. The NICS 2010/11 however showed that just 30 per cent of respondents felt 'very safe' when socialising in their town centre in the evening.[11]

The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey asks respondents to rate how well the target of making town centres safe and welcoming places has been met. Based on a scale of 1 (definitely not achieved) to 10 (definitely achieved), 43 per cent in 2012 ranked this at 6 or more, a significant increase since 2005, but a slight decrease of 3 per cent since 2010. Notably, only 4 per cent of respondents felt that the target of making town centres safe and welcoming had been 'definitely achieved'. Two thirds (67 per cent) of respondents to the NICS 2010/11 felt that alcohol-related, anti-social behaviour was a very or fairly big problem in the night-time economy; I54 per cent problematised 'people drinking or being drunk in public', as did 38 per cent with regard to 'people being noisy, rowdy or disruptive'. A submission by Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce to the US inter-party talks mediator Richard Haass estimated that businesses in central Belfast had lost £234 million in revenue in the previous 12 months. It claimed that trade had been adversely affected not just by loyalist parades and flag demonstrations but also by major events such as the arrival of the Olympic torch and St Patrick's Day – it seems that even festive events of this kind can appear threatening to some.

Safety is a concept that still attaches most strongly to the respondent's own neighbourhood. The NICS 2011/12 found that people in Northern Ireland were more positive in their perceptions of crime trends in their local area than at the regional level. Around three fifths (59 per cent) thought that crime in Northern Ireland had increased in the preceding two years, compared with 33 per cent believing that local crime had risen. Using a seven-strand composite measure, the NICS 2011/12 showed that 12 per cent of respondents perceived anti-social behaviour in their locality to be high. This compared with 15 per cent in England and Wales (CSEW, 2011/12). Particular social groups are more likely to perceive anti-social behaviour as a problem in their neighbourhood: 31 per cent of residents of the 20 per cent most deprived areas of Northern Ireland did soas did 21 per cent of women aged 16-24. The NILT survey also asks people their views on how open amenities in their neighbourhood are to both Protestants and Catholics. In 2012, 59 per cent thought that parks

in their area were 'definitely shared and open' and 65 per cent believed the same of local libraries; just 34 per cent felt this way, however, about pubs in their area.

Safety in the workplace

The vast majority of people from both communities have consistently shown a marked preference for a mixed workplace. Between 2010 and 2012, however, the NILT survey detected a sharp decrease here and a corresponding increase in those preferring a workplace of 'their own religion only' (this would, of course, be illegal to contrive under fair-employment legislation). In 2010, 94 per cent preferred a mixed workplace; by 2012 that had fallen to 80 per cent. In the former year only 3 per cent preferred a workplace of their own religion only but by 2012 that had risen to 12 per cent.

7.2 External perceptions

There was a concerted drive in 2013 to show a new Northern Ireland to the world, a place where culture could be celebrated and businesses could thrive. The flagship events were:

The G8 Summit: This event, held in the Lough Erne Hotel in Fermanagh on 17-18 June, was a showcase for the success of the peace process. Launching it, the Prime Minister, Mr Cameron, said: 'Frankly, 10 years ago, 20 years ago, it would have been unthinkable to hold a G8 in Northern Ireland, in County Fermanagh.' The region, he said, had been transformed and was now "open for business, open for investment, and a great place to visit'.

The World Police and Fire Games: This is a biennial international sporting event for police officers, firefighters, customs and prison officers. It took place in Northern Ireland from 1-10 August and saw 7,000 athletes from 67 countries take part in 56 sports at 41 different venues. Echoing Mr Cameron, the Northern Ireland Sports Minister, Carál Ní Chuilín, said: 'That we could host the World Police and Fire Games might have been unimaginable a few years ago ... we have confidently welcomed thousands of competitors from across the globe to join in a sporting spectacular. The Games have further opened the eyes of the world to the north, they have come and experienced the best of what we have to offer.'

Derry-Londonderry, City of Culture: The City of Culture designation applied for the whole of 2013 and was therefore not so much a festival as a festival of festivals, with 83 major events during the year. Chief among them were the Turner Prize exhibition, which had not hitherto been held outside London and which brought the metropolitan cultural elite to the city, and the all-island Fleadh Cheoil, which had never before been held in the north of Ireland. Some 430,000 visitors came to the city in August for this event.

"Frankly, 10 years ago, 20 years ago, it would have been unthinkable to hold a G8 in Northern Ireland, in County Fermanagh."

- David Cameron

The World Irish Dancing Championship: This brought 3,500 dancers from more than 20 countries to the Waterfront Hall in Belfast to compete over eight days in October/November.

Economic Investment Conference: Organised by Invest NI on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive, the third Economic Investment Conference was held in October at Titanic Belfast. It attracted around 150 potential and existing inward investors from many countries, including the US, Canada and China. The event was also attended by the Prime Minister, who said that 'Northern Ireland was second only to London in the UK as the top destination for inward investment'.

It was also announced during the year that in May 2014 Northern Ireland would host the opening stages of the Giro d'Italia bicycle race. In addition, the Titanic Centre and the Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre, both launched in 2012, continued to market themselves – and Northern Ireland – to the international tourist market.

This came against a difficult tourism backdrop, however. In 2012 there were 6.5 million trips by non-residents to the Republic of Ireland, compared with less than 2 million to Northern Ireland; visitor numbers were also static by comparison with 2011, according to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (see section x). There was better news on foreign direct investment: the UK Trade and Investment (UKTI)[12] *Inward Investment Annual Report 2012/13* showed that inward investment projects into Northern Ireland increased by 41 per cent (from 27 to 38) from 2011/12.

The constant refrain from all of these government-sponsored events and attractions was that Northern Ireland should be seen as a thriving cultural and economic centre. By an unintended irony, the invitation to view the new normality of the post-conflict society is undercut by the scale of the effort that goes into the promotion: other provincial cities in the UK simply do not receive such government largesse, and the series of spectacular events tends to reinforce, rather than displace, the sense of Northern Ireland as a place apart. While the region did enjoy faster growth in inward investment than elsewhere in the UK in 2012/13, as the former US envoy Mr Haass made clear, 'Northern Ireland is competing with every other square inch on the planet to attract investment'. When four letter-bombs were intercepted in October, he warned that 'this is the sort of thing that honestly scares it [investment] off. It sends a bad message and hurts all the people in Northern Ireland. Nobody benefits.'

By an unintended irony, the invitation to view the new normality is undercut by the scale of the effort that goes into its promotion.

Additional problems occurred when the international media turned a spotlight on specific places. Foreign journalists who came to cover the G8 summit in Fermanagh did note the beauty of the landscape. But they also noticed that the venue for the event, the five-star Lough Erne Hotel, was in receivership, that the small towns they passed through were Potemkin villages where smart shop fronts were painted boards disguising closed businesses

and that every road into Fermanagh were festooned with Union flags. And delegates who strolled out of the closing events of the World Police and Fire Games came across an extraordinary sight when they wandered into Belfast city centre. The main shopping street, Royal Avenue, was the scene of a full–scale riot as loyalist flag protesters attacked the police. By the end of the night 56 police officers were injured in scenes that proved astonishing to their international colleagues. These scenes of rioting were reported by media outlets all over the world, from *Al Jazeera* to *Le Monde* and the *Australian*. The sense was that this was not normality as experienced elsewhere.

The official Northern Ireland boosterism of the Tourist Board faces an uphill battle. When the Halifax bank published its list of the 250 Best Places to Live in the UK in December 2013, the highest ranking given to a Northern Ireland location in this – admittedly very Anglocentric - publication was to Fermanagh, ranked at number 180. In November, following a dissident bomb making its way to Belfast city centre, the American Consulate had warned US citizens: “Throughout 2013, a number of protests in and around Belfast have been characterised by violence aimed primarily at the police. Even demonstrations intended to be peaceful can turn confrontational and possibly escalate into violence”.

At the Northern Ireland investment conference Mr Cameron said he was unapologetic about making a ‘sales pitch’ for Northern Ireland. Unfortunately, there were times in 2013 when the noise from the streets drowned out the sales talk.

8. The peace walls

The most visible evidence of sectarian division in Northern Ireland comes from the ironically-named ‘peace walls’ or interfaces: either 53 or 99 of them, depending on how the count is made. Most are in north and west Belfast, where they snake a path some 21 kilometres in length between Protestant and Catholic areas juxtaposed in a geographical jumble. The year 2019 will see the 50th anniversary of the first wall, a temporary structure - or so it was thought at the time - to separate the Falls Road and the Shankill Road after a particularly bad bout of rioting in August 1969. Another view sees the first peace wall as dating from an earlier time, when Belfast began its growth as an industrial city: in 1866 the city fathers decided to open a cemetery and an underground wall, nine feet deep, was inserted to separate Protestant graves from Catholic graves.

In 2013, 15 years after the Belfast Agreement, the idea of dismantling the peace walls was given new impetus. In January the Alliance Party, tired of waiting for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister to issue its community-relations policy, published its own document, *For Everyone*. The section dealing with contested spaces suggested a 20 per cent cut in peace walls over ten years, with 30 per cent removed within fifteen. These targets were thought to be ambitious but when the

OFMDFM did publish its strategy document *Together: Building a United Community* in May the goal was even more ambitious: 'We will establish a 10 year Programme to reduce and eventually remove all interface barriers.' This commitment was however qualified: 'Taking down interface barriers is not something that can be achieved without engagement, consent and support with the people who live there.'

If the removal of the barriers is conditional on the support of those who live on the interfaces, how likely is it to happen? Survey evidence over the years has been consistent. There is majority support for a long-term vision of a world without the walls but hope gives way to fear when the question is framed in the short term. The most recent survey, conducted by the University of Ulster in 2012, showed how the balance of feeling shifts according to the time frame suggested:

- 58 per cent would like to see the peace walls come down now or at some point in the future
- 58 per cent were very/fairly worried about the police ability to preserve order if the walls were removed
- 69 per cent think the walls are still necessary at the present time because of the potential for violence.

No survey has been taken since the start of the flags dispute but the increased violence around the interfaces in east and north Belfast over the past year is unlikely to have built confidence in the idea of their removal. Byrne et al (2012).

Despite this, practical steps are being taken to remove at least some of the walls or, where this is not deemed practicable, to soften their impact. In December 2011 it was agreed that the barrier in Alexandra Park Gardens in north Belfast could be opened for a few hours per day. This park has the distinction of being the only public park in Europe bisected by a wall, news of whose construction emerged at the very time of the IRA ceasefire in August 1994. In June 2012 the International Fund for Ireland launched a £2 millon fund to 'help bring about the conditions that would allow for the removal of peace walls and barriers in Belfast and other parts of Northern Ireland'. What this means in practice is engagement among statutory authorities, community associations, council representatives, the IFI and the Community Relations Council to look at steps, often incremental, to allow increased contact and flow between the interface communities. The balance between encouraging hope and providing security is finely calibrated and in each case the detail is all-important.

For example, in north Belfast during the year the closure of the British army camp at Girdwood meant a military security barrier was removed. This had been in place mainly to protect soldiers in the base, rather than keeping local Catholics and Protestants apart, but residents of Brucevale Park area were unhappy with the absence of a barrier. Negotiations involving the Road Service resulted in a small fence, sufficiently strong to block road traffic but open on both sides to allow pedestrian access. In east Belfast the violence during the flags protest led the Catholic population of Short Strand to seek additional protection, particularly around St Matthew's Church (site of an historic loyalist attack in 1970). Reluctant to create a new permanent structure, the Department of Justice installed stanchions to allow temporary netting to be hung during heightened tension.

Experiments of this kind suggest that if the peace walls in Northern Ireland come down it will be a gradual process - at times almost unnoticeable to all but local residents – rather than a dramatic and symbolic event like the demise of the Berlin Wall. It also means that with the blurring of the definition of a peace wall, estimates of their numbers have to be seen as approximate.

Chart 55: The growth of 'peace walls' (official count)

	Total No. Walls/ fences	Erected since 1998	Total No. Gates	Erected since 1998	TOTAL
East Belfast	4				4
West Belfast	12		6		18
North Belfast	14	2	4	1	18
North west (L'derry)	4		3		7
South west (Portadown/ Lurgan	6	6			6

Source: Department of Justice (figures supplied to the PMR)

Chart 56: The growth of interfaces in Belfast (Belfast Interface Project count)

Year	Central	East	North	West	Total
Pre-'troubles'			9	2	11
1969-79		4		5	9
1980-89	2	1	4	5	12
1990-94			5	7	12
1995-99	1	1	12		14
2000-12			5	2	7
Total	3	6	35	21	65

Source: Belfast Interface Project, 2012

Different figures are produced on the number of ‘peace walls’ or interfaces. The Department of Justice (DoJ) only recognises as a peace wall a structure erected by statutory bodies for the purpose of preventing violent hostilities between antagonistic communities. The DoJ figures for 2013 show a reduction on the previous year, from 58 down to 53. The reduction is due to the removal of security gates on Derry’s Walls, the removal of the security barrier at Brucevale Park and the removal of some fencing around a school on the Cliftonville Road, Belfast.

The Belfast Interface Project (BIP) does not limit its concerns to those on this official list but includes all ‘interfaces’. It defines an interface as ‘any boundary line between a predominantly Protestant/unionist area and a Catholic area’. This can include fences with vegetation, gates, barriers that are sometimes open and sometimes closed and patches of blighted land that are recognised as boundary markers. The BIP figures illustrate different patterns of construction in different parts of the city. The vast majority of the barriers in central, east and west Belfast were constructed before the 1994 ceasefires, while half the barriers in north Belfast have been constructed since.

DIMENSION TWO: EQUALITY

1. Wealth, poverty and inequality

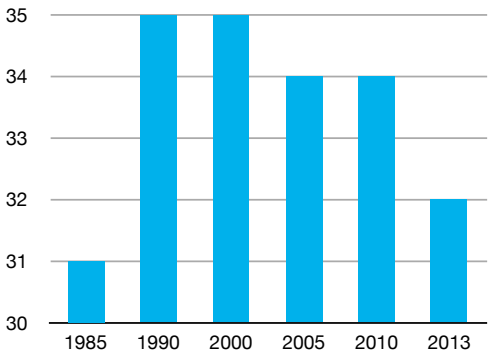
1.1 Overview

The concept of equality is at the heart of the Good Friday Agreement. It also happens to have re-emerged as a key category in the lexicon of politics worldwide since the banking collapse. In January 2014 the US President, Barack Obama, made the issue central to his mid-term election campaign, calling it 'the defining challenge of our time'. In the same month it was the theme of the World Economic Forum in Davos and, in its *Global Risk Report 2014*, released just before the conference, the Forum described 'severe income disparity' as one of the top ten risks. Some startling figures were contained in a report issued by Oxfam, including the calculation that the 85 richest people in the world owned more wealth than the 3 billion poorest (Oxfam, 2014).

The Northern Ireland interpretation of inequality is less concerned with the gap between rich and poor. The term is understood mainly in terms of what is sometimes referred to as 'horizontal equality', that is the relationship between the two blocs, Catholic and Protestant, though section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 also placed an equality duty on public bodies with regard to various other categories, including race and disability. One category not included was class and the research agenda that has evolved since 1998 has tended to ignore vertical inequalities between rich and poor. While poverty is comprehensively researched, wealth is just as comprehensively ignored. So there can be only limited speculation on social inequality as the measurement of wealth disparities.

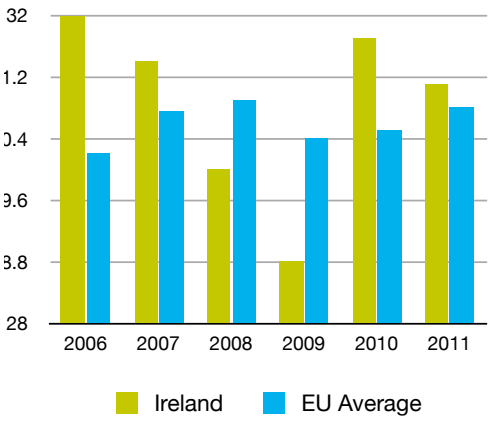
The standard measure of inequality is the Gini coefficient, which places the gap between rich and poor on a scale where 0 equals perfect equality (everyone has the same income) to 1 (one individual holds all income). No government department issues data on the Gini coefficient in Northern Ireland on an annual basis; the nearest reference points therefore are statistics for Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. They show contrasting pictures. In Great Britain the inequality gap had widened during the boom years but has narrowed again as the economy moves out of recession. Inequality tends to fall during an economic downturn when benefits are protected but wages fall, and that has been the case with the British economy. Figures released by the Office of National Statistics in July 2013 showed that the Gini index had dropped to 32.3 per cent, from 33.7 per cent a year earlier. This is the narrowest gap since 1986.

Chart 57: Inequality in the UK: the Gini Coefficient



Source: Office of National Statistics, 2013

Chart 58: Inequality in Ireland and the EU: the Gini Coefficient



Source: Public Policy Ireland, 'Income inequality in Ireland', 23 August 2013

Ireland, during and after the Celtic Tiger

The Republic of Ireland has been experiencing quite a different pattern, almost the opposite to that of the UK and very much at variance with popular perceptions. A large-scale study of income inequality in Ireland was produced in 2012 by economists from University College Cork (McCarthy et al). Using data from the Central Statistics Office and the Revenue Commissioners the authors showed that while inequality was rising in Great Britain during the boom years it fell in the Republic. During the Celtic Tiger period, often associated with the rise of the super-wealthy, the Gini coefficient dropped. The distinguished Irish economist John Fitzgerald estimates that by 2009, the first full year of the crash, income distribution was more equal than it had been since the 1980s (Fitzgerald, 2013). The resurgence of inequality came after the banking crisis when austerity budgets stripped away layers of social protection for the poor. The Gini coefficient increased from 29.3 per cent in 2009 to 31.6 per cent in 2010, converging towards the higher UK level. Figures released by the Central Statistics Office in February 2013 showed little change in 2011 – a Gini coefficient of 31.1 per cent.

Both Ireland and the UK are less unequal than the United States, where the Gini index is regularly above 40 per cent, but they trail far behind Scandinavian countries like Sweden, which in 2013 had a Gini score of 24 per cent. However low that might seem by international standards – and it is ranked by the World Bank as number 136 out of 136 countries for inequality – the Swedish figure has been on an upward gradient. A generation ago it was under 20 per cent and the increase marks a political shift: in May 2013 the country experienced something new, seven continuous nights of riots on the streets of Stockholm.

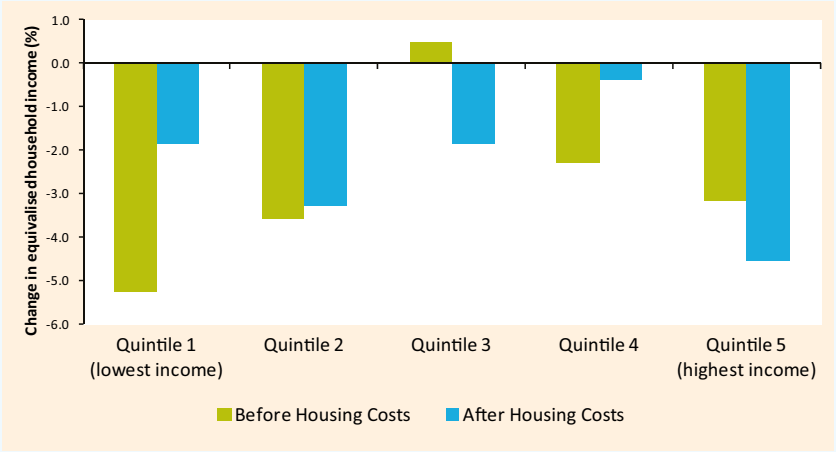
1.2 Income differentials

While there is no Gini for Northern Ireland, data from the HMRC *Survey of Family Incomes* and the Department for Social Development publication *Households Below Average Income* allow incomes to be broken into salary bands. Income inequality can then be expressed as the ratio between the top and bottom decile or quintile. In Northern Ireland income inequality grew slightly from 2010/11 to 2011/12, because the income of poorer households fell by more than those in the top brackets. Before housing costs are considered, individuals in households in the bottom 20 per cent saw their equivalised incomes fall by 5 per cent, while counterparts in the top quintile saw their incomes drop by only 3 per cent, increasing the ratio between them from 3.7 to 3.8. In 2010/11 the ratio was 4.9 after housing costs. Over the course of the year it narrowed slightly, as those in the top quintile saw their income drop by 5 per cent, while those in the bottom quintile, where benefits offered some protection, saw their income drop by only 2 per cent.

The only group not to lose out were those on middle incomes. The middle quintile even enjoyed a tiny increase. The director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), Paul Johnston, has commented

that, contrary to the myth of the 'squeezed middle', these are the people 'least squeezed' by the Westminster coalition's tax and benefits changes (Financial Times, 20/3/13).

Chart 59: Changes in the inequality ratios



Source: DSD Households Below Average Income, Northern Ireland 2011/12

The IFS warns that the inequality gap in the UK will likely open up again. The welfare 'reform' package will reduce benefits – on which dependence in Northern Ireland is high – and, as with the rise in indirect taxes, this will hit the poor hardest. As the ONS has shown, the burden of indirect taxes now means that the bottom quintile give over a higher proportion of their income in tax than the richest 20 per cent.

Chart 60: Where the tax burden falls

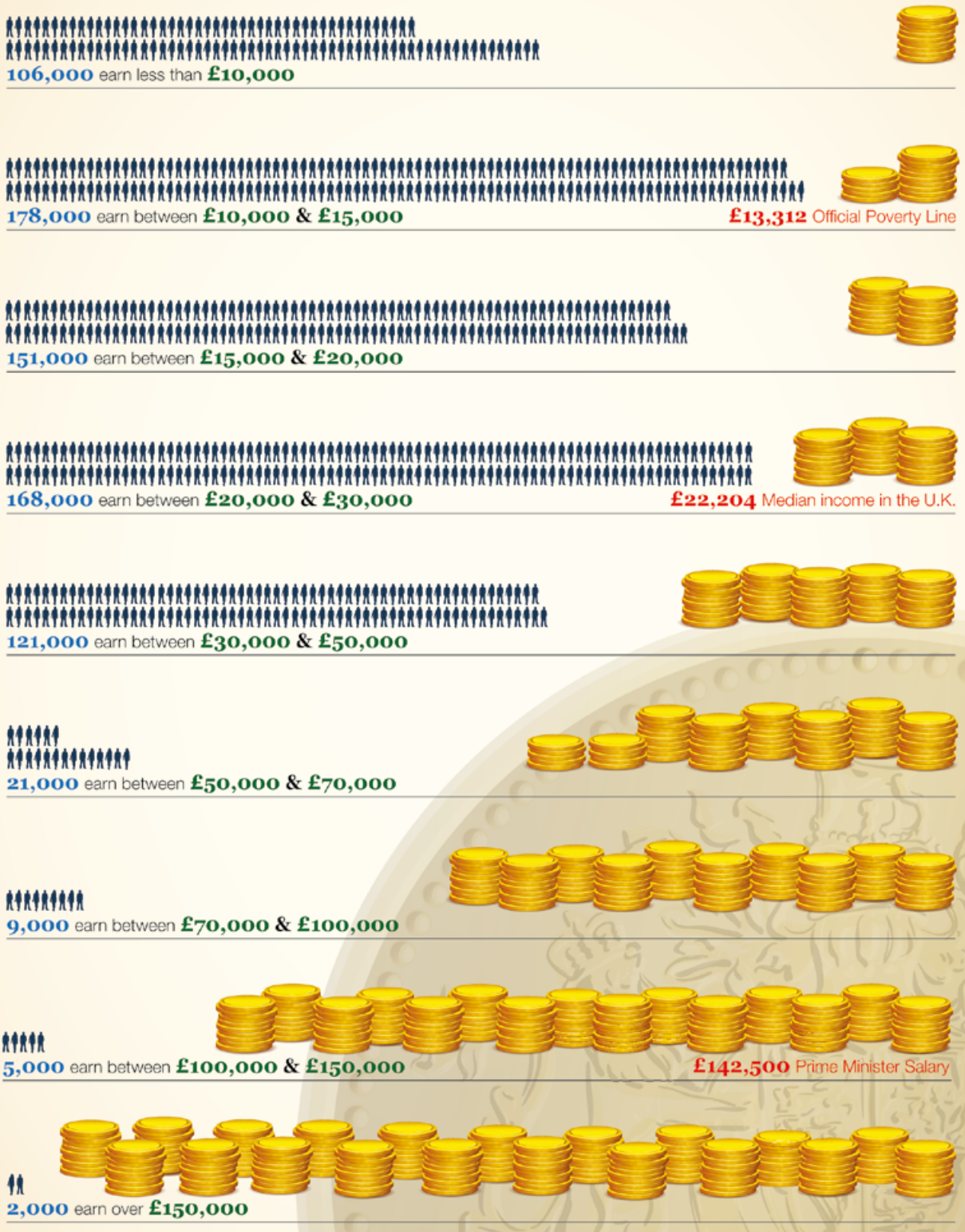
Richest fifth			Poorest fifth		
Direct	Indirect	Total	Direct	Indirect	Total
24.7%	10.8%	35.5%	10.2%	26.5%	36.6%

Source: ONS Tax and Benefits 2011/12

1.3 Wealth

Last year's Peace Monitoring Report drew attention to the number of super-wealthy, or High Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs), in Northern Ireland. The data was drawn from the house journal of the extremely rich, *WealthInsight,* which sets the bar for inclusion at assets of at least $30 million. Northern Ireland was listed as having 96 HNWIs. The past year has been favourable to them. While high salaries overall have gone down in real terms, this does not apply to the top 1 per cent, whose 'fly away' increases are part of an international phenomenon. The 2013 *Sunday Independent Rich List,* which features the wealthiest 300 people on the island, revealed that 41 of Northern Ireland's multi-millionaires were between them worth more than £3.8 billion. Despite the collapse of the property market, 23 had seen their wealth increase. Many of the super-wealthy have substantial holdings in shopping malls and hotels.

Who earns what in Northern Ireland



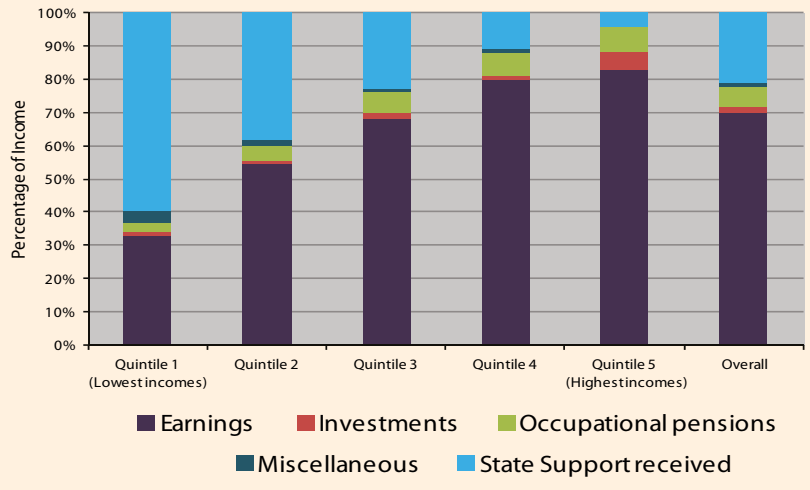
Source: Infographic created using ONS/HMRC Survey of Personal Incomes data

Relative values:

- **There are 56,500 individuals in Northern Ireland with incomes above £1,000 per week (DSD, *Households Below Average Income*, Dec 2013).**
- **There are 300,000 individuals in Northern Ireland with incomes below £100 per week (DSD, *Households Below Average Income*, Dec. 2013).**
- **A report issued by KPMG in November 2013 found that 26 per cent of the workforce in Northern Ireland earned less than the Living Wage of £7.65 per hour (the UK average is 21 per cent).**
- **As Prime Minister, David Cameron earns £142,500 per annum. There are more than 2,000 people in Northern Ireland who earn more than him.**

1.4 Household income

Finance capital does not loom large in the Northern Ireland economy. Only 1 per cent of the population derives income from investments, half the UK average. Indeed, as the Chart below shows, Northern Ireland has the lowest proportion of households deriving income from stocks and shares, premium bonds and national savings bonds. Conversely, the region has the highest proportion of households with no accounts at all. The *Family Resources Survey* issued in November 2013 found that 6 per cent of households in Northern Ireland have no bank account, compared to 2 per cent across the UK. The strength of the Irish Credit Union movement can be seen in the high proportion of households with this type of account: 11 per cent, as against 1 per cent in England and 4 per cent in Scotland.



Earned income was the main source of household income across the income distribution, according to the FRS, except for the bottom 20 per cent where benefits accounted for the largest proportion. Along with Wales, Northern Ireland has the lowest proportion of households deriving income from wages and salaries – 60 per cent, against the UK average of 65 per cent. And it has the highest proportion, alongside the north-east of England, on disability (3 per cent) and other (8 per cent) benefits.

Chart 63: Where does the money come from? The percentage breakdown

Region/Country	Wages and salaries	Self-employed	Investments	Tax Credits	State Pension	Other pensions	Disability benefits	Other Social Security benefits	Other sources
North East	61	4	2	3	9	9	3	8	2
North West	61	6	1	3	8	8	2	7	2
Yorkshire and the Humber	64	8	1	3	7	7	2	6	2
East Midlands	63	7	2	2	8	8	2	6	2
West Midlands	61	7	2	3	8	9	2	7	3
East of England	72	6	2	1	6	7	1	4	2
London	71	9	1	1	4	4	1	6	3
Inner London	70	12	2	1	3	2	1	6	3
Outer London	71	7	1	1	4	6	1	5	2
South East	65	9	2	1	6	9	1	4	3
South West	61	8	2	2	9	10	1	5	3
England	66	7	2	2	7	8	1	5	2
Wales	60	6	1	2	9	10	2	7	3
Scotland	66	6	1	2	7	8	2	6	2
Northern Ireland	60	9	1	3	8	7	3	8	1
United Kingdom	65	7	2	2	7	8	1	6	2

Source: DSD Family Resources Survey 2011/12

Comparing income in NI with the UK and the Republic of Ireland

Average salaries in Northern Ireland are considerably lower than for the UK generally

Average salaries in Northern Ireland are considerably lower than in the UK generally. The *Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings* for 2013 puts the Northern Ireland average at £21,836 per annum, almost £5,000 less than the UK average of £26,634. Data for the Republic of Ireland come from the *Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs* survey carried out by the Central Statistics Office, giving the average salary as the equivalent of £29,931. If all else were equal, this is £8,000 higher than the Northern Ireland average but the very different package of purchasing power, taxes and benefits makes any like-for-like comparison invalid.

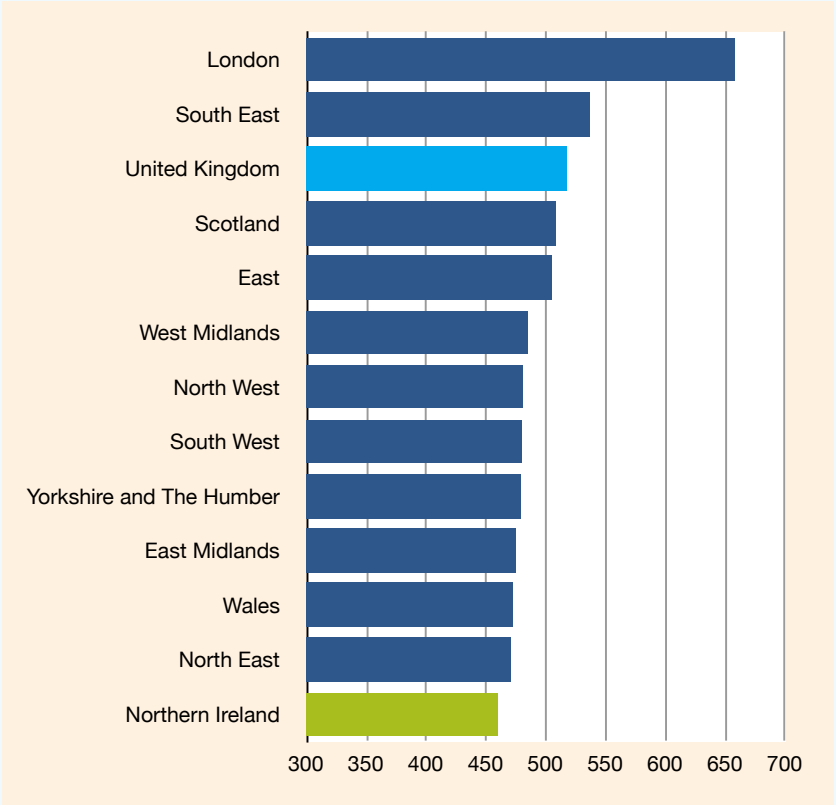
The gap with the rest of the UK is widening. In April 2013 median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees in Northern Ireland were £460, an increase of 0.5 per cent over the year. In the UK as a whole over the same period a 2.2 per cent rise brought median earnings to £518.The ratio of the Northern Ireland to the UK median thus fell to 88.9 per cent from 90.4 per cent a year earlier. The figures are better for part-time workers : in Northern Ireland the weekly median rose by 3.8 per cent, to £154 at April 2013, compared with 3.1 per cent across the UK (reaching £160).

Chart 64: Earnings in Northern Ireland and the UK

	NORTHERN IRELAND			UNITED KINGDOM		
	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	ALL	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	ALL
Apr-13						
Men	477.4	145.1	429.9	556	149.5	508
Women	441.5	158	300	458.8	164.3	327.5
All	460	153.9	366.8	517.5	160.1	416.5
Apr-12						
Men	477.7	138.8	420	546	145.8	498.1
Women	440	153.5	298.6	448.9	158.7	319.7
All	457.6	148.3	360.8	506.1	155.2	405.8
% change 12-13						
Men	-0.1	4.5	2.4	1.8	2.5	2
Women	0.3	2.9	0.5	2.2	3.5	2.5
All	0.5	3.8	1.7	2.2	3.1	2.6

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2013

Chart 65: Weekly earnings in NI are the lowest in the UK



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, ONS, December 2013

2. POVERTY

2.1 The measurement of poverty

Poverty has increased in Northern Ireland on all measures. The extent to which it has increased and how it compares with elsewhere depends on which measure is used. First, there is a difference between poverty when measured before and after housing costs: a comparable house will cost less to rent or buy in Northern Ireland than in those parts of the UK where housing is expensive, particularly in London and the south-east.

A second distinction is between relative and absolute poverty. Obviously poverty in the developed world is very different from poverty in developing countries. In order to give meaning to the term in european countries, the bar for relative poverty is set at 60 per cent of national median income. The UK measure for absolute poverty is different. This sets the bar at 60 per cent of the (inflation-adjusted) median income for a particular year. That year used to be 1998/99, when the Child Poverty Act was introduced, but following the renewal of the act in 2010/11 a new benchmark was set.

In December 2013 the Department for Social Development published , 2010-11. While poverty levels had remained relatively stable at around 20 per cent over the preceding decade, from 2010/11 to 2011/12:

- Median incomes in Northern Ireland decreased for the third consecutive year, by 1.9 per cent in cash terms and 6.5 per cent in real terms.

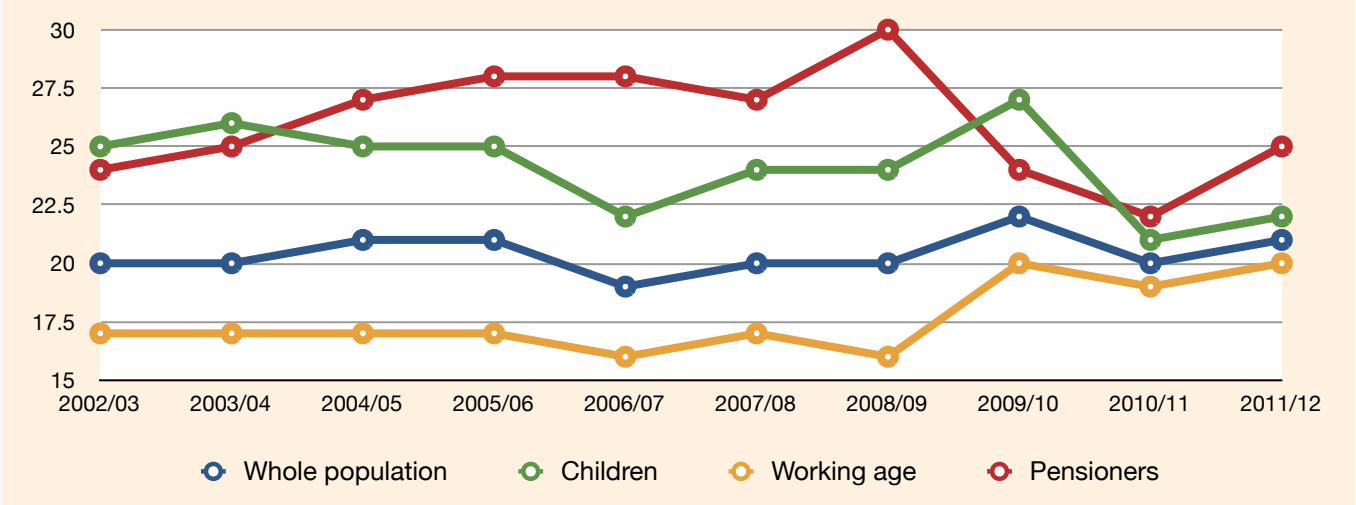
- Relative and absolute poverty increased: in 2011/12 there were approximately 379,000 (21 per cent of the population) in relative poverty and about 422,000 (24 per cent) in absolute poverty before housing costs.

- There were almost 95,000 children (22 per cent) in relative poverty and 109,000 (25 per cent) in absolute poverty before housing costs, a 4 percentage-point increase from the previous year.

- There were nearly 213,000 working-age adults (20 per cent) in relative poverty and almost 235,000 (22 per cent) in absolute poverty before housing costs – the latter incidence the highest since the start of the series in 2002/03.

