FACTS, FEARS & FEELINGS PROJECT

Sectarianism and Segregation in Urban Northern Ireland: Northern Irish Youth Post-Agreement

A report on the Facts, Fears and Feelings Project at the School of History and Anthropology, Queen's University Belfast

Dr. Rosellen Roche, Head of Project

Sectarianism and Segregation in Urban Northern Ireland   Roche

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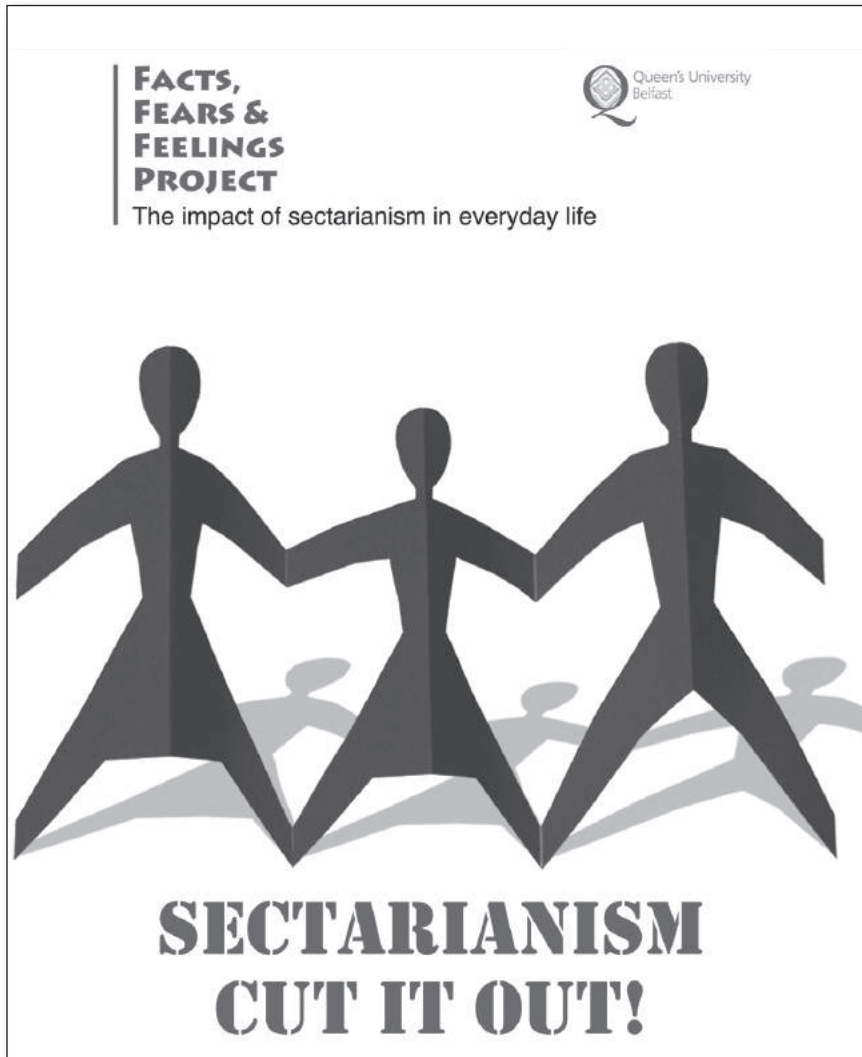
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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Sectarianism and Segregation in Urban Northern Ireland: Northern Irish Youth Post-Agreement

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Queen's University Belfast

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June 2008
Anti-Sectarian
Poster Campaign

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Sometimes, ye know it like, that's a fact like. Like, around certain times of the year or whatever.

But then there is other times when ye feel like someone knows you're a Catholic or whatever. They just look at ye on the street or whatever. When you're shoppin' or whatever and they just know.

Maybe, they (Protestants) feel that way, too. I don't know. But ye know it like. Ye know when somebody just hates ye.

Male,18, Catholic, Derry/Londonderry
Toward Reconciliation and Inclusion Project 2003-2005

Facts, Fears and Feelings:
a forward

Genesis

In 2003 the *Toward Reconciliation and Inclusion Project*, better known as TRIPROJECT, was launched in Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland. This project, funded in the main by the European Union Programme for Peace and Reconciliation administered through the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, was the first project of its kind to involve young school leavers aged 15 to 25, both Catholic and Protestant, both male and female, in the creation of a qualitative and quantitative survey designed just for them. The project was a landmark in that many disaffected young people helped to form not only group discussion questions, but assisted in creating the questionnaire themselves. With over 900 young people involved throughout the life of the project, TRIPROJECT results were exciting and original. The results and reports coming from the project in turn have helped to shed light on some of the most important facets of a young person's life in an urban Northern Irish city and provide much food for thought for government authorities in a Northern Ireland coming from conflict. Issues explored and queried throughout the scope of the project included questions on schooling and leaving school, pastimes, substance use, street violence, sectarian threat and violence, as well as attitudes towards police and paramilitaries across the Derry City Council District areas and across Northern Ireland as a whole.

The quotation that opens this report, came from one of hundreds of young people who discussed with me their personal facts, fears and feelings regarding living in Northern Ireland and issues relating to sectarianism during TRIPROJECT. Both aspects of threat and sectarianism, as well as physical attacks related to sectarianism were demonstrated to be rife in young people's lives. Indeed, our results indicated that 92% of respondents felt there was 'a lot' or 'some' sectarianism in the city (Roche 2005:264).

More revealing and most important, young people made significant distinctions between what can be considered perceived and actual sectarian threat and violence. For example, young people involved in the selection of answer choices for the questionnaire created questions around the topics of perceived threat and violence, incorporating answer choices that included aspects of subjectivity, such as 'it was just a feeling that I had' or integrating parts of hostile interchanges, such as 'looks and glances' that were often harder to describe or verbalise when discussing events that occur (see for example, Roche 2005a:263-265). When respondents were asked if they had personally experienced anything sectarian, 66% of the TRIPROJECT sample of 486 respondents stated that they had. Although 26% experienced some sort of actual physical contact, 39% felt they had experienced this through 'threatening words' and 26% felt they had experienced sectarianism through 'threat' of physical contact. Making the experience more subjective, 32% stated that they had experienced
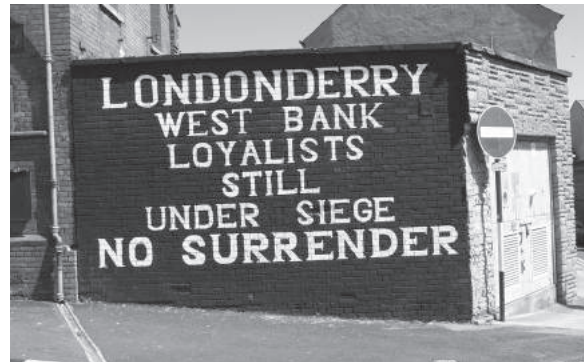
something sectarian through 'threatening looks' and 17% stated that they had experienced something sectarian by defining it as 'just a feeling that I had'.

Regarding violence, subjective or personalised interpretive responses were also apparent. Regarding violence and threat of violence, while 47% of the sample had engaged in physical contact such as fist fighting, more young people were involved in incidents that had involved 'feelings' or 'words'. Indeed, 57% of young people had been involved in incidents using threatening words and 42% had been involved in incidents involving threatening looks and glances (Roche 2005:244-265).

While some initial work has been undertaken to theorise sectarianism in the unique Northern Irish context (Brewer 1992 and McVeigh 1995), tacit levels of sectarianism remain ambiguous and an under-researched topic compared to areas such as, for example, racism. TRIPROJECT was the first project of its kind to begin to query such complicated ideas of 'feelings' or perceptions regarding stress and threat, and to begin to get at the tacit levels of understanding of sectarianism among the most disaffected young people growing up in Northern Ireland. Importantly, rather than focusing on the community divide in Northern Ireland, this work helped us to see parallels among young people concerning the cues to sectarian perception and contact in the Northern Irish environment, and to begin to link these aspects together with the help of the young people themselves.