- In 2011/12 the percentage of pensioners in relative poverty after housing costs was 15%, the same percentage recorded in 2010/11. The level of relative poverty for pensioners has shown a shown a large decrease of 6 percentage points between 2007/08 and 2011/12. This finding is consistent with research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation which also shows that the proportion of pensioners in poverty in NI fell from 19 per cent to 16 per cent in the five years to 2011/12. (Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion in Northern Ireland, 2014)

Chart 66: Long-term poverty trends (before housing costs)



Source: NISRA 'Poverty in Northern Ireland 2011/12', published 30 August 2013

Future trends

Projections by the IFS in January 2014 (Browne et al) suggest:

- Relative child poverty will increase by 5.0 percentage points by 2014/15 and 9.2 points by 2020/21, while absolute poverty will rise by 7.1 points by 2014/15 and 13.5 by 2020/21.

- Working-age poverty will increase on the relative measure by 6.4 points and by 7.3 on the absolute measure.

These projections suggest a larger increase in poverty in Northern Ireland than the UK generally.

2.2 How do NI poverty levels compare?

The poverty figures for Northern Ireland can either be said to be significantly higher than those in other parts of the UK or broadly the same, depending on the measure. As Chart 67 shows, before housing costs the overall figure for Northern Ireland is five percentage points ahead of the UK average. Once housing costs are factored in, however, the gap narrows considerably in all categories.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has made a comparative study of how the devolved jurisdictions have fared before and after the recession, rolling together three-year periods to even out year-to-year fluctuations, and on this basis comparing 2004-2009 and 2009-12. Northern Ireland emerges as the most affected of the devolved countries. The convergence with the UK average is very much to Northern Ireland's disadvantage, since before the recession its poverty incidence had been two points lower (these figures are after housing costs.)

Chart 68: Child poverty by district council area

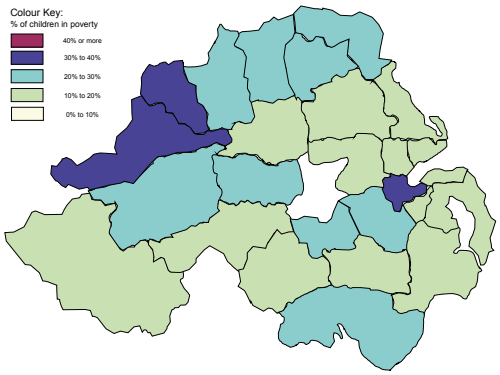


Chart 69: District council breakdown

Antrim	14%
Ards	15%
Armagh	16%
Ballymena	16%
Ballymoney	20%
Banbridge	14%
Belfast	34%
Carrickfergus	16%
Castlereagh	13%
Coleraine	21%
Cookstown	20%
Craigavon	21%
Derry	35%
Down	20%
Dungannon	19%
Fermanagh	19%
Larne	17%
Limavady	26%
Lisburn	21%
Magherafelt	17%
Moyle	23%
Newry and Mourne	25%
Newtownabbey	17%
North Down	13%
Omagh	22%
Strabane	32%

Chart 67: Poverty in Northern Ireland and the UK

	Before Housing Costs		After Housing Costs	
	NI	UK	NI	UK
Whole pop	21	16	23	21
Children	22	17	27	27
Working age	20	15	23	21
Pensioners	25	16	15	14

Source: DSD, Household Below Average Income, 2011/12, published December 2013

Mapping child poverty

The End Child Poverty campaign maps poverty in the UK each year, based on an analysis by researchers from Loughborough University. This draws upon tax data and the most recent report, issued in February 2013, placed West Belfast as the parliamentary constituency with the second highest child poverty, at 46 per cent (Manchester Central had the highest). At local-authority level, Derry was ranked fourth (35 per cent), Belfast fifth (34 per cent) and Strabane 14th (32 per cent), giving Northern Ireland three entries in a dubious top 20.

2.3 How reliable are poverty statistics?

Caution is required when assessing poverty. Relative-poverty figures allow comparisons between those on low incomes and the median but when middle incomes decrease, as they have since the crash, poverty then also seems to fall – a statistical artefact rather than a description of reality. An alternative approach was outlined in a paper commissioned by OFMDFM and issued in October 2013, *Study of Income and Expenditure Poverty in Northern Ireland*. The authors, Paddy Hillyard and Demi Patsois, argued that income measures alone were distorting and that a fuller picture could be gained by including expenditure patterns. While official measures of poverty might mislead because the poverty line drops during a recession, an analysis of expenditure would address the actual financial resources available to people. The study took 2007-10 as its frame for analysis and so does not take into account the increases in relative and absolute poverty in the official figures for the last two years but the conclusion remains relevant:

> *Three particular findings of the research – the lower living standards in Northern Ireland, their sharper decline, and the extensive inequality as shown by the predictor analysis – taken together have important implications for the stability of society. The inequality between the better-off and the poor in Northern Ireland is large and needs to be addressed.*

Deprivation Indicators

Percentage who do not have enough money to:

Keep their home in decent decor

25 Protestant 60 Catholic 15 Other

Holiday away from home one week per year

32 Protestant 51 Catholic 17 Other

Insure household contents

25 Protestant 58 Catholic 16 Other

Save £10+ per month

35 Protestant 50 Catholic 15 Other

Replace any worn out furniture

30 Protestant 53 Catholic 18 Other

Repair/replace broken electrical items

30 Protestant 51 Catholic 19 Other

Spend on oneself each week

33 Protestant 53 Catholic 14 Other

Keep accommodation warm enough

24 Protestant 61 Catholic 15 Other

Keep up with Bills and regular debt repayments

39 Protestant 51 Catholic 10 Other

Avoid being behind on one or more household bill

28 Protestant 61 Catholic 10 Other

Source: Family Resources Survey, Deprivation Indices 2011/12

2.4 The Assembly's anti-poverty strategies

The Child Poverty Act 2010 required the Executive to develop a strategy to achieve the eradication of child poverty in the UK by 2020. The NI version of this strategy, *Improving Children's Life Chances*, was laid before the Assembly in March 2011. The target for relative poverty under the act is that by 2020 fewer than 10 per cent of children in the UK will live in households whose income is less than 60 per cent of the median. *Child and Working-Age Poverty in Northern Ireland from 2010 to 2020*, a report by the IFS for OFMDFM, however concluded that it 'seems impossible that the targets set out in the Child Poverty Act could be met even if there were unprecedented changes in the labour market, welfare policy, and the amount of redistribution attempted by the state'.

'It seems impossible that the targets set out in the Child Poverty Act could be met."

- Institute of Fiscal Studies

A mapping paper presented to the Committee for Social Development in July 2012 showed that across departments there were more than 90 strategies with a 'high relevance' to tackling poverty and deprivation (RAISE Paper 145/12). Political support for tackling child poverty in Northern Ireland, and in the devolved jurisdictions more generally, may run ahead of the powers available to act on such a 'wicked' problem, with key competences over tax, welfare and regulation reserved to Westminster. A renewed attempt to create an integrated strategy has been made by the Department for Social Development through the Delivering Social Change programme. This is described as 'a new way of moving away from plans with long lists of existing activities towards a smaller number of actions which can really make a difference. It is about creating a new culture and focus on cross-cutting work to achieve social benefits' (DSD website).

The failure of previous strategies can be seen in Chart 70, created by Gaffikin and Morrissey (2011) to track the way in which the most disadvantaged areas of Belfast have remained consistent over the years, even when measured by changing indices. From decade to decade the pack is reshuffled so that the pecking order alters slightly but when arranged alphabetically the same names recur. These are the areas that have been targeted through a lengthy series of urban-renewal schemes, including some generously funded EU programmes, but the table is a sobering testament to the persistence of poverty.

Chart 70: Different periods, same names: most disadvantaged areas of Belfast 1991-2010

1991	2001	2005	2010
Ardoyne	Ardoyne	Ardoyne	Ardoyne
Ballymacarett	Ballymacarrett	Ballymacarrett	Ballymacarrett
Beechmount	Beechmount	Beechmount	Beechmount
Blackstaff	Blackstaff	Blackstaff	Blackstaff
Clonard	Clonard	Clonard	Clonard
Crumlin	Crumlin	Crumlin	Crumlin
Duncairn	Duncairn	Duncairn	Duncairn
Falls	Falls	Falls	Falls
Glencairn	Glencairn	Glencairn	Glencairn
Glencolin	Glencolin	Glencolin	Glencolin
Island	Island	Island	
New Lodge	New Lodge	New Lodge	New Lodge
Shaftesbury	Shaftesbury	Shaftesbury	Shaftesbury
Shankill	Shankill	Shankill	Shankill
The Mount	The Mount	The Mount	The Mount
Upper Springfield	Upper Springfield	Upper Springfield	Upper Springfield
	Waterworks	Waterworks	WaterWorks
Whiterock	Whiterock	Whiterock	Whiterock
Woodstock	Woodstock	Woodstock	Woodstock
Woodvale	Woodvale	Woodvale	Woodvale

Source: Belfast City Council 'Poverty in Belfast', cited in Gaffikin and Morrissey, 2011: p.216

2.5 Welfare reform

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 received Royal Assent on 8 March, allowing the UK Government to introduce Universal Credit in England, Scotland and Wales. Although social security is a devolved matter in Northern Ireland, in practice retaining parity with Great Britain is an attractive option for the Executive, as the UK Government has only agreed to meet the costs of benefits in full if parity is maintained. Research into the potential impact of the 'reforms' was commissioned by the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action and carried out by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University. It found that when the changes come into full effect they will take £750 million a year out of the Northern Ireland economy – or £650 for every adult of working age. The impact will be greater than in any other UK region, mainly due to the high dependence on incapacity benefits and Disability Living Allowance, two of the main targets.

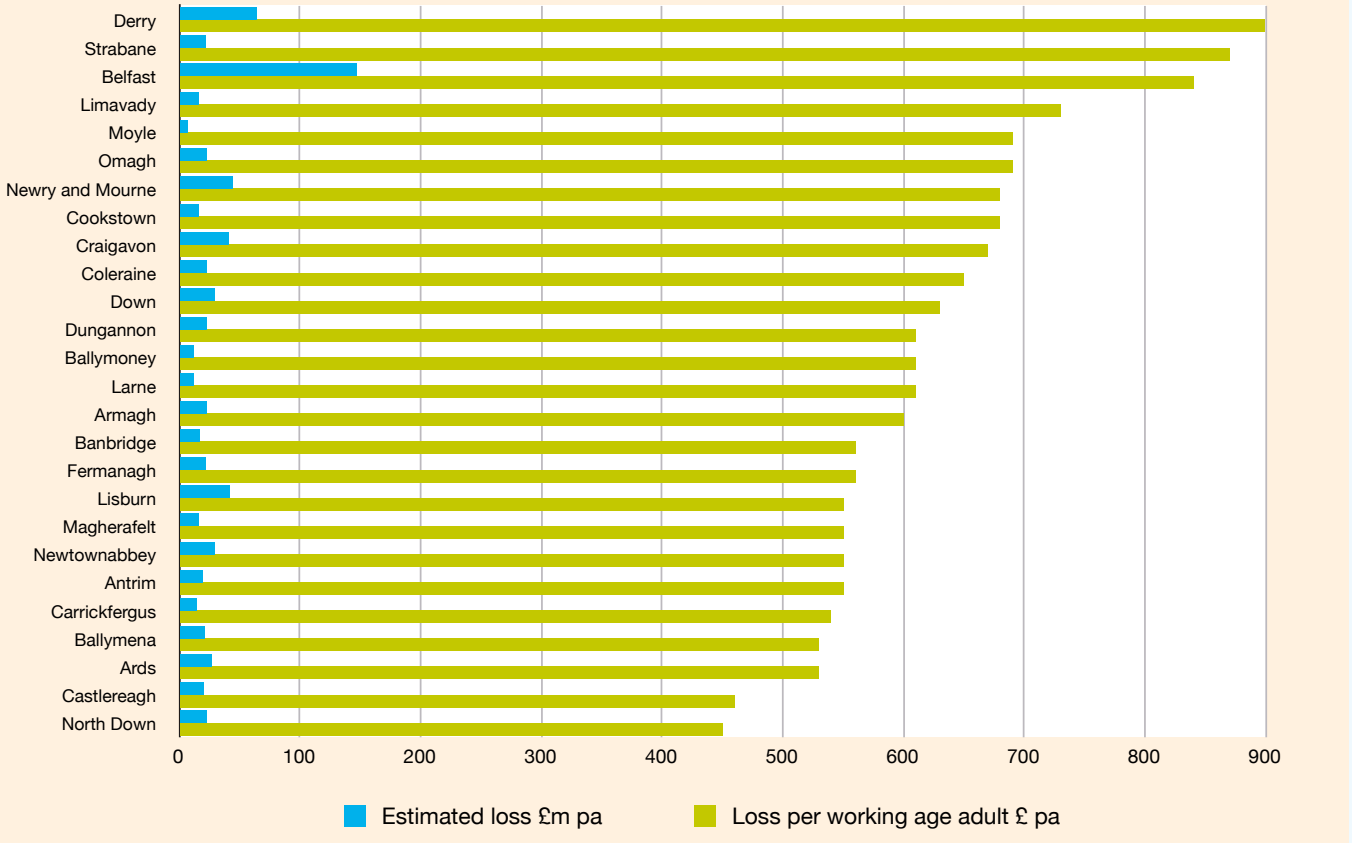
Chart 71: Projected impact of welfare 'reform' on Northern Ireland by 2014/15

	No of h'holds/ individuals adversely affected	Estimated net loss £m pa	Average loss per affected h'hold/indiv £ pa	Net loss per working -age adult £ pa
Incapacity benefit	66,000	230	3,480	200
Tax Credits	165,000	135	810	115
1 per cent uprating	NA	120	NA	105
Disability Living Allowance	67,000	105	2,160	90
Child Benefit	242,000	80	330	70
Housing Benefit: Local Housing Allowance	54,000	55	1,000	45
Housing Benefit: 'bedroom tax'	33,000	20	620	20
Non-dependant deductions	10,000	10	1,130	10
Household Benefit cap	620	3	4,810	3
Total	NA	750	NA	650

Source: Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research/NICVA 2013

The effects of the changes are geographically uneven, with three local-government districts hit hardest: Derry, Strabane and Belfast. In these three areas the loss averaged across the working-age population is over £800 a year, with Derry reaching the £900 mark.

Chart 72: Projected impact of welfare 'reform' by council area



Source: Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research/NICVA 2013

Universal Credit

A key component of the welfare package is Universal Credit, replacing a set of in- and out-of-work benefits. Between October 2013 and the end of 2017, all existing claims to income based Jobseekers Allowance (JSA), Income Support (IS), income based Employment Support Allowance (ESA), Housing Benefit (HB), Working Tax Credit (WTC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) will have moved to Universal Credit. The pattern of winners and losers is complex, and the wide range of independent variables means any projections are speculative. However, research by the IFS, *Universal Credit in Northern Ireland: what will its impact be, and what are the challenges?* found that it would lead to a small reduction in aggregate benefit entitlements, as in the UK as a whole. Lone parents and couples with children constitute a much larger share of working-age households in Northern Ireland (27.1 per cent) than the rest of the UK (23.6 per cent); since people in these categories bear a disproportionate share of the reductions, the likely net effect is greater overall loss within Northern Ireland. The pattern of winners and losers is complex but the 900,000 families in Northern Ireland can be assigned to the categories below:

Chart 73: Winners and losers with the introduction of Universal Credit

Better off	103,000 families	11.4%
Worse off	99,000 families	10.9%
Benefit claimants who neither gain nor lose	197,000 families	22%
Not in the benefits system	504,000 families	56%

Derived from Institute for Fiscal studies- Universal Credit in Northern Ireland: what will its impact be, and what are the challenges?

3. Equality and Inequality in the Labour Market

3.1 The changing balance of the labour force

For the past 30 years or more the labour market has moved steadily towards greater equality between Protestants and Catholics. This has been well documented in a briefing paper for the Assembly, *Northern Ireland: The Decades of Change, 1990-2010* (Russell, 2012), which traces the legislative and cultural changes that have ended discriminatory practices. The Equality Commission Monitoring Report No 23, issued in December 2013, provided further evidence of this long-term trend. The data, which relate to the year 2012, show there is now an almost exact correspondence between the Protestant and Catholic shares of the workforce and the proportions of the two communities

available for work, whereas in 1991 the gap between Catholics in the workforce and those available was five percentage points.

Chart 74: Changing balance of the workforce

	Protestant	Catholic
% of the workforce	53.4	46.6
% of those available for work	53.0	47.0

Source: Equality Commission Monitoring Report 23, December 2013

The demographic swell of the Catholic community in younger cohorts shows itself in figures for job applications and appointments. In 2012, for the fourth successive year the proportion of applicants who were Catholic (51.6 per cent) was greater than the Protestant proportion (48.4 per cent). For appointees, the proportions were again tilting in the same direction: Catholics 50.9 per cent and Protestants 49.1.

The ratio of Catholics to Protestants is slightly bigger in the public than in the private sector. In both the tempo of change has slowed. While Protestants continue to form the majority of older cohorts, and therefore the majority of those leaving the workforce (52.1 per cent), the ratios of those coming into employment are not so much weighted in favour of Catholics as in previous years. For seven consecutive years Catholics made up the majority of appointees, but the 2012 figures showed a dip. At 50.9 per cent Catholics were still a majority but down 1.2 points on the previous year.

Chart 75: Changing balance of the private sector

% of the workforce	2011	2011	2012
Protestant	59.6	54.0	53.8
Catholic	40.4	46.0	46.2

Chart 76: Changing balance of the public sector

% of the workforce	2011	2011	2012
Protestant	59.8	53.2	52.9
Catholic	40.2	46.8	47.1

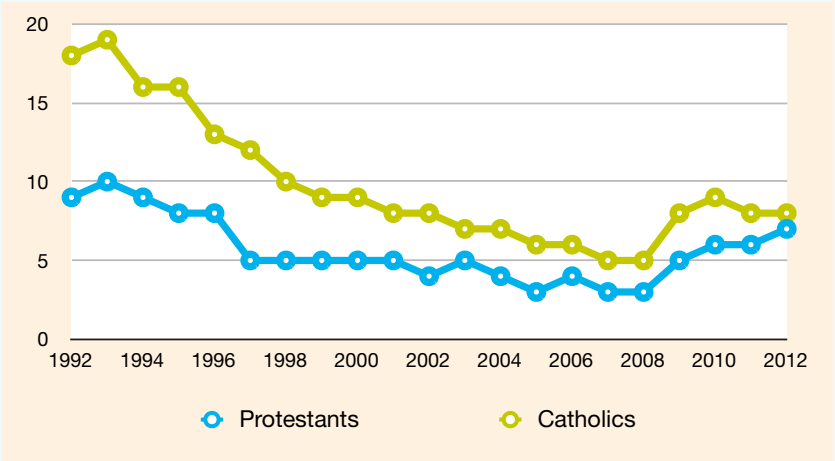
It is striking how during the flags dispute the workplace remained free of the controversy. Before the introduction of the Code of Practice associated with the 1989 legislation, it was common for workplaces, particularly in the Protestant-dominated heavy industries like shipbuilding and engineering, to be festooned with union flags and other loyalist insignia.

The code required employers to 'promote a good and harmonious working environment and atmosphere in which no worker feels under threat or intimidated because of his or her religious belief or political opinion'. Flags had to come down. At the beginning of the 1990s there were localised disturbances over the flying of the union flag and the wearing of poppies on Remembrance Day (or black armbands on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday) but gradual acceptance of shopfloor neutrality meant the passions engendered by the decision of Belfast City Council to limit the flying of the union flag failed to reignite sparks in the workplace.

3.2 Unemployment and economic inactivity

Unemployment shows the same trend as participation in the workforce – convergence between Protestants and Catholics. In 1992 the unemployment rate was 18 per cent for Catholics, double that for Protestants. By 2012 these rates had decreased to 8 and 6 per cent respectively.

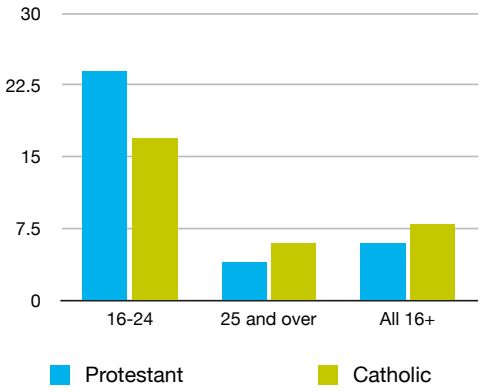
Chart 77: Unemployment rate



Source: Labour Force Survey Religion Report 2012, issued January 2014

The narrowing of the unemployment gap overall masks a serious problem which has emerged since the start of the recession – differentials within age bands. Among those aged 25 and over, in 2012 Catholics were more likely than Protestants to be unemployed (6 v 4 per cent). In the younger age group, however, the pattern is reversed. Young Protestants are now finding it harder than Catholics to break into the job market: in the 16-24 age bracket 24 per cent of Protestants were unemployed in 2012, against 17 per cent for Catholics.

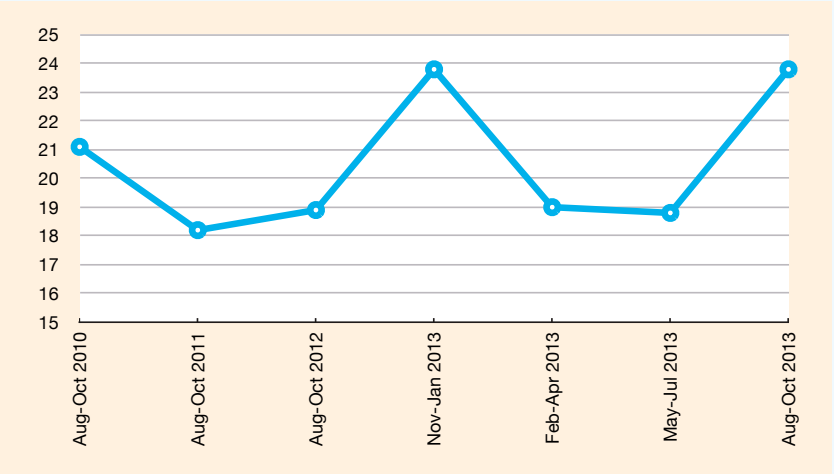
Chart 78: Unemployment rate by age group



3.3 Youth unemployment and NEETs

While the overall unemployment rate in Northern Ireland fell slightly (by 0.3 points) in the year to October 2013, youth unemployment rose by 5 points to 23.8 per cent.

Chart 79: Trends in youth unemployment 2010-2013



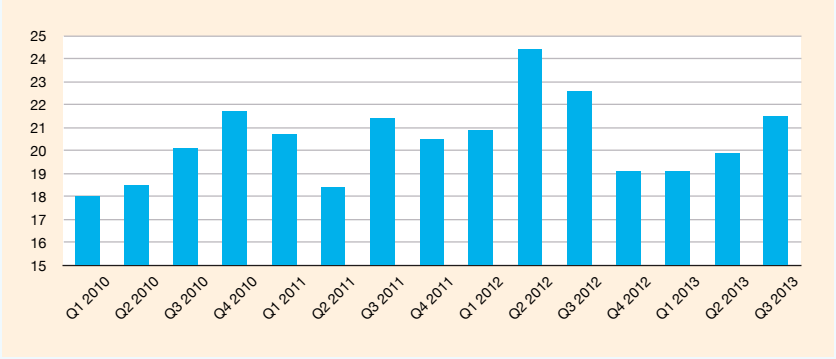
Source: NISRA, Statistical Press Release, 18 December 2013

Of particular concern are those categorised as 'not In employment, education or training' or NEETs. Northern Ireland now has the highest proportion of young people in this category within the UK. The term is used not just as a statistical net but as a category that suggests social exclusion and the hopelessness that attaches to the 'lost generation' of the recession. While the UK has experienced a surge in youth unemployment, it has not however been on the scale of the crisis in Greece, Spain, Portugal or Italy or, closer to home, the Republic of Ireland (across the border in Donegal the NEET proportion is 49 per cent).

In Northern Ireland over one in five young people is NEET and the research paints a gloomy picture. The (mainly England-focused) Commission on Youth Unemployment (2012) found that NEETs are more likely to be unemployed and welfare-dependent later in life, to earn less, to suffer mental and physical ill-health and to become involved in anti-social behaviour. A study of 1,000 NEETs by the lecturers' union, UCU, published in July 2013, found:

- 40 per cent feel they are not part of society,
- 33 per cent have suffered depression,
- 37 per cent rarely go outside the house and
- 39 per cent suffer from stress.

Chart 80: NEETs in Northern Ireland



Source: DEL Analytical Services

A larger study based on interviews with 2,136 16-25 year-olds was published in 2013 by the Prince's Trust (Youth Index, 2013). It showed that while 27 per cent of young people in work felt down or depressed 'always' or 'often', this increased to almost half (48 per cent) among NEETs. One on five of the young unemployed said they felt their confidence would never recover from their period out of work. These findings are consistent with a previous study by the Prince's Trust in Northern Ireland, *A Manifesto for the Disadvantaged Young People of Northern Ireland* (Prince's Trust, 2010), which suggested that 35 per cent of NEETs had experienced suicidal feelings.

Northern Ireland has 48,000 of its 16-24 year-olds in the NEET category, and 25,000 of 16-19 year olds. Some care must be taken with these figures. Firstly, there are seasonal fluctuations with the academic year, and so in Chart 81 for reasons of consistency the figures are all for the third quarter of the year. Secondly, the definition of NEET is problematic, as training is restricted to that which is government sponsored and education is restricted to full-time. Thirdly, to arrive at the figures for the 16-24 age cohort the Labour Force Survey (LFS) combines two sets of figures: those for the economically inactive (and who do not feature in the unemployment figures), and those for the unemployed. The LFS is a sample survey, and in Northern Ireland this survey was based on a sample of around 240-300 young people aged 16-19. The health warning issued by NISRA concludes that it can only say with 95 per cent certainty that the total number lies within 8,000 either way of the estimate, As a briefing paper to the Assembly put it, "The size of the variation in the confidence interval would therefore call into question the accuracy of the NEET statistics being used in Northern Ireland to determine policy"(Murphy,2013). The final caution concerns comparisons across the UK, where the data is derived from a different range of sources, including the Client Caseload Information System in England and the Annual Population Survey in Wales. None of this suggests that the official statistics have the rigour that might be expected (or hoped for) but in the absence of any other data they are used for planning purposes. The Department for Employment and Learning's strategy *Pathways for Success* was launched in May 2012. It committed to expenditure of £41 million over three years: £5.8 million available in 2012/13, rising to £15.6 million in 2013/14 and £19.6 million in 2014/15.

Chart 81: NEETs in the UK, 2009-2013 Source: Labour Force Survey

NEETs in the UK aged 16-19				
Year/ Quarter	England	Scotland	Wales	NI
2009 (Q3)	17.7%	17.7%	16.6%	15.4%
2012 (Q3)	16.4%	19.2%	22.6%	14.2%
2013 (Q3)	16.3%	17.9%	16.5%	15.4%

NEETs in the UK aged 16-24				
Year/ Quarter	England	Scotland	Wales	NI
2009 (Q3)	21.4%	20.6%	22.4%	22.5%
2012 (Q3)	20.4%	21.6%	22.4%	22.6%
2013 (Q3)	20.2%	18.9%	21.5%	22.1%

3.4 The gender gap

There is a gender pay gap in Northern Ireland but it takes an unusual form. Women earn as much (and fractionally more) than men per hour, and this applies to both full-time and part-time work. However when pay differences are calculated per week or per month men take home more pay than women. There are two reasons for this. First, men work more overtime and so earn more per week and per month. The second reason is to do with the distribution of full-time and part-time work. Women predominate in part-time work where the overall pay rates are lower. The net effect of these two factors is a pay gap in favour of men, and there has been a slight widening of that gap over the past year. At April 2013, female median hourly earnings, excluding overtime, were 89.7 per cent of male earnings. This compares to 90.6 per cent in 2012 and 91.2 per cent in 2011. Female and male earnings are still more closely aligned in NI than in other parts of the UK, and the 89.7 per cent figures is still narrower than the gap in the UK for the same period (80.3 per cent).

Chart 82: The earnings of men and women

	MEN			WOMEN			RATIO WOMEN TO MEN (%)		
	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	ALL	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	ALL	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	ALL
2013	11.37	7.47	10.82	11.45	8.02	9.71	100.7	107.4	89.7
2012	11.36	7.14	10.55	11.36	7.91	9.56	100	110.8	90.6

Median female hourly earnings excluding overtime as a percentage of male earnings.
Source: ASHE 2013

4. Equality and Inequality in Education

4.1 Overview

The Northern Ireland schooling system is characterised by division. There are, first, two parallel systems, one primarily for Catholics and the other primarily for Protestants, and within the two systems a second division opens up at post-primary level between selective grammar schools and the others, defined negatively as non-selective. There are further categories: integrated schools represent a sector of their own, in addition to which there are Irish-language schools and since the first Free Presbyterian school opened in 1979 the number of 'Christian education' schools has grown to seven. The most significant divisions are based on gender and class, and it is the interplay between these which drives inequality.

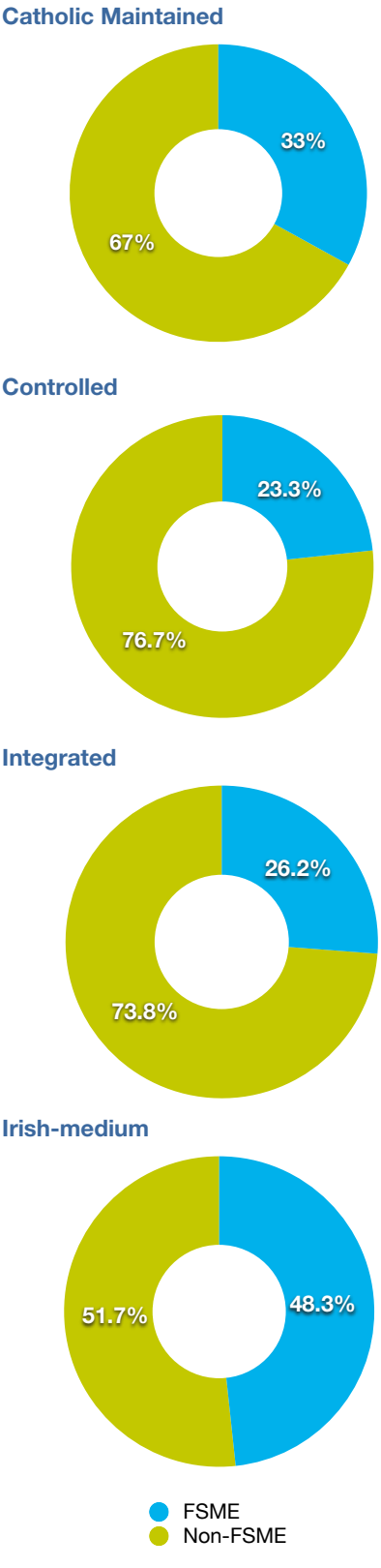
Girls do better than boys, as in all the OECD countries. Catholics do better than Protestants – it is also the case across the world that Catholic schools tend to outperform state schools but in Northern Ireland the different attainment levels are built upon the dangerous fault-line of ethnic division. These variables interact to extend the gap between top and bottom. Catholic middle-class girls enjoy remarkable educational success, while Protestant working-class boys experience equally remarkable failure.

4.2 Primary education

In 2011, 3,586 year-six students from 136 schools in Northern Ireland participated in two major studies, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). PIRLS has a five-yearly cycle and TIMSS four-yearly and this was the first time they had coincided. The results were extremely impressive. The National Foundation for Educational Research summarised the findings thus:

- In PIRLS, Northern Ireland was outperformed by only four of the 45 participating countries. The mean score for reading was not significantly different from that of a further four countries, and was significantly higher than all remaining participating countries.
- Pupils in Northern Ireland performed very well in TIMSS 2011 mathematics, significantly outperforming 44 of the 50 participating countries and being significantly outperformed by only five.
- The average score for science was lower than for mathematics, although still above the TIMSS science international average. Northern Ireland was outperformed by 17 countries in science and was in a band of 10 countries scoring similarly.

Chart 83: The imbalance of social and economic disadvantage means that Catholic schools have a higher percentage of FSME pupils than state controlled schools: 33 per cent as against 23 per cent. The highest FSME percentage (48.3 per cent) is to be found in the small number of Irish-language schools, which draw their intake largely from the Catholic population.



These positive findings were reinforced by the OECD's *January 2014 Review of Evaluation and Assessment in Education*. This found that Northern Ireland pupils had 'excellent skills' in reading and mathematics at the primary level in international comparisons. Persistent challenges remained in improving outcomes for some pupils, particularly in schools serving socially disadvantaged communities, but external school evaluations suggested some progress was being made.

The Education and Training Inspectorate's *Chief Inspector's Report 2010-2012* evaluated the overall effectiveness of 78 per cent of primary schools inspected as good or better. Of children leaving primary school, 82 per cent had achieved the expected level in English and 83 per cent in mathematics. In 82 per cent of the lessons observed, the quality of learning and teaching was good or better and in 50 per cent it was very good or outstanding. In 78 per cent of the schools the quality of leadership and management was also good or better. There were some criticisms. Schools serving communities with no or low social deprivation scored a good or better rate of 84 per cent. Only 61 per cent of schools serving communities with high social deprivation levels of social deprivation achieved the same level – a gap of 23 percentage points.

The closing balance still shows NI's primary schools to be a success story and not just for a top layer. The deeper problems develop once children move into post-primary provision.

4.3 Post-primary education

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a triennial OECD survey of the educational achievement of 15 year-olds. Frequently criticised by educationalists, PISA remains the World Cup of educational league tables, used by governments and business as a ready reckoner of performance in the key areas of mathematics, science and reading skills. The 2012 report was based on tests run with 500,000 pupils in 66 countries. The UK did poorly for an advanced nation. British 15-year-olds ranked 26th in maths, 23rd in reading and 21st in science. The results created a certain consternation, with some conservative critics arguing that standards had fallen in England because of 'bog standard' comprehensives. In response the Director of OFSTED, Sir Michael Wilshaw, said: 'Northern Ireland has a selective system and they did worse than us' (BBC News, 15/12/13). In fact the differences between Northern Ireland and the other parts of the UK were slight, with the main attainment gap coming in maths. Here Northern Ireland came third in the UK pecking order, behind Scotland and England but ahead of Wales.

On the other hand, Northern Ireland's low achieving schools are significantly worse than the lowest in the English league tables. No school in England has fewer than 14 per cent of its pupils achieving 5 good GCSEs in the OFSTED 2012/13 Annual Report. Three schools in Northern Ireland are below this line.

How much does socio-economic background determine attainment? The ESCS Index (of economic, social and cultural status) assesses this correlation and attaches point scores to show the degree of determination. The higher the score, the more the pupil attainment has been determined by social background. The Republic of Ireland, Scotland and Wales fall below the OECD average (39) on the index, with scores of 38, 37, and 35 respectively. England is above with 41, meaning pupil success there is more determined by social background, but Northern Ireland is higher still at 45 – indicating that education is not acting as a key to social mobility but tending to reproduce hierarchies.

4.4 Class, religion and gender in education

The PISA finding on the high correlation between social class and attainment in Northern Ireland is borne out in the statistics for GCSE and A-level. The standard UK threshold here is five 'good' GCSEs – passes at A*-C, including English and maths. In 2012/13 60.9 per cent of year-12 pupils achieved the target, an increase of 0.8 points on the previous year. That left four in ten leaving school without what is seen as the key 'employability' qualification. The real problem lies in low attainment by the poorest pupils.

In 2012/13 the Department of Education produced for the first time summary data for attainment by those with a free school meal entitlement (FSME), a proxy for poverty. Only one third (33.9 per cent) of FSME pupils reached the five 'good' GCSEs target. Those not on FSME had an attainment level that was almost double, 66.7%. This attainment gap of 32.8 percentage points is wider than in English schools, where in 2012/13 it was 27 points (OFSTED Annual Report, 2012/13). Northern Ireland pupils at the bottom do worse than the corresponding group in England, while those at the very top do better. For example, in 2013 in Northern Ireland 28 per cent of pupils achieved the top A* and A GCSE grades, compared with 20 per cent in England and Wales. On the other hand, no school in England went below 14 per cent on the 5 good GCSEs measure, while three schools in Northern Ireland performed below this level.

The Executive's Programme for Government has set a target of 66 per cent of all young people achieving at least five 'good' GCSEs by 2014/15 and 49 percent of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds achieving the same standard in the same timeframe. The latest figure of 33.9 per cent in the latter case shows that there is still much ground to be made up – just over 15 percentage points. The gap in school performance continues right up to entry to higher education: the proportion of school-leavers from FSME backgrounds going on to university is 18.6 per cent; of those not on free-school-meal entitlement, it is 47.4 per cent.

The division into grammar and non-grammar schools facilitates a form of social segregation. Although notionally based on academic selection – as administered separately by Catholic and 'controlled' schools – the grammar/non-grammar divide speaks to a class distinction, with high concentrations of socially disadvantaged

Chart 84: PISA maths scores for selected education systems

Country	Rank	Score
Shanghai	1	613
Singapore	2	573
Hong Kong	3	561
Switzerland	9	531
Germany	16	514
Vietnam	17	511
Ireland	20	501
France	25	495
UK	26	494
UK breakdown		
Scotland	1	498
England	2	494
N. Ireland	3	487
Wales	4	468

pupils in non-grammar schools. In 2012/13 the vast bulk (83.4 per cent) of FSME pupils was filtered into non-grammar schools, while only 16.6 per cent went to grammars. A further breakdown shows that while 56 of the 68 grammar schools had fewer than 10 per cent FSME pupils, this was true of only one non-grammar school. And while no grammar had more than 30 per cent FSME pupils, four non-grammars had between 60 and 70 per cent.

Chart 85: Distribution of disadvantaged pupils

% of pupils entitled to free school meals at school	All post-primary schools	Grammar schools	Non-selective schools
0-10	57	56	1
10.1-20	56	10	46
20.1-30	47	2	45
30.1-40	28	0	28
40.1-50	14	0	14
50.1-60	9	0	9
60.1-70	4	0	4
Average %:	19	7.4	27.8

Figures issued by the Department of Education have been analysed in the *Irish News* (23/12/13) to show that in the post-primary sector nine of the ten most disadvantaged schools are Catholic. Conversely, nine of the ten least disadvantaged schools are controlled schools where most pupils are Protestant.