The *Facts, Fears and Feelings Project*: *An Exploration of the Impact of Sectarianism in Everyday Life in Northern Ireland* stems from this initial project. Launched in January 2006, *Facts, Fears and Feelings* aimed

to be an exclusively qualitative investigation regarding the impact of sectarianism in everyday practicalities and feelings. The project sought to be ethnographic in its aim, conducting fieldwork through open-ended conversations on a series of topical areas with over 100 young people within a generational span of 16 to 35.

Putting it simply, presented in this document are the results of 18 months of research and some discoveries and recommendations based on this research. More importantly, contained in this document is an attempt to encapsulate and highlight the thoughts, issues, trials and stories of everyday, genuine lives. The voices presented here come from areas as geographically varied as Ardoyne, Whiterock, Shankill, Falls, Ballymacarret, Creggan, Galliagh, Fountain, Caw, Clooney, Top of the Hill and Irish Street, and provide a generational insight into the very personal meanings of sectarianism, the personal influences of sectarianism, the personal impact of sectarianism and the personal thoughts on the eradication of sectarianism in Northern Ireland. While the document may not contain a 'cure' for Northern Ireland's continuing ill, it does illustrate both how nebulous and personalised sectarianism can be, how sectarianism can seep through generations, and how sectarianism can be shaken to a loose footing when conscious efforts to eradicate it are made. This report demonstrates how young people, and indeed some of Northern Ireland's most at-risk young people, discuss the impact of sectarianism which permeates through the generations, as well as illustrates how – with intermingling and sharing – opinions and attitudes can be changed for the better for the future.

It is each of these very aspects of personal knowledge of the facts, fears and feelings in their lives – these three personal categories expressed by the young people – that are so striking. 'Facts' or the subjective understanding of what actually makes a particular person's world and happens in that world; 'Fears' or the psychological and physical worries and experiences that contribute to the everyday understandings that the young people have; and finally, 'Feelings' or the perceptions of how individuals and community members 'feel' about each other, as well as what young people think about and 'know' about their Northern Ireland. These facts, fears and feelings are what are presented here.

Dr. Rosellen Roche
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School of History and Anthropology
Queen's University Belfast

Thanks

The *Facts, Fears and Feelings Project* has a large number of people to thank for making this project possible, particularly the dedicated staff of the many youth training organisations and the young people who whole heartily participated and gave of their time and their effort in every aspect to this project.

Belfast Activity Centre	**John's Street Hostel**
Cathedral Youth Club	**Job Assist**
Caw Community Centre	**Lettershandoney Community Centre**
City of Derry Boating Club	**Lincoln Court Community Centre**
Derry Bytes	**Lower Ormeau Residents Group**
Derry Youth and Community Workshop	**New Buildings Community Centre**
Divert	**North City Training**
East Belfast Area Youth Project	**Reach Across**
Forum for Substance and Alcohol Abuse	**Shantallow Community Centre**
Fountain Community Group	**Spirit of Enniskillen Programme**
Foyle Youth Forum	**Springboard**
Greater Shankill Partnership	**Springvale Learning**
Greater Shankill Job Assist Centres	**Swann Training Services Limited**
Irish Street Community Centre	**Wider Horizons**
Impact Training Belfast	
Jefferson Court	

Training for their continued support of the project in Belfast. Both these organisations supported group activities which collaboratively joined young people for days out from both Derry/Londonderry and Belfast.

My gratitude to the members of the voluntary sector and academic board who helped to oversee and advise the project.

- **Dr. Dominic Bryan, Director, The Institute of Irish Studies at Queen's University Belfast,**

- **Mr. Terry Curran, University of Ulster,**

- **Mr. Declan Doherty, CEO, Derry Youth and Community Workshop,**

- **Professor Hastings Donnan, Anthropological Studies, Queen's University Belfast,**

- **Professor David Hayton, Head of School, School of History and Anthropology, Queen's University Belfast, and,**

- **Professor Gillian Robinson, Head of ARK and INCORE, University of Ulster.**

Importantly, *Facts, Fears and Feelings* sought to include the opportunity for young people to learn from young people. An aspect of 'student facilitation' was built into the project. Six student facilitators were involved in the project over its lifespan. These young people accompanied me to some of the interviews, and on occasion tried their hand at interviewing themselves.

Some transcribed, while others helped with analysing data after interviews were completed. All the students involved in this project showed promise and initiative. Some completed BA degrees while participating in the project, while others found experience to take them to the voluntary sectors or onto further education. My heartfelt thanks and my congratulations to them on their fine contributions to this project.

- **Ms. Sally-Ann Atkinson**
- **Ms. Roscha Cronin**
- **Ms. Jessica Golden**
- **Mr. Colm McCarroll**
- **Ms. Noomi Mozard**
- **Mr. Enda Young**

I would like to thank the Belfast Activity Centre and its staff for hosting activity days for many of the young people.

Thanks to all those in the Anthropology Office and the Publicity Office at Queen's University Belfast, CDS/Blackstaff Publications and the Student's Union at Queen's University for their time and effort in organising the publication and helping with the anti-sectarian campaign attached to this project. A thanks to the media sources used as illustrations in the text: *The Andersonstown News*, *Bebo* at *www.bebo.com*, *The Derry Journal* and the *Derry News*.

All these organisations and people were instrumental in the production of this report and I trust that this research will stand as testimony to all their efforts. Equally, it is my sincere hope that this work will aid the young people of the future in both Belfast and Derry/Londonderry, as well as the rest of Northern Ireland.

Chapter 1

Introduction: the project and the participants

Introduction

Peter Hain's forward in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister's First Triennial Action Plan 2006-2009 states clearly (2006:4):

> *Over the years Northern Ireland has gradually come to accept as normal, a society where most people live separately and where our children are educated separately … We need to change this geometry of relationships….*

Struggling to move forward, it is apparent that Northern Ireland is still plagued by pervading division and sectarianism. Despite this, little has been done to attempt to map the factors contributing to sectarianism as these indicators are felt, seen and experienced by everyday, working class people. *The Facts Fears and Feelings Project*, beginning in January 2006, attempted to try to probe some of these everyday and tacit factors of sectarianism facing some of Northern Ireland's most at-risk and segregated communities. The main aim of this project was to explore segregation and sectarianism through the experiences and words of young people and young adults aged 16 to 35 living in deprived and segregated communities in Northern Ireland's two largest cities, Belfast and Derry/Londonderry.

The project sought to focus on young school leavers, those who left school early, the young unemployed, and those in skilled and semi-skilled training programmes in an effort to give voice to this often ignored and hard to access contingent.

This introduction will briefly outline the aims of the 18 month *Facts, Fears and Feeling Project* and how the project sought to drill into some of the many aspects of life affecting our 'post-conflict' Northern Ireland. The project is outlined in light of some attributes of Northern Ireland that we continue to face. Methodology and research are discussed, as are several important features of the two cities included in this study. Time then is spent to discuss the circumstances of those out of school in Northern Ireland with limited qualifications. The introduction ends with a brief description of the report that follows.

Aspects of a 'post-conflict' Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is youthful. Northern Ireland has the youngest population of any region in the United Kingdom. 27% are aged under 18 years (Save the Children 2006). The average age of those living in the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area is approximately 37 years old, while the average age of those living in the Derry/Londonderry Urban Area is 33 years old. The Northern Irish average is 36 years old (NISRA 2005).

Northern Ireland schooling is divided and segregated. According to statistics from the 2003-2004 school census exercises, approximately 46% of students in Northern Ireland attend Catholic maintained schools, approximately 43% of students attend state controlled schools and only

5% attend integrated schools (DENI 2006). Beyond these figures regarding segregation due to religious affiliation, pupils are also commonly divided along gender, academic ability and social class (Russel 2006, Tomlinson and Benefield 2005).

Northern Irish housing is divided and segregated. Just under 95% of Northern Irish housing estates are segregated on ethnoreligious and ethnonationalist grounds (NIHE 2006).   Mixed communities, most commonly comprised of the middle and upper classes, continue to illustrate another kind of division along lines of social class.

Northern Ireland is sectarian. A review of recent survey data from 2000 to 2005 on sectarian harassment and violence estimates that more than one in four young people have experienced sectarian verbal abuse, young people are more likely to experience sectarian harassment and violence than older age groups, and more than one in two young people do not feel safe when in areas that have a majority representation of the other community (Jarman 2005:34). A submission to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion from the British Irish Rights Watch (BIRW) notes that from 1 April 2005 to 31 December 2005, 1,240 sectarian crimes were reported. BIRW, however, feels these estimates are dramatically under-reported. They believe that almost half of crimes committed in Northern Ireland are related to sectarianism (BIRW, June 2007).

Northern Ireland has significant amounts of poverty, social exclusion and deprivation. Northern Ireland is one of the poorest areas of the European Union with more than a third of all children living in poverty (Save the Children 2006). Many young people are socially excluded, having left

school early with few or no qualifications, and are socially marginalised within their areas (Hargie, Dickson and O'Donnell all 2006, Roche all 2005, Burchardt et al. 2002, McVicar 2000 and Dowling 1999). Northern Ireland, and Northern Irish urban areas in particular, suffer from high amounts of economic deprivation. Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures (2005) show that out of the 100 most deprived wards across Northern Ireland, 56 of these are in Belfast, while 19 are located in Derry/ Londonderry.

Northern Ireland urban life is divided. Northern Ireland maintains 40 'peace lines' or 'peace walls' stretching over 13 miles, dividing communities still experiencing violence and hostilities. Furthermore, peace lines have increased over the period of ongoing peacemaking with the number almost doubling between 1995 and 2005 (*New Statesman* 28.11.05). One, most recently erected in 2008, runs past one of Northern Ireland's few integrated schools in Belfast.

For the *Facts, Fears and Feelings Project*, ethnographically exploring the realities of many of these indicators through the words and lives of the young people themselves was imperative. While community members understand or 'just know' nuances and feelings related to segregation and sectarianism, mapping them is far more complicated. The *Facts, Fears and Feelings Project* sought to help reveal some of these nuances.

The Facts, Fears and Feelings Project

Facts, Fears and Feelings aimed to be a much needed ethnographic and 'person-focused' exploration of some of the most mundane and tacit factors that influence the upcoming generations living in some of the most socially deprived areas in urban Northern Ireland. In this way, the project hoped to tap into both the obvious and not-so-obvious facets of segregation and sectarianism facing young people living in economically deprived and enclaved areas today.

As discussed in the Forward of this report, moving on from initial statistics highlighted from an investigation in the Derry/Londonderry areas from April 2003-December 2005 during the *Toward Reconciliation and Inclusion Project*, TRIPROJECT, (Roche 2005a), the *Facts, Fears and Feelings Project* looked beyond numerical indicators and investigated, through semi-structured, open-ended individual interviews and discussion groups, some of the most prominent sectarian facts, fears and feelings in everyday life. Covering aspects of self, family, friendship and community that influence decision making among the current youth population in both Catholic and Protestant areas in both Belfast and Derry/Londonderry, the project aimed to shed light on some of the continuing barriers to integration and a shared future for Northern Ireland.

Most importantly, the project sought to be and proved to be two fold. Ethnographic research was pursued with young participants through substantial time spent with them on one to one interviews, group interview sessions, cross-community excursions, as well as impromptu creative sessions. The fruits of those efforts are presented here. However, in addition to gathering research with young people, the participants also

helped to develop a novel anti-sectarian campaign for Northern Ireland. This promotion took the form of a distribution of over 3000 anti-sectarian campaign badge buttons, multiple posters, and over 50 advertisements on cross-town buses in Northern Ireland's two largest cities throughout the month of June 2008. The agreed sentiment: 'Cut It Out! Stand Together Against Sectarianism' was set aloft throughout urban areas in Northern Ireland in hope that we might make the broader community aware of our efforts, and to remind us all of the work ahead. Envisaged and executed by the young people, the campaign helped to give our efforts a tangible and lasting result for Northern Ireland beyond just the words in this initial report.

Methodological approach and sample

While many scholars have utilised the classroom as an arena to access young people and children (Ewart and Schubotz 2004, McEvoy 2002), the *Facts, Fears and Feelings Project* followed in the tradition of other research projects with harder to access populations in Northern Ireland, such as pre-schoolers and out-of-school teenagers (Connolly 2002, Roche all 2005 and 2003). In this way, the project employed the same methods that were successfully used by the author and Head of Project in two previous research projects with school leavers and the young unemployed (1999-2002 [Roche 2003] and 2003-2005 [Roche 2005a, 2005b and 2006).

This research was accomplished by approaching young people through a myriad of bodies that serve those most at risk and marginalised in both Belfast and Derry/Londonderry areas. These included organisations that

sponsored skilled and semi-skilled training for those who have left school at or before age 16. These programmes included: Jobskills/Training for Success (TfS) programmes (ages 16-18), New Deal programmes (ages 18-24) and New Deal 25+ (ages 25 and over). Equally, Job Assist programmes, providing mentoring for people furthest from the workplace, were contacted and some participants from these programmes became participants on our project. Other groups, such as those providing team building for young people, including the Belfast Activity Centre, and interactive cross-community programmes such as Wider Horizons, were also involved. Young participants also came from various youth agencies, such as the Foyer Network, and Leaving and Aftercare programmes. A variety of community and youth groups across the Belfast and Derry/ Londonderry areas also had young people volunteer to be part of the project.

Individual, group and cross-community meetings followed in the ethnographic tradition of working with young people in their own areas for a significant period of time. For purposes of the project this tradition was tailored to meet the 18 month period of the project. After pilot discussions with 7 small groups of young people (none exceeding 4 young people per group), an open-ended conversational style of semi-structured interview was adopted. In sum, to the best of the project's ability, all young people were asked a series of questions that pertained to their background for demographic purposes. In addition, a selection of questions on the topic of 'community relations' and sectarianism were asked of all participants.   All youth providers and participants were made aware of the subject nature and participated of their own free will. The majority of the participants were met and interviewed within the first 14 months of the project.

The project sought and succeeded in involving over 100 young people in the programme aged 16 to 35. This upper age bracket was selected due to the average age of those living in Northern Ireland (approximately 35 years), and to cover a generational spread of participants. In this way, *Facts, Fears and Feelings* had a generation of experiences from which to draw. However, the main focus of *Facts, Fears and Feelings* was to tap into the worldviews of those aged under 25. As the future of Northern Ireland, this cohort was most important to us. Equally, any data gathered from this research can then act as companion for other qualitative and quantitative surveys conducted annually throughout Northern Ireland.

At the end of the project, 111 young people living in deprived urban areas of Belfast and Derry/Londonderry aged 16 to 35 were participants in detailed group and personal conversations. Well over 130 young people in total participated in the *Facts, Fears and Feelings Project* across its lifespan, including pilot workshops and fun recreational days out for the young people.   Quotations included in this report come from the cohort of 111 interviewees.