The striking thing about educational performance in Northern Ireland is that while it broadly conforms to the pattern observed in relation to the PISA results – close correlation between socio-economic background and exam success – Catholics do better than might be expected. Their overall exam performance is better than that of Protestants, despite patterns of socio-economic background running in the other direction. In 2011/12 63.5 per cent of the Catholic cohort attained five 'good' GCSEs, as against 60.2 per cent of their Protestant counterparts. Chart 86 shows how Catholic schools predominate in the top ten grammars, when measured by the number of pupils attaining three or more A-levels. The pattern is not quite so pronounced in the list of top ten non-grammars, but Catholic schools still take up the majority of places. In some cases the success of Catholic schools is extraordinary. St Dominic's is situated in west Belfast, one of the most deprived areas in the UK. Fifteen per cent of its pupils are FSME, double the average for a grammar school, and less than a third of the year group began the school with A grades in their '11 plus'. Yet it achieved the best A-level results of any school in Northern Ireland in 2012: 97 per cent of participating pupils attained three A*-C grades.

Chart 86: The imbalance of poverty in post-primary schools: free school meal eligibility

Schools with highest numbers of eligible pupils		Schools with lowest numbers of eligible pupils	
School	% eligible	School	% eligible
St Gemma's, Belfast	70.0	Campbell College Belfast	1.1
St Peter's, Derry	68.8	Our Lady and St Patrick's, Belfast	1.7
St Brigid's, Armagh	64.3	Ballyclare High School	1.8
Corpus Christi, Belfast	61.4	Friends'School, Lisburn	2.2
St Colm's Twinbrook	58.7	Wallace High School, Lisburn	2.3
St Eugene's Castlederg	56.9	Sullivan Upper, Holywood	2.3
St Rose's Belfast	55.2	Strathearn School, Belfast	2.9
Orangefield Belfast	54.7	Methodist College, Belfast	3.0
Immaculate Conception, Derry	54.4	Antrim Grammar	3.3
Christian Brothers, Belfast	54.1	Dalriada, Ballymoney	3.4

Source: Irish News / Department of Education statistics

Note: A number of these schools including St Gemma's, St Peter's Derry and St Eugene's have now closed.

Chart 87: Top ten selective schools

School	% achieving 3+ A-levels	% achieving 5+ GCSEs	% free school meal entitlement	Principal Religion	Co-educational or Single sex
St Dominic's High School	96.6	97.8	15.3	Catholic	Girls
Lumen Christi College	91.5	100	4.9	Catholic	Co-ed
St Louis Grammar School	91.3	91.4	14.5	Catholic	Co-ed
Dominican College	91.2	88.0	10.5	Catholic	Girls
Friends' School	90.6	98.6	2.2	Protestant	Co-ed
St Louis Grammar School	89.7	99.3	6.1	Catholic	Co-ed
St Mary's Grammar School	88.8	100.0	6.4	Catholic	Co-ed
Our Lady and St Patrick's College	88.1	98.9	1.7	Catholic	Co-ed
Victoria College	88.0	90.6	6.2	Protestant	Girls
Loreto Grammar School	87.9	99.2	12.2	Catholic	Girls

Chart 88: GCSE Attainment in non-selective schools

	Catholic Maintained	Controlled
% achieving 5 A*-C (or equivalent)	73.7	59.2
% achieving 5 A*-C (or equivalent) with English and Maths	41.0	33.5

Chart 89: Top performing non-selective schools

School	% achieving 3+ A-levels	% achieving 5+ GCSEs	% free school meal entitlement	Principle Religion	Co-educational or Single sex
St. Catherine's College, Armagh	71.7	80.6	19.9	Catholic	Girls
Rathfriland High School	71.2	N/A	16.7	Protestant	Co-ed
St Patrick's High School, Keady	69.6	63.2	19.7	Catholic	Co-ed
St Patrick's Co-ed College, Maghera	68.2	57.3	16.6	Catholic	Co-ed
St Patrick's College, Banbridge	64.6	41.7	24.9	Catholic	Co-ed
Slemish College	62.5	43.6	13.1	Integrated	Co-ed
Aughnacloy High School	60.9	N/A	12.3	Protestant	Co-ed
Kilkeel High School	60.6	45.7	11.5	Protestant	Co-ed
St Colmcille's High School, Crossgar	59.2	N/A	21.5	Catholic	Co-ed

The religious attainment gap, while distinct and consistent, is not so pronounced when the results for the two communities are given as averages:

Attainment level	Catholic	Protestant
5 good GCSEs (including English and maths) A*-C	63.5%	60.2%
5 GCSEs A*-C	78.8%	73.8%
2+ A-Levels A*-E	59.1%	51.8%

Source: Department of Education Statistical Press Release, 30 May 2013

The accelerators come from the interplay of religion with two other factors: poverty (as detailed above) and gender. Using the same measures as for religion, a much wider attainment gap opens up when a gender filter is applied:

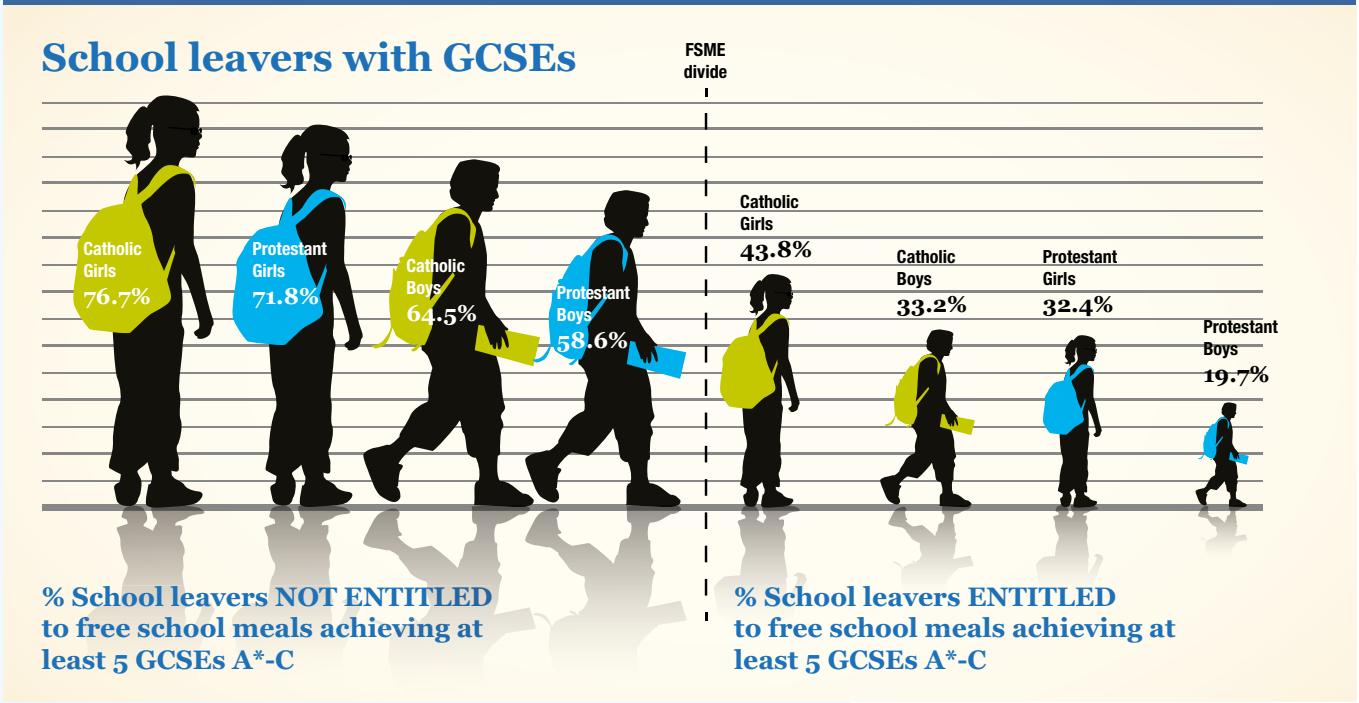
Attainment level	Girls	Boys
5 good GCSEs (including English and Maths) A*-C	67.8%	56.3%
5 GCSEs A*-C	82.1%	71.0%
2+ A-Levels A*-E	64.0%	47.4%

Source: Department of Education Statistical Press Release, 30 May 2013

When these independent variables act upon each other an attainment spectrum opens up with at the upper end Catholic girls

not on school meals and, at the other end, Protestant boys who have free school meal entitlement. Using the measure of five good GCSEs including English and maths the gap between non-FSME Catholic girls (76.7 per cent) and Protestant FSME boys (19.7 per cent) is 57 percentage points.

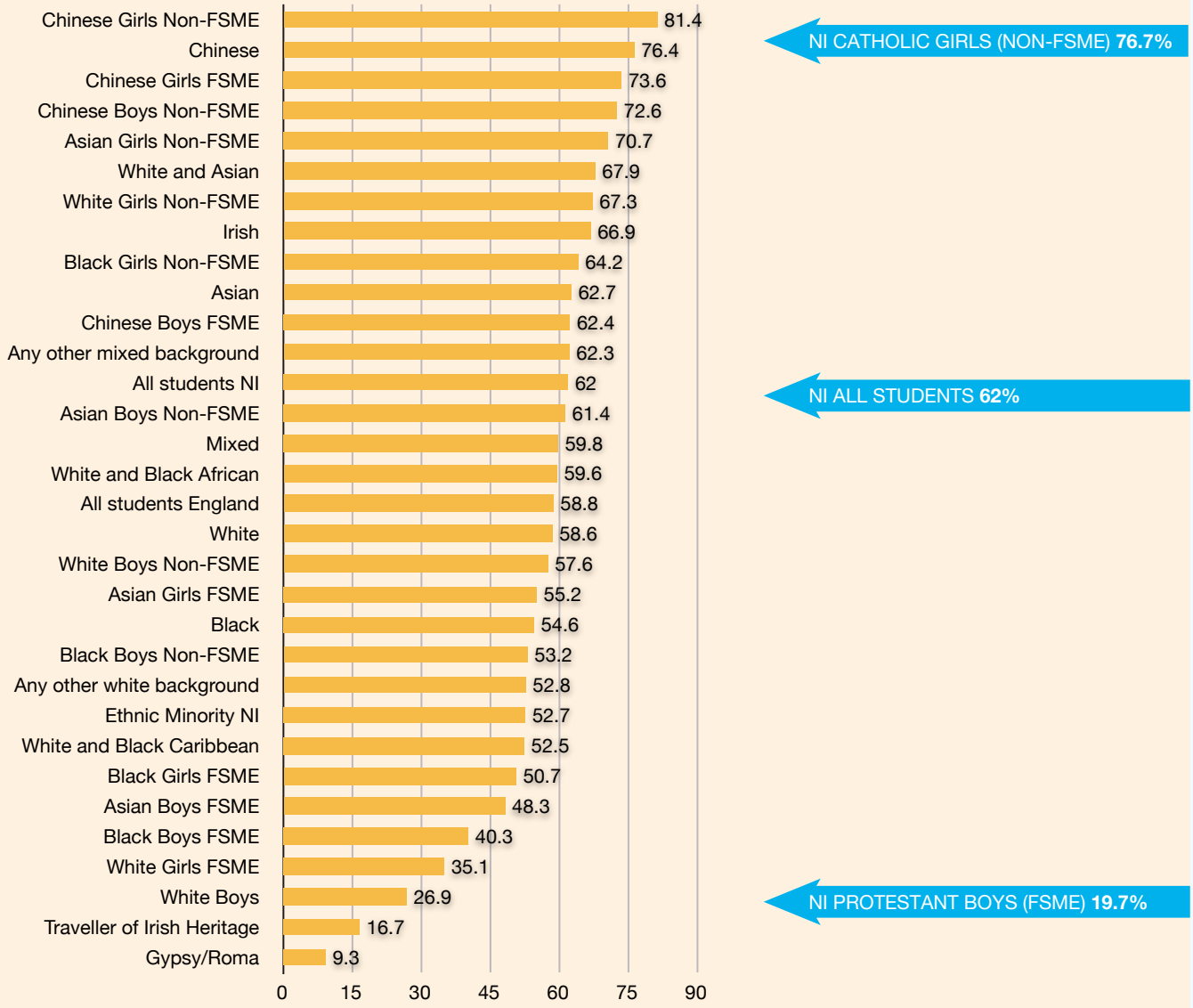
The height of their achievement



This is a very wide attainment gap, but how does it compare with the size of the attainment gap between the most and least successful social groups in Britain? It is in fact very difficult to make such comparisons. There is no integrated data set for the whole of the UK and so comparisons have to be made up from different sources. The Summary of Annual Examination Results (SAER) published by DENI provides a gender breakdown of pupil attainment, but not a religion breakdown. The Survey of School Leavers' Qualifications and Destinations provides both a gender and religion breakdown, and in addition uses Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME) as a proxy for social disadvantage. It is the source for the Northern Ireland data in Chart 93. Although it is called a 'survey' it is in fact a census as it presents data for all pupils. However as the exercise is conducted at the point when the pupils leave school it means that for those who have stayed on to do A-Levels, the GCSE information is from the year two years previous to the published results. There are also some differences in the way FSME eligibility is determined in Northern Ireland and England, but these would not have a significant impact on the attainment differentials in this chart. Even allowing for some variability in the data collection, the picture is a clear one. Catholic girls not on FSME are close to the very top of the attainment ladder, and on these estimates are vying with the most successful social group, the Chinese, while Protestant FSME boys are close to the very bottom, just above Irish Travellers and Roma children.

Chart 93: 5+ A*-C grades incl. English & mathematics GCSEs 2011/12

Attainment gaps in England and Northern Ireland



Sources: DENI Survey of School Leavers, 2011-12 / National Pupil Database and Key Stage 4 Attainment Data, 2011/12.

4.5 School leaver destinations

One third of the 22,568 school leavers in 2011/12 were in year 12 – aged just 16 – when they left the school system. In terms of access to higher education, class, gender and religion again interact as determinants of success:

- over half of Catholic girls (52.8 per cent) go on to higher education, compared with less than a third of Protestant boys (32.4 per cent);
- 45.9 per cent of Protestant girls go on to higher education, thus outperforming Protestant boys but still falling almost seven percentage points behind Catholic girls, and
- more Protestants than Catholics go on to further-education colleges (37.7 per cent versus 31.7 per cent).

Northern Ireland may be a small place but there is often a spatial dimension to educational inequalities , with neighbouring areas producing very different outcomes. Thus 76 per cent of the school leavers living in Belfast's BT9 (Malone, Lisburn Road, Taughmonagh and Stranmillis) went on to higher education. Yet just 19 per cent of those living in BT13 (Shankill Road, Woodvale, Ballygomartin, Springmartin, Glencairn and Highfield) and just 21 per cent of those living in BT12 (Falls Road, Sandy Row and the Village) went on to university.

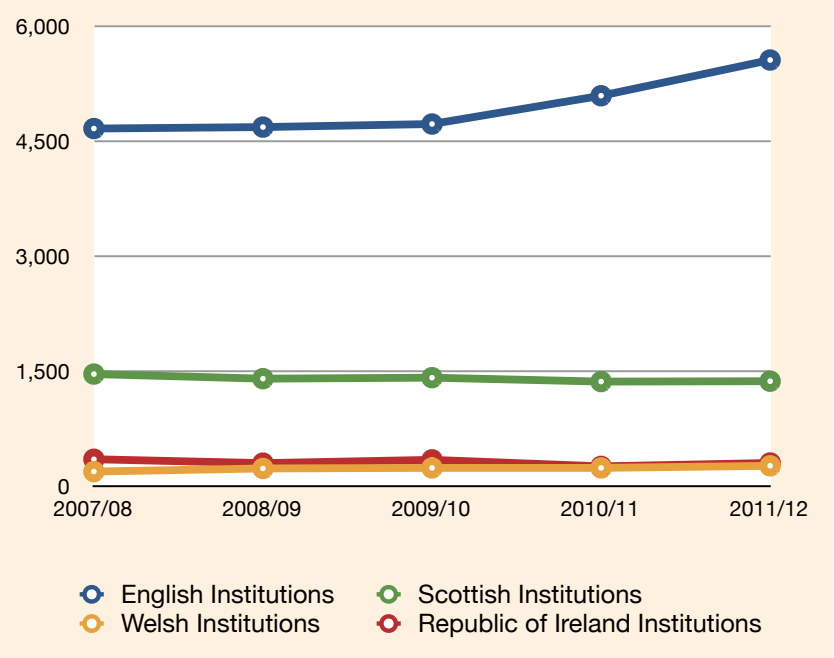
Chart 94: School leaver destinations

Protestant	Boys	Girls	Total
Institutions of higher education	32.4	45.9	39.2
Institutions of further education	38.6	36.8	37.7
Employment	7.6	5.4	6.5
Unemployment	2.7	2.6	2.7
Training	16.1	7.5	11.8
Destination unknown	2.6	1.9	2.2
Catholic	Boys	Girls	Total
Institutions of higher education	37.6	52.8	45.2
Institutions of further education	32.7	30.7	31.7
Employment	6.3	5	5.7
Unemployment	4.1	3.2	3.7
Training	16.3	5.8	11.1
Destination unknown	3	2.5	2.7

Source: DELNI statistics

There is a continuing discrepancy between school-leaver attainment and qualifications among the workforce in Northern Ireland, partly due to out-migration of students and graduates. Figures from the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) show the number of students going to Great Britain to study has increased by 24 per cent in a decade, to 27 per cent of the total in 2011/12, while the number attending Northern Ireland higher-education instittions has increased by less than 1 per cent.

Chart 95:First year students enrolled at universities outside of Northern Ireland



Source: Hansard, Volume 89, No WA1[4]

Chart 96: Religious backgrounds of students in higher education institutions in NI, 2012/13

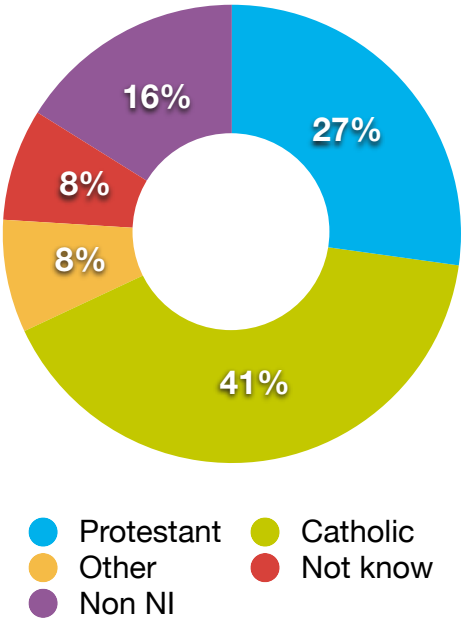
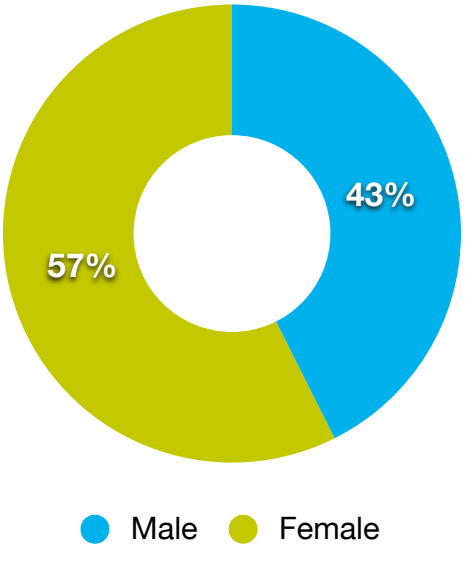


Chart 97: Gender of students in higher education



DEL's *Destination of Leavers from UK Higher Education Institutions Survey*, 2013 tracked the movements of graduates six months after they left higher education. The survey found that only 37 per cent of Northern Ireland domiciled full-time leavers from Great Britain higher education institutions in employment were employed in Northern Ireland. Of 2,470 students who had gone to England, Scotland or Wales to study, 1,550 did not return in 2011/12 – slightly under two thirds of those who went away.

There has been a steady decline in the number of graduates returning to work and live in Northern Ireland – in 2011/12 it was 1 per cent fewer than in 2010/11 and 3 per cent fewer than two years previously. This may be partly explained by the salary differential: DEL found that the average salary for local graduates working in Northern Ireland was £18,705, compared with £22,720 for their GB counterparts in Britain; 88 per cent of graduates from local universities were employed in Northern Ireland.

4.6 Higher education

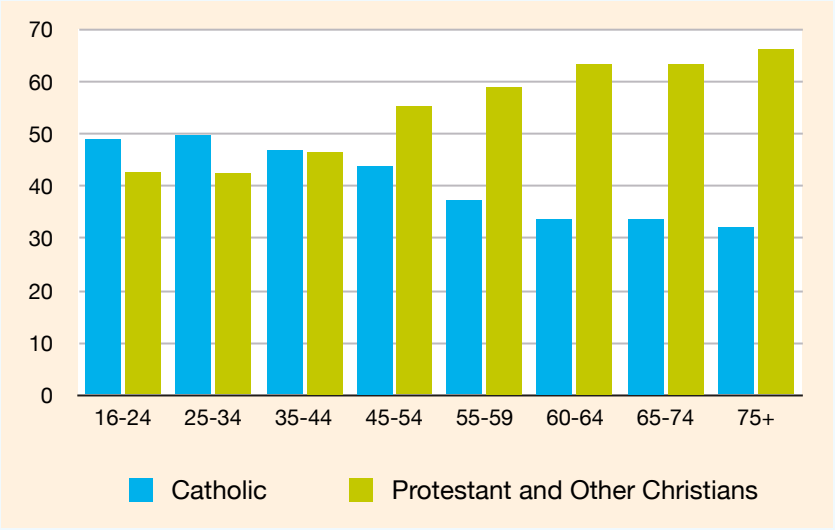
The Catholic share of higher education places has continued to rise and the ratio of Catholics to Protestants in NI universities is now 3 to 2. The other imbalance is to be found in the gender statistics. Females account for 57.4 per cent of enrolments, males for 42.6 per cent. This marks a slight narrowing of the gender gap. In 2010/11 females accounted for 58.7 per cent.

4.7 Qualifications and skills in the adult population

The comparative success of Northern Ireland at the upper levels in GCSE and A-level tables does not provide a competitive advantage among the adult population. In the UK in 2012 NVQ level 4 or above qualifications (diploma, bachelor's degree, masters or doctorate) were held by 34.2 per cent of the adult population; the Northern Ireland figure was just 27.5 per cent. Unfortunately, the table Northern Ireland tops is for the proportion of the adult population with no qualifications. At 18.4 per cent this was almost double the UK average of 9.9 per cent in 2012.

The breakdown of degree holders shows an interesting pattern. The percentages for Catholic and Protestants (44 and 49 per cent respectively) are broadly in line with respective population shares (44 and 51 per cent respectively). Important differences emerge, however, when degree qualifications are examined by age and religion. In general, the younger bands contain a higher proportion of Catholics than Protestants, while the reverse is true in the older groups.

Chart 98: Degree or higher qualifications by age band and religion

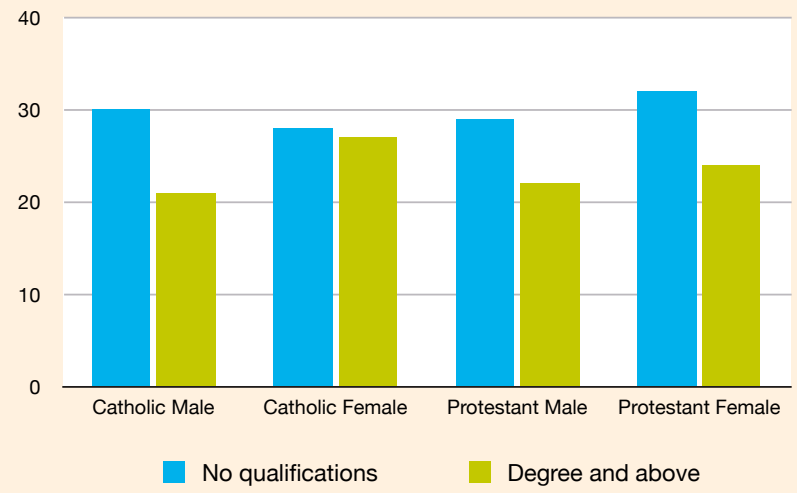


Younger cohorts are disproportionately involved in job recruitment and among those aged 16-35 Catholics predominate, not only numerically but also in terms of higher-level qualifications. Thus, the pool of qualified labour available to employers in Northern Ireland is likely to contain a higher proportion of Catholic than Protestant applicants and so the trend towards increased representation of Catholics in the workforce, particularly in salaried positions, seems likely to continue.

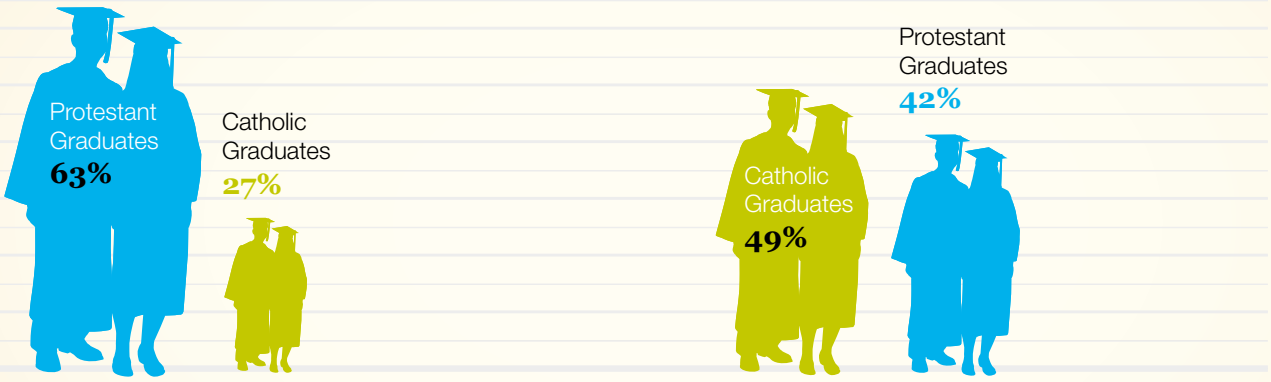
Comparing across the two genders and religious groups:

- Catholic females account for the lowest proportion of residents aged 16 or over without formal qualifications (28 per cent)
- Catholic females also account for the highest proportion of those with degree or higher qualifications (27 per cent).
- Protestant females have the highest proportion of those without qualifications (32 per cent), and
- Catholic males have the lowest proportion of those residents with degree or higher qualifications (21 per cent).

Chart 99: Degree and no qualifications by religion and gender (all ages)



Degree or Higher Qualification by Age and Religion



The percentages of Protestants and Catholics who hold degrees are close to their respective population shares. However, a different picture emerges when an age filter is applied. In the over-60 age group 63 per cent of degree-holders are Protestant. In the under-30 age group that drops to 42 per cent, and Catholics take up the larger share with 49 per cent.

In the over 60 age group 63% of graduates are Protestant.

However, in the under 30 age group 49% are Catholic.

4.8 Ethnic minorities and educational attainment

On the whole, children from ethnic minorities and white newcomer children tend to do less well than those from Northern Ireland's traditional communities, but all generalisations tend to misrepresent the complexity of the situation. For a start, the statistical base is very small: the numbers from ethnic backgrounds leaving school in any one year are still extremely low. In 2012/13 it was just 425, or 1.9 per cent. Secondly, the term 'ethnic communities' tends to bundle together very different social groups. The stock community (that is, those who have been here for more than one generation) includes those who work in medicine, education, and other professions and whose children are not eligible for free school meals. At the other end of the spectrum are newcomer children, including of black African, Pakistani or Bangladeshi backgrounds, and they are much more likely to be eligible. Figures based on averages do not describe the realities at either end of this very long spectrum.

	Number (white)	%	Number (ethnic minority)	%
3+ A Levels A*-C	8060	36.4	157	36.9
3+ A Levels A*-E	11117	50.2	211	49.6
2+ A Levels A*-E	12316	55.6	232	54.6
At least 5 GCSEs A*-C	16958	76.6	305	71.8
At least 5 GCSEs A*-C inc English and maths	13766	62.2	224	52.7
At least 5 GCSEs A*-G	20986	94.8	377	88.7
No GCSEs	364	1.6	33	7.8
No formal qualifications	306	1.4	33	7.8

Source: DE statistics

4.9 Changing the system?

In July 2012 a Ministerial Advisory Group on Shared Education was established by the Minister of Education, bringing forward recommendations on how to advance it in Northern Ireland, including *vis-à-vis* socio-economic background (reported on in section 4.4). The review expressed particular concern about the effects of selection at 11, and the under-achievement of pupils on free school meals. Questions were also raised as to whether

the educational needs of Irish Travellers, minority students, LGBT students, children and young people in care or those with disabilities were being met. The group called for fundamental changes to the system and how schools operate.

The Education Minister committed himself to addressing educational disadvantage and commissioned a further review chaired by Sir Robert Salisbury, on how to 'create a funding system that is fair, clear, and distributes funding proportional to pupil need'. It concluded that the current model of funding schools did not maximise opportunity for all pupils nor sufficiently target educational need. The Minister launched a consultation on proposed changes, suggesting an additional premium attaching to schools with high levels of pupils receiving free school meals (a pupil premium was introduced by the Westminster Government in April 2011 to direct additional resources to FSME children).

The consultation provoked more than 15,000 responses, the largest for any consultation since devolution began. The vast majority (77 per cent) were hostile. The three Belfast newspapers campaigned heavily against the proposals. In the Assembly the DUP chair of the Education Committee, Mervyn Storey, accused the Education Minister of 'a very low level of social engineering when it comes to the distribution of funding for our schools'. The practical outworkings proved hard to defend because quirks in the new formula meant that some of the schools that were supposed to gain were in fact scheduled to receive cuts in their finances. In February the Minister managed to quell the crisis by announcing a special contingency fund to ensure that no school would lose any money in the first year. In the Assembly the Ulster Unionist Danny Kinahan said the real decision had simply been postponed. "It seems a battle has been won, but the war over the funding formula has still to be fought."

5. Health Inequalities

The Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Inequalities Monitoring System Life Expectancy Decomposition identifies deprived areas according to the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure. In its 2013 report (using 2008-10 data), the differential in life expectancy between the 20 per cent most deprived areas and the Northern Ireland average was 4.5 years for men and 2.6 years for women.

Chart 102: Life expectancy gaps between Northern Ireland overall and its 20% most deprived areas

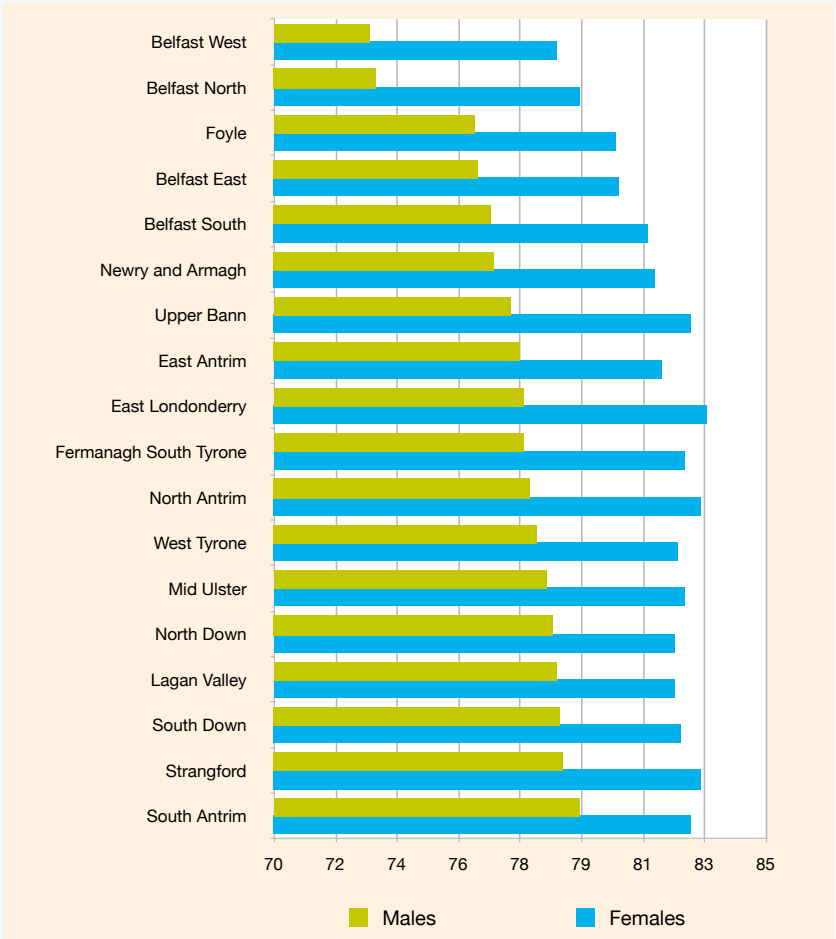
	2001-03	2008-10	Change over time
Male	4.1 years	4.5 years	0.5 years
Female	2.6 years	2.6 years	0.0 years

The male expectancy gap has been widening and, as Chart 104 shows, when assessed between the 20 per cent most deprived areas and the 20 per cent least deprived, it has increased to 7.6 years. The corresponding female gap has also grown, to 4.5 years.

Chart 103: Life expectancy at birth for the 20% most and the 20% least deprived areas and corresponding expectancy gaps

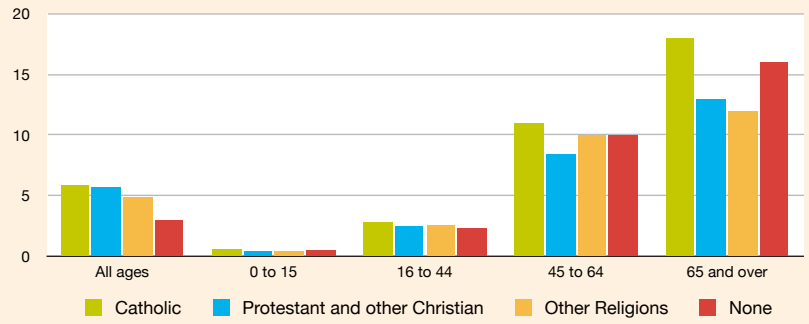
	2001-03	2008-10	Change over time
Male life expectancy in the 20% most deprived areas	71.5	72.5	1
Male life expectancy in the 20% least deprived areas	78.6	80.1	1.5
Male deprivation gap	7.1	7.6	0.5
Female life expectancy in the 20% most deprived areas	77.9	78.9	1
Female life expectancy in the 20% least deprived areas	82.1	83.4	1.2
Female deprivation gap	4.3	4.5	0.2

Chart 104: Life expectancy by constituency



Detailed analysis of the 2011 census released by NISRA in May 2013 showed self-reported differences in general health according to religion. Those brought up as Catholics were more likely than those brought up in Protestant denominations to assess their general health as 'bad' or 'very bad', particularly in older age groups. Among those aged 45-64, 11 per cent of Catholics, compared with 8.4 per cent of Protestants, were in 'bad' or 'very bad' general health. And among those aged 65 and over, 18 per cent of Catholics compared with 13 per cent of Protestants were in 'bad' or 'very bad' health.

Chart 105: Proportion of people with 'bad' or 'very bad' health



DIMENSION THREE: COHESION AND SHARING

1. The policy context

On 23 May 2013 the Northern Ireland Executive published its 'good relations' strategy, *Together: Building a United Community*, which has become known through the awkward acronym TBUC or through the shortened form 'United Community'. There had been a long delay: under direct rule in 2005, *A Shared Future* had been introduced but its integrationist ethos did not commend itself to the Sinn Féin / DUP partnership when devolution was restored in 2007. The Programme for Government 2008-11 did not mention it and in 2010 Alliance refused to sign off on the Hillsborough Agreement to devolve policing and justice until the two main parties committed to a proper policy. Later, a consultation paper, *Cohesion Sharing and Integration*,was published but it was widely rejected as anodyne. Following the May 2011 elections the parties agreed to try again, but an all-party working group fell victim to disagreements and in 2012 Alliance left the negotiations and published its own document, *For Everyone*.

The flags protest and the accompanying street disorders led the British, Irish and American governments to put pressure on the Executive to address the very obvious problem of relations between Catholics and Protestants. The 2013 document was agreed by SF and the DUP; it has simply been 'noted' by the UUP, Alliance and the SDLP but, taking it to be a *fait accompli*, the smaller parties have focused their criticism on the delays in progressing the policy rather than its philosophical underpinnings. In fact the document pays scant attention to theoretical concerns and does not even define 'good relations'. At times the term seems to be used interchangeably with the older 'community relations', although usually the latter refers to relations across the sectarian divide whereas 'good relations' takes in the various minority ethnic communities of Section 75.2 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998). The Act requires public authorities to 'foster good relations between people who share a relevant characteristic and people who do not' and to 'tackle prejudice and promote understanding' and the term is parsed in the official guidance . But 'United Community' does not elaborate and infrequent references to communities other than Protestant and Catholic mean that for the most part the focus remains on their inter-relationship alone.

Indeed, the strategy assumes the permanence of the two blocs. 'Good relations' is presented not as a way to eliminate division but rather to ensure that relations between these two fixed entities can be positive. The paradigmatic case is education: while the Good Friday Agreement and, subsequently, *A Shared Future* privileged integrated education, the new policy speaks of 'shared' education, where separate religions will retain their separate schools but

assistance will be given to schemes which increase co-operation. In its implementation the policy will have to balance out the competing imperatives of equality on the one hand, and good relations on the other. The two have been seen to be in conflict in recent years, particularly on issues relating to the allocation of public resources. A good relations ethos might suggest a 'one for me, one for you' approach, while an equality approach tends to prize objective social need. This became an issue, for example, in the discussions over the anti-poverty Social Investment Fund, where an objective assessment of need was likely to favour Catholic areas. The strategy document tries to strike a balance: "To tackle issues of inequality we must improve equality of opportunity; by improving equality of opportunity for all, we make positive strides to address better community relations." This balanced formulation is likely to be put to the test every time a resource allocation is decided.

Three 'wicked' issues were identified in the strategy to be addressed subsequently by an all-party group chaired by Richard Haass: flags, parades and dealing with the past. With these out of the way four priorities were designated:

1. children and young people,
2. a shared community,
3. a safe community and
4. cultural expression.

The British government had sought to incentivise a new policy by offering an addition to the Northern Ireland block grant, and a modest £500,000 was provided. The smaller parties have sought clarification in the Assembly on the breakdown of that budget and on the progress of the strategy which, in addition to the four priorities has seven 'headline' and 35 additional actions. With this plethora of initiatives it is hard to monitor progress but the table below represents the position, as of March 2014.

Together: Building a United Community strategy	
Measure	**Progress (as of February 2014)**
United Youth – placements for 10,000 NEETS	Design outlines announced in January. A pilot scheme, Headstart, involving 50 young people launched on 6 February.
100 shared summer camps	Pilot to be launched in Belfast in summer 2014
Shared neighbourhoods	DSD to take lead. Still at planning stage
Cross-community sports programme	DCAL to take lead. Still at planning stage
Four urban village projects	DSD to take lead. Still at planning stage
Ten new shared education campuses	DENI to take lead. In January Education Minister called for expressions of interest
All 'peace walls' to be removed by 2023	DoJ officials in consultation with interface communities

2. Happiness and unhappiness

There is conflicting evidence about the state of well-being among the population of Northern Ireland. Carefully designed happiness surveys show the place to be the most content in the UK but figures for suicide, self-harm and mental health suggest that for some the reality is quite different.

2.1 Northern Ireland: a state of happiness?

In July 2011 the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution inviting member countries to measure the 'happiness' of their publics and to use this to help guide policy. In April 2012 the first UN high-level meeting on happiness and well-being was chaired by the Prime Minister of Bhutan (which has for some time officially pursued 'gross national happiness'). At the same time the first World Happiness Report was published, followed some months later by OECD guidelines on measurement of well-being. Prof Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia University leads the project and the UK representative is the 'happiness czar', Prof Richard Layard. The 2013 report placed the UK 10th out of 156 countries (number 156 being Togo). Ireland slipped out of the top ten to number 18. The European Quality of Life Survey of 2011/12 meanwhile placed the UK at number 10 of the then 27 EU members.

The 'happiness' data for the UK were collected as part of the Annual Population Survey by the ONS, with a sample of 165,000, between April 2012 and March 2013. Four questions were asked, with respondents offered a scale of one to ten:

1. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?
2. Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?
3. Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?
4. Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?

Northern Ireland had proportionately more people than any other UK jurisdiction choosing 9 or 10 in answering the first three questions:

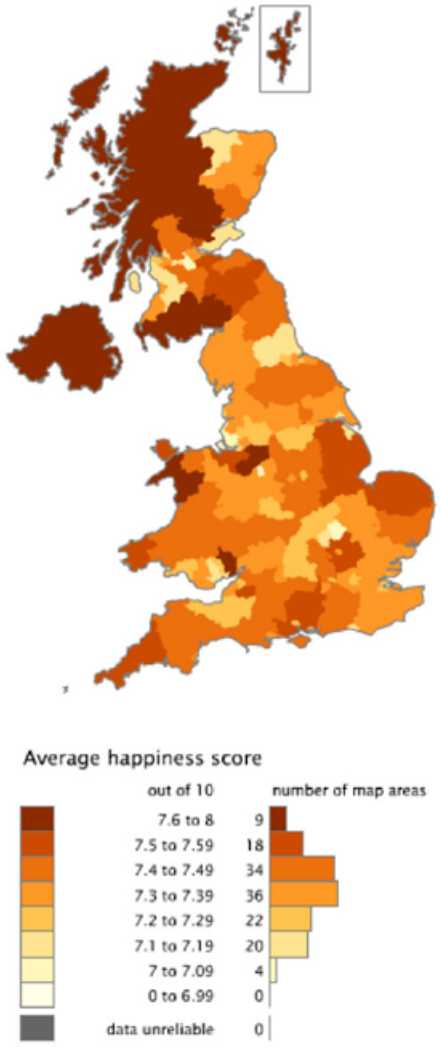
Chart 108: Well-being across the UK (%)

Jurisdiction	How satisfied?	How worthwhile?	How happy the previous day?	How anxious?
England	25.6	31.2	30.7	37.7
Scotland	27.0	31.0	31.2	40.2
Wales	26.8	31.9	31.7	38.6
Northern Ireland	33	37.6	36.2	39.2

Source: ONS Personal Well-being Across the UK, 2012/13, published 23 October 2013

When the results were published the Shadow Cabinet Office minister, Michael Dugher, said: 'This is a statement of the bleeding obvious, a waste of taxpayers' money. ... You don't need a "happiness index" to know that people without a job are

Chart 107: Happiness across the UK



Happiness
AVERAGE (out of 10)

This is the average score reported by UK adults (aged 16 and over) on a scale of 0 to 10 on an eleven point scale (where zero was 'not at all' and ten 'completely' when asked "Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?"

Source: ONS

unhappier than people in work.' Certainly some of the results fall into that category. Wales, which had proportionately more people than any other region/nation in the UK who rated their life-satisfaction low, also had the highest unemployment rate (8.4 per cent) between February and April 2013 when the survey was conducted. The Northern Ireland results are however more difficult to explain and when broken down by district council some are counter-intuitive. The unemployment blackspot Strabane, registered 8.4% in terms of feeling life is worthwhile. Fermanagh emerged as the happiest place in Northern Ireland, followed by Moyle, Lisburn and Limavady; Derry-Londonderry was the least happy. Perhaps less surprisingly, the people of Northern Ireland also scored second highest in the UK on the anxiety scale, with Belfast the most anxious place in Northern Ireland.

2.2 The measurement of unhappiness

The idea that Northern Ireland is one of the happiest places in the UK might surprise those who work in mental health in Northern Ireland, but it would not surprise them to learn that Belfast scores high on the anxiety scale. There is no measurement scale for unhappiness but there are some strong indicators which point to a high prevalence of mental ill-health. In the financial year 2012/13 the total number of presentations to the emergency medical services for self-harm and suicide ideation was 11,478 - equivalent to more than 31 per day (NI Registry of Self-harm, 2012/13). Ideation is a medical term that means having suicidal thoughts and those who present to emergency units are experiencing a crisis of sorts. The highest rates of self-harm and ideation are among 20-24 year old males. The rate is 71 per cent higher than among their counterparts in the Republic of Ireland. The NI Registry quotes a study examining self-harm in a number of Irish and British cities, which shows that only Limerick records a higher rate than Belfast.

Chart 109: Self-harm in England, Ireland and NI: annual rates 2012/13

Place	Incidence rate
Limerick	634
Belfast Trust	563
Western Trust NI	478
Cork	442
Derby	435

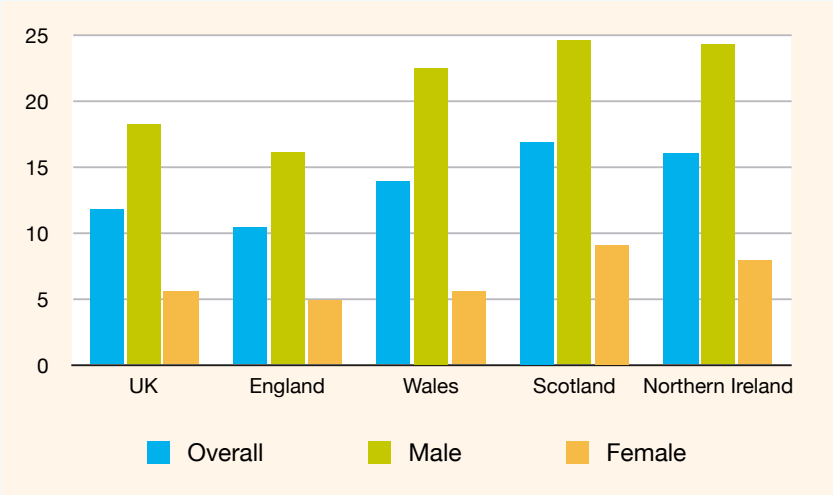
The data can tell us about the prevalence of depression, self-harm and suicide but it does not provide any obvious explanation of the causes. A study of suicide among young people was conducted by researchers from Queen's University on behalf of the NI Commissioner for Chidren and Young People and in it the authors observe: "...although adolescent suicide remains a well-researched area it still remains a poorly understood phenomenon". (Devaney et al, 2012)

2.3 Suicide

Last year's Peace Monitoring Report referred to research conducted by Professor Mike Tomlinson at Queen's University which linked the increase in suicide in Northern Ireland to the legacy of the Troubles "…the key finding is that the cohort of children and young people who grew up in the worst years of violence, during the 1970s, have the highest and most rapidly increasing suicide rates, and account for the steep upward trend in suicide following the 1998 Agreement." (Tomlinson, 2012). Professor Tomlinson based his conclusions on a detailed analysis of the statistical data for more than forty years. A new study from the Bamford Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing at the University of Ulster uses a qualitative approach to arrive at the same conclusion. The study which was based on a sample survey of 4,340 people says "The highest odds ratios for all suicidal behaviours were for people with any mental disorder. However, the odds of seriously considering suicide were significantly higher for people with conflict and non-conflict–related traumatic events compared with people who had not experienced a traumatic event." (O'Neill et al, 2014).

Using the World Health Organisation's most up-to-date coding and classification rules, Northern Ireland has a higher suicide rate than England or Wales and its profile closely resembles that of Scotland, though the Scottish rate is slightly higher. The region once had the lowest rate in the UK but over the past 30 years this has doubled, the annual figure shooting up from 2004, particularly for men – betweeen 1980 and 2011 three quarters of all suicides were male. The rate of increase may however be exaggerated by falling under-reporting, as in NI as elsewhere the associated stigma has been diminishing.

Chart 110: Suicide rate per 100,000 for persons aged 15+

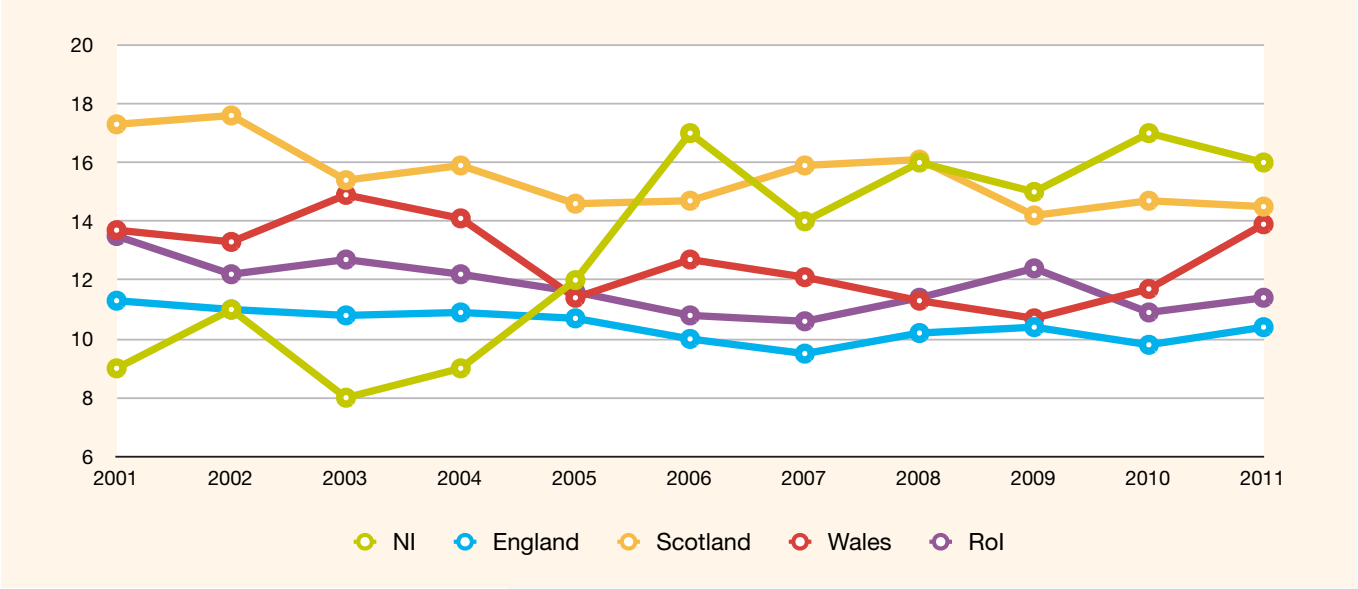


Source: Samaritans Suicide Statistics Report, 2013 (Based on new WHO counting rules)

In 2011 the ONS, National Records of Scotland (NRS) and NISRA adopted a change in the classification of deaths in line with the World Health Organisation's new coding rules. The change results in some deaths previously coded under 'mental and

behavioural disorders' now being classed as 'self-poisoning of undetermined intent' and are therefore included in the suicide figures. Theoretically, this could mean that more deaths could be coded with an underlying cause of 'event of undetermined intent', which is included in the national definition of suicide. ONS and NISRA have produced one set of suicide data for 2011 using the new coding rules. NRS have produced two sets of suicide data for 2011 to reflect what figures would show using both the old and new coding rules. They note that, when examining trends over time, data using the old coding rules should be used as 2011 data based on the new rules is not directly comparable to old data. Therefore, when analysing trends, as in Chart 111 below, Northern Ireland will have a higher rate than Scotland, though using the WHO figures; Scotland has a slightly higher rate.

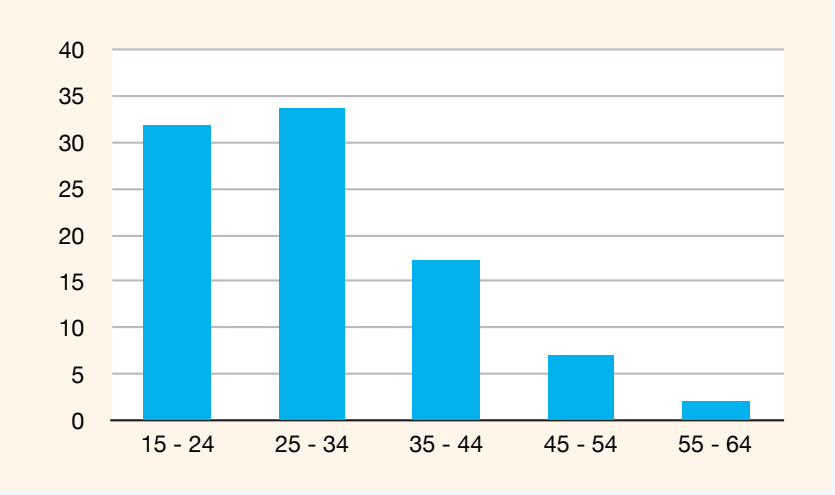
Chart 111: Number of suicides per 100,000 of the Population



(Based on old counting rules).

Who dies from suicide?

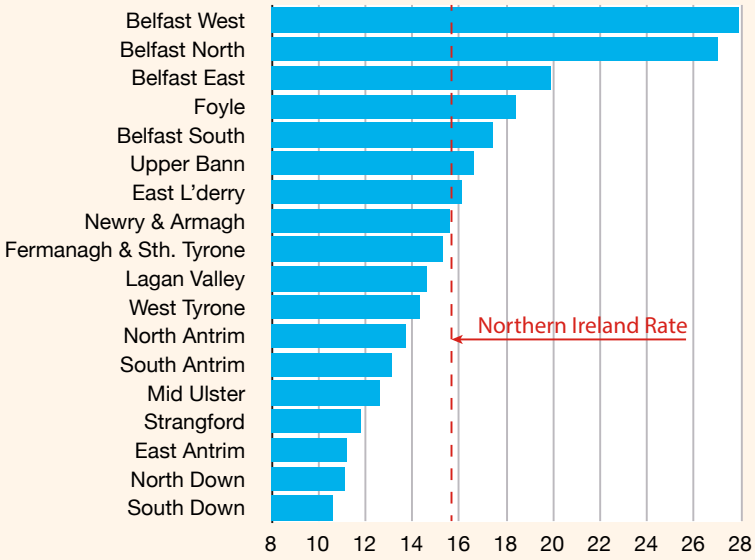
Chart 112: Suicide and Age:
Suicide as a Proportion of all Deaths by Age-group (2007-11)



Source: Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report (2011/12)

Media attention has tended to focus on youth suicide. However, the Samaritans note that in Northern Ireland the peak suicide cohort is 30-34 for men and 40-44 for women, although, as the Chief Medical Officer's annual report (2011/12) shows, young people (15-24) make up the next highest risk group (see Chart 112). There is less confusion about where suicide is worst. In a presentation to the Assembly Knowledge Exchange series, Prof Mike Tomlinson of Queen's University showed how the highest concentrations were in the constituencies of North and West Belfast, areas highly associated with poverty and violence. He suggests a link between the increase in suicide from 2000 and unexpurgated traumas suffered by children during the worst years of violence in the 1970s – a suggestion with strong implications for government's anti-suicide and mental-health programmes.

Chart 113: Suicide and Place



Source: Professor Mike Tomlinson, QUB, presentation to Knowledge Exchange seminar, NI Assembly

Suicide also has close correlations with self-harm, dependency on alcohol and other drugs and mental ill-health. The Regulation and Quality Improvement Agency found that of a sample of 40 suicides in Northern Ireland 55 per cent had been associated with a history of addiction (Rooney, 2013). According to figures released to the online magazine The Detail, of the 1,865 people who died from suicide in Northern Ireland during 2000-08, 533 had had contact with mental-health services in the previous 12 months. The Detail also estimated that around 13,000 people presented with self-harm in accident-and-emergency departments in Northern Ireland every year.

3. Sharing and separation in housing

3.1 Public housing

Housing in Northern Ireland saw major changes between 2001 and 2011. There was a huge decline in the tenure share of social housing and an even larger offsetting growth in that of the private-rented sector:

	2001	2011	% change
Owner-occupied	74.4%	71.9%	-4.2%
Social housing	17.8%	12.3%	-25.6%
Private rental	7.8%	15.9%	118.2%

Social housing

Social housing has been reduced in size but in terms of contested space it has more than retained its importance. The areas with the names most frequently in the headlines are all social-housing estates, the places where the territorial markers are most important. According to the 2011 census the breakdown of NIHE tenants by religion is very close to that in the population as a whole: 48 per cent Protestant, 45 per cent Catholic, 0.7 per cent other religions and 6.3 per cent none.

On 9 January 2012 the DUP Minister for Social Development, Nelson McCausland, announced plans for the dismantling of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the transfer of social housing to housing associations. The Housing Executive is widely credited with the depoliticisation of housing – a key demand of the 1960s civil-rights movement – through its objective points system for allocation based on needs. This has sparked concern that the communal identities of some housing associations will remove that guarantee of impartiality. The legislative changes necessary to effect the Minister's package remain however stalled in the Assembly. Meanwhile, the shortage of public housing is acute: at 31 March 2013, the waiting list amounted to 41,356 households, of whom around 22,414 were considered to be in housing stress, including 9,878 deemed statutorily homeless.

The Housing Executive also has a commitment to 'community cohesion'. its main programmes are:

- *Shared Communities*, which aims to foster a culture of diversity and respect for difference. Currently 45 estates, including around 18,000 households, participate.

- *Building Relationships in Communities* (BRIC), which focuses on the personnel of the Housing Executive and other public bodies to help them change organisational culture to foster shared-society values. BRIC involves 88 estates.

Some new imperatives have come from the TBUC strategy. This envisages ten new shared-neighbourhood housing

developments, coupled with an 'overarching review of housing to bring forward recommendations on how to enhance shared neighbourhoods"'(OFMDFM, 2013, p27).

3.2 Residential segregation

The first set of housing modules from the 2011 census were unpacked at the end of February 2013, just before the deadline for the second Peace Monitoring Report. A preliminary analysis of the data for the 582 local government wards was included in the report, which indicated over the preceding decade:

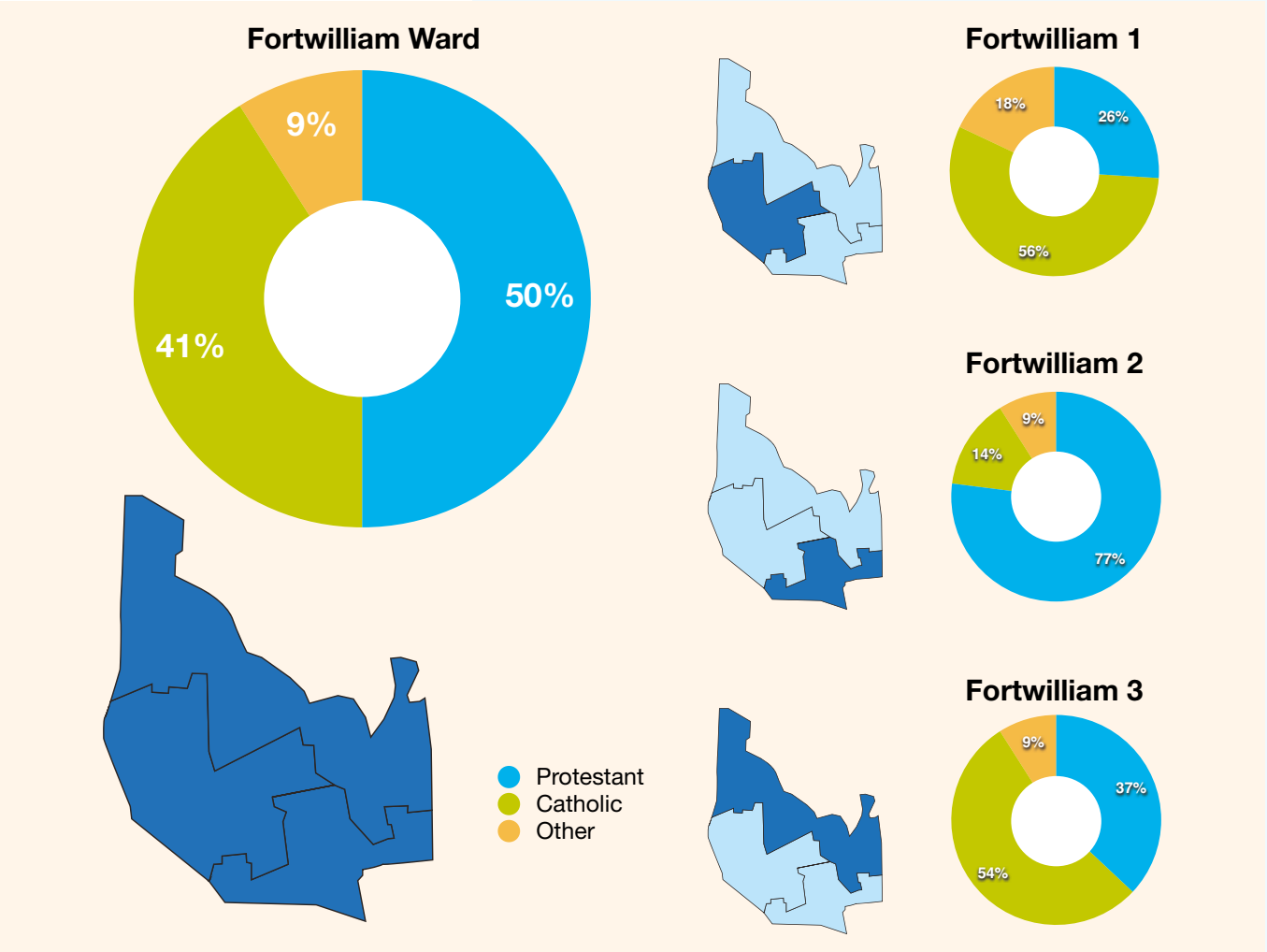
- a steep decline in the proportion of 'single identity' wards (above a threshold of 80 per cent of one religion), from 55 per cent to 37 per cent;
- in line with the growth of the Catholic population, a change in 28 wards to a Catholic majority, with none going the other way.

Finer-grained analysis reinforces the caution expressed in last year's report against assuming that mixed wards were integrated. Early results from a more detailed examination of population units of under 2,000 by the School of Planning at Queen's show that wards that appear mixed overall can still be self-segregating at street level. For example, Fortwilliam, a leafy area of north Belfast, is 50 per cent Protestant and 41 per cent Catholic overall but smaller units show marked variation.

The pattern in these pie charts doesn't mean that the residents of Fortwilliam don't co-mingle: we know very little about how much sharing goes on there or in any mixed community and statistical data cannot take us closer. Qualitative studies are needed to provide a picture of the social interaction (or lack of it) in areas where Protestants and Catholics share housing.

Moreover, the decline in 'single-identity' wards has affected Protestant areas more than Catholic. There remain 61 wards that are at least 90 per cent Catholic, yet only two such Protestant wards. According to the geographers Shuttleworth and Lloyd, six of the ten wards showing the greatest Protestant decrease are in east Belfast. This does not represent a *displacement* of Protestant residents: the 'new communities' and the Catholics who have moved in are replacements, taking up vacancies resulting from Protestants moving out of the inner city or older cohorts passing on. Clearly, the break-up of the solidity of historic Protestant communities in east Belfast has explanatory power in relation to the flags protest but the changing ethnic composition allows for other interpretations. Shuttleworth and Lloyd suggest that the move away from homogeneous communities and the arrival of new ethnic minorities takes Northern Ireland 'on a trajectory towards a more pluralist society'. The optimistic scenario they put forward is that these changes offer 'significant opportunities for positive political and social change' (Shuttleworth and Lloyd, 2013: 64).

Chart 115: How a mixed area divides



Source: School of Planning, Architecture and Civil Engineering, Queen's University, Belfast

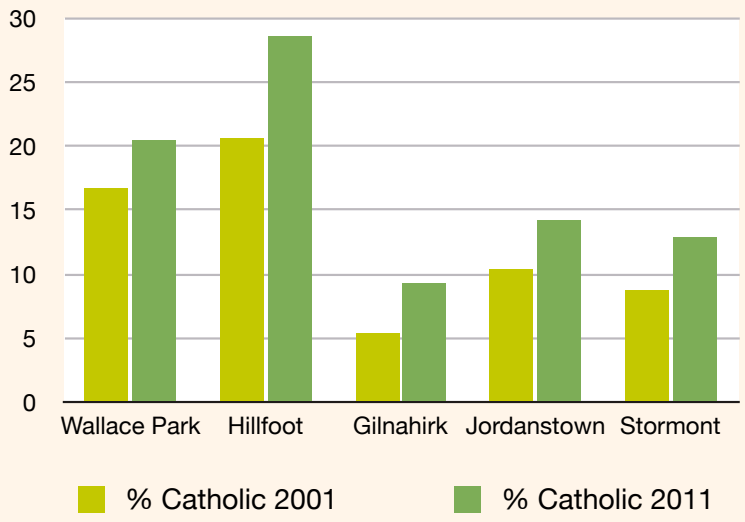
Chart 116: The ten wards with greatest Protestant decrease, 2001-11

	2001	2011			Protestant decline (% points)
	Protestant	Protestant	Catholic	Other	
Duncairn	90.2	63.9	23.6	12.6	-26.4
Coolhill	75.7	51.7	41.2	7	-24.0
Woodstock	86.7	63.3	19.4	17.3	-23.4
The Mount	89.7	68.3	16.1	15.6	-21.4
Parklake	60.7	39.6	54.1	6.2	-21.1
Ravenhill	67.4	39.7	46.9	13.5	-20.5
Blackstaff	91.4	71.5	15.0	13.5	-19.9
Island	89.5	69.8	13.9	16.3	-19.7
Bloomfield	87.6	69.7	16.1	14.9	-17.9
Church	93.8	76.0	14.0	9.9	-17.8

The movements of population are not just about horizontal shifts: they are also about social mobility and the most marked development has been the expansion of the Catholic middle class into areas previously perceived as 'Protestant'. This is in line with the increasing Catholic share in the higher reaches of the labour market. Last year's report noted that while in 2001 the

top 18 least disadvantaged – that is, most affluent – areas had Protestant majorities, by 2011 this had turned around so that in six of the top 20 areas Catholics made up the largest share of the population. Further analysis shows that in many of the other affluent areas where Catholics do not have a majority their share has still increased considerably. For example, Wallace Park, which features as the most affluent area in the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service chart, had 16.7 per cent Catholics in 2001 and in 2011 this had increased to 20.5. Chart 117 shows the movement in five of the top ten most affluent areas. Some of these small demographic shifts have symbolic importance: the Ravenhill Road in Belfast is dominated by the imposing church founded by Rev Ian Paisley, the Martyrs' Memorial, but in the 2011 census the Catholic population in the surrounding ward had grown to 47 per cent, the largest share.

Chart 117: Catholic social mobility: changes in the most affluent areas



4. Sharing and separation in education

4.1 The management of schooling

There are four main types of school management in Northern Ireland:

- *Controlled schools* – currently managed by the five Education and Library Boards (ELBs) through Boards of Governors. Within this sector there is a small but growing number of controlled integrated schools.
- *Voluntary (maintained) schools* – managed by Boards of Governors that consist of members nominated by trustees (mainly Catholic or Irish-medium), along with representatives of parents, teachers and ELBs.
- *Voluntary (non-maintained) schools* – voluntary grammar schools, managed by Boards of Governors that consist of

persons appointed as provided in each school's scheme of management, along with representatives of parents and teachers and, in most cases, members appointed by the Department of Education or ELBs.

- *Integrated schools* - a number of integrated schools have been established, as grant-maintained or controlled, at primary and post-primary levels.

The current distribution of schools and children and young people across the sectors for the most recent academic year is summarised in Chart 118.

Chart 118: Number of schools and pre-school education centres and enrolments in Northern Ireland by management type – 2012/13

	Schools	%	Children & Young People	%
VOLUNTARY AND PRIVATE PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRES	390		8,410	
NURSERY SCHOOLS				
Controlled	65	67	4,135	69.9
Catholic maintained	32	33	1,776	30.1
Total	97	100	5,910	100
PRIMARY SCHOOLS				
Controlled	374	44.2	77,167	45.9
Catholic maintained	387	45.7	76,783	45.7
Other maintained	29	3.4	2,863	1.7
Controlled integrated	19	2.2	3,503	2.1
Grant maintained integrated	23	2.7	5,887	3.5
Grammar school preparatory departments	15	1.8	1,907	1.1
Total	847	100	168,110	100
POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS				
Controlled secondary	55	25.6	29,763	20.4
Catholic maintained secondary	71	33	40,643	27.9
Other maintained secondary	1	0.5	541	0.4
Controlled integrated secondary	5	2.3	2,612	1.8
Grant maintained integrated secondary	15	7	9,501	6.5
Controlled grammar	17	7.9	15,181	10.4
Voluntary grammar (Catholic management)	29	13.5	27,170	18.7
Voluntary grammar (other management)	22	10.2	20,248	13.9
Total	215	100	145,659	100
SPECIAL SCHOOLS	40		4,653	
HOSPITAL SCHOOLS	1		78	
INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS	15		687	
ALL SCHOOLS AND PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRES	1,605		333,507	

Source: DENI Statistics, 2012/13 (provisional)

The school-age population in Northern Ireland has been in steady decline. The OECD *Review of Evaluation and Assessment in Education in Northern Ireland 2013* however estimated an increase in the number of children aged four and under between 2006 and 2011, which would continue the recent trend of slightly higher numbers enrolled in primary schools. In fact, over the next nine years, the population aged 16 and under is projected to increase by 5 per cent (NISRA, 2013). A decline in primary enrolments between 1996/97 and 2009/10 has affected enrolments in post-primary schools, although mainly in the non-selective sector – hence the grammar proportion of secondary pupils has increased from 40.6 per cent in 1996/67 to 43.0 in 2012/13. The number of non-selective schools has correspondingly fallen, from 166 to 147 between 1991/92 and 2012/13 (Chart 119).

Chart 119: Trends in the number of post-primary schools

	1991/92	2001/02	2012/13
Non-selective post-primary schools			
Controlled	82	70	55
Catholic maintained	82	76	71
Other maintained		1	1
Controlled integrated		4	5
Grant maintained integrated	2	13	15
Total non-selective post-primary schools	166	164	147
Selective post-primary schools (grammar schools)			
Controlled	18	17	17
Voluntary Catholic management	30	32	29
Voluntary other management	22	22	22
Total selective schools (grammar schools)	70	71	68
Total post-primary schools	236	235	215

Source: OECD Review of Evaluation and Assessment in Education in Northern Ireland 2013 prepared for DENI, 2013

Admissions data for 2013 relating to 207 schools show that although three grammars did not fill all their places many remained heavily over-subscribed, while non-grammar schools struggled. As of June 2013, there were 24 unfilled year eight places in grammar schools, compared with 5,281 in non-grammars. Grammar schools enjoy a greater prestige and pupils and parents are guided by this distinction, with non-selective schools receiving on average 45 fewer first-preference applications than the number of places available.

4.2 Integrated and shared education

The number of children in integrated schools has risen fractionally in the past year, from 21,170 to 21,503, but as a proportion of the school population this remains stubbornly at 6.5 per cent. The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education argues that the number is effectively capped and that if all those who wished to enrol were given a place it would be significantly higher (Chart 120).

Chart 120: Integrated Schools – with and without 'turnaways'

School type	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Primary actual enrolments	7,620	7,922	8,615	8,918	9,039	9,390
Primary turnaways (cumulative)	84	166	275	375	499	645
Primary total + cumulative turnaways	7,704	8,088	8,890	9,293	9,538	10,035
Post-primary actual enrolments	11,247	11,464	12,099	12,133	12,131	12,113
Post-primary turnaways (cumulative)	496	1,184	1,795	2,389	2,788	3,135
Post-primary total + cumulative turnaways	11,743	12,648	13,894	14,522	14,919	15,248
Total actual enrolments	18,867	19,386	20,714	21,051	21,170	21,503
Total turnaways (cumulative)	580	1,350	2,070	2,764	3,287	3,780
Total + cumulative turnaways	19,447	20,736	22,784	23,815	24,457	25,283

Source: Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education, 2014

The survey evidence continues to favour integrated education. A Lucid Talk poll for the *Belfast Telegraph* in February 2013 showed 66 per cent agreed with the proposition that integration should be the main model for education (18 per cent disagreed); in a subsequent Lucid Talk poll for the Integrated Education Fund in June 32 per cent agreed with the proposition that all new schools in Northern Ireland should be integrated and 24 per cent strongly agreed (22 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed) (IEF, 2013). These polls cannot however be taken as evidence of momentum. The Northern Ireland Life and Times survey, which has in the past recorded over 80 per cent support for integrated education, received more nuanced responses to its most recent survey. When asked whether they would prefer to send their children to a mixed-religion school or 'own religion only', 62 per cent opted for the former but 31 per cent the latter. Moreover, among the youngest age band (18-24) only 55 per cent supported mixed-religion schooling, while 39 per cent favoured 'own religion only'.

Support for own-religion schools was also higher among Catholics than Protestants (37 v 32 per cent).

Policy is very clearly drifting from integrated schooling towards 'shared' schooling – closer co-operation between Catholic and controlled schools. The Good Friday Agreement had provided the integrated-schools movement with what seemed like rock-solid endorsement, but subsequent expressions of policy emanating from the Assembly, such as the Programme for Government (2011-15), the Education Bill (2012) and TBUC (2013), all failed to mention integrated education. It was also sidelined by the report of the advisory Ministerial Group for the Advancement of Shared Education in April 2013. Two forces are driving the change: the sharing of resources has been made an economical necessity by the decline in school enrolments and, secondly, it fits the binary model of political life in Northern Ireland, allowing for co-operation while leaving the two systems intact. TBUC envisaged ten new shared campuses, each accommodating Catholic and Protestant schools, and a call for proposals went out in January 2014.

While that remains on the drawing board, Queen's University has piloted inter-school co-operation through its Sharing Education Programme. This was launched in 2007 with funding from the International Fund for Ireland and Atlantic Philanthropies. By 2012, 140 schools (60 per cent primary and 40 per cent post-primary) had participated in 43 partnerships across Northern Ireland, involving 7,814 pupils. In 2012 funding was renewed for three years to include around 150 schools and 13,000 pupils (Sharing Education Programme, 2012). Dr. Blaylock and Professor Hughes, from the Centre for Shared Education at Queen's, has compared the investment of over £10.5 million by the external funders with the Department of Education's community-relations budget, which for 2009/10 was just £3.6 million (Blaylock and Hughes, 2012).

5. Sharing public space

5.1 Derry-Londonderry: the city of post-conflict culture

The film submitted by Derry –Londonderry as part of its bid to become the first UK City of Culture finished with the words "I have a new story to tell. I need to tell a new story. Just say yes." On 14 July 2010, in a live broadcast from Liverpool, the adjudicating panel said yes to the smallest city in the competition. The deputy first minister and native of Derry-Londonderry, Martin McGuinness, present in Liverpool, described it as 'a precious gift for the peace-makers'. He immediately received a congratulatory call on his mobile from the then First Minister, Rev Ian Paisley. The idea that the year of culture could help reconciliation in the city had formed part of the judging panel's thinking. The chair, the television producer Phil Redmond, said the title was a 'badge to bring people together ... If that is not the role of culture, I don't know what is.'

There was another, more conventional ambition set for the year, one that Derry-Londonderry shared with the competing cities of Birmingham, Norwich and Sheffield – the possibility of culture spearheading economic renaissance. The UK City of Culture had been created by government to build on the success Liverpool had enjoyed during its year as European City of Culture in 2008 and in line with received wisdom about the way in which Glasgow had refashioned its economy when it enjoyed similar status in 1990. There was, however, an immediate and obvious problem for a city with a nationalist political majority in accepting a UK prefix. There had already been a long campaign to change the name of the city itself from Londonderry, the official name given by Royal Charter in 1662 and still preferred by many Protestants. Unable to alter the official nomenclature, the city council had decided unilaterally to change its name from Londonderry City Council to Derry City Council in 1984. The adoption of the UK prefix for the year of culture seemed to many nationalists a reversal and it created particular difficulties for Sinn Féin. While the bid was being put together unease was voiced by the SF leader in the council, Maeve McLaughlin. But 'dissident' republicans seized on what they saw as proof that 'mainstream' republicans had accepted British rule in Ireland and accordingly deemed the City of Culture offices a 'legitimate' target. Bombs were left outside the building in January and October 2011 and in December 2012, a bomb having also been placed outside the tourist office in January that year.