Out of the 111 participants interviewed:

- **Almost all young people involved in the project had left school early, were out of school, were seeking employment or were unemployed. Only 8 young people considered themselves still in school or were employed in skilled or community oriented jobs.**

- **All young people involved in the project lived in housing areas that had a majority representation of either Catholic or Protestant community affiliation.**

- **All but 7 young people hailed from the urban housing areas of Belfast or Derry/Londonderry. These 7 participants came from more 'rural' areas located outside the city. Responses from these few participants that did not come from urban areas or areas directly outside urban areas were kept to a minimum for the purposes of this report.**

- **60 participants were from the Belfast city area and from neighbouring areas.**

- **51 participants were from the Derry/Londonderry area.**

- **The majority of the participants were 24 years and under, making our sample comparable with other surveys researching the contemporary youth population of Northern Ireland. 97 of the young people included in the project were aged 16-24, and 14 were aged 25-35.**

- **59 of our participants were male and 52 were female.**

- **14 participants discussed that they had children or were expecting children.**

- **19 young people stated that they were in 'long-term' partnerships, engaged to be married or married. In some instances 'long-term' was difficult to gage as some 'long-term' partnerships were more established than others. However, this number is a good estimate. 6 of these relationships were cross-community. 1 relationship had partners of the same sex.**

- **In majority, young people in this project defined themselves as ascribing to traditional Catholic and Protestant affiliations. 63 described themselves as 'Catholic', 47 described themselves as Protestant. Two participants defined themselves as 'British Protestant' (included in this report as Protestant), and only 1 participant described himself as an 'Agnostic'.**

TABLE 1: Participants by city, sex and religious community affiliation

PARTICIPANTS BY CITY, SEX and RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY AFFILIATION

	Male Catholics	Male Protestants	Female Catholics	Female Protestants	Total
Belfast	16	18	13	13	60
Derry/Londonderry	17	7	17	9	50
Totals	33	25	30	22	110
Total 58 Males		**Total 52 Females**			**110**

NB: 1 male agnostic missing from total.

Young people were asked to state which area they were from. Some young people provided wards, named certain housing estate areas or even listed street addresses, while others preferred to provide general descriptions, such as 'North Belfast' or 'the Waterside.' Young people have been listed in this document by their area as they described it.

The table below illustrates the many areas in which young people lived.

TABLE 2: Area details as provided by participants

AREA DETAILS AS PROVIDED BY PARTICIPANTS		
Belfast		**Derry/Londonderry**
Albert Bridge Road	Poleglass	Altnagelvin
Ardoyne	South Belfast	Ardmore
Ballymurphy	Springfield Park	Bogside
Ballysillan	Springfield Road	Brandywell
Beechmount	Sydnham	City Centre
Bloomfield	Tennent Street	City Side
Bombay Street	The Falls	Claudy
City Centre	Turf Lodge	Creggan
Clara Estate	Twinbrook	Drumahoe
Dundonald	Village	Galliagh
East Belfast	West Belfast	Garden City
Hostel, East Belfast	Whiterock	Hazelbank
Foylevale	York Gate	Irish Street
Glenbryn		John Street
Grosvenor Road	**Other areas**	Lincoln Courts
Imperial Street	Ballycastle	Nelson Drive
Lenadoon	Bushmills	New Buildings
Ligoniel	Carrickfergus	Prehen
Mountpottinger	East Lisburn	Rosemount
New Lodge	Glengromley	Strand Road
Newtownards Road	Lisburn (outskirts)	The Fountain
North Belfast		Top of the Hill/Gobnascale
		Waterside

With access to multiple youth National Vocational Qualification programmes in both Belfast and Derry/Londonderry, hosting between 50 and 200 young people at any one time, it was possible to get a large sample size for qualitative research. The important task of attempting to gain a relatively equal Catholic/Protestant, male/female ratio was achieved and this facilitated coherent and consistent overall factors coming from the research. While significant differences may be highlighted in the research, for the purpose of promoting peaceable means of grappling with sectarianism, this report sought to draw out the similarities between communities and sexes, illustrating the overall need for radical campaigns to combat sectarianism.

Following in the tradition of most solid participant-observational studies in urban areas, interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the young people and at the convenience of the young people. The participants were accessed when they had time and when the facilitating organisations deemed appropriate. Organisation heads had the opportunity to sit-in on conversations to monitor interviews. Any imagery that was drawn by the participants was gathered for the project at the permission of the participant.

For this report, young people are identified by the area from which they described themselves as living, by their own self-ascribed religious community affiliation, and by the age they were when the taped interview took place. When appropriate, questions are included for accuracy and to show a range of how some themes were approached.

Research and methodological points

- **As stated above, this research followed in the tradition of other successful research with harder to access, young, out-of-school and working class populations. Individual and group discussions took a semi-structured approach. A certain number of questions regarding the participants' age, their living area, their living situation and location, their marital/ partnership status, and their employment status were asked of each individual.**

- **In addition to an easy, relaxed and free-flowing conversation technique, a series of questions were asked throughout each interview. Questions included: 'What is sectarianism, or how would you define sectarianism?', 'How do you recognise sectarianism?', 'Have you ever felt threatened by something that you considered sectarian in intent?' and 'If so, how did you feel?' In general, conversations focused around the topic of 'community relations' and how young people moved through their personal worlds. Conversations averaged at 55 minutes.**

- **The write-up used all accumulated information and verbatim responses from group and individual interview sessions for this initial report. Structural and emotional facets of everyday life that support sectarianism have been used to inform policy recommendations.**

Northern Ireland's largest cities

Belfast and Derry/Londonderry remain the two largest and two most strategically divided urban areas in Northern Ireland. Each city illustrates stark division regarding working and socialising habits (Hargie, Dickson and O'Donnell all 2006, and Roche all 2005). Both urban locations also have enduring 'peace lines' or 'peace walls' in areas that experience yearly ethnopolitical upheaval and consistent sectarian violence. Both areas experience some of the highest poverty deprivation in Northern Ireland (McLaughlin and Monteith 2006, see also McLaughlin and Baker 2007).

Despite some differences in size and location of populations in each city, general trends in educational attainment, housing, division and segregation remain common between Belfast and Derry/Londonderry urban areas.

Belfast
The population of Belfast metropolitan urban area on Census day, 29 April 2001, was 579,554 people. 22% were aged under 16 years, while the average age was 37 years. 47% of the population were male and 53% were female. Approximately 34% were from a Catholic community background and 61% were from a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' community background (NISRA 2005).

Belfast residents have some significant factors that affect their well-being. 9% of households were reported to be lone-parent households with dependent children. 41% of households had at least one person with a limiting long term illness.

Equally important for the *Facts, Fears and Feelings* study is that education statistics for the Belfast area show 39% of residents had no qualifications. Only 19% of the population aged 16 through 74 had degree level or higher qualifications. 4% of people aged 16 through 74 were unemployed.

Derry/Londonderry
The population of Derry/Londonderry urban area on Census day was 90,736 people. 27% were aged under 16 years, while the average age was 33 years. 48% of the population were male and 52% were female. 78% were from a Catholic community background, while 21% were from a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' community background.

Derry/Londonderry residents, too, have some significant factors that affect their well-being. 14% were lone-parent households with dependent children. 22% reported that they had a limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability, and 47% of households had at least one person with a limiting long term illness.

Again important for this study, education statistics for the Derry/Londonderry area show 44% had no qualifications. This is slightly higher than Belfast. Only 15% of the population aged 16-74 had degree level or higher qualifications. 7% of people aged 16-74 were unemployed. Over a quarter, approximately 27%, were dependent on public transport.

The table opposite provides an interesting comparison of both cities with each other and with Northern Ireland as a whole.

TABLE 3: A comparison of Belfast, Derry/Londonderry and Northern Ireland

Created by author from last revised demographic tables (NISRA/NINIS April 2007). All statistics from the 2001 Census. Percentages have been rounded to one decimal place.

A COMPARISON OF BELFAST, DERRY/LONDONDERRY AND NORTHERN IRELAND			
Percentage Comparisons (%)	SETTLEMENT Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (BMUA)	SETTLEMENT Derry/Londonderry Urban Area (DUA)	SETTLEMENT Northern Ireland
Under 16 years of age	22.0	27.0	23.6
Over 60 years of age	19.2	13.4	17.6
Male	47.4	48.3	48.7
Female	52.6	51.7	51.3
Catholic	34.4	77.8	43.8
Protestant and Other	60.9	20.8	53.1
Born outside of NI	9.4	12.2	9.0
Ethnic group other than white	1.2	1.0	0.8
Persons with limiting long-term illness	21.6	22.2	20.4
Providing unpaid care	11.9	10.7	11.0
Owner-occupied households	64.8	58.4	69.6
Detached houses / bungalows	19.8	20.2	36.5
Access to a car or van	66.3	64.8	73.7
Degree level education or higher	18.6	15.2	15.8
No qualification	39.1	43.6	41.6
Female in employment	47.5	45.6	45.0
Male in employment	52.5	54.4	55.0
Unemployed	4.3	7.1	4.1

Facts, Fears and Feelings' young people

By targeting young people and young adults from both communities, living in deprived areas, as well as those who may be out of school, unemployed, or seeking employment, *Facts, Fears and Feelings* sought to involve those who have been most socially and economically affected by the Troubles, those who have intimately experienced structural dereliction in their areas on a daily basis, those who have experienced high levels of victimisation, and those who have grappled most with community tensions and sectarianism for decades.

Regarding those out of school with basic GCSEs or lacking qualifications, more research is now being undertaken to ascertain the problems and needs facing this community in Northern Ireland. The New Policy Institute, London, states that regarding educational attainment at age 16 in Northern Ireland, in 2004-2005, 5% of 16 year olds obtained no GCSEs, 9% obtained some but fewer than five GCSEs and a further 23% obtained five GCSEs but not all at grade C.

These three groups together make up all those who fail to achieve at least five A to C GCSEs. These indictators suggest then, that by 2005, 37% of young people were in this category in Northern Ireland.

As a whole, this headline measure has come down, from 47% in 1994-1995 to 37% in 2004-2005. But almost all of this fall has been in the group getting five GCSEs but not at grades A-C. By contrast, there has been no fall in the numbers getting no GCSEs and no fall since 1997-1998 in the numbers getting fewer than five. Rather, as the headline measure has gradually

improved, **the proportion getting few or no GCSEs at all has remained largely unchanged at around 15%, or one in seven of all 16 year olds.**

Among children entitled to free school meals, the proportion getting few or no GCSEs has remained at around 30% over the decade, double the rate for all 16 year olds on average (all statistics, www.poverty.org.uk 2007).

Regarding young adults without any basic qualifications in Northern Ireland, the proportion of 19 year olds lacking basic qualifications in Northern Ireland has remained almost the same over a decade at 23% in 2005-2006.

Averaging over a nine-year period between 1997 and 2006, around two fifths of 17 year olds lacked basic qualifications compared with a quarter of 24 year olds. Over the same period, almost all of those whose highest qualification at 17 was 5 GCSEs at grade A to C go on to achieve either higher academic qualifications or vocational qualifications at NVQ2 or NVQ3.

Among 19 to 24 year olds, more young men (24%) than young women (20%) lack basic qualifications. Among both young men and young women, more Protestants than Catholics lack basic qualifications. This means that the group with the highest proportion lacking basic qualifications are young Protestant men (27%) and that the group with the smallest proportion lacking them are young Catholic women (19%) (all statistics, www.poverty.org 2007).

While the Northern Ireland Year Book for 2008 states that only a small percentage of children in Northern Ireland leave school with no qualifications, the bigger picture regarding educational attainment in

Northern Ireland is not as simple. As the indicators from the New Policy Institute suggest, approximately 23% of 19 year olds in Northern Ireland lack basic qualifications. And 1 in 7 of all 16 year olds get few or no GCSEs. This is worrying. Lack of skills can lead to unemployment, and Long Term Unemployment affects personal and societal perceptions of future employability (Sheehan and Tomlinson 1998). These factors, coupled with the dramatic effects coming from decades of conflict, violence and deprivation growing up within a divided society can lead to emotionally crippling results for young people in these circumstances.

Facts, Fears and Feelings sought to involve young people who had left school, left school early and who were living in such circumstances as outlined above. By involving those most at risk of social exclusion, the project hoped to shed light on personal facts, fears and feelings that young people had about themselves, their families, their friends and their communities.

The report

This report is an initial report on the findings of the 18 month *Facts, Fears and Feelings Project*. This report aims to provide information regarding qualitative data collected from young people across both Belfast and Derry/Londonderry city areas, both communities and both sexes. The overall aim of *Facts, Fears and Feelings* was to provide a broad, comprehensive view of segregation and sectarianism among socially excluded young people and young adults living in Northern Irish urban and highly deprived areas.

The discussion focuses on facts, fears and feelings in the young person's life as they describe them in relation to segregation and sectarianism in Northern Ireland. In this report, 'Facts' are interpreted as the subjective understanding of what actually makes a particular person's world and happens in that world; 'Fears' are interpreted as the psychological and physical worries and experiences that contribute to the everyday understandings that the young people have; and finally, 'Feelings' are interpreted as the perceptions of how individuals and community members 'feel' about each other, as well as what young people think about and 'know' about their Northern Ireland.

These facts, fears and feelings are presented here in a series of chapters that examine them through the young person individually, through the young person's opinions and feelings about their families, through the young person's views and discussions on friends, and through the young person's feelings about the broader community. In this way, the report is person-centered and seeks to reveal a more nuanced perspective of their worlds through following the themes that arose most often in conversation with the young people.

Because *Facts, Fears and Feelings* attempted to ask many similar queries of all participants regarding sectarianism, segregation, families, friends and communities, some responses and discussion themes have been broadly calculated to reveal trends that emerged throughout the research. While no two young people are the same, the themes through which young people discussed their lives revealed parallels which could be loosely calculated and assessed.

For the readers' convenience, all chapters contain summary points at the start of the chapters.

Chapter 2: What is sectarianism in Northern Ireland? explores the meaning of sectarianism in the Northern Irish context, both individually and more theoretically, through the responses of the young people. By examining trends in response, it is apparent that definitions and descriptions of sectarianism often took on a personalised hue, tied up in specific instances pertaining to the Northern Irish context. It is suggested that when forming policies around sectarianism and ways to combat it, sectarianism is most usefully thought of within a continuum of 'isms', and that the relationships between prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping have much to lend to the debate on segregation and sectarianism in Northern Ireland.

Chapter 3: Bounded contentment discusses the limited exposure and exhibited cocooned lifeways of many of the young participants in the project. Just under two thirds of the young people involved in the study were isolated on a regular basis from the other community to such an extent that they expressed being 'unaffected' or 'untouched' by sectarianism. Only when their relative isolation was discussed with them, did the young people begin to consider the segregated circumstances in which they lived. This segregation was complicated by a genuine fear of travelling into areas associated with the other community, and often, a fear of the other community. 3 out of 4 young people in this study expressed such fears.

Chapter 4: Family and friends matter(s) examines young people's immediate and most influential circles of personal contact. Family members, particularly parents and grandparents, are illustrated as particularly influential in forming young people's views about the other community. A third of participants involved in the project describe their parents' and grandparents' as holding prejudiced views. Equally, young people often see their older family members as victims of conflict and excused sectarian prejudice in their elders. Local friends are seen to be most influential and lasting friendship between young people in segregated communities is demonstrated to be extremely limited. Only 1 in every 4 of the young people involved were able to maintain any lasting friendships across the divide. Young people discussed aspects of communal violence and discussed this in terms of camaraderie, with just under a third of participants being caught up in such activities at some point. New technologies, such as social media networking, were shown to have both negative and positive effects on friendship across communities.

Chapter 5: Community pressures begins to explore the shift in community influences post-ceasefire. Interpretations, feelings and fears about what 'people in the community' may 'think' or indeed 'do' when a person acts outside of expected norms influence young people in this study in complex ways. Young people discussed larger community pressure overall as the most restrictive agent on their affairs. Several young people discussed pressure to quit participation in sports and other cultural activities due to fears of reprisals from community members. Those in cross-community relationships discussed continued bullying and violence from their neighbours. Finally, it is demonstrated that the traditional concept of paramilitary influences as community guardians remains an important factor in young people's decision making. Over 8 out of 10 participants discussed continuing paramilitary influences in their areas and the related pressures that stem from them.