Still, the foreboding receded as the year picked up momentum, the feel-good factor boosted by encouraging media coverage – the *Lonely Planet Guide* ranked Derry-Londonderry number four in its Top Cities to visit in 2013. The programme delivered a tumultuous year, and the Derry Visitor and Convention Bureau reported the highest hotel occupancy ever recorded in the city. There were approximately 430,000 visitors during the all-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil, almost 40,000 turned out for the Return of Colmcille celebrations, thousands lining the streets to enjoy Music City, and there were prestige performances by the Royal Ballet and the London Symphony Orchestra. For the first time in its history the Turner Prize exhibition was held outside England and the city found itself playing host to the metropolitan art world. The seasoned Derry commentator Eamon McCann described the year as an 'enormous success' but said: 'The biggest impacts were, naturally, made by events which called for mass involvement and created a sense of communal joy'(*Belfast Telegraph*, 20 December 2013). The Hallowe'en Carnival turned the city into an open-air party and the Lumiere transformed public spaces into places of enchantment.

There were tensions between cultural activists and council officials, and claims that £120 million of capital investment accrued from the project remain to be tested. More certain is that the City of Culture delivered more than could have been thought possible in terms of community relations. The Fleadh Cheoil provided some of the special moments: the Police Service of Northern Ireland pipe band being applauded when in entered Guildhall Square and the Apprentice Boys opening up their

hall as a venue while several flute bands attended a play about their music, *The Pride*, at the Irish language and culture centre, Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin. Meanwhile the Apprentice Boys march through the city in August – the event which sparked the Battle of the Bogside in 1969 – passed almost entirely without incident. The order's Governor, Jim Brownlee, said an understanding had developed on all sides (BBC news, 10 August 2013).

Why did the City of Culture year succeed? There were proximate causes and longer-run contextual forces.

In the former category were two pivotal moments. The insertion of the hyphen between the words 'Derry' and 'Londonderry' was the grammatical equivalent of the city's Peace Bridge, a device to link the two communities without diminishing either. A second breakthrough came when Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann decided, after strong initial reluctance, to bring the all-Ireland Fleadh to the city. Dissident republicans were disarmed at a stroke: to attack the City of Culture would be to attack Irish culture. There were no further bombs.

In the latter group were five factors:

1) **Long-term vision** In 2008 civic leaders agreed that plans for the regeneration of the city were 'not progressing fast enough due to a lack of any guiding coalition and ownership' (Ilex, 2011: 91). Engagement with a team of OECD experts led two and a half years later to the long-term regeneration strategy, 'One City, One Plan, One Voice', which frames the city's development until 2020. Securing the status as UK City of Culture was part of this long-term strategic plan.

2) **The good relations strategy** Derry City Council's good relations strategy has placed a premium on collaborative working and, in a small city, it has proved possible to build positive relationships. For example, the Apprentice Boys have for some time co-operated on tourism projects with the Museum of Free Derry.

3) **The impact of the Saville verdict.** The clarity of the Saville Report in 2010 on Bloody Sunday in 1972 and the unstinting nature of the apology on behalf of the British state by the prime minister, David Cameron, changed the political weather in the city. The local actor and political activist Bronagh Gallagher said: 'You take on the big man and the big man runs you down. But here in Derry, we stayed standing until the big man apologised. After that, we found our voice, and that's where City of Culture begins – with the voice" (Vulliamy, 2014).

4) **The Peace Bridge** The opening of the Peace Bridge in June 2011 was a hugely symbolic moment. The bridge was so-called because it was designed to link the largely nationalist Cityside to the largely unionist Waterside. It was opened by EU Commissioner for Regional Policy, Johannes Hahn, accompanied by the First and deputy First Ministers, Peter Robinson and Martin McGuinness. They were accompanied by

an orchestra and a choir of 600 schoolchildren from both sides of the river.

5) **The changing demography of the city** Catholics now comprise 72 per cent of the population, Protestants 22 per cent. The Catholic community has nothing to fear and, acting as a generous majority, has experienced a reciprocity of trust. The separation of most Protestants on the Waterside, across the river from the mainly Catholic Cityside, means the abrasions found in north Belfast, where the jumble of housing means the two communities are constantly rubbing up against each other, is largely absent.

One final consideration is the civic pride shared by all residents. This superordinate identity allowed partisan concerns to be trumped by a shared celebration of place and in turn was strengthened by it. Derry City Council has now voted to submit a bid to become Irish City of Culture in 2018.

5.2 Softening sectarianism: taming bonfires and murals

Public bodies have tried to drain the toxicity from popular communal traditions, such as bonfires and mural painting, by engaging with communities and encouraging less sectarian expressions of these same cultural forms. Two projects are:

Taming the bonfires

In 2005 Belfast City Council initiated an engagement programme whereby bonfires in Protestant working-class areas on the eve of 12 July and – to a lesser extent – in their Catholic counterparts on 9 August (the anniversary of the 1971 introduction of internment) could receive funding provided certain conditions were met. The programme has been emulated in Larne, Ards and other council areas, following a pattern: the council requires recipients to set up a local bonfire committee to moderate the size of the bonfire, to be environmentally accommodating, to act against displays of sectarianism and to promote discussions reflecting on cultural practices. In Belfast the programme has grown steadily:

Chart 121: Belfast City Council engagement with 11 July bonfires

Year	Number of participating groups	As % of all bonfires
2005	8	7
2011	38	52
2012	42	55
2013	45	59

Source: Institute for Conflict Research Evaluation of Cultural Networks Programme, 2012/13

The flags dispute raised the temperature for both communities in 2013 but an evaluation of the Belfast programme by the Institute for Conflict Research concluded that it had had ‘a positive impact

on the vast majority of participating community organisations and their respective communities'. Fewer tricolours were being burned and less provocatively, and bonfires were being built further from sectarian interfaces to avoid causing offence. Following engagement with the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities, Polish flags had also been removed from bonfires. Still, in 2013 Irish flags or insignia were burned at nearly half of all bonfires.

Murals – the writing on the wall

Various public bodies are involved in working with communities to remove the more menacing of Northern Ireland's famous murals. Since 2007 the Arts Council of Northern Ireland has led a consortium of funders of a project called Re-Imaging Communities, which works with local artists and neighbourhood representatives to replace paramilitary murals with less militaristic and less threatening imagery. Typically, a mural of a masked gunman will be replaced by a painting of a local sports hero or scenes from local history. In February 2013, after a break in its funding, the scheme was renewed with an investment of £3,127,500 for 2013-15. While the Housing Executive and district councils are mainly concerned with the removal of paramilitary imagery, the Arts Council seeks to put up works of artistic merit.

In August the first tranche of the new grants was awarded. But in the same month in east Belfast a mural of the footballer George Best was replaced by an image of a masked man in front of an Ulster Volunteer Force flag – beside it, incongruously, a quotation from Martin Luther King. The Best mural had itself been painted in 2010 to replace a UVF mural, with funding from Belfast City Council as part of its PEACE III project, 'Tackling the Physical Manifestations of Sectarianism'. The reversion to the UVF imagery led to an outcry and to the mural being briefly painted over before it was repainted once more, exactly as before. The UVF was making it clear that it would not be swayed by the public mood even though one of those protesting against the paramilitary mural was John Kyle, chair of the Progressive Unionist Party, which has links to the UVF. It wasn't the first expression of the resurgence of loyalist paramilitarism on the walls of east Belfast. In 2011 the UVF incursion into the Catholic Short Strand was presaged by a series of new murals of UVF gunmen and others have appeared since.

Two of the most notorious loyalist murals have however been taken down. One, on the edge of the Mount Vernon housing estate in north Belfast, depicted two armed men in balaclavas with their guns pointing out at those who approached, above them the slogan 'Prepared for peace, ready for war'. In January 2014, after three years of negotiations, it came down. Another, of armed members of the Ulster Defence Association, had dominated the entrance to the Sandy Row area in south Belfast. In 2012, again after protracted negotiations, it was replaced by an ornate painting of King William of Orange. Both changes were facilitated by the Housing Executive.

6. Arts, sport and language

6.1 The arts

The Belfast poet Sinead Morrisey won the prestigious TS Eliot prize for poetry in 2013, following a line of northern recipients over the years: Ciaran Carson, Seamus Heaney, Michael Longley and Paul Muldoon. The title poem in Morrissey's collection *Parallax* expresses what one of the judges described as 'the many angled ... any angled' way in which Morrissey shows reality can be viewed. In this way poetry – a field in which Northern Ireland excels - differs from the fixed world views that define the political realities of the place.

And it was the death of a poet that came to mark the year. When Heaney died on 30 August 2013 there was a spontaneous welling up of emotion – not only throughout Ireland but in the many places in the world where the Nobel prize-winner had found an audience. No unionist politician however attended his funeral service in Dublin or the burial in the northern town of Bellaghy. There was an irony to this, because on 28 January 2013 Heaney had given an interview to *The Times* in which he had expressed some sympathy for the flags protest, then at its height: 'There's never going to be a united Ireland, you know. So why don't you let them fly the flag?' Very few from outside the Protestant community had shown any sympathy for the protest but Heaney was speaking from his own many-angled view of the world.

Unfortunately, at other points during the year, the old stereotype of unionist philistinism was resurrected. In October the North Belfast DUP MLA William Humphrey clashed with the SF Culture Minister, Carál ní Chuilín, claiming: 'The concept of "the arts" is not something which the Protestant working-class community in this city buys into at any great level.' (*Belfast Telegraph*, 9 October 2013). In January 2014 DUP concerns led a theatre in Newtownabbey, Co Antrim, to cancel a production by the Reduced Shakespeare Company of its play The Bible; although the decision was reversed in the face of an outcry, the issue had already been tweeted and commented upon by Richard Dawkins and others.

This was in sharp contrast to the public embrace of the arts during the City of Culture in Derry-Londonderry as discussed above. But the evidence does not uphold a neat narrative of culture-convivial Catholics and arts-averse Protestants. The Continuous Household Survey found no difference in the proportions of Catholic and Protestant adults who had attended arts events in 2012/13, albeit there were nuances such as Catholics being more likely than Protestants to have visited an event in a bar (11 per cent and 5 per cent respectively). True, in common with similar surveys elsewhere, the CHS showed that adults living in the most deprived areas were less likely to have participated in arts activities or attend events than those in the least deprived (75 per cent and 88 per cent respectively). But additional data provided to the Peace Monitoring Report by the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure

for the same period demonstrated that if anything Protestants in the 20 per cent most disadvantaged areas had attended marginally more arts events than their Catholic counterparts.

Chart 122: Attendance at arts events in 2012/13 by those from most disadvantaged backgrounds (%)

Religious background	Yes	No	Base
Catholic	72	28	391
Protestant	74	26	284
Other/none	72	28	57
All adults	72	28	733

Source: DCAL figures provided to the Peace Monitoring Report

The most emphatic message from those who have represented themselves as spokespeople of Protestant working-class communities in the past year has been the assertion of 'culture' as ethnic affirmation. The reality of actually-existing Protestants' engagement with the cultural arena, however, is more complex. In the end, The Bible played to full houses.

6.2 Sport

The past year has provided many examples of how sport can bring people together; equally it has provided evidence of how sports can draw demarcation lines. In October 2013 the First Minister, Peter Robinson, delivered the keynote speech at a Co-operation Ireland dinner at Queen's, celebrating the Gaelic Athletic Association's contribution to peacebuilding. Mr Robinson's attendance was itself an indicator of a new rapprochement and the headlines treated it as such. In his speech he made a playful acknowledgement of the well-known GAA commentator Joe Brolly. The next day Mr Brolly himself made headlines when he commented on unionist concerns about GAA grounds being named after IRA men. Speaking about his hometown club in Dungiven, named after the hunger-striker Kevin Lynch, he said: 'It's nobody else's business – it's as simple as that. People can either like it or lump it.'

The significance of sectarianism varies from sport to sport. Boxing was in the dock in 2013, following an independent review commissioned by the Irish Amateur Boxing Association. The report confirmed that sectarianism and racism were present in the sport and addressed the issue of competing national allegiances. Following accusations of sectarianism by the Sandy Row Boxing Association, the Assembly had voted in favour of a new Northern Ireland Boxing Association. The review group did not support this, recommending instead that boxers should have the option, under the terms of the Belfast Agreement, of choosing which country they wished to represent, in the context of a regulatory framework.

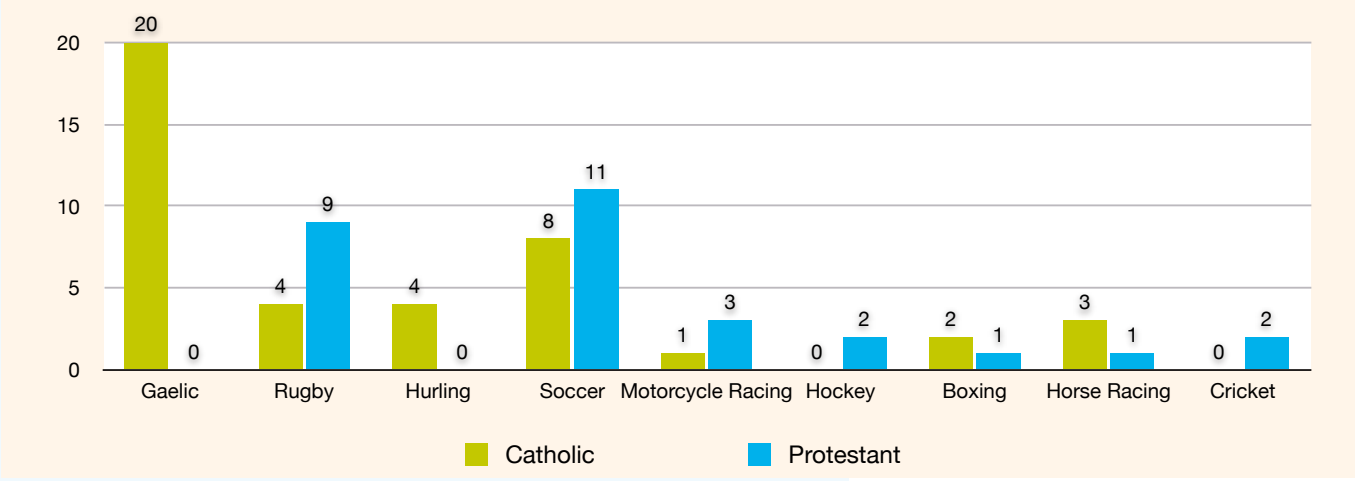
Football enjoys a currency in both communities. It is the team sport shown to enjoy the greatest participation in Continuous Household Surveys – 10 per cent in 2011/12. Unsurprisingly then,

it has acted as a lightning rod for wider social tensions. On 29 October 2013 an announcement was made ten minutes before the end of a Linfield-Clifonville game – the two sides drawing their support predominantly from the Protestant and Catholic communities respectively – that the match would be stopped if sectarian chanting continued. The Irish Football Association has tried to combat sectarianism through its 'Football for All' campaign. Beginning at international level, the campaign has cascaded down to Irish League and amateur clubs and to the grassroots. In the wake of the Linfield-Cliftonville game the FIFA vice-president Jim Boyce, warned clubs that they could face sanctions, including games played behind closed doors and points deducted, for such behaviour.

Some sports are still largely embedded within two separate communities. For example, the Continuous Household Survey for 2012/13 showed that 21% of those from a Catholic background had attended a Gaelic Athletic Association event within the last year, compared with fewer than 1 per cent of Protestants. Conversely, cricket and hockey events are almost exclusively attended by Protestants. These are historical attachments but some sports have managed to loosen the communal ties. The successes of the Irish rugby team, for example, have helped it gain a new acceptance within the northern Catholic population. It helps of course that Ulster Rugby is part of the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU), created before partition, and through it Ulster is linked to the other three historical provinces of Connaught, Leinster and Munster.

The IRFU has worked assiduously to ensure that flags, emblems and anthems are inclusive of both northern and southern identities. The GAA likewise has made strenuous attempts in recent years to make Gaelic games attractive to Protestants as well as Catholics. In 2009 it changed its mission statement from being non-sectarian to being anti-sectarian and its strategic plan includes nine cross-community activities to be delivered by 2015. The two governing bodies and the IFA have come together under the banner of a project, 'Sport in the Community', funded by the Department for Social Development, which aims to stimulate volunteering and cross-community relationships through sport. A high-profile conference on 'Sport and Reconciliation' took place under its aegis in Armagh in November. It was addressed by several ministers from north and south, including the First and Deputy First Ministers, the Taoiseach and the Tánaiste.

Chart 123: Live sport attendance rates in the Catholic and Protestant communities



Source: Continuous Household Survey

These cross-community efforts have however to swim against a difficult tide. While the 2012 Young Life and Times survey showed that more than half of all youngsters in Northern Ireland surveyed socialised or play sport with people from a different religion on occasion, only 31 per cent did so 'very often', a decrease of 5 percentage points on 2011.

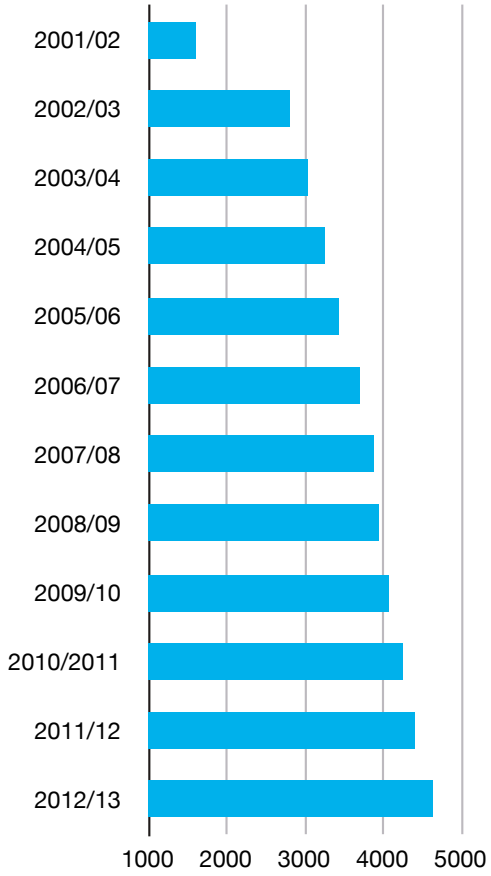
6.3 Language

The past year has seen continuation of the stalemate over an Irish Language Act, supported by nationalists but opposed by unionists. This has created a problem for the British government, the UK being a signatory to the Council of Europe Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Such an act would not only make the UK compliant with the charter and related commitments in the Belfast Agreement but would go with the grain of policy across Britain and Ireland, where there is ample official support for other Celtic languages, such as Welsh and Scots Gaelic. Irish-language activists have pressed for something akin to the Welsh Language Act of 1993, which would create fresh entitlements for the use of Irish in all interactions with officialdom, including the courts. If the Welsh model were followed it would necessitate the creation of many more jobs for fluent speakers.

The stalemate received attention in January 2014 when it was criticised in a report by the Council of Europe. Every three years the Council publishes a report on minority languages and the 2014 report explained that it was 'incomplete, lacking information about the situation in Northern Ireland'. This was because the Stormont parties could not agree on a submission. Noting that 'promotion of the Irish language remains, regrettably, a highly contentious issue in Northern Ireland', the Council of Europe undertook its own fact-finding visit. This criticised the absence of Irish in areas of public life, including government administration, the courts and the media.

It wasn't just in Northern Ireland that the lack of official support for Irish came in for comment, however. Just one week after the

Chart 124: Pupils in Irish medium-education



Council of Europe report, the Irish Language Commissioner in the Republic of Ireland, Seán Ó Cuirreáin, resigned. Giving evidence to an Oireachtas sub-committee on the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language (which runs till 2030), he said the language was being driven to the margins of Irish society amid inaction by government and public bodies. No member of either of the coalition parties turned up to hear Mr Ó Cuirreáin's evidence.

Further dismay was caused in January 2014 by the decision of the all-island language body, Foras na Gaeilge, to cut the number of core-funded Irish-language groups from 19 to 6 – part of a rationalisation agreed by the North/South Ministerial Council. None of the six successful organisations is based in the north, where there was angry reaction. Two flagship language projects in Belfast, Raidió Fáilte, an Irish-language station, and An tÁisionad, an Irish education resources centre based at St Mary's teacher training college on the Falls Road, will continue under separate funding.

Meanwhile, however, the number of pupils attending Irish-medium schools in Northern Ireland continued to grow. Belfast has now had two Irish-speaking lord mayors in recent years. Another sign of change came with the opening of an Irish-language centre in the Skainos Centre in the heart of Protestant east Belfast. This led to a claim by George Chittick, the Orange Order's Belfast County Grand Master, that the Irish language was part of a'republican agenda' but the Order distanced itself from his remarks, describing the decision to learn the language as 'a matter of conscience'.

7. Participation in public life

7.1 Women's representation

The Gender Equality Strategy of 2006 set out a bold vision: 'Men and women will be able to realise their full potential to contribute equally to the political, economic, social (including caring roles) and cultural development of Northern Ireland and benefit equally from the results.' Results to date have not kept up with the promise, however. Women make up 19.4 per cent of members of the Assembly, a lower rate than in other parliamentary bodies within the UK, although still higher than that in Dáil Éireann, which has only 15 per cent female representation, one of the lowest in Europe. In the 2011 election 20 female MLAs were returned; since then there has been one additional co-option. A briefing paper for the Assembly (Potter, 2013) provided the following data on women's political representation otherwise:

- 23.5 per cent of councillors in 2011 were women (compared with 31 per cent in England),five of 26 mayors/chairs of councils were women,
- four of 18 MPs were women (compared with 22 per cent in Great Britain),
- two of three MEPs were women (compared with 30 percent in Britain) and

- four of 15 ministers and junior ministers were women.

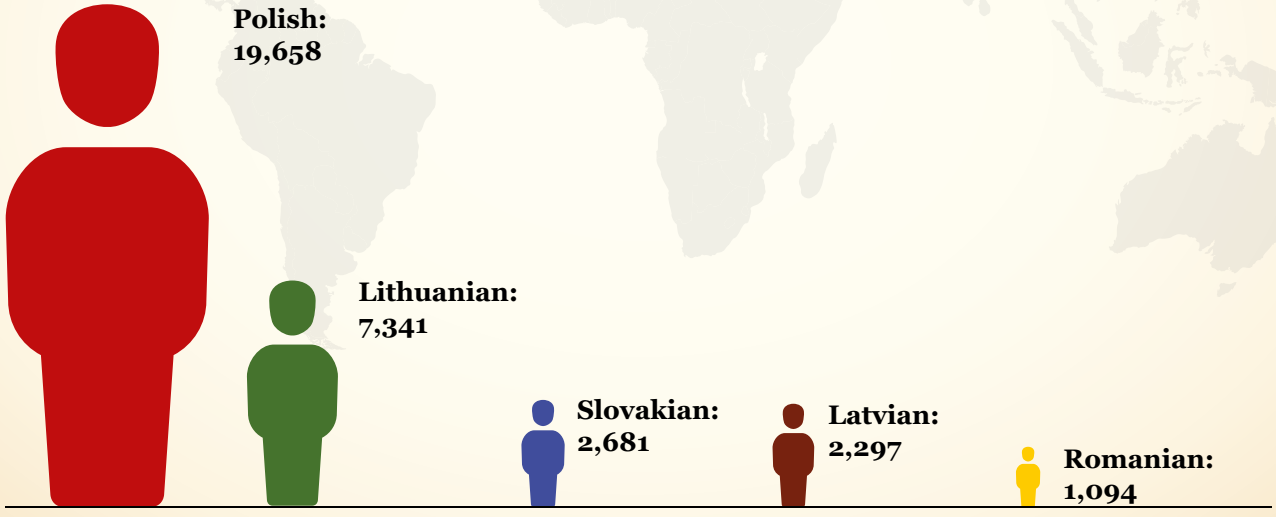
In January 2014 the Commissioner for Public Appointments in Northern Ireland published a report, *Under-representation and Lack of Diversity in Public Appointments in Northern Ireland*. The Commissioner noted that while in 1998, the year of the Belfast Agreement, women had made up 35 per cent of the membership of public boards that proportion had dropped to 33 per cent. By way of comparison, 37 per cent of new public appointments made by Whitehall departments in 2012/13 were women and the Cabinet Office has set a target of 50 per cent by 2015.

7.2 The ethnic-minority presence

The 2011 census did not wholly clear the confusion concerning the size of the minority-ethnic population in Northern Ireland. The term 'ethnic' was applied in the census only to the non-white population and did not therefore include the new communities from the 'A8' accession states, although the term is often applied to them (for example, the PSNI includes the A8 nationalities when compiling statistics on hate crime). 'New communities' does not however work either as a catch-all, as this does not take in Chinese or Indian families who have been in Northern Ireland for generations. It is best to use two classifications: ethnic communities and Eastern European immigrants.

The five main ethnic communities

The five main immigrant communities from accession states



Those classified as 'ethnic' in the census accounted for 1.8 per cent of the population; the new communities accounted for a further 2 per cent.- if taken together in a wider definition of ethnicity these categories comprised 4 per cent of the population. The main driver for migration has been the availability of low-paid jobs which indigenous workers do not want to fill. This has been particularly true of food-processing in mid-Ulster but elsewhere too the new communities have prevented companies moving production to other areas, kept local schools open and contributed to community life - in short, they are more than economic units. One report put it thus:

> *The various migrant populations who have arrived in Northern Ireland since the millennium have brought with them not only their skills and experience, but also their traditions, music, food and language. Ten years ago, Northern Ireland was a relatively insular and inward-looking country. Today it is a vibrant and culturally diverse society.* (Russell, 2012)

A qualitative study of the experiences of migrants reflected this from the perspective of the newcomers. One young Indian man said:

> *See at the end of the day everybody is not here for enhancing our growth from a monetary point of view. We are here for the experience and to see the world also …* (McAreavey et al, 2013)

The 2012 Northern Ireland Life and Times survey (reporting in 2013) found that 43 per cent of respondents believed immigration to be 'good' or 'very good' for the economy, while half viewed Northern Ireland's new diversity as having a 'good' or 'very good' cultural impact. But when asked to compare current racial prejudice in Northern Ireland with five years ago the largest group of respondents (41 per cent) thought it had got worse, while only 17 per cent said racism was less common. Projections were even more pessimistic, with 38 per cent saying the problem would stay the same and a further 31 per cent expecting it to get worse.

Chart 126: Attitudes to immigration in Northern Ireland

	For NI	For NI economy	For NI cultural life
Very bad	5	10	4
Bad	19	22	17
Neither good nor bad	31	26	30
Good	38	36	39
Very good	7	7	11

Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times report, 2013

7.3 The LGBT presence

In July 2013 Belfast City Hall was illuminated in rainbow colours to mark the beginning of Pride Week and yet Northern Ireland

is on course to be the only part of these islands not to permit same-sex marriage. In April 2013, for the second time in months, a proposal to that effect was made in the Assembly by Sinn Féin but defeated by 53 votes to 42, the DUP voting *en bloc* against. In February 2014 the Scottish Parliament voted for its introduction; the enabling legislation is in place in England and Wales, while in the Republic the coalition partners are putting the matter to a referendum in 2015, with polls showing public support running consistently at 70 per cent or above. In October 2013 the chief commissioner for the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Michael Wardlow, told the BBC: 'We as a commission support same-sex marriage. It is a fundamental equality matter; leadership needs to be shown. People from the gay and lesbian community are feeling let down by this.'

The NILT survey in 2012 found 57 per cent of respondents thought marriages between same-sex couples should be recognised by the law as valid. Support was highest (72 per cent) among 18-24 year olds, while just 30 per cent of those aged 65+ agreed.

In political terms, the strongest opposition has come from the DUP, reflecting the deeply-held religious views of many of its members. During the year the DUP Health Minister, Edwin Poots, fought court battles to try to prevent gay and unmarried couples from adopting, and to sustain a ban on blood from gay male donors. In both cases he lost: the blood ban was overturned in the High Court in Belfast, while the Supreme Court in London refused to allow him to appeal the High Court verdict on adoption. In the Assembly Mr Poots accused the courts of attacking Christian principles, on which he claimed society in Northern Ireland was based. The fundamental divide between the DUP and other parties makes agreeing the long-delayed Sexual Orientation Strategy extremely unlikely.

But this is not a simple religious divide. The Attorney General, John Larkin, explains his strong opposition to abortion and same-sex marriage by reference to his Catholic beliefs. He has campaigned on these issues not only in Northern Ireland but at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, where he sought (unsuccessfully) to support the Austrian authorities who had denied adoption rights to a lesbian couple.

Meanwhile societal changes occur without reference to the courts. Even if same-sex marriage is still a bridge too far, civil partnerships have become an unexceptional part of Northern Ireland life. In 2012 101 same-sex civil partnerships were registered, up from 89 in 2011. Pride festivals are well-established in Belfast, Newry, Derry-Londonderry and, in a real sign of the times, Strabane hosted its first pride event in February under the title 'Coming out'. In perhaps one of the most telling developments in the past year, St Joseph's High School in Crossmaglen accepted an award from the Northern Ireland Teaching Council for its work on tackling homophobia, following a nomination by the Rainbow Project.

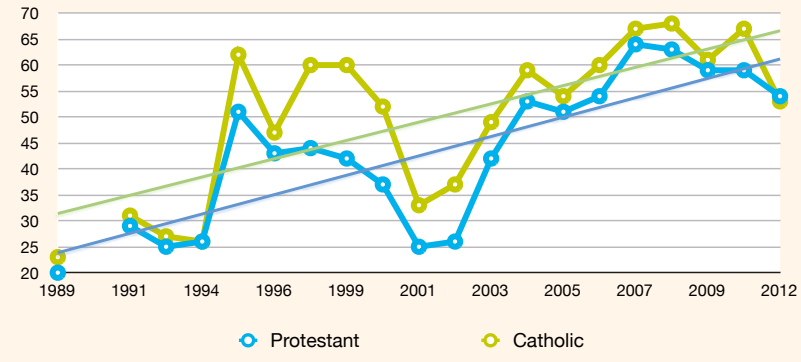
8. The state of community relations

The 2012 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey was published in December 2013. Fieldwork, which sampled 1,204 adults, was carried out between 1 October 2012 and 10 January 2013. Two months of data collection thus preceded the flags dispute, which erupted on 3 December, but its influence on subsequent responses seems the most likely explanation for a sharp apparent deterioration in community relations from the previous survey in 2010. The pattern can be glimpsed in responses to three key questions:

Question	2010	2012	Percentage point drop
Percentage who think community relations now better than they were 5 years ago	62	51	11
Percentage who would prefer to live in a mixed neighbourhood	83	71	12
Percentage who would prefer to work in a mixed workplace	94	80	14

If all the data had been collected after the vote in Belfast City Hall, rather than just one third of responses, the deterioration manifested might have been even more dramatic.

Chart 128: Percentage saying relations between Protestants and Catholics are better than they were 5 years ago



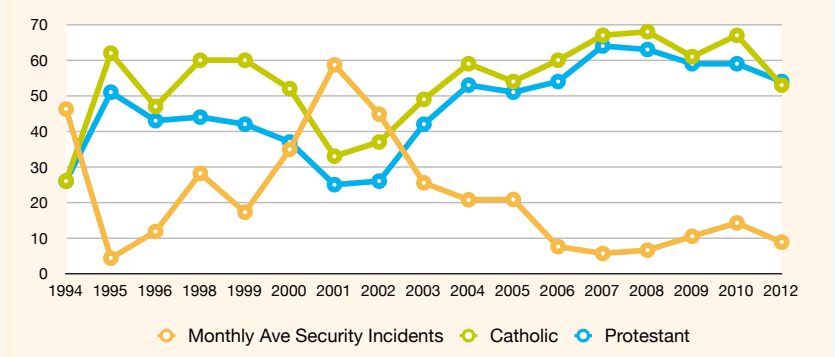
Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times survey 2012, published December 2013

8.1 Longer-term trends in community relations

The NI Life and Times survey is a rolling time series that has been under way since 1998, and in December 2013 a special Research Update was published reflecting on long-term trends (Morrow, Robinson and Dowds, 2013). The retrospective was broadly positive: Monitored over a twenty year period, the Life and Times Survey confirms that the peace process has had a measurably positive effect on the underlying “climate” of inter

community relations.' The verdict was guarded: 'A closer analysis of attitudes indicates that responses tend to be closely linked to political events and the presence of or absence of violence and tensions at key flashpoints.' Morrow *et al* wrote: 'Thus by far the most negative period in public attitudes took place in the period following the Good Friday Agreement apparently closely associated with the Holy Cross dispute and its aftermath, the collapse of devolved institutions of government at Stormont and political polarisation over the question of decommissioning.' In fact, the NILT data correlate better with fluctuations in security than with high-level political events, even if the latter are not wholly independent of each other. The correlation is an inverse one, where a fall-off in violence will produce a spike in optimism, while an increase in violence will trigger a dip in positive attitudes.

Chart 129: Security and Protestant and Catholic Attitudes



Source: Data derived from the NILT annual surveys/PSNI security statistics

Particularly disturbing in this regard are the responses in the 2012 survey by young urban Catholics and Protestants as to their willingness to live in mixed neighbourhoods, dropping from three quarters and two thirds respectively to just half in each group.

Chart 129: Percentage saying they would prefer to live in a mixed-religion neighbourhood (Urban Protestants)

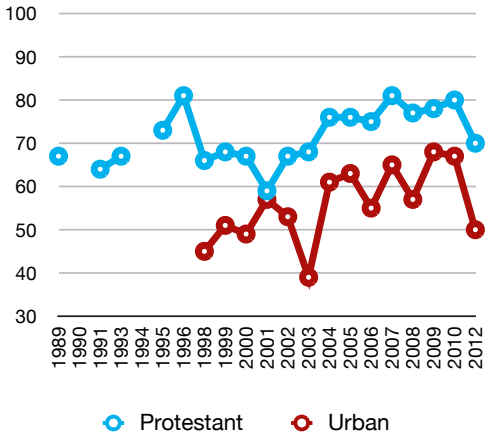
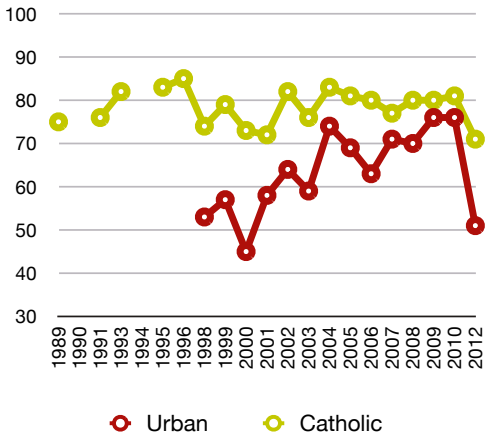


Chart 130: Percentage saying they would prefer to live in a mixed-religion neighbourhood (Urban Catholics)



9. Civil society and peace-building

The Good Friday Agreement had created a body called the Civic Forum which brought together 60 representatives from business, the trade unions and the voluntary sector and was intended to act as a consultative mechanism on social, cultural and economic affairs. It met in plenary session 12 times between October 2000 and October 2002, when the political institutions were suspended. When devolution was restored there was no strong demand for it to be brought back, but nor can it be abolished as it is written into the architecture of the Agreement. In April 2013 the idea was revived, and the Assembly passed an SDLP motion for it to reconstituted – but by a narrow margin of 48 votes to 47. Stephen Moutray of the DUP said the Forum had 'expended little but hot air' and was 'completely beyond revival'. Without unionist support it is hard to see the Forum come back into existence.

In the past year however civil society organisations have been involved in various activities to promote peace and reconciliation. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions organised a lunchtime rally at Belfast City Hall to urge the politicians to seek agreement around the Haass proposals. A group of ecumenically-minded Christians organised the 4 Corners Festival in January to bring the different parts of the city together. This included a controversial meeting in the Skainos centre in east Belfast, involving the Brighton bomber Pat Magee in a discussion on reconciliation. A crowd of protestors gathered outside the building, but a larger crowd gathered inside to participate in the discussion.

The long slow processes of reconciliation at community level tend to be invisible in reviews of the year. News headlines come from events, not processes, and so the burning of cross-community facility will be given attention, but not the years of planning and fund-raising that went towards its creation. This year, as every year, people crossed the sectarian divide to join in peace-building activities. The work is often at the sharp end of experience. For example, a group of disabled police officers, most of them former RUC officers injured in the Troubles, have begun a programme to explore Irish history in order to better understand the origins of the NI conflict. The Youth Initiatives project took young people from frontline areas in West Belfast, East Belfast, Downpatrick and Banbridge off on a 'Digging Deeper' encounter to work together and reflect on their understanding of what community and identity mean to them. The Shankill Women's Centre continues its long collaboration with women from the Falls/Culturlann centres. And when Richard Haass and Meghan O'Sullivan visited Ardoyne one night before Christmas they heard a cross-community choir sing carols right on the interface.

DIMENSION FOUR: POLITICAL PROGRESS

1. Introduction

However it might be regarded at home, the Northern Ireland peace process is still regarded as a rare success by the international observatories on peace and conflict. It belongs to the category of conflicts that have ended in negotiated settlements and these, according to the Peace Research Institute Oslo, represent the growing trend: in 1989 only 10 per cent of civil wars ended with a peace accord, but that has since increased to 40 per cent. Attention is now being paid to the quality of such settlements, and the problems that can lead to 'backsliding'. What causes a peace process to go into reverse? An article in the Economist in November 2013 summarises the evidence:

One reason for backsliding is that peace often fails to bring the prosperity that might give it lasting value to all sides. Power-sharing creates weak governments; nobody trusts anyone else enough to grant them real power. Poor administration hobbles business. Ethnic mafias become entrenched. Integration is postponed indefinitely. Lacking genuine political competition, with no possibility of decisive electoral victories, public administration in newly pacified nations is often a mess. (The Economist, 9th November 2013)

Surveys of this kind provide a sobering reminder that lasting peace is not guaranteed by a signed accord, and that political progress requires constant work and constant compromise.

2. Changing national identities

In the 2011 census a question on national identity was included for the first time. The results showed a shift away from the majority/minority paradigm to one characterised in last year's Peace Monitoring Report as 'We are all minorities now'. The three main categories are:

- British: 40 per cent
- Irish: 25 per cent
- Northern Irish: 21 per cent

In addition, 9% per cent of people identified with more than one nationality, while 5 per cent of people selected national identities other than British, Irish or Northern Irish.

Who are the Northern Irish?