Chapter 6: Concluding: looking forward discusses the discoveries of the project and highlights some aspects of good practice that can influence future government decision-making in the area of segregation and sectarianism in Northern Ireland.

In addition, the report also hopes to serve as a temperature taking exercise in light of, and in conjunction with, recent research on young people under 25 (for example, Roche 2007 and all 2005, Hargie, Dickson and O'Donnell all 2006, Jarman 2005, Ewark and Schubotz 2004, Connolly and Healy 2003, Connolly et al. 2002, Smyth and Scott 2000, Connolly and Maginn 1999, Smyth 1998, Trew 1992 and Cairns 1987). Annual surveys, such as the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey (NILT) and the Northern Ireland Young Life and Times survey (YLT) are also used in comparative and contrasting ways with this research. For example, the most recent YLT 2007 survey shows that of the young people who participated in their survey almost 50% were in grammar schools – 48% attended a grammar school, 46% attended a secondary school and 3% attended a planned integrated school. Only 3% stated that they attended some other type of school. Equally, most respondents defined their family's situation as economically average, while 14% stated their families were 'not well-off' or 'not at all well-off' (YTL 2007, Summary of Results). While such surveys have become invaluable resources for Northern Ireland and research with young people, the voices of young people out of school and on the margins are still missing from many youth studies and programmes. It is hoped that this project can act as companion to these studies, to augment and expand quantitative research, as well as to add voice to those who live at the social margins of Northern Irish society.

As a final note on the report, while *Facts, Fears and Feelings* revisits some aspects of research as investigated by others, such as rioting (Hansson 2005, McGrellis 2004, Roche 2003, Jarman and O'Halloran 2001), other

topics such as schooling and experiences of school (DENI 2006, Russell 2006, Gallagher 2001, Bennison 2000, Lundy 2000) are left out in the main. This is because the subjects covered in the report reflect the most commonly discussed topics among the young people with regard to 'community relations' and sectarian segregation.

It is the hope of this project that issues surrounding the high levels of segregation and sectarianism can be tackled within a post-conflict Northern Ireland. The young people involved in *Facts, Fears and Feelings* help to express some of the needs of their community and express themselves in frank, vivid and open ways. From there we can only move forward.

Chapter 2

What is sectarianism in Northern Ireland?

Facts, Fears and Feelings findings

- General trends indicated that sectarianism meant different things to different people. Responses could be placed into five broad categories. These include:

  1. Sectarianism as a 'text book' definition;
  2. Sectarianism in Northern Ireland as connected to the world;
  3. Sectarianism as exclusively related to Northern Irish Catholicism and Protestantism;
  4. Sectarianism as violence and hatred; and,
  5. Sectarianism as related to Northern Irish culture and the Troubles.

  For those who strayed from a 'text book' or 'definitional' sense of the meaning of the word, this does not mean that these young people did not have a clear idea of what the word means. Rather, these young people integrate subjective and cultural aspects of their lives into their own personal understandings. This, therefore, provides a far more nuanced perspective on the meaning of the word – putting it in a living context.

- **Broader and more inclusive notions of sectarianism are useful in identifying a set of parameters around situations in which sectarianism can be present and flourish. From there, we can better understand the complexity of it, and why so many individuals 'know it when they see it.'**

- **Rather than forming or forcing contrasts and comparisons with individual phenomena like racism, it is suggested that sectarianism is most usefully thought of within a continuum of 'isms', such as racism, heterosexism and ageism. Sectarianism could be said to share resemblance to each of these examples and the relationships between prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping have much to lend to the debate on sectarianism in general and sectarianism in Northern Ireland.**

What is sectarianism in Northern Ireland?

Introduction

It can not be contested that the conflict in Northern Ireland has created a geography of separate communities identifying with ethnonationalist and ethnoreligious communities of Roman Catholic and Protestant. As Northern Ireland's devolved government now steps forward and makes landmark legislative decisions for its own community, the long shadow of sectarianism follows every stride. Aspects of how to successfully integrate Northern Ireland's people – and particularly its children and young people – in a cooperative manner have become priority.

The Agreement Between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Ireland of 1998 (Belfast Agreement or Peace Agreement), the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister's January 2003 publication of the anti-sectarian *A Shared Future* plan, and the restoration of devolved government in 2006 have heralded this new era. Even before these moves, however, children and young people were coming to the fore with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, the Children Order for Northern Ireland in 1995 and the Northern Ireland Act of 1998 began to highlight the need for children and young people in Northern Ireland to become a priority. In 2001, the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister announced their intention to bring forward proposals for an independent Commissioner for Children for Northern Ireland. This proposal was realised in 2003, with the first

appointed and dedicated commissioner for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland.

Sorrowfully, there is good reason for this attention to children and young people. Young people aged 24 and under account for 40% of conflict related deaths from the Troubles (Faye et al. 1999) and by 2003 those under 18 who had died from result of Troubles related violence had risen to 324 (Smyth et al. 2004). Beyond mortality figures, young people and children often suffer the most in conflict. Children and young people often experience not only physical injury in conflict, but psychological trauma as well (for example, Smyth 1998, Cairns 1987 and Fields 1977).

Finally, young people, and particularly those from enclaved and economically under-privileged areas are serving a 'double sentence' or 'double penalty'. Smyth states (1998:2):

In Northern Ireland, the effects of Troubles-related violence augment the effects of deprivation, creating a 'double penalty'. For the most part, intervention programmes have ignored this and their social policies have operated as if they were dealing with 'simple' socio-economic deprivation, rather than deprivation which is interlocked with and compounded by the attritional effect of the violence of the Troubles.

Work by Smyth has taken care to emphasise the 'double penalty' connection between deprivation and political violence in urban pockets throughout Northern Ireland. Equally, authors note that in addition to the high levels of violence in deprived areas, participation in violent activities by young people ensures that they are in the highest risk categories (Smyth and Scott 2000). Revealing the impact of the Troubles and pervasive sectarianism, and particularly the impact on children and young people, has remained at the front position of concern, with most recent publications and policy-oriented reports now attempting to focus on the impact of continuing sectarianism among those under 25 (cf. Roche 2007 and 2005a, Ewark and Schubotz 2004, Connolly and Healy 2003, Connolly et al. 2002, Smyth and Scott 2000, Connolly and Maginn 1999, Smyth 1998, Trew 1992 and Cairns 1987).

This chapter examines the meaning of sectarianism in the Northern Irish context, both theoretically and, more individually, through the responses of the young people. It examines the responses of young people when asked about describing or defining 'sectarianism' and what it means to and for them. By examining trends in response, some consistency regarding defining sectarianism as prejudice related to religious affiliation is apparent. However, descriptions of sectarianism and what it means most often took on a personalised hue, tied up in specific instances pertaining to the Northern Irish context and their very own lives.

While common sense tells us that this should come as no surprise to anyone who has lived in Northern Ireland, these responses demonstrate the complexity in obtaining a definition of sectarianism that is not, to some extent, context bound. By beginning here, we can begin to see how young people define sectarianism as something that is part of their culture and their everyday lives.
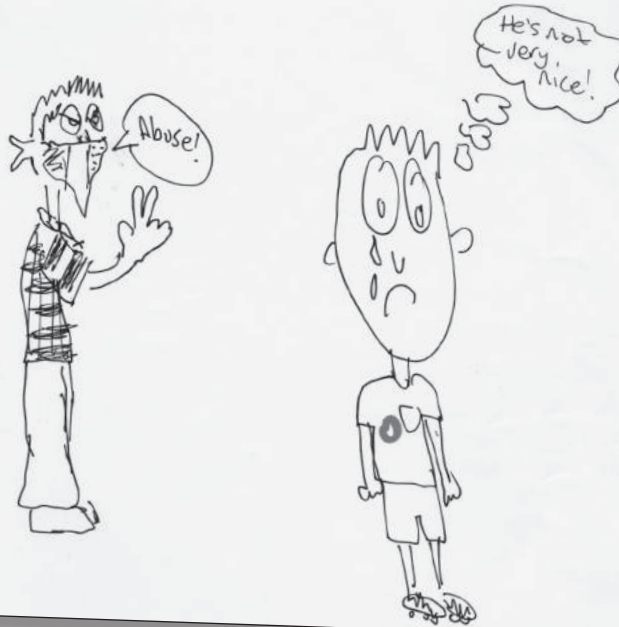
What is sectarianism in Northern Ireland?

Even with this attention and growing study on sectarianism, can we adequately describe or define what sectarianism is or what sectarianism means? Following results from *Facts, Fears and Feelings*, if asked, probably many of us will define it as some sort of bigotry or prejudice related to religion. Many of us will see it as connected to violence. Many of us in Northern Ireland will specifically relate it to negative feelings between Catholics and Protestants. In almost all instances, we will define what it means for us, personally. Without a doubt, no two definitions will be exactly the same.

In 2006, the Scottish Government's *Sectarianism in Football* (SIF) Working Group published the aims of its working group. In this document, SIF state:

Sectarianism is easy to recognise, but can be difficult to define.

Highlighting the 'you know it when you see it' or 'gut' feeling that is observed by those experiencing sectarian discrimination or under sectarian threat or attack, the idea that recognition is prevalent but definition is elusive, strikes a chord in Northern Ireland.

Academic attempts have been made to theorise sectarianism within the Northern Irish context and I will discuss a few of these here. These theorisations complicate the exclusivity of religiosity as it is linked to sectarianism.

Getting to the root of the word, sect or sectarian, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'sectarian' as:

(1.) Pertaining to a sect or sectaries; 'belonging to a schismatical sect'. (2.) Pertaining to a sect or sects; confined to a particular sect; bigotedly attached to a particular sect.

Expanding on this, the word 'sectarianism' is defined as:

(1.) Adherence or excessive attachment to a particular sect or party, esp. in religion; hence often, adherence or excessive attachment to, or undue favouring of, a particular 'denomination'.

While helpful, strict definitions like these do very little to describe the nuances and the complexities of what sectarianism means for people in everyday life and action, and additionally, what sectarianism means in the Northern Irish context.

In a discussion on sectarianism in Ireland, McVeigh (1995) discusses the very fact that defining sectarianism is difficult. He states (1995:643):

Definitions of complex social phenomena are never entirely satisfactory. Sectarianism, like racism or sexism, traverses centuries and continents and no definition can ever capture its full complexity.

However, despite this difficulty in creating one definition, McVeigh outlines sectarianism with a few key aspects. McVeigh states that it includes unequal power relationships, that it includes ideas and actions in combination, and importantly it is a process which changes over time. Other authors also discuss sectarianism in Northern Ireland in a comparative way with racism. For example, Brewer states that sectarianism

is harder to concretely elaborate upon and more nebulous than concepts such as racism. Brewer also maintains that sectarianism is more context bound and more specific to the context in which it occurs. Equally, he describes it more as a social process.

Importantly, and related to the root of the phenomenon, Brewer sees sectarian beliefs as unlikely to exist without religion as a social marker to which prejudice ties itself. Negative beliefs, inequality, discrimination and harassment are all resultant through the social marker of sect through which the conflict is articulated (Brewer 1992).

In his article, 'Sectarianism and racism, and their parallels and differences', Brewer puts forth a set of 'features' or points relating to sectarianism (1992:359). All these points, he emphasises, are carried out on the levels of ideas, individual behaviour and within the social structure:

1. Sectarianism refers to a whole cluster of ideas, beliefs, myths and demonology about religious difference which are used to make religion a social marker, to assign different attributes to the various religious groups and to make derogatory remarks about others.

2. Sectarianism is not just a set of prejudiced attitudes but refers to behaviour, policies and types of treatment that are informed by religious difference.

3. Sectarianism describes a set of social relations that are codified into a stratification system which religion causes or comes to represent.

4. Sectarianism involves recognisable social patterns of inequality, some of which are predicated on discrimination against members of a different religious group.

5. Sectarianism involves intentional and unintentional discrimination. Intentional discrimination refers to acts and policies of unequal treatment that are predicated on religious difference. Unintentional discrimination refers to acts and policies whose consequences are discriminatory even though this was not intended.

6. Sectarianism also involves various forms of disadvantage that affect some religious groups rather than others and that are influential in determining patterns of social stratification.

7. Sectarianism involves the use of religious markers as a representation for, or cause of, conflict.

8. Sectarianism involves the use of religion as a marker invoked to justify conflict.

9. Sectarianism can adhere to individuals as well as to a social structure.

Broader and more inclusive notions of sectarianism, such as Brewer's listing, is useful in promoting the idea that it is perhaps best to identify a set of parameters around situations in which sectarianism can be present and flourish. From there, we can better understand the complexity of it, and why so many individuals 'know it when they see it.'

Rather than forming or forcing contrasts and comparisons with individual phenomena like racism, I suggest that sectarianism is most usefully thought of within a continuum of 'isms'. Like sexism, the 'feelings' a person gets in particularly significant and context bound situations become relevant (for example, Koss, Gidycz and Wisniewski 1987). Like racism, prejudice can be formed and cemented through historical practices, as well as through feelings of domination and 'natural' superiority (for example, Blee 2002, Banks and Eberhart 1998, and Rex 1986 and 1970). Like heterosexism, fear of revealing true opinions and preferences can stifle communication and progress (for example, Ragins and Cornwell 2001). Like ageism, evaluative judgments can be made about competence and ability based on presumptions (for example, Kite et al. 2005). Sectarianism could be said to share resemblance to each example and the relationships between prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping have much to lend to the debate on sectarianism and sectarianism in Northern Ireland.

All participants in the *Facts, Fears and Feelings Project* were involved in in-depth discussions revolving around the topic of social relationships between the two majority ethnonationalist communities in Northern Ireland. As discussed earlier, although dialogue was to be open and relaxed with only topic areas to be covered, all young people participating in *Facts, Fears and Feelings* were also asked to describe what sectarianism meant to them, or to define the word. This question followed on from a variety of topics covered, and usually followed a personal anecdote or story which the young person relayed.

Answers to this query were unique and distinctive. Some young people noted a 'text book' or 'dictionary' definition of sectarianism, remarking upon the prejudice related to religion and, in some cases, tying it in with other areas experiencing sectarian conflict and strife. Others relayed nuanced
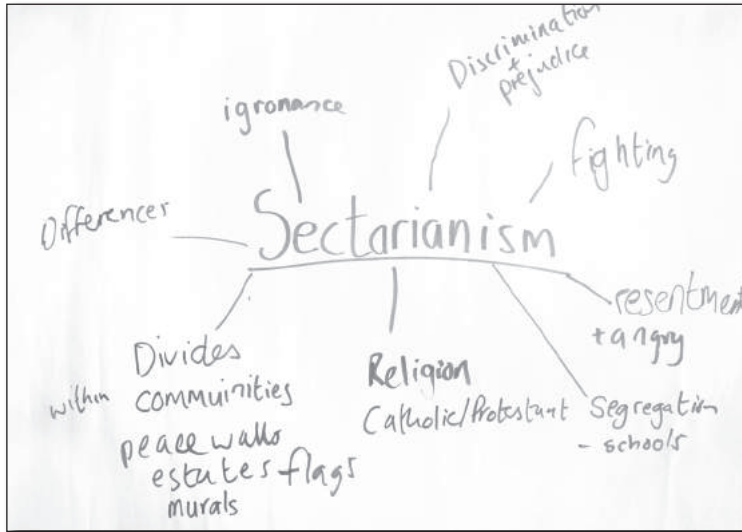
definitions with more personalised or experiential definitions rooted in the Northern Irish context. Even when young people stated that they did not know what sectarianism meant, when discussion was teased out, inevitably a definition emerged.