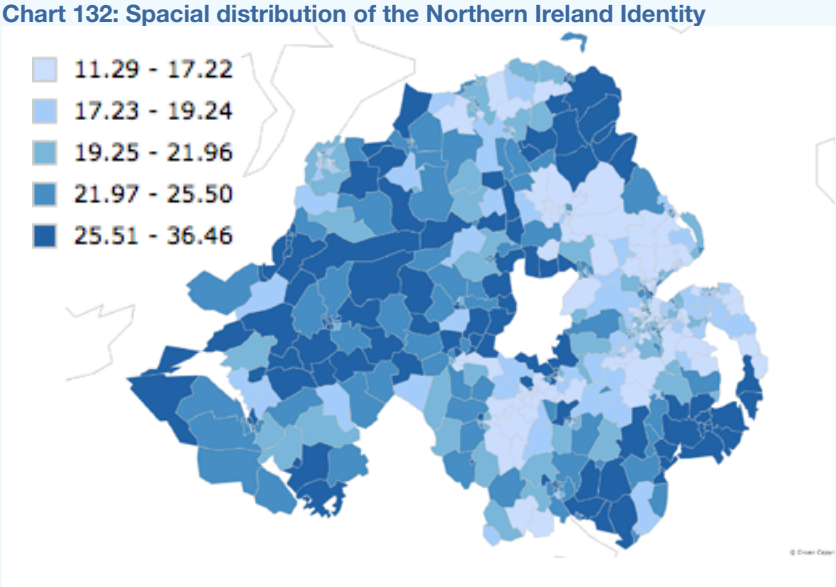
This was the first time the people of Northern Ireland were given the option to select Northern Irish as a national identity and it was an option selected by 21 per cent. What is known of this group? In addition to the more detailed information that has emerged as the new census data is unpacked, there have been a number of surveys which present other perspectives: the NI Life and Times survey, a Lucid Talk poll conducted for the Belfast Telegraph, and an Ipsos/MORI poll conducted for the BBC Spotlight programme. There is little consistency in the results. The differences may be due in part to the time differences in the data collection but, more importantly, while the other three are sample surveys the census is conducted across the whole population.

Source	Date of data collection	NI identity as percentage of pop.	Percentage of Catholics Choosing Northern Irish	Percentage of Protestants Choosing Northern Irish
NI Census	March 2011	21	27	15
Ipsos/Mori	January 2013	22	25	15
NI Life and Times	October 2012-January 2013	22	17	24
Lucid Talk	August – September 2013	13	16	13

In addition to the option of a Northern Irish Only identity, the census allowed the option of combining it with one or more other identities. There was a larger percentage who regarded themselves as British and Northern Irish (6.2 per cent) relative to those who felt Irish and Northern Irish (1.1 per cent). Seven-eighths (87 per cent) of people who felt British and Northern Irish only belonged to or had been brought up in Protestant denominations, while a similar proportion (86 per cent) of those who regarded themselves as Irish and Northern Irish were or had been brought up as Catholics.

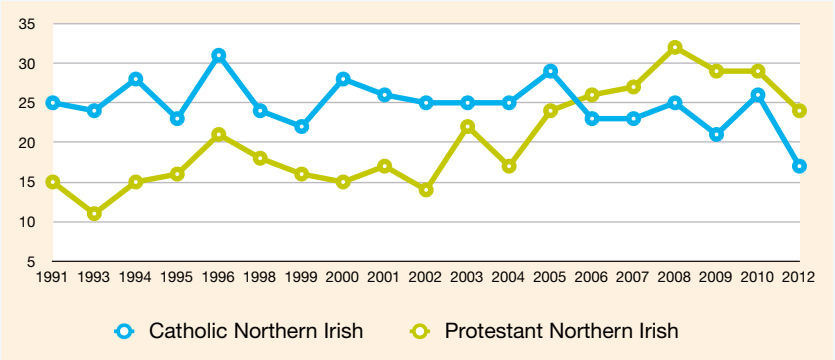
The spatial distribution of the Northern Irish identity is interesting in that it doesn't conform to any obvious pattern. It is very evenly spread but the higher concentrations are in the rural west in wards like Limavady (25 per cent) and Fermanagh (24 per cent), though Moyle in the north-east and Down in the south-east also have relatively high concentrations (26 and 28 per cent respectively). The distribution tends to be more pronounced in mainly Catholic wards, but do not suggest any obvious alignment with any political constituency or social group.

Chart 132: Spacial distribution of the Northern Ireland Identity



The size of the Northern Irish identity in the census has been taken in some quarters as the arrival of a new political force. In fact the NI Life and Times has been including it as a self-categorisation option for over 20 years. The most recent survey suggests that a very sudden dip has taken place, particularly amongst Catholics, and with it a move back to more exclusivist British and Irish identities.

Chart 133: Protestant and Catholic Northern Irish



In the 2011 census, 53 per cent of people who were or had been brought up as Catholics felt Irish only, over a quarter (27 per cent) felt Northern Irish only and 11 per cent thought of themselves as British only. Of the Catholic respondents to the BBC-Ipsos/Mori poll, a larger majority (62%) chose to identify as Irish than in the census and fewer Catholics (25%) identified as Northern Irish.

Even allowing for survey sampling error, it does seem that there has been a shift amongst Catholics towards Irishness and away from Northern Irishness in 2012/13. This shift is also evident in figures from the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey. The proportion of Catholics who feel Irish has been largely stable, but there is a discernible peak in 2012 and since then a shift away from the Northern Irish identity amongst Catholics. A stable proportion of Catholics has felt themselves to be British, and in line with the Census figures, this is generally around ten per cent.

Chart 134: Catholic National Identity Census 2011

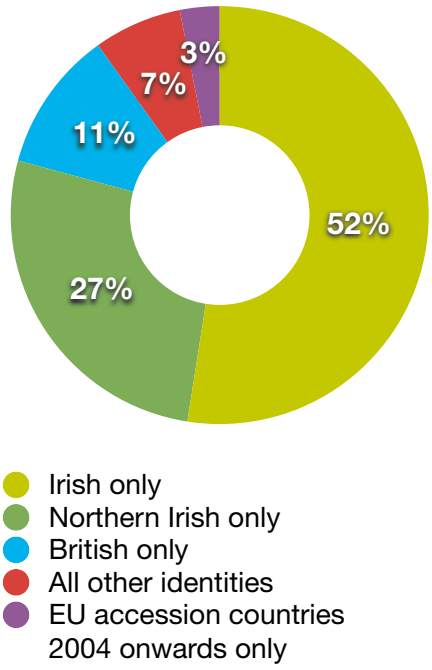
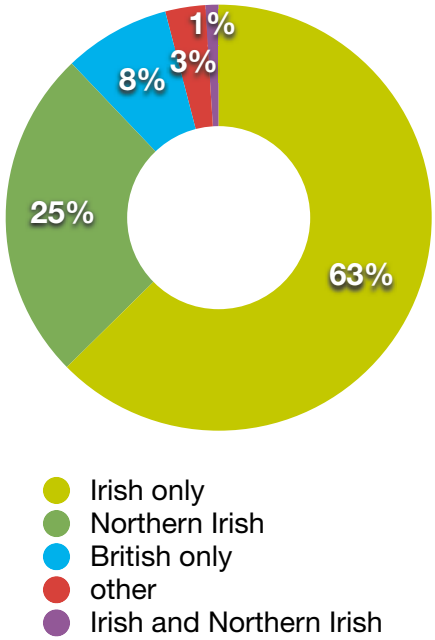


Chart 135: Catholic National Identity IPSOS



Source: BBC-Ipsos/Mori

Chart 137: Protestant National Identity Census 2011

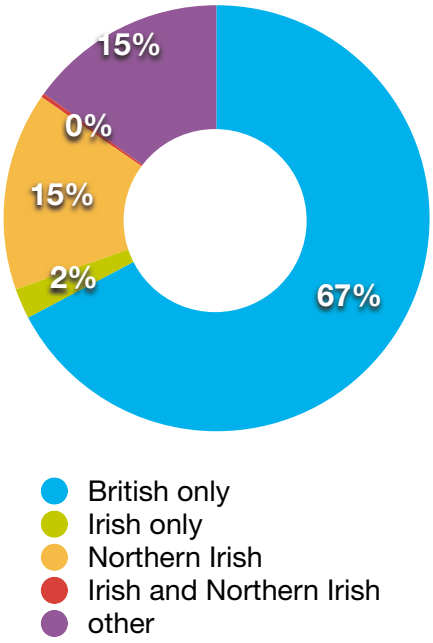
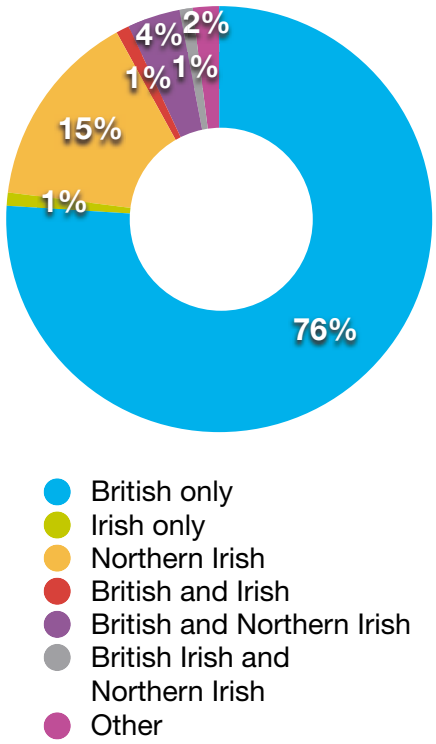
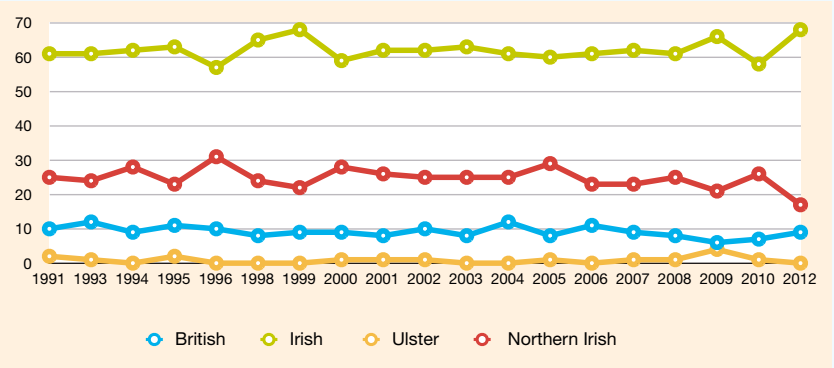


Chart 138: Protestant National Identity IPSOS



Source: BBC-Ipsos/Mori

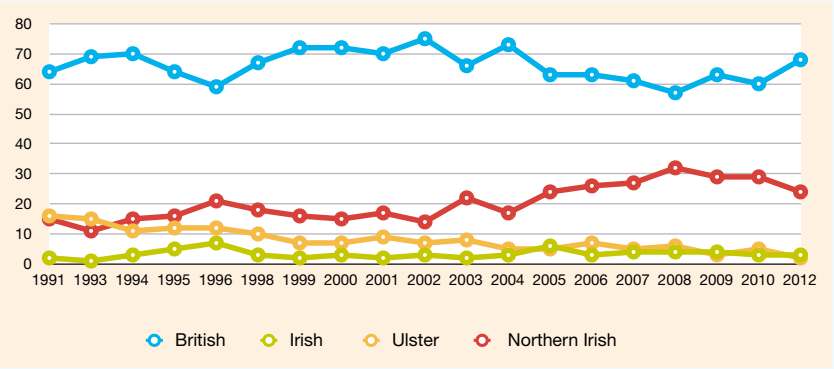
Chart 136: Catholic National Identity



In the 2011 census, two-thirds (67 per cent) of Protestants had a British only national identity, 15 per cent felt Northern Irish only and 2.3 per cent felt Irish only. Of the Protestant respondents to the BBC-Ipsos/Mori, more identified as British (76%) than in the 2011 census, 15% identified as Northern Irish and 4% chose British and Irish. So again, even allowing for a margin of error, there is a perceptible shift towards more exclusivist identities amongst Protestant in 2012/13.

In 2012 there was a falling away in the Northern Irish identity amongst Protestants and a noticeable rise in Britishness. For example, figures from the NILT show that amongst Protestants the British national identity had been on a slight downward trend. The Ulster identity had likewise faded over the years from 16% in 1991 to 2% in 2012. In contrast, the rise of the 'Northern Irish' identity had been quite marked-from 15% in 1991 to 32% in 2008, but this had dropped back to 24% in 2012.

Chart 139: Protestant National Identity



Elusive identities

The underpinning assumption of a census or a survey is that your identity can be identified by ticking a box. A book published in 2013 by broadcaster Mark Carruthers, *Alternative Ulsters*, provides a useful reminder that identities are much more fluid than that – or, as poet Frank Ormsby puts it, they are 'fugitive and elusive '. Ormsby was one of the 36 writers, artists, singers and politicians to be interviewed by Carruthers about their national identity. In one of his last interviews, published posthumously,

Seamus Heaney fights shy of the label of Ulster. Asked if it would make him uncomfortable he replies “It would, yes....Irish-Ulster, Ulster-Irish. I think my identity is Ulster-Irish or Irish-Ulster, take it one way or another.” Still wary of any simplification, he adds “You would have to keep the options open”. Gary Lightbody from the band Snow Patrol seems to see the Northern Irish identity as a way of escaping the traditional binary notions: “How about a united Northern Ireland?” he asks. “That would be a lovely thing, just forgetting for a minute Britishness or Irishness and just being proud to be Northern Irish.” Carruthers was tasked by the Impartial Reporter in Fermanagh on how he would describe himself. “Who am I? I don’t know who I am and I am not sure if I am any the wiser but I can tick the boxes and say I am an Ulsterman, I am an Irishman, I am British, I am European. But they are not always the same size of tick” (Impartial Reporter, 10/11/13). If one theme runs through the book it is that in a place where national identities are often seen to be fixed and unyielding, there are many who are prepared to live with ambiguity and complexity. Or who prefer not to think about it at all. As the PUP leader David Irvine once put it, “ I don’t want to wake up in every morning and ask myself ‘Am I British or Irish? I want to think ‘Am I late for work?’ (quoted in Shirlow, 2012)

3. The workings of the NI Assembly

The Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness gave Carruthers a simple rationale for the power-sharing executive: “The first time I ever sat down with Ian Paisley he said to me, “Martin, you know, we can rule ourselves. We don’t need these people coming over from England telling us what to do.” In some ways the NI Assembly can be seen to be fulfilling that hope, a devolved parliament creating legislation in tune with its electorate, but its record over the past year has been disappointing. No one, it seems, is more disappointed than McGuiness himself. Speaking in the Assembly in January after the failure of the Haass talks he said, “It is incumbent on all of us to be positive and constructive and to recognise that the lot of politicians is not great. I find that embarrassing. What we need to do is show the public right across society that we have the ability to tackle these difficult issues”. Speaking to a youth audience on 13 February co-founder of NI21, John McCallister echoed his doubts: “We need to move to normal politics, the bread-and-butter stuff. Not the endless stuff about flags and parades. We are an embarrassment to the rest of the UK and Ireland.”

> “The first time ever I sat down with Ian Paisley he said to me, ‘Martin, you know, we can rule ourselves. We don’t need these people coming over from England telling us what to do’.”
>
> - Martin McGuinness, interviewed in ‘Alternative Ulsters’

Certainly there were times when the acrimony between members of the Executive made Northern Ireland seem ‘a place apart’ in terms of parliamentary behaviour. In December 2013 a high court judgement was necessary to resolve a dispute between the Finance Minister, the DUP’s Simon Hamilton, and the Sinn Fein Agriculture Minister, Michele O’Neill. The Agriculture Minister wanted to transfer £100 million of Common Agricultural Policy

funding to rural development projects; the Finance Minister insisted the decision required Executive approval. The court found in favour of the Finance Minister, but the Lord Chief Justice Sir Declan Morgan's judgement was also a judgement on the NI Executive. This was, he said, "a case about political failure".

At the heart of the problem of the Executive is the relationship between Sinn Fein and the DUP. There are in fact two problems. There is firstly the problem of mutual veto, which has led to the series of logjams outlined below. However, when the two parties do agree on a course of action behind closed doors the second problem arises: their combined majority gives them unchecked power. Between them, Sinn Fein and the DUP control 62% of the vote and this brute fact allows for a simple majoritarianism. At the end of the Stormont year in July the UUP, Alliance and the SDLP joined forces to warn of the crowding out of other voices. The UUP leader Mike Nesbitt said, "The Sinn Fein/DUP carve-up at the heart of Government gets worse, not better." The issue was highlighted by a notorious remark made in the course of a television debate on – ironically - good relations. Sinn Fein and the DUP had announced their joint strategy 'Together-Building a United Community'. When SDLP, Alliance and UUP representatives in the television studio protested they had not had sight of the document prior to its publication Sinn Fein's John O'Dowd repeated the phrase 'so what?' to each objection – leading to the small parties being branded the 'so what parties'.

Discourtesy is the common coin within the Assembly.

Discourtesy is the common coin within the Assembly. Martin McGuinness said in an interview with the Irish News that three-quarters of DUP members do not acknowledge him in the corridors. A study by linguists from Middlesex University threw up an interesting perspective on the practices of the Assembly. The study was concerned with gender patterns in debates in the four parliaments of the UK, and found that the NI Assembly had 'had the most illegal interventions of all the parliaments'. The main observations of the NI Assembly were that:

1. Out of order utterances are frequent and confrontational. They occur in both question time and plenary sessions;
2. Women and men MLAs take part in the most confrontational exchanges, and both are called to order by the Speaker;
3. Many illegal interventions are concerned with securing a 'give way' intervention, and resisting 'give way' interventions. This type of contest for the floor seems more typical of men, rather than women MLAs;
4. Points of order are common, and are used by Speakers to confront opponents or to get a political point into the official report. (Shaw, 2013)

These problems are not new. The Speaker, William Hay, has frequently had to appeal to MLAs to moderate their language and behaviour. Speaking to the Belfast Telegraph on 4 July 2013 however he risked a cautiously optimistic note: "In my view, the Assembly is clearly developing as a legislature, perhaps not as fast as many would like in the system we have, but watching from the chair, I often

reflect that 10 or 15 years ago I was not so sure that locally elected Members would be debating and deciding these issues."

3.1 Progress

The past year has not seen any been a significant one in terms of a legislative programme, though more acts were enacted than in 2012. A high percentage of these are 'compliance' legislation where Northern Ireland falls in between EU or Westminster legislation (such as the Superannuation Bill), or else 'necessary' legislation such as the Budget Bill. Two pieces of legislation were enacted which were specific to Northern Ireland. The first of these was the act to set up an Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse. The second was driven by TUV MLA Jim Allister after Sinn Féin appointed former IRA prisoner Mary McArdle as a Special Political Adviser (SPAD) and was drafted to prevent former prisoners being allowed to serve in this role. Following a marathon debate on 3 June 2013 the vote was 56 in favour and 28 against. It succeeded with the support of unionist and Alliance MLAs. Sinn Féin and the Greens voted against the bill, while the SDLP abstained.

Acts passed by the NI Assembly	
Superannuation Bill	9 January 2013
Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Bill	18 January 2013
Charities Bill	18 January 2013
Budget Bill	14 March 2013
Business Improvement Districts Bill	21 March 2013
Criminal Justice Bill	25 April 2013
Water and Sewerage Services (Amendment) Bill	25 April 2013
Budget (No. 2) Bill 2013	18 July 2013
Marine Bill	17 September 2013
Road Races (Amendment) Bill	17 January 2014
Civil Service (Special Advisers) Bill (Non-Executive Bill)	8 July 2013

3.2 Logjams

The past year has seen a silting up of the legislative process of the Assembly. The areas of disagreement have increased, the areas of agreement have reduced. In earlier periods the trading arrangements between the two big parties allowed deals to be done but the past year has seen very few points of agreement – even when the toxic issues of flags, parades and dealing with the past were cordoned off to be dealt with separately through the Haass talks. The main logjams have been:

Welfare reform

The UK coalition government's welfare reform package has raised fundamental issues in Northern Ireland. While the DUP and the UUP have voiced concerns over elements of the bill, but they have also warned of the cost of not implementing the cuts. The Secretary of State Theresa Villiers has been adamant that NI will lose £5 million each month from its block grant if it does not implement the package. She reiterates the Treasury view that breaking the parity principle will see funding for the power-sharing executive cut by £200 million a year by 2017. Having won some small concessions, the DUP Minister responsible, Nelson McCausland, has said he "is fully committed to taking the Welfare Reform Bill through its remaining legislative stages". Sinn Fein, having built its political programme in the south by unwavering opposition to austerity budgets says it cannot endorse legislation which will affect the most vulnerable in the north.

Education and Skills authority

The Education and Skills Authority does not legally exist but has already cost taxpayers more than £15m. It was first announced in 2006 and was intended to replace the cumbersome five regional education boards with a unitary body. It was estimated that the amalgamation would save £20 million per year. An Education Skills Authority Implementation Team has been in existence and a Director Designate has been in post since that time. Speaking in the Assembly in February 2014, the education minister John O'Dowd said he was on the verge of having to re-hire staff and reconstitute education and library board senior management because the Executive has failed to agree ESA.

Irish Language Act

As noted in section 6.1, bodies such as the Council of Europe have been critical of the failure of the Executive to promote the use of Irish in public life. Sinn Fein Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, Caral Ni Chuilin, who is responsible for overall promotion of the language, has said that there is a large body of support for an Irish Language Act in the North. The SDLP have argued that protections for the language fall below the standards flowing from the Council of Europe's Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the Good Friday Agreement, the St Andrews Agreement 2006, and Human Rights legislation. The shift from a

DUP to a Sinn Fein DCAL minister in 2011 did little to progress the issue. The DUP remain dismissive of the idea of an Irish language act and in January 2014 DUP MEP Diane Dodds said "the debate around an Irish language act has ended as it is clear that no cross-community support exists for such a proposal." This leaves the UK government in breach of its obligations under the EU Charter

Maze/Long Kesh

Ever since the prison closed in 2000 government has struggled over what to do with the 350-acre site, located roughly 14 kilometres southwest of Belfast. A development plan which had as its centrepiece a Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre initially won the backing of Peter Robinson and Martin McGuinness. Daniel Libeskind, who designed the new World Trade Center at the ground zero site in New York, was to be the architect for the project. The European Union also offered financial support. After pressure from other unionists, and with tensions running high over parades, Robinson withdrew his support, stating that "wide-ranging consensus" was absent. In response, Mr McGuinness said no development could occur on the site without the peace centre.

Housing Executive

In 2013 Social Development Minister Nelson McCausland put forward plans for the dismantling of The Northern Ireland Housing. His plans split the Northern Ireland Housing Executive into landlord and strategic functions, with strategic issues staying within the department and landlord functions moved to the private sector. The Department for Social Development, supported by a regional housing body, will take responsibility for overall housing strategy and the organization's 90,000 homes will be transferred to housing associations in this new arrangement. The SDLP's Alex Attwood chairs the Social Development Committee and to date has not attempted to progress the Minister's plans.

Academic selection

The impasse over selective education continues, and is perhaps the most obvious example of how, when the main parties debate 'bread and butter ' issues such as education, a fundamental difference in world view prevents any agreed programme. Sinn Fein managed to get rid of the eleven plus, but not of selection so now, instead of one selective exam for children at the age of eleven, there are two: one for Catholics and one for Protestants. A Ministerial Advisory Group set up by the Education Minister produced a report during the year and responses divided along familiar lines. Peter Robinson said that the report's authors had focused on the "divisive issue of academic selection and have placed perceived class issues above the religious divide in their priorities." UUP education spokesman Danny Kinahan claimed the report diverted focus from shared education. In contrast, Minister for education John O'Dowd endorsed the report's view that segregation by income was wrong and said that he would strive to limit the damage done by academic selection while it was still being used.

3.3 The limits of ambition

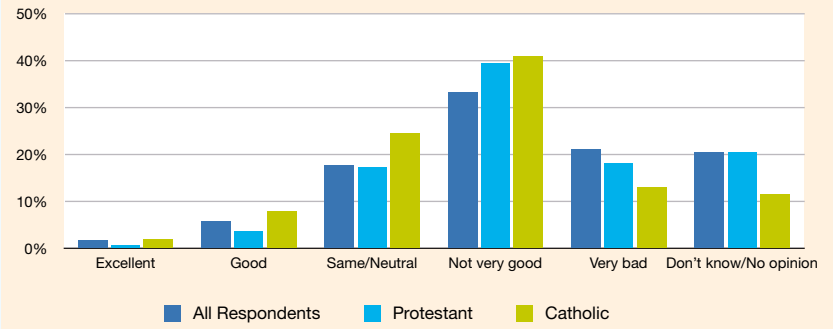
One thing held in common by the NI political parties is a lack of ambition for the Assembly as a devolved government. In 2007 the Scottish government, which had for the first time a SNP majority, set up a 'National Conversation' about independence and autonomy. The outcome of this came in October 2012 when the Edinburgh Agreement was signed by the Scottish First Minister, Alex Salmond, and the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, confirming the Scottish Parliament's power to hold a referendum on independence whose outcome would be respected by both governments. If the referendum fails to deliver a Yes vote, the extent of devolved powers will be very much a matter for discussion. One option canvassed in the discussions to date has been the possibility of 'full devolution' – or 'devo max', meaning the greatest degree of autonomy possible while still remaining within the UK. Extended fiscal responsibility could mean that all taxes in Scotland would be set and collected by the Scottish government, which would pay for all its own public services and remit a contribution to the Treasury to pay for remaining UK-wide services (notably defence and foreign affairs). In Wales the debate has been much more around the possibility of varying the arrangements for the block grant. A Commission on Devolution in Wales was set up with membership from all four major parties, and took its name the Silk Commission, from its chair, Paul Silk. Its first report, issued in November 2012, included recommendations for income tax variance powers, plus stamp duty land tax, air passenger duty, aggregates levy and landfill taxes to be to be devolved. The second report, issued in March 2014, added energy policy and policing powers to the list and asked for a ten year timetable for the transfer of these powers. The idea of re-balancing financial arrangements within the UK even extends to the English regions, where the Heseltine Growth Review has recommended a de-centralisation of power. This ferment of ideas appears to have passed Northern Ireland by. A paper by PWC *Fiscal Power: A Review of the Fiscal Powers of the Northern Ireland Assembly* was issued in June 2013 by NICVA. Consideration was given to the devolution of 'major' taxes, in particular income tax, and also to a series of 'minor' taxes, including air passenger duty, tobacco duty, fuel duty and alcohol duty. The report failed to spark any debate. Even more modest suggestions, like for example a proposal from QUB Professor Colin Harvey that the Assembly could amend the terms of legislation on asylum seekers, seemed to lie outside the compass of political concern. The extent of devolution now on offer seems broadly satisfactory across party lines; the larger debates go on elsewhere.

3.4 Attitudes to the Assembly

Surveys show that satisfaction with the performance of Stormont is poor by international standards. An August 2013 Belfast Telegraph/LucidTalk opinion poll delivered a massive vote of no confidence in Stormont politicians. With only 9.4 per cent of those expressing an opinion rating the performance of Stormont

as 'excellent' or 'good', the Assembly's net approval rating sank deep into minus figures to -59.9 per cent. Gerry Lynch, an analyst for the pollsters LucidTalk said "this is the sort of score which a politician could expect after being arrested on serious criminal charges." This is in contrast to a March 2013 IPSOS/Mori poll that gave the Scottish devolved parliament a positive approval rating of +12 per cent. Stormont's poor performance in this poll is underlined even further by the fact that the comparison is with direct rule from Westminster, which was regarded as an unpopular and unresponsive method of government.

Chart 141: Compared to Direct Rule how would you rate the performance of the NI Assembly



3.5 Changing the Assembly?

Two issues arose during the year in relation to the overall architecture of the devolved parliament: one concerned the number of MLAs, the other the possibility of moving from a grand coalition of all the parties to a more conventional government-and-opposition arrangement.

The issue of the size of the Assembly arose when the Secretary of State signalled her intention to bring forward a Northern Ireland Bill no later than May 2015 to make changes relating to political donations in Northern Ireland. The Assembly was asked if wished to see any other constitutional changes that would require primary legislation at Westminster. The idea of a smaller Assembly was floated, but in the House of Lords the Northern Ireland spokesperson Baroness Randerson sought to provide reassurances that legislation would be introduced to limit any reduction to one seat in each constituency, meaning that the Assembly would retain at least 90 members. "When it was established it was the intention it should be a widely inclusive body and that remains an essential element of the Northern Ireland settlement." (Belfast Telegraph, 26 February, 2014).

The other idea, that of allowing a formal opposition, has always had its champions. The smaller parties in particular have toyed with it as a possible way to circumvent the duopolistic power of Sinn Fein and the DUP. The deputy leader of the SDLP, Dolores Kelly, has strongly championed the idea, as has Jim Nicholson the UUP MEP, but neither of their two parties has adopted it as party policy. The newly formed NI21 has built it in as a core part

of its programme, but the stakes are higher for the SDLP and the UUP as they would have to cede their seats at the Executive table, and to date that has seemed too large a sacrifice. The two large parties, Sinn Fein and the DUP, see the idea as no more than a distraction and without their support the idea is unlikely to become a constitutional reality. A consultation by the British government in 2012 concluded that "there wasn't sufficiently broad support among the parties to justify proceeding with legislation that would in any way change the legislative structure" deriving from the 1998 agreement.

Nonetheless in the past year two attempts have been made to give strength to the idea, one at Westminster, the other at Stormont. In February 2014 Lord Empey, former leader of the UUP, used the committee stage debate in the House of Lords on the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill to say that was that those Assembly members who are not in the Executive have no "status in terms of the Assembly's proceedings". His views were heard sympathetically, but Labour's Lord McAvoy expressed the view of the House when he said his party could not support Lord Empey's amendment because: "Devolution is devolution. It can and should be dealt with at Stormont." This is in fact the approach that has been taken by John McCallister, who has announced plans to introduce his own Private Member's Bill in the Assembly. Without the support of the larger parties, however, it is difficult to see how the idea can gain traction. Even the idea of the smaller parties being allowed to band together into technical groups has been knocked back twice by the procedures committee – most recently in February 2014.

4. Re-shaping local government

In 2008 the Northern Ireland Assembly approved the reform of local government. The change moved Local Government from the 26 current Districts to 11 new Districts, as well as making changes to the powers of Local Government. Under Priority 5 of the Programme for Government was a commitment to establish the new 11 council model for Local Government by 2015. The first elections to these new councils will be on 22 May 2014. The makeup of the new councils had been the subject of much political debate, with a concern on the part of the smaller parties that the larger parties would benefit more from the changes.

New Local Government Districts - Religion or religion brought up in			
	Catholic	Protestant and Other Christian	Other
Antrim and Newtownabbey	30%	61%	9%
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	43%	52%	5%
Belfast	49%	42%	9%
Causeway Coast and Glens	40%	55%	5%
Derry and Strabane	72%	25%	2%
Fermanagh and Omagh	64%	33%	3%
Lisburn and Castlereagh	24%	67%	9%
Mid and East Antrim	19%	73%	8%
Mid Ulster	64%	33%	3%
Newry, Mourne and Down	72%	24%	4%
North Down and Ards	13%	75%	12%

Source: NISRA Census 2011

5. North-South and East-West

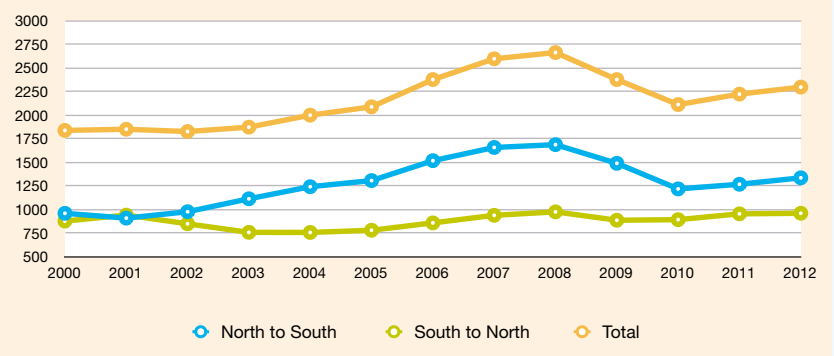
5.1 North-South

The most successful outworking of the Good Friday Agreement has been in north-south co-operation. The success has been such that the everyday workings of the North-South Ministerial Council (NSMC) or the six implementation bodies pass almost without notice. It is a success, in other words, that is now taken for granted. North-South issues no longer press on the political agenda. This is an outcome that would have been difficult to predict. In his memoir of the negotiations which led up to the 1998 agreement, Senator George Mitchell describes how north-south matters were by far the most sensitive issue; so much so that he chaired all these discussions personally, leaving the negotiations over the shape of the NI Assembly to the Secretary of State, Paul Murphy. The nationalist parties had their focus on the all-island dimension, the unionists had their focus on the internal power-sharing arrangements. Mitchell sought to balance one against the other, and the Belfast Agreement makes the Assembly and the North-South structures 'mutually interdependent' so that if one falls, so does the other. The quiet hum of industry that comes from the implementation bodies today makes it unlikely that any crisis will come from that side of the balancing act.

Some examples from the past year will serve to make the point. On 17 February 2014 heart surgeons from Dublin carried out heart surgery on a child in Belfast. This is a practical outcome of a new arrangement by the Republic's minister of health, James Reilly and the DUP health minister, Edwin Poots. A jointly funded cancer radiotherapy unit at Altnagelvin in Derry marks the next stage in this area of cooperation. An all-island conference on child protection in Dundalk took place in May 2013 and, on foot of that, an all-island child protection strategy is being rolled out. The Irish dimension presents no problem for the DUP on such a practical matter. "A border should not be a barrier to child protection" said Edwin Poots. "It should not be something that perpetrators could use to their advantage". Where possible though the DUP prefers to by-pass the machinery set up by the Good Friday Agreement. Energy policy is a case in point. Northern Ireland has the second highest energy costs in Europe (and is converging with Italy, the most expensive). A high voltage link to the Republic's grid infrastructure would save £7m per annum. DUP Minister Arlene Foster explained to the Assembly the practical benefits of the link but was counselled by her DUP colleague Sammy Wilson not to go through the North-South Ministerial Council: " I believe, as with all such things, that it is best done on a Minister-to-Minister basis rather than through a structure that is moribund and does not deliver anything anyway" (NI Assembly Hansard, 3/3/14)

A joint study was commissioned on education issues and at the North-South Ministerial Council in November 2013 ministers agreed to develop further co-operation in the three areas: literacy and numeracy, teaching inspections, and educational underachievement. In tourism, a number of high profile projects were launched under the INTERREG Programme including the All-Island Tourism Trail and a number of cross-border economic development projects focused on supporting the SME sector. Trade levels have also been good – even if these are shaped more by market forces than by policy design. Statistics from InterTrade Ireland show that in 2012, the last year for which figures are available, total trade in manufacturing came to £2.298 billion. This represents a 10.5 per cent increase on total cross border goods trade in comparison with the previous year.

Chart 143: Cross Border Trade in Manufacturing



Not every effort results in success: there have been abiding difficulties, for example, in fashioning legal arrangements to deal with the prosecution of motoring offences in one jurisdiction when

the offences were committed in the other. Difficulties of this kind are inevitable and arise more from technical complications than from any absence of political will. What is more, the slow build-up of achievements in most of the sectoral areas allows sufficient ballast to be created to help in situations where north-south cooperation is buffeted by head winds. In February 2011 plans to invest in the A5, which would have built a high speed connection between Dublin and Derry- Londonderry were cut back drastically. In 2013 the Narrow Water Bridge project, that would have linked Cornamucklagh near Omeath in Co.Louth with Warrenpoint in south Down, was axed. The bridge was a cherished project in both areas and, its supporters claimed, was crucial to the prospects for economic regeneration and reconciliation of the border community in Louth and Down.

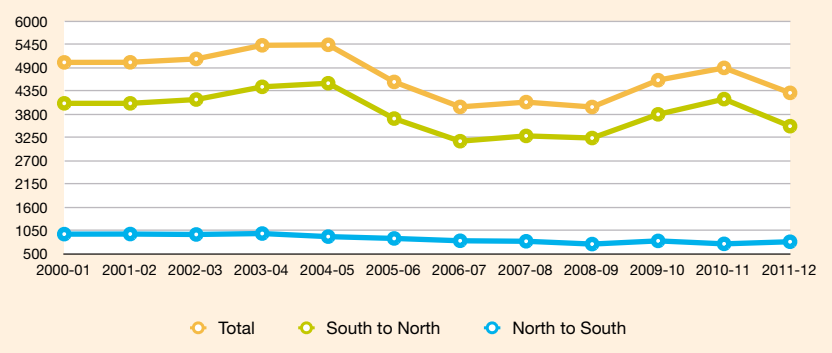
The project had begun back in the period of Mary McAleese's Presidency and seemed to give physical form to the bridge-building theme she had made her own. The ending of the hope of the bridge offers itself as a symbol of the lack of interest by both administrations in north-south cooperation, just as the decision not to proceed with the Dublin-Derry road had done two years previously. The economic exigencies however have to be taken into account. The Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) had pledged 17.4m euro (£14.5m) but the final estimates were so much higher than the early projections that the Irish economy, straining under a series of austerity budgets could not commit the extra resources, and the NI Assembly could not make up the shortfall.

Inches, not miles

The degree of co-operation between the two jurisdictions now resembles the norms between neighbouring European states. The increased traffic however does not seem to have fulfilled the hope that the two populations would come to feel themselves as one 'imagined community'. As the historian Cathrine Kinealy puts it in her 2010 book *Ireland Since the 1960s* 'A partition that was less than 100 years old had become deeply embedded in the psyche of the Irish people.' (Kinealy, 2010: 329-330) . A clear illustration of that can be seen in the higher education flows, particularly in those from the north to the south. Starting from a very low base of 968 students in 2000-01, it has never climbed above 1,000. In the last year for which data is available, 2011-12, it had gone down to 788 students. There are two reasons for this. One is that northern students, for a variety of reasons, look to England and Scotland for their higher education options. This is *in spite* of cost factors, not because of them: the £9,000 fees in Britain are much higher than the registration fees in the south. Dublin simply isn't magnetised for northern students, not even those from nationalist grammar schools along the border, just sixty miles from the capital. The other reason is to do with the entry points system for Irish universities, a system which privileges the Irish Leaving Cert over the UK A-levels. This has helped to choke the flow of northern students in ways that defy the academic and economic interests of the southern universities. In February 2014 Trinity College announced it had set up a working group to explore this

issue. The fact that it had been unattended for so long, and in the period when support for the peace process was high across the island, suggests that all-island thinking is still a distant dream.

Chart 144: Student flows in higher education



Source: InterTrade Ireland, 2014

5.2 East-West

Speaking to the British-Irish Chamber of Commerce on 13 February 2014 the Secretary of State Theresa Villiers said, "Relations between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland economically, culturally, socially and politically have never been stronger than they are today". There is evidence to support this. The Joint Declaration signed by the two governments in 2012 set out a course of action for UK-Irish co-operation over the ensuing decade. As a practical outcome of this the first ever joint UK trade mission took place in February 2014 with ministers from London, Belfast and Dublin attending the Singapore Airshow together (Bombardier in Belfast was a beneficiary with contracts worth a potential £479 million). At the symbolic level two events were organised to represent the spirit of the new agreement:

- In December 2013 David Cameron and Enda Kenny made a joint visit to the western front war graves in remembrance of the tens of thousands of Irishmen who lost their lives in the Great War.

- Plans were made to welcome President Higgins to London for the first state visit by an Irish President to the United Kingdom.

Below this level lies a complex machinery to connect the NI Assembly to the other parts of the UK. During the negotiations that led to the Good Friday Agreement these east-west structures were requested by David Trimble and other unionist negotiators as a counter-balance to the north-south bodies. There are three bodies to co-ordinate east-west relations. Parallel to the North-South Inter-Parliamentary Association is the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly. It was set up in 1990 and brings together parliamentarians from Westminster and the Oireachtas for goodwill exercises. The more practical agenda is handled by the British-Irish Council (BIC), set up as part of the Belfast Agreement . The 21st Summit meeting of the BIC was held in

Jersey in November 2013. The official communiqué from the meeting explains how the Council focused on the economy, youth employment and the creative industries. The Council agrees to specific work areas for which individual members take responsibility, with Housing falling to Northern Ireland. In October 2013 British-Irish Council Housing Ministers met in London at a meeting chaired by Nelson McCausland. The Ministers discussed the potential of the housing sector to generate jobs for young people. However the BIC has struggled to establish its importance. Decisions are taken by consensus and members can opt out of any programme of action that follows. This means it is much more of a talking shop than the North-South Ministerial Council, and attracts only token support from the sponsoring governments. The third structure is the British-Irish Governmental Council and when it first met in December 1999 it seemed like the weightiest of these bodies. That first meeting was attended by Tony Blair, Bertie Ahern, the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, but although in theory the body has wide powers, and provides the Irish government with direct input into policy-making in the north, the Governmental Council has been allowed to fade into a background role. Professor John Coakley in a study of British-Irish institutions concludes that since the St Andrew's Agreement and the restoration of devolved government, neither government sees it as a particularly useful structure. The Joint Declaration signed in 2012 prioritised action over formal structures and Professor Coakley concludes: "This fresh front in the British–Irish relationship cuts across the role of the British–Irish Intergovernmental Conference, and may well sideline it further." (Coakley, 2014).

Trade is at the heart of the new understanding. According to UK Trade and Investment (UKTI), Ireland is the UK's fifth largest export market – and its largest in sectors such as food and drink and clothing, fashion and footwear. In fact, Ireland imports more goods from Britain than the rest of Europe combined, according to the British Irish Chamber of Commerce. The coordination of energy resources offers has been identified as the key area for increased cooperation. The East–West Interconnector, launched in September 2012 is a high-voltage direct current submarine and subsoil power cable which connects the British and Irish electricity markets. The huge project has been developed by the Irish national grid operator EirGrid, with a 300 million euro loan from the European Investment Bank. A second energy project, which would have seen Britain import energy from wind farms in Ireland has been stalled. Ireland, which is short of money but not of wind, has placed wind farms at the centre of its energy policy. Turbines up to 180m (590ft) tall - half the height of the Empire State Building - are cropping up as part of a drive to generate 40% of Ireland's electricity from wind, and to sell energy to Britain. The Coalition government in Britain faces opposition to wind farms in the shires, but the Irish government has also faced opposition for committing to what is described as "an Irish solution to a British problem." The decision by the British government in March 2014 to pull back from the project has placed the first strain on the 2012 Joint Declaration.

6. From the flags protest to the culture wars

6.1 The aftermath of the flags protest

On Saturday 30 November 2013 a march was held in Belfast to commemorate the first anniversary of the first flags protest on 3 December 2012, the date when Belfast City Council voted to restrict the flying of the union flag to 18 designated days. There was a flag protest of one sort or another on every single day of 2013, but the large-scale protests had run out of momentum by the end of March, and the commemoration event at the end of November was an attempt to rally support for one last big demonstration against the City Council decision. It was predicted there would be between 5,000 and 10,000 people on the streets but in the end only 1,500 participated. The marching season and the setting up of the Twadell Peace Camp had served to broaden the agenda of discontent and, tellingly, the organisers of this event, the Loyalist Peaceful Protesters, did not mention the flags issue when they completed a Parades Commission form applying to stage the march. Instead the reasons they gave for their protest were “human rights”, “political policing” and “PSNI brutality”. What had begun as a protest on one specific issue had taken on a life of its own, and in retrospect the City Council decision can be seen as a lightning rod for a whole series of issues.

Some of these were given expression in a series of interviews conducted by Dr Jonny Byrne from the University of Ulster in a report prepared for the north Belfast conflict transformation group, Intercomm. The interviews were conducted with focus groups and involved two groups of female flag protestors, one group representative of the churches, and one group made up of young loyalists. The overall tone of the report is bleak and the key themes to emerge are to do with an amorphous sense of loss, and a more focused alienation from a peace process which they feel has advantaged Catholics and left them behind. The interviews show an acceptance that the protests may have failed to reverse the City Council decision, but the gain as they see it is that ‘they have created a platform which allows them to focus on the needs and concerns of the Loyalist community’ (Byrne, 2013:34).

One immediate concern for the loyalist community concerns the number of people brought through the criminal justice system as a result of the process. Records held by the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) show that up to 11 October a total of 360 files had been submitted by the PSNI. At the time this record was prepared seven cases were awaiting a decision by the PPS, but the 353 cases where the PPS had made a prosecutorial decision broke down as follows:

Chart 145: Prosecutions arising from flags dispute up to 11 October 2013

	Most Serious Decision Type				
	Indictable Pros	Summary Pros	Diversion	No Pros	**TOTAL**
Riot	32	30	9	10	**81**
Obstructing traffic in a public place	0	37	4	6	**47**
Taking part in an un-notified public procession	0	31	1	0	**32**
Disorderly behaviour	0	30	4	0	**34**
Assault on police	0	26	2	0	**28**
Obstruction of a road	0	19	3	2	**24**
Riotous behaviour	1	7	5	3	**16**
Obstructing lawful activity in a public place	0	8	0	2	**10**
Doing a provocative act	0	9	0	1	**10**
Obstructing a constable - road traffic order	0	7	0	0	**7**
Taking part in an unlawful public procession	0	6	1	1	**8**
Affray	0	3	0	2	**5**
Possessing offensive weapon in public place	0	6	0	0	**6**
Obstructing police	0	2	1	0	**3**
All other offences	4	30	3	5	**42**
TOTAL	**37**	**251**	**33**	**32**	**353**

Source: Public Prosecution Service

Summary offences usually tend to be run of the mill charges such as battery and motoring offences, and do not require a jury trial. Indictable offences are more serious and are tried in the Crown Court by a judge and with a jury. Diversion refers to those cases where it is decided that the offence is not sufficiently serious to merit a prosecution and instead the case is disposed of in one of three ways: informed warning, caution or youth conference.

Diversion was applied to 33 cases, and in another 32 cases the PPS decided on no prosecution. The other cases were heard in either the Crown Court or the Magistrates/Youth Courts. Of the 23 cases that went on to the Crown Court by 11 October all but one resulted in a conviction. In the same time period the Magistrates'/ Youth Courts recorded a conviction rate around 72%, with 162 out of 225 defendants convicted of at least one offence. As the table below shows, Belfast accounted the majority of cases: 35 out of the 37 indictable offences, and 186 out of the 251 summary offences.

Chart 147: Age breakdown of prosecutions

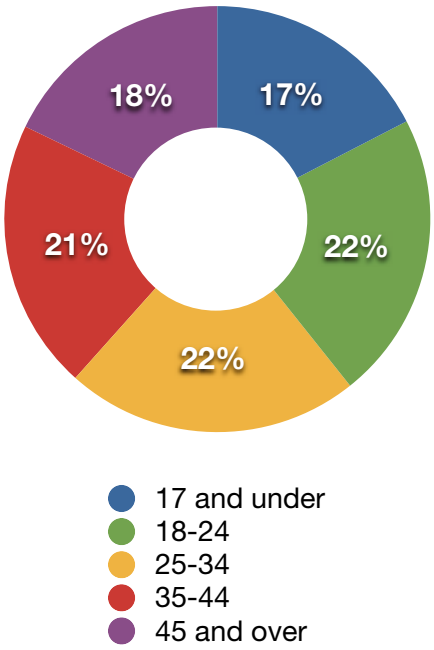
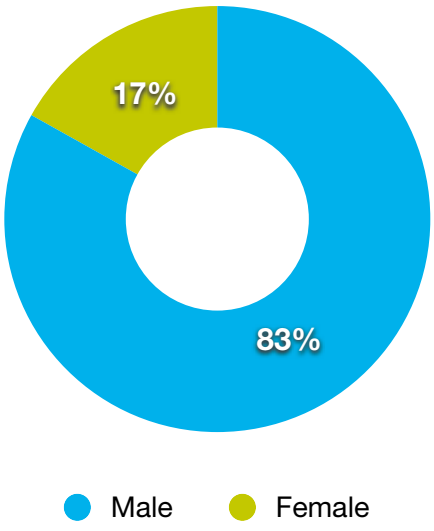


Chart 148: Gender breakdown of prosecutions



Source: PPS

Note: these figures are based on the 225 people charged with offences related to the flags protest up to 11 October 2013.

Chart 146: Where the prosecutions took place

	Most Serious Decision Type				
	Indictable Pros	Summary Pros	Diversion*	No Pros	TOTAL
BELFAST	35	186	22	25	268
LISBURN	2	31	7	4	44
BALLYMENA	0	9	2	1	12
FOYLE	0	10	2	0	12
NEWRY	0	2	0	0	2
OMAGH	0	12	0	2	14
CENTRAL (HQ)	0	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	37	251	33	32	353

The flags protest left two legal problems in its wake. While the original protest had been about official policy on the flying of flags, it helped to propel the unofficial flying of flags. The City Council decision resulted in one flag coming down and tens of thousands going up – on lampposts, private houses, and on any available object on arterial routes. The proliferation of flags was assisted by global production methods which allowed designs created on laptops in Belfast to be mass-produced at high speed and low cost in China and Taiwan. This phenomenon had in fact begun long before the City Council decision. In their 2000 study *'Public Displays of Flags and Emblems in Northern Ireland: Survey 2006-2009'* Bryan and Gillespie noted that the 'flag explosion' actually first manifested itself in Newtonabbey in 2000 when the local UFF put up 1,500 flags 'because of daily events and the need to promote Protestant culture generally'. Bryan and Gillespie comment: "In the past people would buy a flag as a comparatively expensive item and display it on their house, but take it in to be re-used on future occasions. Now large numbers of cheap flags are purchased and left to become tattered on lampposts. "This problem became particularly pronounced in September 2013 at the time 'Ulster Day' held to commemorate the signing of the Ulster Covenant. Hundreds of UVF flags festooned the route of the march, and while these appeared at face value to commemorate the UVF of 1914 many took them to glorify the present day paramilitary organisation. There were calls for the police to remove them, but the PSNI did not accept that it had responsibility for this task. What the controversy served to expose was that the Flags Protocol of 2005, properly known as the Joint Protocol in Relation to the Display of Flags in Public Space, was not sufficient to determine where responsibility lies in such situations. Signed by the PSNI, the Department for Social Development, the Department for Regional Development (Roads Service), the Department of the Environment (Planning Services), the NI Housing Executive and the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, the Protocol committed all signatories to collective responsibility for the removal of flags in public spaces.

Unfortunately, in a situation where everyone is responsible no one organisation is ever responsible – a painful truth exposed during the flags protest.

Another legal confusion that had been brought to light concerned responsibility for the regulation of street assemblies and the movement of people. At the height of the flags protest there were repeated calls for the Parades Commission to disallow the marches, particularly those which took loyalist protestors past the Catholic Short Strand on their way to the City Hall. Parades Commission Chairman Peter Osborne issued a statement on 26 February saying that these gatherings were not notified parades and that the Parades Commission had no authority to act in the case of an unnotified procession - it was, he said, a matter for the PSNI under the Public Processions Act, 1998. The Chief Constable thanked the Parades Commission for 'providing clarity' on this matter, but added "I remain concerned that the current Public Processions Act does not provide sufficient deterrence to those breaking the law, the required standard of proof to convict is high and the act would benefit from review."

A demonstration of the problems of securing convictions came in March 2014 when a court dismissed a case against the Young Conway Flute Band for breaching a Parades Commission ruling in August 2012. A month before that date the Shankill Road-based band had been filmed walking in circles outside the church on Donegall Street, playing the sectarian Famine Song. Following that controversial incident the Parades Commision ruled that it should not pass St Patrick's on the 'Black Saturday' event in August. Belfast Magistrates' Court was shown footage of the band then marching on the prohibited part of the route. Large signs had been erected by the police warning the band members that the march was illegal; the legal warning was issued in leaflets, and read through loudspeakers. However, District Judge Ken Nixon held that the prosecution failed to reach the standard of proof required. Acquitting all 17 accused, Judge Nixon said: "The standard of beyond reasonable doubt has to be established."

6.2 The marching season

The number of marches in Northern Ireland has been growing each year (see Chart, page 160) and in the calendar year was at its highest ever with a total of 4,637. By way of comparison the total for 2005 was 2,120 (Jarman,2000:182), less than half the number of recent years. Loyalist organisations were responsible for the largest number of marches: 2,687 or 61.8 per cent of the total. Nationalist parades made up just 3.2 per cent of the total, and the remainder were of a civic or cultural nature encompassing events such as the Lord Mayor's Parade or church parades. There have been a number of distinct trends within the loyalist category of parades. First, there has been an increase in the number of marches organised by ad hoc groups operating outside the traditional loyal institutions and marching on dates not in the traditional calendar. The last Annual Report of the Parades Commission before the flags dispute is for the year 2011/12. In that

"No unionist, no matter how loud they shout will prevent me or any other republican honouring our comrades who gave their lives in the struggle for Irish freedom and equality"

- Gerry Kelly

year the total organised by 'Other' loyalist organisations was 2 per cent. In the calendar year 2013 the number organised by 'Other' had risen to 24.2 per cent. At times the proliferation of new parades has become Pythonesque: for example, on 1 February 2014 there were two parades in Belfast city centre by loyalist organisations, one called the Belfast Concerned Residents Group and the other the Greater Belfast Concerned Residents Group. Along with this some loyalist groups, totally opposed to the authority of the Parades Commission, have gamed the regulations. The legislation requires an application form, known as an 11/1, to be submitted 28 days in advance of a parade and the Parades Commission can then make its determination. In February the Orange Order's Mervyn Gibson pointed out a loophole: if no application is submitted then the Parades Commission cannot intervene. In the end, the Orange Order did not adopt that tactic, but another trend developed during the year whereby organisers of parades did not identify themselves by name on the application forms, an omission which allows individuals to escape personal liability. It does not however absolve the organising body from corporate responsibility. For example, a march through Belfast city centre in January was organised by the Loyalist Peaceful Protestors, and the application was signed by the 'organising committee'. According to information released to the Irish News through a Freedom of Information request, there were 2 such occurrences in 2012 and 170 in 2013.

While republicans organised only a small number of marches during the year, a Sinn Fein commemoration parade in Castlederg turned out to be one of the most controversial, and one of the most far-reaching in its consequences. The Castlederg event was organised to commemorate the IRA dead of the area, and in particular two IRA volunteers who had been killed by their own bomb on the way into the town. Unionist politicians took strong offence, and Sinn Fein's Gerry Kelly responded with equal belligerence when he gave the oration "No unionist, no matter how loud they shout will prevent me or any other republican honouring our comrades who gave their lives in the struggle for Irish freedom and equality". Peter Robinson later cited this event as one of the reasons for pulling the plug on the Maze/Long Kesh project.

The Castlederg march took place on 11 August and followed on from a savage battle fought between loyalist protestors and the PSNI in Belfast's main shopping street, Royal Avenue, on 9 August. In response to a republican anti-internment march six loyalist organisations organised protests. The Parades Commission placed restrictions on four of these. The protests quickly turned violent. A total of 56 PSNI officers were injured on the night. Speaking to the BBC the next day, the DUP Deputy Lord Mayor Christopher Stafford said,

> "I think this is a disaster for Belfast and I think it's a disaster that's been created entirely by the Parades Commission."

In a hot-tempered summer the most significant riots were those that took place over four days in north Belfast. The Orange Order was allowed its traditional 12th July march past the Catholic

Ardoyne shops in the morning, but was prevented from returning this route in the evening. The riots did not help them succeed in their aim of marching that stretch of road, but in response a group of protestors remained in place up against the police barriers, and eventually set up what has become known as the Twadell Peace Camp, or alternatively, the Twadell Civil Rights Camp. This makeshift encampment is positioned at Twadell Avenue, right on the interface with the Catholic Ardoyne, and the gathering of bandsmen each evening, and the occasional appearance of masked-up figures, has required a heavy police presence.

Counting the costs

A PSNI statement on 18 November 2013 said that since December 2012 a total of 560 people have been charged or reported to prosecutors in connection with flags or parading. The financial costs have been enormous: policing the marching season in 2013 cost £18.5 m, compared to £4.1m the previous year (see Chart 149). Speaking to the House of Commons Select Committee Deputy Chief Constable Judith Gillespie said that between 1 July 2012 and 28 August 2013 approximately 682 police officers had been injured in public order situations. Of these, 51 required hospital treatment and 4 were detained for over 24 hours. Another set of figures were produced about opportunity costs. The Deputy Chief Constable produced an estimate that there had been 4,500 fewer arrests than in the same period in 2012.

Chart 149: The costs of policing the parades, April – August 2013

Total duty time				
Parades	Total District Policing (£s)	Total Depts (£s)	Mutual Aid (£s)	Total PSNI Costs (£s)
Loyalist	6,295,298	4,473,507	6,900,000	17,688,805
Republican	236,166	269,399		505,565
Other	88,467	218,822		307,289
Totals:	6,619,932	4,961,728	6,900,000	18,481,660

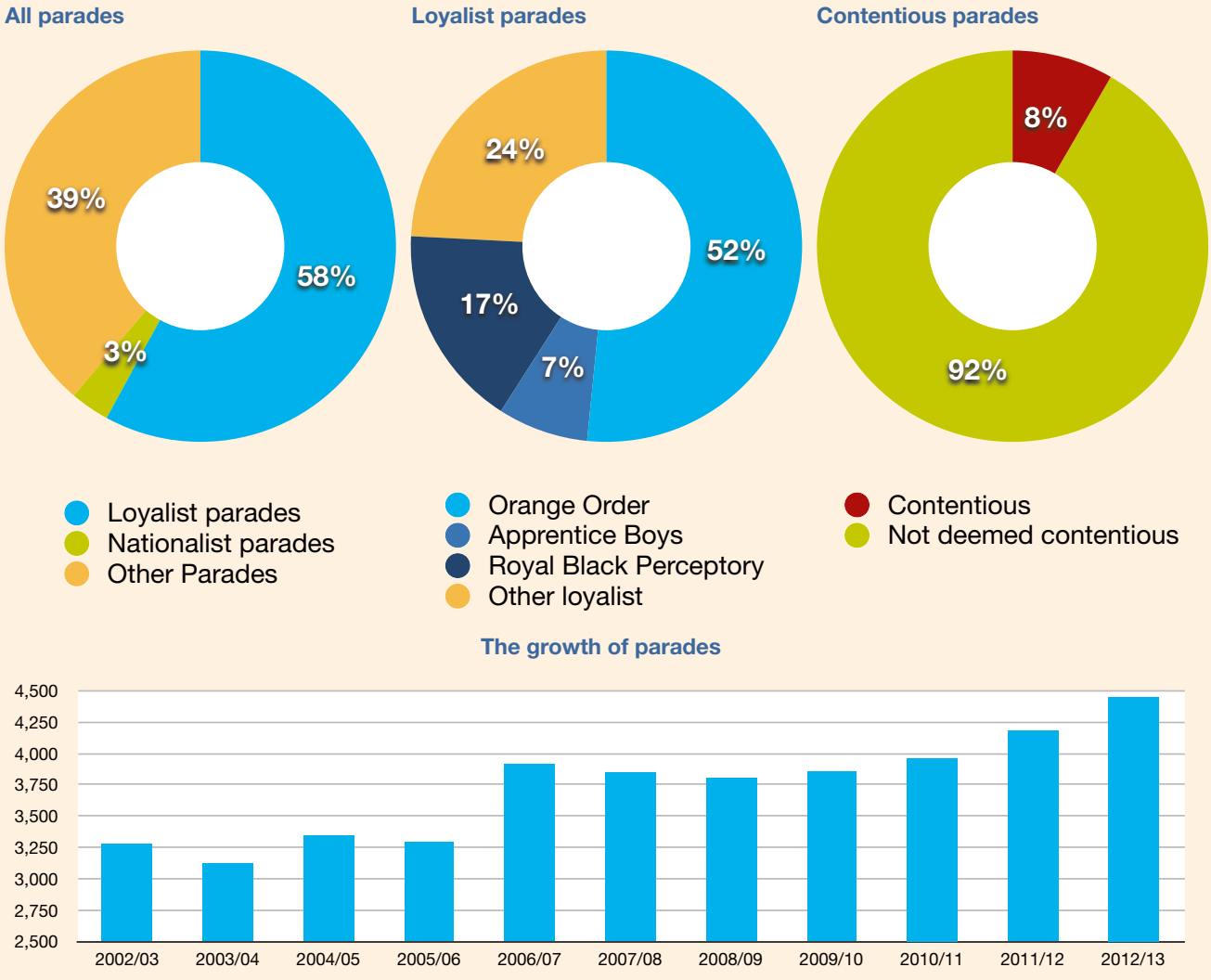
Total additional costs				
Parades	Total District Policing (£s)	Total Depts (£s)	Mutual Aid (£s)	Total PSNI Costs (£s)
Loyalist	2,981,642	1,052,571	N/A	4,034,213
Republican	133,091	73,956		207,047
Other	54,289	25,802		80,091
Totals:	3,169,022	1,152,329		4,321,351

Source: Business Services, PSNI

The two tables above reflect the two different ways that police costs can be calculated. The upper table, Total Duty Time (otherwise referred to as opportunity costs) are calculated on the basis of costs that would have been incurred anyway in the normal run of duties. The lower table, Additional Costs, calculates costs that arise from the public disturbances. These include

overtime pay, damage to vehicles, operational catering etc. Mutual Aid is the cost of officers brought in from other police forces to help maintain public order. The £6.9m cost had not been included in the planned PSNI budget for the year.

Marches and parades: the statistics



6.3 Culture wars

In 2001 the former New Statesman editor John Lloyd reflected on the dynamic of republican politics following Sinn Fein's acceptance of the UK constitutional framework in the Belfast Agreement: "If Northern Ireland could not be taken out of Britain, then Britishness could, as far as possible, be taken out of Northern Ireland" (cited in Mcauley, 2010). This may have been an astute analysis of republican ambitions at the time, but the way in which politics has evolved in the period since then has revealed a more complex reality, where unionists fight a 'culture war' on two fronts: one to curb the advance of Irish nationalism, and the other to keep a modern and liberalising Britain at bay.

The latter has proved to be a more important dynamic than had ever been considered possible at the time of the 1998 Agreement.

The unlikely alliance of Sinn Fein and the DUP has been driven to a large part by the concern inside the unionist community that this is the only way to preserve traditional moral values. In January 2013 Peter Robinson articulated this view, when he defended the NI Assembly against criticism from flags protestors: " Are they content to have Westminster impose same sex marriages and abortion on demand on our community? Such folly. Have they so quickly forgotten the decisions of direct rule in the past?" The distance between ethnic unionism and the type of Britishness abjured by Peter Robinson can be measured through a series of spats, each revealing a fundamental difference of world view – as, for example, when the Minister for Culture, Edwin Poots, provoked a furious reaction in Britain because of his attempts to have a creationist perspective included in the National Trust text at the Giant's Causeway. The year 2013 once again exposed the contrast in values between the sincerely held convictions of Ulster unionists and a secular British culture. The decision of Newtonabbey Council to ban the Reduced Shakespeare Company's production 'The Bible' provoked mocking headlines in the UK press, and Edwin Poots's various attempts to legislate from a conservative Christian base on issues such as abortion, blood transfusion and gay adoption have served to underline the distinction between traditional unionist values and a 21st century multicultural Britain. The flags protest served to sharpen these differences even further, the irony being that the more the protestors draped themselves with union flags to demonstrate their Britishness the more deeply un-British they appeared to the English. "There is nothing remotely British about what they are doing", Theresa Villiers said of the protestors in the House of Commons on 12 December 2012, "They are dishonouring and shaming the flag of our country". Her distaste was further evinced at the Tory party conference when she described the idea that British culture could be defended by loyalist rioters as "grotesque".

The Britishness that is perceived to be under attack on the other front from Irish nationalism is therefore of a particular kind. Increasingly it is described in terms of an ethnic identity which binds together the Protestant religion, the Orange tradition and political unionism. The acronym PUL has emerged to collapse the distinctions between Protestantism, unionism and loyalism, and to create a single homogenised identity. This ethnic solidarity is felt necessary by some as a protection from the encroachments of Irish nationalism. In 2013 this emerged as the key neuralgic point for loyalism.

The speeches given at the 12 July events are a reliable guide to unionist concerns at any one time and in July 2013 the emphasis in speech after speech was on 'the culture war'. Speaking at the Orange demonstration in Derry- Londonderry, the Orange Order Grand Master, Edward Stevenson, said Protestants were facing an almost daily onslaught on their British heritage and culture. "Republicans are engaging in a cultural war to erode all symbols of Britishness," he told those gathered at the field in Wilton Park. This has become the standard view across a wide spectrum of unionism. At the PUP conference party leader Billy Hutchinson

asserted the reality of the culture war and asked 'How do we deal with de-Britification?' The Twadell Peace Camp has become a rallying point for those who wish to defend Protestant culture, and its platform has been used by speakers from all the unionist political parties (other than NI21) and all the loyal orders.

The sense of besiegement is deep and widely-held, but what empirical evidence exists for there being a cultural war on unionism? The facts do not align themselves easily with such a proposition. Rather, there is evidence of a loyalist culture that is flourishing and being supported to flourish. For example:

- Loyalist marches have increased in number year on year and the year 2013 saw the highest number ever, 2,687. Only a small number of these, 388, were contested. All the others proceeded as the organisers wished.

- The Orange Order has received a grant of almost £900,000 from the European Union to help address the legacy of the Troubles in the Protestant community. Seven full-time staff have been appointed to work on the project which is being financed until December 2014.

- Over £2 million worth of assistance from the European Union's PEACE III Programme has been awarded to the Trustees of the Apprentice Boys of Derry to create a new visitors' centre and renovate the existing Apprentice Boys Memorial Hall on Society Street, Derry-Londonderry.

- A report from McClure Watters in 2013 showed there are now 660 marching bands, the highest total ever.

- Ulster-Scots received £2.7 million in funding last year.

Attacks on Orange halls are a more concrete form of attack on Protestant culture and cause considerable offence, particularly in places such as Derry-Londonderry where the Protestant community feels exposed because of its minority status. The number of attacks however has been going down from a peak of 72 in the 2009/10 to 27 in 2012/13, and the expression of the unionist concern on this issue suggest that the sense of a culture war is at the more abstract or symbolic level - the union flag at Belfast City Hall representing the paradigmatic case. When a zero sum logic is applied it is easier to see how the balance sheet can show a loss on the Protestant side. If recognition of the Irish language, for example, is seen as a de-recognition of British culture, then unionism could be seen to have lost a number of significant battles in a culture war, and from this perspective it would make it all the more imperative to block an Irish language act. This form of zero sum thinking was present as far back as 2008 when the Grand Orange Lodge accused the Equality Commission of being intent on removing Britishness, because it has appoved the use of the Irish language in local councils. In an open letter, the Orange Order claimed the Commission was engaged in a strategy to wipe 'the face of Britishness from Northern Ireland' while 'ignoring the use of the divisive symbols of Irishness' (Mcauley,2010: 273)

7. Dealing and not dealing with the past

7.1 The competing claims of truth and justice

If, as Clausewitz said, war is the continuation of politics by other means then Northern Ireland's post-conflict journey can be seen to be the reverse of that: politics as the conflict continued by other means. The war of the narratives has replaced the war of the weapons. Each side not only insists on the validity of its own narrative, but also insists on the lack of validity of any other narrative. In this force field attempts to deal with past events are highly charged as particular cases come to be seen as emblematic of one or other of the main narrative threads. A murder can be used as a stand-in for a general theory of collusion between loyalists and state forces, just as a different murder can be seen as evidence for a more general thesis on how republicans were guilty of wanton violence that has gone unpunished. These two main narratives – of a ruthless and criminal republican terrorism campaign on the one hand and, on the other, of a struggle for national rights that met with a violent state response – are not the only ones to be considered. There are a variety of others, including those of the British and Irish governments. The formal position of the British Government was given a surprise expression at a conference in Geneva in July 2013. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was taking evidence on the role of women in peace-building, when the British government representative gave a statement of clarification concerning the use of the term 'conflict'. The minute of the meeting reads as follows:

The war of the narratives has replaced the war of the weapons.

Ms. Reardon-Bond (United Kingdom), replying to questions regarding Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), said that the position of her Government, which had been endorsed by the First Minister of Northern Ireland and the Democratic Unionist Party but not by the Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland or Sinn Féin, was that the situation in Northern Ireland did not constitute an armed conflict as defined under international law.

There was no further clarification of how the events known colloquially as the Troubles are to be categorised, but what is clear is the logical impossibility of reconciling such diametrically opposed versions of the past as those currently held by the main protagonists.

This does not make Northern Ireland unique; on the contrary it leaves it with the same dilemma as all other post-conflict societies (if the term can be used without prejudice). The essential dilemma concerns the choice to be made between the demands for truth recovery and the demands of justice. The more that prosecutorial processes are employed the less likely the main actors are to be open about past events. A lessening of threat of legal consequences, on the other hand, can open up personal narratives and story-telling that helps fuller versions to emerge.

For some, the need for justice is paramount; for others the main quest is to discover the truth of what happened to their loved ones. In an article in the London Review of Books (7 November, 2013) Mahmood Mamdani makes the distinction between the Nuremberg trials and the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Nuremberg he sees as creating the template for a human rights approach, with criminal justice as the only possible response to the illegitimate use of violence. The SA Truth and Reconciliation Commission, on the other hand, 'replaced the logic of crime and punishment with that of crime and confession'. Trade-offs between justice and truth recovery are the standard feature of post-conflict societies, but in each case the mix is different. As Mamdani puts it, 'Human rights may be universal, but human wrongs are specific'.

In the past year Northern Ireland has seen various new approaches to the problem of dealing with the past, all of which can be placed at different points on the spectrum between justice and truth. The key interventions have been:

Appeals for an amnesty The case for the consideration of amnesties has been led by the Amnesties, Prosecution and the Public Interest project, a partnership between Queen's University, the University of Ulster and the Healing Through Remembering project. One of the leaders of the initiative, Professor Kieran McEvoy from Queen's, has argued that over time the hopes of prosecutorial justice have evaporated, with only 2 successful prosecutions resulting from 2,000 cases reviewed by the HET.

Historical Enquiries Team The réalité, it is argued, requires that families of victims are at least offered a process that leads to truth recovery. This idea moved from the seminar room to the headlines when it was taken up by the Attorney General, John Larkin. In November 2013, when the Haass talks were underway, Larkin issued a paper 'Stay on Prosecutions' which proposed that legislation should be enacted in London and Dublin to set a statute of limitations on murders prior to the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. He distinguished this from an amnesty: "Sometimes the fact of an amnesty can be that that which was a crime ceases to be a crime. That wouldn't be the position here, it would simply be that no criminal proceedings would be possible with respect to those offences". The distinction was not considered of any consequence by most commentators and, with the exception of NI21, the political parties all condemned any hint of amnesty – some with undisguised fury. There was some support: former Secretary of State Peter Hain endorsed the idea, as did the Retired Police Officers' Association and the former Chair of the Policing Board, Sir Desmond Rae.

Appeals for criminal justice Patrick Corrigan, Director of Amnesty International NI, issued an immediate condemnation of the Attorney-General's suggestion, calling it: "an utter betrayal of victims' fundamental right to access justice". In September Amnesty International had issued its own report 'Northern Ireland – Time to Deal with the Past'. Perhaps ironically in the light of its

name, Amnesty abjures the amnesty approach in any international setting and having investigated the situation in Northern Ireland it called for a comprehensive mechanism to be set up to review the conflict as a whole, establish the truth about outstanding human rights violations and determine responsibility. Only the impartial application of criminal justice, it argued, could restore faith in the law and help to end societal divisions. Several case studies were included in the report to illustrate the human cost that comes when criminal justice is set aside. Peter Heathwood, for example, was shot and left paralysed in an attack on his home by suspected loyalist gunmen in September 1979. His father, Herbert Heathwood died of a heart attack at the scene. “People say let’s forget the past and move on, it was 30 years ago. That’s a load of bunkum. In Northern Ireland the past is the present. If we don’t deal with the past, I don’t want my grandchildren to have to suffer this again” This perspective is widely shared by victims and survivors groups.

Historians not lawyers When Owen Patterson was Secretary of State he pushed for what he called the Salamanca approach, a reference to a document archive of the Franco era. The debacle over the Boston College tapes put paid to the idea of any oral history project, but a group of academics have gathered under the collective name of Archiv (a term borrowed from Kierkegaard) to propose ‘a commission of historical clarification’. Such a commission would be appointed by both governments and consist of British and Irish historians under the chairmanship of an independent and internationally recognised historian and provided with access to all official archives. Using the oft-quoted phrase of Michael Ignatieff, this project would limit the number of ‘permissible lies’ societies tell themselves about their past.

The spectrum of possibility allows for many other approaches, but a scoping paper prepared by Professor Kieran McEvoy and Dr Louise Mallinder for the Haass talks identified four positions along the truth/justice spectrum. The four can be briefly summarised as follows:

1. An amnesty for all security-related crimes before 1998

2. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission, broadly based on the South African model

3. A truth recovery process in which witnesses could be compelled to give evidence, but with immunity from prosecution

4. A truth recovery process which would also allow for prosecutorial actions and so witnesses would not be immune from prosecution.

7.2 The past isn't past yet

There are many complexities in the debates on dealing with the past, but the political atmosphere has not been conducive to reasoned debate. Every day the headlines have been full of killings, bombings and atrocities – some from ten, some from twenty and some from forty years ago. These irruptions are unsettling and each controversy serves to shift the locus of concern. The most explosive was the controversy over the On the Runs (OTRs) which blew up at the end of February 2014, and which led to the biggest crisis for the NI Assembly since the 2002 raid on the Sinn Fein offices. That had led to the suspension of the Assembly; this time, although Peter Robinson threatened to resign, a full-scale crisis was averted when David Cameron agreed to set up a judge-led review of the circumstances in which republicans who had been on the run were offered 'letters of comfort'. The details of this affair are set out below, but have to be understood in the context of a rolling series of crises and controversies over the year about the past. Chief among them over the past year have been:

The publication of Anne Cadwallader's book 'Lethal Allies'. Drawing mainly from files given by the HET to the families, Cadwallader's book uses police evidence to document collusion by the RUC and the UDR in the murder of nationalists in Tyrone and Armagh from 1972 to 1978. In total 120 people were killed and Cadwallader contends that 'enough was known, or should have been known, by sufficient people in places of authority, to prevent many of murders described' (Cadwallader, 2013:16)

The broadcast of a BBC Panorama programme into the activities of the Military Reconnaissance Force in the early 1970s. Former members of the unit told how they had 'hunted down and shot' unarmed men who they took to be IRA personnel. The Director of Public Prosecutions Barra McGrory formally requested that the PSNI investigate the claims "on the grounds that criminal offences may have been committed".

The decision to prosecute the soldiers involved in Bloody Sunday. In 2010, the long-awaited Saville enquiry, which had taken 12 years to complete and cost £191 million, concluded the killings had been "unjustified and unjustifiable". In October 2013 the PSNI announced they had opened a murder inquiry. The protections offered to witnesses in the Saville Inquiry mean that none of that testimony can be used so the PSNI now has to begin again, asking witnesses to provide police statements. Writing in the Daily Telegraph, Lord Dannatt, who was Chief of the General Staff from 2006 to 2009, said: "Today Northern Ireland is moving forward – surely eyes in the Province should be looking ahead and not in the rear view mirror?"

The Jean McConville case. In November 2013 a joint RTE/ BBC documentary was aired which used testimony from former IRA operatives to argue the case that Gerry Adams had been personally involved in the 1972 murder of the young mother from Divis Flats. Adams was under additional pressure from revelations

concerning his brother Liam Andrews, and how much he had known about the child abuse that Liam had perpetrated. In March 2014 former IRA commander Ivor Bell was charged in connection with her murder.

The De Silva Report The Blair government had promised a full public inquiry into the 1985 killing of Belfast solicitor Pat Finucane. Instead of this, David Cameron asked the barrister Desmond de Silva in 2011 to conduct a review of the case papers. In December 2012 De Silva concluded in his report that agents of the state had ' furthered and facilitated' the murder and that, in its aftermath 'there was a relentless attempt to defeat the ends of justice' While having one particular murder as the focus of his concern, De Silva painted an alarming picture of the degree of collusion between loyalist paramilitaries and state forces at that time, concluding that 85 per cent of UDA intelligence came from the security forces. However sensational these revelations were they did not satisfy those (including the Irish government) who still wished to see a full public inquiry. Pat Finucane's widow Geraldine dismissed the report as a 'whitewash'.

The report of the Smithwick Tribunal On 3 December 2013 the Tribunal, which had begun its investigations in 2006, published its report. The chair, retired judge Peter Smithwick, said that although he had not been able to find a 'smoking gun' the balance of evidence had convinced him that two RUC officers, Breen and Buchanan, had been set up for an IRA ambush on their way back from Dundalk Garda Station by information and that he was "satisfied that the evidence points to the fact that there was someone within the Garda station assisting the IRA". The report provoked some very hostile reactions. The Garda Commissioner, Martin Callinan, said he "accepted" the findings but did not go as far as saying he agreed with the findings or believed them. Three senior gardai took grave exception to the report and wrote a 30-page critique. Crucial to the outcome was late evidence given in private by PSNI Assistant Chief Constable Drew Harris. Commissioner Callinan's senior counsel described that Drew Harris' evidence to the tribunal as "nonsense on stilts". The Tribunal had also accepted written evidence from the IRA (later followed up by a face-to-face meeting), but Judge Smithwick's scepticism about the nature of that evidence raised further doubts about how republicans' code of omerta squares with any truth recovery process. In the end the much sought-after 'closure' was not much in evidence; instead old wounds were re-opened and different versions of events were left unreconciled.

7.3 A society on the run: the OTR controversy

The controversy over republican OTRs began on 25 February 2014 when a 62-year old Donegal man called John Downey was released from a private hearing at the Old Bailey. Downey's legal team had established that he was in possession of a letter assuring him he was not wanted by any police force in the UK. Judge Sweeney decided it would be an abuse of process for the trial to go ahead. In May 2013 Downey had been picked up by a police computer at Gatwick Airport, en route to Greece, and charged with the murder

of four soldiers in a bomb attack in London in 1982. The arrest had come as a surprise to Downey as he had travelled to the UK on four previous occasions since 2010. His confidence came from the fact that he believed an amnesty was in place for him and his fellow OTRs. The letter, which he produced in court, said: "There are no warrants in existence, nor are you wanted in Northern Ireland for arrest, questioning or charging by police. The Police Service of Northern Ireland are not aware of any interest in you by any other police force." Unfortunately a mistake had been made. When Mr Downey had received his letter in 2007 he was, in fact, still listed on the police national computer as wanted by the Metropolitan Police. The PSNI had been made aware of that, but had not informed Downey, and his letter was never withdrawn. Judge Sweeney felt that Downey had effectively been misled and ordered his release. The decision was bound to cause a certain amount of controversy, but it was the revelation in court that a total of 187 persons had received the same letter that fuelled an immediate crisis. Peter Robinson appeared on television, visibly angry, and threatened to resign unless an inquiry was set up immediately and all the letters rescinded. David Cameron expressed shock and agreed to set up a judge-led investigation – it wasn't all that Robinson had demanded, but it was sufficient for him to withdraw his resignation threat. Lady Justice Hallet was appointed to lead the independent review, but Northern Ireland Affairs Select Committee at Westminster decided the terms of reference were 'too narrow', and decided to launch its own separate inquiry with a wider remit so that all the background circumstances could be investigated. This Westminster review will also have the power to compel witnesses, including politicians and senior civil servants. An emergency debate took place in the Assembly on 28 February, with strong disagreements about who knew what and when they knew it and, more fundamentally, about the morality of the trading between Sinn Fein and the highest reaches of the British establishment.

The background facts are:

1998 The Good Friday Agreement included provision for the early release of prisoners. This was effected through the Northern Ireland Sentences Act (1998) and a total of 482 prisoners were released. The early releases created an anomaly in regard to those IRA personnel who had left the jurisdiction to avoid the criminal justice system. Their status was uncertain.

2000 A meeting involving Sinn Fein and British and Irish officials took place at the Irish embassy in London. Following this Tony Blair wrote to Gerry Adams to say if the details of the OTR cases were presented then they would be examined by the Attorney General, in consultation with the police and the PPS "with a view to giving a response within a month if at all possible". Senior legal figures were not happy with the approach. The Attorney General wrote to Northern Ireland Secretary Peter Mandelson saying he was "seriously concerned" that the scheme could severely undermine confidence in the criminal justice system. None of this was made public at the time.

2006 The then Secretary of State Peter Hain brought forward the controversial On the Runs bill, which had to be shelved because of widespread opposition. The SDLP argued that it would provide immunity not just to republicans, but also to loyalist killers and even the Bloody Sunday paratroopers. Sinn Fein withdrew its support and the bill was dropped. Following this Tony Blair wrote a confidential letter to Mr Adams telling him the government was working to put in place mechanisms to resolve outstanding On the Run cases, including "expediting the existing administrative procedures".

2007 Beginning in February 2007, new administrative procedures were put in place to deal with the OTRs. The PSNI set up Operation Rapid, the operational name for a review of people regarded as "wanted" in connection with terrorist-related offences committed before the Good Friday Agreement.

And so, when the crisis erupted in February 2014, both Sinn Fein and former British ministers challenged the unionist argument that they had been kept in the dark. Writing in the Daily Telegraph on 1 March Peter Hain said the unionists' claims not to have known about the scheme were 'risible'. This was also the view taken by Blair aide Jonathon Powell and a range of others involved in the behind-the-scenes negotiations in that period. The former PUP chair Plum Smith wrote in the Belfast Telegraph about how they were asked to submit a list of loyalist OTRs, but since there were none living outside the UK jurisdiction, no names were submitted. Journalist Brian Rowen was able to trace the policy back much further to the year 2001 when he pursued the case of Eibhlin Glenholmes , once known as 'the most wanted woman in Britain'. Rowen had received confirmation from the Crown Prosecution Service that they had reviewed her case and concluded "there was no longer sufficient evidence to afford a realistic prospect of conviction". This allowed her to live openly in Northern Ireland and in fact she was subsequently appointed to serve on the Victims and Survivors Forum in 2012. Further evidence of the 'administrative scheme' was turned up in the Eames-Bradley report and at meetings of the Policing Board in 2006 and 2010, when Assistant Chief Constable Drew Harris provided details of the situation at the time in response to a question from DUP representative Tom Buchanan.

BBC NI's Political Editor Mark Devenport offered an explanation of the disparity between unionist recollections and those of Sinn Fein and New Labour ministers. In a blog entitled 'Secret Deal Hidden in Plain Sight' (BBC website 24/2/14) he suggested that those who were aware of the arrangement could find evidence of it in public reports, while those who were unaware could not see the pattern in the evidence as presented. He also drew a parallel between this particular crisis and previous crises in the peace process. Facts can be known and lie dormant until some particular case serves to throw a particular light upon them. Devenport suggests the furore over Special Advisers is a case in point. Sinn Fein 'had appointed former IRA prisoners as ministerial aides going back to the year 2000, but the issue

"We have exchanged a dirty war for a dirty peace."

- Mark Durkan, MP

only captured widespread and persistent media attention when it was revealed that one of them had been jailed for her part in the murder of magistrate's daughter Mary Travers. In March 2007 Lady Sylvia Hermon, then an Ulster Unionist MP, asked Peter Hain in a written question 'What measures are the government considering to deal with on-the-runs?' Hain answered unequivocally that there were no measures in place. During the Downey court case Judge Sweeney attributed the phrase 'a secret process' to Gerry Adams as a way of describing the procedure that was brought into play, but while it was not widely publicised, neither was it completely hidden from view.

However the background to the OTR crisis is explained, the end effects have been damaging for all involved.

The OTRs, who might well have assumed that the standard letter represented an amnesty, have been reminded of its provisional nature – that is to say that it represented no more than a statement that, at the time of issue, there was insufficient evidence to bring a prosecution.

The lop-sided nature of the agreement, where IRA operatives were given letters of comfort while the security service personnel remained open to prosecution, created a sense of outrage. In the same week that the story broke, billboards went up in Derry-Londonderry asking for witnesses to come forward with evidence to help prosecute the Bloody Sunday soldiers for murder.

For loyalists, even those who had been aware of the scheme, the controversy reinforced their sense that the peace process had been guided by a wish to appease republicans – a sense that was reinforced on 12 March when a 75 year old man, not in possession of a 'letter of comfort', was charged with the UVF murders of 15 Catholics in McGurk's Bar in 1971. For Sinn Fein the situation presented real difficulties. The only people to be given the letters of comfort were those identified by the party. The list did not include other republicans, such those in the INLA or other fringe republican groups. One case that particularly rankles is that of Gerry McGeough who, as a former IRA man, might have been eligible for the same arrangements as the other 187. However, McGeough had split from Sinn Fein and had stood as an Independent Republican in the 2011 elections. When he was arrested for a pre-1998 offence he had no letter to protect him and he is currently completing the two year imprisonment period laid down in the Belfast Agreement.

The Department of Justice was by-passed in the arrangements even though from 2010 onwards it had devolved powers for policing and justice. The PSNI involved in the scheme were directed by the NI Office, an abrogation of power that both David Ford the Justice Minster and Peter Robinson have said to be in breach of the devolution arrangements.

As the debate in the Assembly on 28 February showed, this matter had damaged relations between the parties in a serious

way. Describing the exchanges in the Belfast News Letter columnist Alex Kane wrote: "There wasn't even a debate as such. What we had was the usual swaggering, snarling, finger-pointing and trench digging" (News Letter, 3/3/14). The real damage was to the peace process. From a wide range of perspectives there was a felling that the moral basis of the Good Friday Agreement had evaporated. The phrase most repeated came from a speech by Mark Durcan in the House of Commons when he said 'We have exchanged a dirty war for a dirty peace'.

8. Trying to broker a deal: the Haass-O'Sullivan talks

8.1 Context

The May 2013 document 'Together –Building a United Community' set to one side three deeply problematic issues: flags, parades, and dealing with the past. These were to be dealt with separately by an all-party working group under an independent chair. A personal invitation was extended by Peter Robinson and Martin McGuinness to the American diplomat, Richard Haass, to take on that role. Dr Haass was familiar with Northern Ireland. He had succeeded George Mitchell as US Special Envoy to Northern Ireland and had served from 2001 to 2003. For this he received the State Department's Distinguished Service Award. When he returned in September 2013 he was not acting as an official of the US government, but rather as a trusted individual in his own right. Acting as his assistant and co-chair was Meghan O'Sullivan, Harvard professor and former deputy national security adviser on Iraq and Afghanistan.

When he arrived in Belfast in September 2013 to begin the talks Richard Haass set out a timetable: September and October would be spent on information-gathering exercises and November and December on producing the report. That, he said, should provide 'ample time' for parties and groups to air their positions and come up with compromises. A passage from Senator George Mitchell's memoir of his time in Northern Ireland might have alerted him to a potential problem. In it Mitchell describes the problem of agreeing an agenda for the opening plenary of the multi-party talks " It should have taken a few days. Instead it took seven weeks." (Mitchell, 1999: 56). The talks ran right up to Christmas Eve without agreement. Haass and O'Sullivan flew home that night and returned to re-start the discussions on 28 December. On New Year's Eve, after a marathon all-night sitting, it was announced that it had not been possible to reach a comprehensive agreement. In lieu of this, Haass published the seventh and final draft to allow the public to judge the matter for themselves. The document represented an attempt to sketch the intersection area in the Venn diagram of unionist, nationalist and Alliance opinion. At an earlier stage in the process the Americans

Facts on the Haass/O'Sullivan talks:

- The process took nearly six months, including 33 days of meetings and negotiations.
- There were 600 submissions from interested groups and individuals.
- There were 100 meetings involving 500 people in total.
- In financial terms the total cost came to £243,474

had attempted to inject some new ideas into the negotiations, such as the suggestion that a new flag could be designed to express a shared Northern Irish identity, but the parties were not in the market for fresh thinking. The document that emerged did not therefore strive for any originality. Instead it was like a palimpsest where under these latest proposals could be discerned previous attempts at solutions: the report by Eames and Bradley on dealing with the past, the formulations of the St Andrew's Agreement on parades, and various other failed attempts to find compromise.

8.2 What Haass/O'Sullivan proposed

The full text of the final draft had as its formal title *'An Agreement amongst the Parties of the Northern Ireland Executive on Parades, Select Commemorations and Related Protests; Flags and Emblems; and Dealing with the Past'*. In addition to this 39-page document Haass issued a two page Summary Fact Sheet. The main provisions were:

Flags and Emblems

Haass says that 'This area proved the most difficult in which to reach consensus; there was no accord on policies surrounding the flying of flags on official buildings or the unofficial display of flags and emblems in public space'. The reason given is one that locates the problem in the fundamental nature of the divide:

'Without a larger consensus on the place of Britishness and Irishness – for which there must be a protected place alongside other identities, national or otherwise, represented in our society – we could not reach a common position on the flying of flags and the display of other emblems, which are in fact manifestations of those identities'.

In other words the symbolic problem cannot be solved because it is only part of the larger problem of conflicting national identities. The part cannot be treated separately from the whole. In this situation the only proposal to be put forward for dealing with flags and emblems is for a Commission on Identity, Culture, and Tradition. Such a commission would 'bring the public more into considered debate not just on flags and emblems but on Irish and other languages, including Ulster Scots; a Bill of Rights; gender; public holidays, possibly including a day of remembrance or reflection; and memorabilia and other items in public buildings.' After 18 months recommendations would be brought forward to the NI Executive – an ambitious timeframe, given that six months of intensive talks by a focused multi-party group had failed to resolve any of these issues.

Parades

The document recommends that responsibility for the management of parades be moved from the Parades Commission, which operates under the authority of the British Secretary of State, to the devolved institutions in Northern Ireland. Recognising that the vast majority of parades are non-contentious, it proposes two new bodies:

- The Office for Parades, Select Commemorations and Related Protests. This structure would have a 'strictly administrative' function, intended to facilitate the vast bulk of parades which do not require any form of adjudication, and to facilitate dialogue or mediation where there are disputes.

- The Authority for Public Events Adjudication would be the responsible body in situations where disputes cannot be resolved at local level. The Authority would be chaired by a senior legal figures appointed by the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission. In addition there would be six individual members 'broadly representative of the community in Northern Ireland'. These individuals would be appointed by the First Minister and deputy First Minister. The Authority would have the power to ban a parade but only if this was necessary to 'adequately safeguard community relations and public order'. Any decision of this sort would be taken by majority vote.

In structural terms these proposals represent quite a shake-up, but most commentators felt they would not affect 'facts on the ground' in places like Ardoyne or Rasharkin the next time a march met with opposition from residents. Of more import is the idea that the legislation should include a 'code of conduct' which would disallow paramilitary-style clothing and which would require 'the avoidance of threatening, provocative, abusive, sectarian, obscene or racist words or behaviour, with due regard to the right of everyone to be free from sectarian harassment.'

Contending with the Past

It had been thought this would prove the most difficult area in the multi-party talks; surprisingly, it turned out to be the area where most progress was made. At present there is a complex and disjointed set of arrangements. The document proposes a new set of arrangements that may be equally complex but are integrated within an overall architecture. The past is currently excavated through four different processes: government inquiries (north and south); Police Ombudsman inquiries, the Historical Enquiries Team, and coroners' inquests. In place of these Haass proposes the following:

- A Historical Investigations Unit (HIU)with prosecutorial powers to take over from the HET and the Police Ombudsman in dealing with cases from the past, including investigations currently underway and those not yet started.

Once attitudes were struck they quickly seemed to justify themselves

- An Independent Commission for Information Retrieval (ICIR), intended to secure information on individual cases. If the HIU is intended to deliver justice, this complementary structure is primarily intended to aid truth recovery. To this end a very limited and circumscribed set of protections would be available to those prepared to volunteer information. In pursuing the facts in individual cases the ICIR would also establish an internal unit 'to analyse patterns or themes'.

- An Archive which would contain 'conflict-related oral histories, documents, and other relevant materials from individuals from all backgrounds, from Northern Ireland and beyond, who wish to share their experiences connected with the conflict'.

- An Implementation and Reconciliation Group,(IRG), comprised of party nominees, to provide monitoring and oversight of all the other structures in order to ensure their effectiveness. It is suggested that the IRG should also constitute a Historical Timeline Group, 'comprised of suitably qualified academics' to develop an historical chronology of the conflict from 1968 to 1998.

8.3 Responses to the Haass/O'Sullivan proposals

In his introduction to the final draft document Richard Haass says, 'We are standing at a crossroads in Northern Ireland.' Whether consciously or not, he was re-working a famous speech made by Captain Terence O'Neill in December 1968, when the then Prime Minister warned that 'Ulster stands at a crossroads'. On this second occasion, as on the first, the political parties in Northern Ireland immediately set off on different branch roads. The nationalist parties, Sinn Fein and the SDLP, agreed to support the package as a workable set of compromises. The UUP rejected it outright. The DUP refused to endorse it, but Peter Robinson gave a more measured response, saying instead that 'the document was not balanced and needed more work'. Alliance, usually seen as the party of compromise, surprised some by withholding its endorsement, supporting only the proposals on dealing with the past. Once attitudes were struck they quickly seemed to justify themselves. "It says an awful lot if the two nationalist parties are jumping up and down ready to sign up to a deal but no unionist is prepared to go with it," said Northern Ireland's First Minister on 10 January. "That indicates that it wasn't a balanced final output."

Prior to a vote in the Assembly on the package Haass himself stepped up the pressure. He did not place the blame on the parties collectively, but made a distinction between those who had accepted the proposals and those who had not. Parties expecting an agreement to their liking, he said in a clear reference to the UUP, the DUP and Alliance, are 'being unrealistic in the extreme' (Belfast Telegraph, 9/1/14). On 13 January the matter was debated in the Assembly. Sinn Fein put down a motion calling for the immediate implementation of the proposals. There were three amendments. The first amendment from the UUP,

effectively rejecting the proposals, was defeated by 89 votes to 12. A DUP amendment sought to delete any reference to the Haass proposals being implemented and instead welcomed a meeting between party leaders on 14 January. This was defeated by 63 votes to 38. The Alliance motion urged support for the proposals on dealing with the past, and called for a "time-limited, independently-chaired mechanism to reach agreement on outstanding matters surrounding flags and parades". This fell on an oral vote. The original Sinn Fein motion in support of the Haass deal was supported by the SDLP, but fell with 49 in favour and 52 against.

The impasse seemed to deepen when Sinn Fein said it would not join with the DUP in any continued discussions of the issues. Either unionists accepted the package or they didn't, said Martin McGuinness, but Sinn Fein would not be party to any attempt to re-negotiate the content of the package. This position softened and a new deadline emerged. Party leaders began a weekly series of meetings with a view to making a statement before St Patrick's Day when Robinson and McGuinness would be received in the White House. American pressure did not just come from Haass but from the Obama administration. The Vice-President Joe Biden had phoned Peter Robinson on 28 December, first offering birthday greetings (it was Robinson's 65th) and then pressing him to reach a compromise. A cautious optimism began to surround the talks but at the end of February John Downey walked free from a London court and the controversy over the OTRs broke. Unionist leaders expressed fury that at no time during the Haass negotiations when they were discussing legacy issues had anyone made explicit the arrangements for republican OTRs. Speaking in the Assembly on 3 March Peter Robinson said it would not be possible for the party leaders to discuss that section of the Haass document dealing with the past until after the judge-led inquiry into the OTR affair delivers its report in May 2014. Mike Nesbitt announced the UUP was pulling out of the leaders' talks altogether, having previously declared 'Haas is dead in the water'.

The early optimism shown by Richard Haass in September had gone by New Year's Eve, when he had to announce the talks had concluded without agreement. When he returned to Belfast on 28 December he issued a challenge to the politicians to consider how these talks would fit within an historical process: "The Belfast or Good Friday Agreement ended the conflict, what we are trying to do is build the peace." (BBC, 28/12/13). Following the OTR controversy it was very clear that this attempt at peace-building had not succeeded. What remains the case, as Haass insisted on many occasions, is that if the multi-party talks failed to find agreement the politicians would certainly still have to return in the future to the same issues of flags, parades and dealing with the past, and that no deal would ever be possible without compromise.

'The Belfast or Good Friday Agreement ended the conflict, what we are trying to do is build peace.'

- Dr. Richard Haass

9. Party politics

The hardening of attitudes at the end of the Haass talks in part reflected the fact the politicians were already turning their faces towards elections. Politics over the next three years will be structured around a series of electoral campaigns:

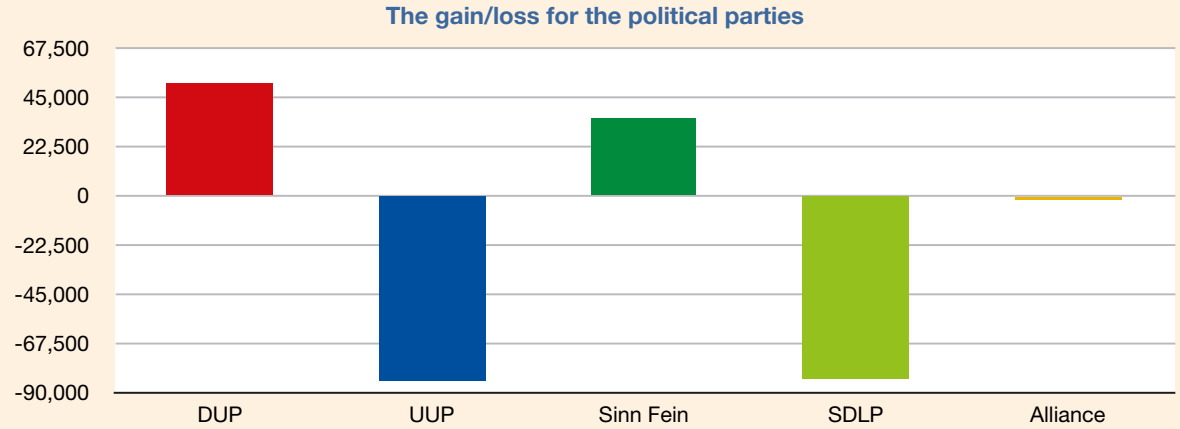
Date	Election
22 May 2014	NI District Council elections European Parliament elections (NI and Republic of Ireland) Local government elections in the Republic
7 May 2015	Westminster elections
5 May 2016	NI Assembly elections

In addition, the next elections to Dáil Éireann must take place before 8 April 2016.

Some very clear patterns can be seen in the period since the Good Friday Agreement. In the elections which followed the signing of the accord, the two parties most associated with its success, the SDLP and the UUP, were rewarded by the electorate. The SDLP emerged as the largest party, and the UUP as the second largest. Since then, the SDLP has lost 83,677 voters, and the UUP 85,694 – a total of 169,371 lost to the parties usually characterised as the moderate parties in 1998. The votes did not all transfer to the rival parties in each camp: between them the DUP and Sinn Fein only gained 87,677, just over half of the lost votes. Nor did the Alliance Party gain; in fact its vote in 2011 was

Chart 152

Long-term voting patterns: from the Good Friday Agreement to 2011					
Year	DUP	UUP	Sinn Fein	SDLP	Alliance
1998	146,989	172,225	142,858	177,963	52,636
2011	198,436	87,531	178,224	94,286	50,875
gain/loss	51,447	-84,694	35,366	- 83,677	-1,761

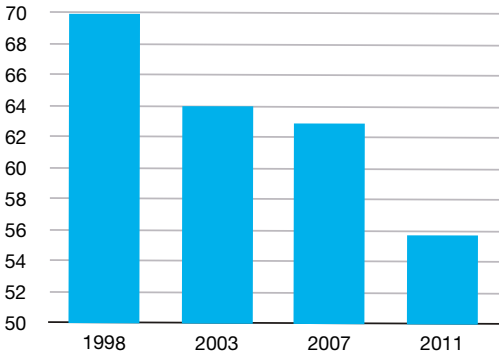


marginally lower than in 1998. The chief reason for the drop in the combined UUP/SDLP vote can be seen in the falling turnout in subsequent elections (see Chart 153). In the dynamic set in train by the Good Friday Agreement the centre did not hold. Instead there has been a disengagement with electoral politics among some sections of the population.

9.1 Who is not voting?

Opinion polls have given voice to a disillusionment with politicians. Commentators frequently assert that voters are simply switching off, and voter turnout at the last three Assembly elections would seem to support this view (see Chart 153).

Chart 153: The decline in voter turnout for the NI Assembly



The decline in 2001 could be attributed to disillusionment, but an alternative explanation is that at that point NI politics seemed relatively stable and the low turnout reflected a form of contentment. The evidence simply does not exist to prove either case. All we know is that almost 44% of the electorate chose not to vote. What can be demonstrated is that the low turnout is in keeping with both national and international trends. In 2011 the 55.7% turnout in NI was higher than that for the other devolved administrations: the turnout in Scotland was 50.4% and in Wales it was just 41.5%. In the UK the nadir of voter turnout was reached in November 2012 with the elections for Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), when the overall turnout was just 15%. That may have been simply because the electorate had not gained any real sense of the role of PCCs, but there is additional evidence of people turning away from the polls. The Hansard Society publishes an annual Audit of Political Engagement to measure the 'political pulse' of the nation. The latest report, issued in December 2013, shows 'a worrying decline in the public's propensity to vote'. Just 41% of the British public now say that in the event of an immediate general election they would be certain to vote – a decline of seven percentage points in a year and the lowest level since the Audit began ten years ago. Twenty percent of people say they are certain not to vote. For young people, the picture is even worse; just 12% are certain to vote, down from 30% two years ago.

This is a phenomenon sometimes described as voter apathy. However, an ICM poll commissioned by the Guardian shows that is anger rather than apathy that explains the disconnect between British people and electoral politics. Asked for the single word best describing "how or what you instinctively feel" about politics and politicians in general, 47% of respondents answered "angry", against 25% who said they were chiefly "bored". This anger is seen to have begun in 2009 with the expenses scandal exposed by the Daily Telegraph, but was given popular expression by the entertainer Russell Brand during a Newsnight interview in October 2013, when he called upon people not to vote. Northern Ireland therefore is not alone in experiencing a disillusionment with its politicians but the roots of this discontent may have a quite different origin. As Tolstoy observed, while all happy families resemble each other, each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.

9.2 The Northern Ireland electorate

In November 2012 the Electoral Commissioner for Northern Ireland, Anna Carragher, said that a survey or the electoral register had shown cause for concern. The survey showed that one in five entries was inaccurate. It also said that up to 400,000 people are registered at the wrong address. The last update of the register had been in 2006, and in August 2013 a new canvas was begun. The results of the canvas were announced in December 2013 and showed voter registration to be 88%, very close to the estimates for Great Britain. The total number of eligible voters is 1,241,079. That includes 47,196 new registrants, 1,000 people who at the time of the register were aged 17, and 26,040 people from ethnic backgrounds.

It is impossible to know how this electorate will cast its vote in any of the forthcoming elections, but a paper by Dr John Garry from Queen's University provides some clues by analysing voting behaviour in 2011 Assembly elections. No significant differences were discovered between male and female voting levels, but three key variables were identified:

Religion Catholics were found to be more likely to vote (65 per cent) than Protestants (55 per cent). A Belfast Telegraph poll conducted by the Lucid Talk polling agency also found a community differential, but a smaller one: 41 per cent of Protestants said they didn't vote, against 38 per cent of Catholics (Belfast Telegraph,17/9/13).

Age Young people were less inclined to vote than older people Just over half (51 per cent) of 18-22 year olds voted, compared to 66 per cent of those aged 65 or over. This is in line with national trends.

Class Garry's study found that working class people (the C2 and DE categories) were more likely to vote than those in the AB and C1 categories. This is directly contrary to the trend in Britain where working class votes have gone on a precipitous slide: "A striking social class divide has also expanded in recent decades. In the 1987 general election only a four-point gap in the turnout rate existed between the highest and the lowest income quintiles; by 2010 this grew to a staggering 23 percentage points" (The Bernard Crick Centre, http://www.crickcentre.org/?p=249).

All of these factors will play into the voting patterns over the next three years, and will impact in different ways on the main political cultures. It has frequently been observed that at election time in Northern Ireland there are two parallel electoral processes, one conducted inside the unionist community and one conducted inside the nationalist community, and that the two bear little relationship to each other. While the internal battles between the two dominant political traditions provide the main dynamic, other battles are fought: one by the Alliance Party to build the centre vote and, on the fringes, attempts by independents to assert alternative agendas.

9.3 Unionism

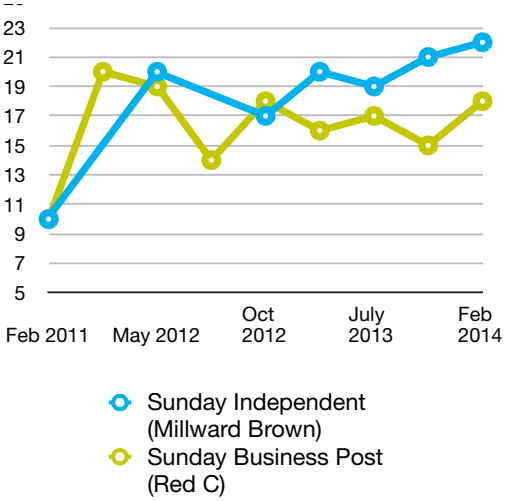
In the 1998 Assembly elections the combined unionist vote took the majority share, but only just, with 50.5 per cent of the total vote. In the 2011 Assembly elections the unionist share had dropped to 45.5 per cent. Population changes make it unlikely that unionism will ever have a simple majority again. Facing the next cycle of elections, unionism faces three challenges:

Demographic drift The majority of the population under 40 years of age is now Catholic. Over time this will translate into an electoral majority, and the decision to put the next Assembly election back to 2016 will not be to the benefit of the unionist parties. The voting patterns described above however suggest that younger people are less likely to vote than older people so the changes in voting share are likely to lag behind the population changes.

Getting the vote out The research by John Garry suggests that Protestants are less likely to vote than Catholics. In addition, they are less likely to be registered. When the electoral register was being updated a voter registration drive was attempted by the PUP and other loyalist groups. While some unionist wards have registration above the 88.3 per cent average, there are many that are lower - Shankill, the symbolic heartland of loyalism, for example, has only 81.4 per cent and Woodvale, home to the Twadell camp, has under 80 per cent. By contrast, nationalist areas often have registration above 90 per cent. The three highest rates are in Sinn Fein held constituencies – Newry and Armagh (92.7 per cent), West Tyrone (92.2 per cent) and Mid Ulster (92 per cent).

Fragmentation of the vote At the height of the flags protest the various shades of unionism came together to create the Unionist Forum, described by UUP leader Mike Nesbitt as " the most representative gathering of unionism for half a century". Working groups were set up to foster a new pan-unionist sense of purpose, but the initiative did not withstand the bumps in the road during the past year. The TUV quit over the Maze/Long Kesh issue and in February 2014 the leading proponent of closer cooperation between the unionist parties, Strangford MLA David McNarry, expressed his disappointment at "how easily extinguished" the Forum had been, and added: "To say I'm disappointed doesn't do justice to my feelings". A gesture towards a united electoral strategy came in March 2013 when Peter Robinson announced that the DUP would not run a second candidate in the European elections to allow a clear field for the UUP. Despite this, for all other elections the unionist electorate will have to choose from a crowded field, involving the DUP, UUP, PUP, TUV, UKIP, N121, and new fringe loyalist parties like the Protestant Coalition. These latter groupings are indicative of a class friction that emerged during the flags dispute with attacks on the unionist leadership as common on their social media sites as attacks on nationalism.

Chart 154: The rise of Sinn Feín in the Republic



In the 2011 election Sinn Feín gained 10 per cent of the vote. Three years on their share has more or less doubled in the polls.

9.4 Nationalism

The long-term dynamic within nationalism is easily described: Sinn Fein is a party on the way up and the SDLP is a party on the way down. That said, the decline in the SDLP vote has slowed pace. In the 2007 Assembly elections it captured 15.2 per cent of the vote and in 2011 it held on to 14.2 per cent. There is a core of nationalist support that has not transferred to Sinn Fein, but since the Good Friday Agreement the party has been in search of a project. The most recent party conference in November 2013 allowed the party to make its criticisms of Sinn Fein and the unionist parties, but the one big idea to emerge – to leave the Executive and go into opposition – exposed a split, with deputy leader Dolores Kelly and former leader Margaret Ritchie coming out in clear support of the idea while the leader Alastair McDonnell and the executive held back from such a decisive move.

Sinn Fein also had to contend with some serious challenges during the year. Its leader, Gerry Adams, was under sustained criticism from the media, north and south. The core issue was his truthfulness, raised in relation to the disappearance of Jean McConville, his knowledge of the child abuse inflicted by his brother Liam and his continued denial of ever having been in the IRA. None of these controversies damaged the party's standing in the polls. The elections in the south now give the party the hope of redeeming the promise contained in the polls, which for the past year have seen its support hover at around 20 per cent, double the vote it won in the 2011 elections. This would position it to become the second largest party in the south. Being in opposition in the south and in government in the north has created tensions. Legislating to introduce the Coalition's welfare reform package is not easily reconciled with its strong anti-austerity programme in the south – but the penalty of £5 million per month out of the NI block grant is also hard to defend. Sinn Fein's larger problem as an all-island party is that the more it succeeds in pushing the equality agenda, the less inclined northern Catholics feel to need to move outside the UK framework.

9.5 Alliance and others

The flags dispute and the follow-on street protests have acted to re-position the Alliance Party. The party had sought compromise, not confrontation, on the Belfast City Council decision on the flying of the union flag but was quickly identified as the enemy by an extreme wing of loyalism. The physical attacks that followed have earned the party a new respect among nationalists - an unintended consequence, but one that is likely to boost the tendency of Catholics to give Alliance a tactical vote in constituencies where nationalist candidates would not be able to take a seat. Opinion polls show the party building its support. A Belfast Telegraph poll published on 17th September 2013 put it at 10.2 per cent, just a few percentage points behind the Ulster Unionist Party. At its peak in the 1970s and early 1980s Alliance used to regularly command double figures, but after slumping

to 3.7 per cent in the 2003 Assembly elections it was seen as an achievement to reach 7.7 per cent in the 2011 Assembly elections. While the upward swing is very much in evidence the party still faces three main challenges. Firstly, while the physical attacks have abated over the year, they have not ceased. In November 2013 two petrol bombs were thrown at the East Belfast offices, in December the Lisburn offices were petrol-bombed. The physical harassment of members makes everyday constituency work difficult and will affect the party's ability to conduct door-to-door canvassing in the forthcoming elections. Secondly, there is now competition for the centre vote. While the communal designation system at Stormont divides the parties into nationalist, unionist and 'other', the arrival of a new moderate unionist party, NI21, means Alliance no longer has this middle-ground to itself. The third problem is perhaps the most difficult for the party, and that is to gain a presence outside Belfast, particularly in the nationalist areas west of the Bann. The same Belfast Telegraph poll showed that 45 per cent of the Alliance vote is concentrated in south and east Belfast.

9.6 Beyond the elections

Whatever the election outcomes for particular candidates or particular parties, it is widely assumed that the political landscape will remain unchanged. And in that landscape Churchill's 'dreary steeples' remain the most distinct features. There has been nothing in the events of the past year to suggest that the stand-offs between the parties are likely to yield to compromise, or to dilute 'the integrity of their quarrel'. Three years of political campaigning are likely to sharpen, rather than soften, existing differences. Twenty years after the ceasefires, the parties are still waging the conflict, and will continue to fight it in one election after the other. Might it continue this way for another twenty years? And if so, might softer attitudes eventually prevail? Richard Haass thinks not. In his submission to the American House Foreign Affairs Committee he stressed the 'urgency' of the situation. "The passage of time will not by itself heal Northern Ireland's society or make it more normal or bring it together. To the contrary, absent political progress, the passage of time will only create an environment in which social division intensifies, violence increases, investment is scared off, alienation grows, and the best and brightest leave to make their futures elsewhere." In short, the status quo is not an option.

Much political capital has been squandered. Richard Haass and Meghan O'Sullivan were not the only Americans to invest time in the Northern Ireland situation this year. President Barack Obama, Vice-President Joe Biden and former President Bill Clinton all tried to lend their support. The G8 leaders agreed to hold their summit in Fermanagh as an encouragement to the peace process. On top of that, the European Union, which has contributed an ocean of funding to assist peace and reconciliation, has renewed its commitment through a Peace IV programme. This level of goodwill will not be available for ever.

The starting point for the devolved administration in 2007 was Ian Paisley's suggestion to Martin McGuinness that the people of Northern Ireland ought to be perfectly capable of running their own affairs. And, with very few diplomats likely to want to pick up where Haass and O'Sullivan left off, it will be for the people of Northern Ireland and their politicians to demonstrate the will to turn that hope into a reality.

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Glossary

ACNI	Arts Council of Northern Ireland
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
ASHE	Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
BCC	Belfast City Council
CIRA	Continuity IRA
CJI	Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland
CPI	Community Prioritisation Index
CSEW	Crime Survey England and Wales
DENI	Department of Education Northern Ireland
DETI	Department of Trade & Enterprise
DEL	Department of Employment and Learning
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
DSD	Department for Social Development
DOJ	Department of Justice
ECNI	Equality Commission of Northern Ireland
FRS	Family Resources Survey
FSME	Free School Meals Entitlement
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HBAI	Houses below Average Income
HET	Historical Enquiries Team
ICR	Institute of Conflict Research
IICD	Independent International Commission on Decommissioning
IIS	Institute of Irish Studies
IMC	Independent Monitoring Commission
JRF	Joseph Rowntree Foundation
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LGBT	Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender

LVF	Loyalist Volunteer Force
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
NIACRO	Northern Ireland Association for the Care & Resettlement of Offenders
NEET	Not in Employment Education or Training
NIAO	Northern Ireland Audit Office
NICEM	Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
NICS	Northern Ireland Crime Survey
NICTS	Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
NILTS	Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey
NIPB	Northern Ireland Policing Board
NIPS	Northern Ireland Prison Service
NIO	Northern Ireland Office
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
OFMDFM	Office of the First and Deputy First Minister
OPONI	Office of the Police Ombudsman Northern Ireland
ONH	Óglaigh na hÉireann
ONS	Office of National Statistics
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PPS	Public Prosecution Service
PWC	PriceWaterhouseCoopers
RIRA	Real IRA
UDA	Ulster Defence Association
UFF	Ulster Freedom Fighters
UVF	Ulster Volunteer Force

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