General trends deserve to be examined here. Although sectarianism meant different things to different people, responses could be placed into five broad categories:

1. **Sectarianism as a 'text book' definition;**
2. **Sectarianism in Northern Ireland as connected to the world;**
3. **Sectarianism as exclusively related to Northern Irish Catholicism and Protestantism;**
4. **Sectarianism as violence and hatred; and,**
5. **Sectarianism as related to Northern Irish culture and the Troubles.**

For those who may have strayed from a 'text book' or 'definitional' sense of the word, this does not mean that they did not have a clear idea of what the word means. Rather, these young people integrated subjective and cultural aspects of their lives into their own personal understandings. This provides a far more nuanced perspective on the meaning of the word – putting it in a living context.

Understanding these types of personal meanings are especially important when making governmental policy to combat sectarianism for Northern Ireland. *Facts, Fears and Feelings* has involved participants from some of the most enclaved and economically disadvantaged working class housing areas in Northern Ireland. Considering this, it is important to witness how these young people feel about their environments and to continue research in a comparative class context. Equally, Northern Ireland also has to grapple with other hate crimes and sentiments, such as heterosexism and racism. Seeing all these prejudices as interconnected will prove valuable for the future.

'If I was to ask you to define sectarianism, or ask you to describe what it means …. '

'Text book' definition

1. Sectarianism as a 'text book' definition

Beginning with the 'text book' or definitional examples, some young people presented a broad definition specifically related to religion and prejudice. These examples included or could be used to define any religious prejudice:

Could you define sectarianism?

It's when people, people don't get on, like, because of their religions.

Female, 16, City Centre, Derry/Londonderry

How would you define the word sectarianism?

Ahmm, like discrimination of another religion...any religion.

Male, 17, Catholic, Glengormley, Belfast

What is sectarianism? Can you define it?

I haven't a clue what it means. All I know is like sectarianism is, like, where you mock all other people's religion, or something like that.

Female, 17, Protestant, Shankill, Belfast

If I asked you to tell me what sectarianism means, could you
tell me what that means?

Sectarianism, ahmmm. It means if you are discriminating not race but a different culture, different religion, it would be like...being sort of bias.

Male, 16, Protestant, Sydnham, East Belfast

If you could define it, do you know what sectarianism is?

It's sort of prejudice. You don't like someone because of religion.

Male, 19, Catholic, Creggan, Derry/Londonderry

What is sectarianism? If you could define it, do you know what it means?

Ahmm, it's hard to explain. It's like if... you don't approve of who they are, 'cause of what religion you are. It's really just it, really.

Female, 16, Protestant, East Belfast

If you had to define it (sectarianism), could you tell me what it means?

It means the differences between religions and how people are, have bigotry because of that. Religions, I mean.

Male, 22, Protestant, North Belfast

Do you think you could define sectarianism, … what is it?

People not getting on with each other because of their religion. That's what it is, because they have different beliefs or somethin'. Something like that anyway.

Male, 17, Catholic, Ligoniel, Belfast

Can you define sectarianism?

It's to do with religions. All religious hatred.

Female, 30, Falls Road, Belfast

Connected to the world

2. Sectarianism in Northern Ireland as connected to the world

Some young people discussed the meaning of sectarianism as attached to other issues, such as racism or heterosexism. Some saw sectarianism within an historical context. Sectarianism seen through this view interprets and ties in the issues connected to sectarianism and communities beyond the Northern Irish context. Other areas noted were Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, and the World War II Holocaust. A few examples are included below:

What is sectarianism? Can you define it?

Ahmmm, sectarianism is…it's like…it would be fighting, you know, between different sides of, I'm not going to say Catholic and Protestant, not just Catholic and Protestant, but it would be sort of like racism as well. It wouldn't just be Catholic and Protestant. Take the likes of the Indian community. Ahmm, I know a lot of Indian families that have moved over here and, they would be, you know, if they're

Hindu and Catholic or Hindu and Protestant they disagree as well. And the likes of Iraq and Iran and places like that.

I think it's just generally just disagreement because of your actual background, that's the best way to put it. In this country our main problem is between Catholic and Protestants but it's not the only problem in this country either because there is a lot of racism as well.

Female, 22, Protestant, Fountain, Derry/Londonderry

How would you define sectarianism?
It's when different sides of something... no, it's religious but it's more like racism like, it's a hatred. A hatred of people not like you. And then that goes into other things. Like where people live and how they act. It's not just about church or chapel or whatever, if that makes any sense.

Male, 20, Protestant, Village, Belfast

Would you be able to define sectarianism, like what is it?
Just like, something like racism, would it be? Know like people who, someone doesn't like someone because of the colour of their skin or someone doesn't like someone because they're a Catholic or a Protestant or they're Chinese or whatever.

Female, 23, Catholic, Ballymurphy, Belfast

Can you define sectarianism?

It's like when people have a problem with people of different colours, or sex or whatever, people from different places. I mean, what I mean is that it's part of a whole thing where people are. It has to do with religion, but that's here. There's places where that's like, ahmm, a, how would you call that, an ethnic thing and it's tied up in that. It's like what's going on in the Middle East.

Male 19, Catholic, Top of the Hill, Derry/Londonderry

If you had to define sectarianism how would you say it is?
Sectarianism…it's is just an excuse to make money.

Okay… alright, in this context you mean?
In this county yeah, an excuse. Well in any country when you think about it, an excuse to make money. They're fighting in Iran and Iraq, it's really just for oil and money and power.

Female, 33, Protestant, Shankill, Belfast

What, if you could define sectarianism what would it be? If you could give it a definition…
It's bitterness, isn't it. But at the same time there's a lot of reason for bitterness. Because, it's like two religions. It's like Jews. It's not as bad as, like, the Jews over in Germany.

But it's almost like as I get older I start to take a different meaning and look more deeply. That I think that it's the British come over to Northern Ireland and they took over and they expect, you know, at the start they did. It was discrimination, and they were giving Protestants better jobs and better housing and that. And there's evidence of all that. But now, it's equal but still Catholics don't want that, they want you know their own power. But at the same time they're still living under British rule, there still signing on the dole like, and getting money off the British government.

Female, 27, Catholic, Abercorn Road, Derry/Londonderry

3. Sectarianism as exclusively related to Northern Irish Catholicism and Protestantism

Gradually becoming more context specific, many young people participating in *Facts, Fears and Feelings* saw the meaning of sectarianism as exclusively related to religious affiliation and communities in Northern Ireland. This view also saw verbal 'slagging' or the threat of sectarian abuse, physical or verbal, between communities as also important to include. Interestingly, one young respondent sees the connection relating so specifically to the Northern Irish context he states that because he has an 'American' father, sectarianism has 'nothing to do' with him. In descriptions like these, young people were including 'text book' definitional meanings, as well as including some subjective feelings of their own from the Northern Irish context.

Catholicism and Protestantism

Could you give a definition in your own words of what, of what sectarianism is?

Isn't it whenever, say a Catholic slags a Protestant of their own religion or that? Mainly like, say if you went to the Waterside and you were wearin' a Celtic top you'd get a hidin'. If you went over here, if you came from the Waterside over here wearing a Rangers top to say the Bogside or Creggan, you'd get a hidin'. I think it's stupid.

Female, 18, Catholic, Claudy, Derry/Londonderry outskirts

What does it mean, sectarianism?

Just, to me, it's like Catholics and Protestants. That's it just.

Female, 23, Catholic, Falls Road, Belfast

What does sectarianism mean?

Catholic / Prod stuff. I don't know really. My mother was Catholic but my daddy was American, so it has nothing to do with me, really.

Male, 16, Protestant, Yorkgate area, Belfast

When I say the word sectarian, can you define it?
Well I think it's religion, is it? Sectarian attacks.

Do you think it affects your life at all?
Aye, I do, yeah.

In what way?
I don't know, just to be a Protestant …
Male, 17, Protestant, Lincoln Courts, Derry/Londonderry

How would you define sectarianism? What would you say it is?
I just says, um, it's Catholics and Protestants just fighting. That's more or less it.
Male, 16, Catholic, Lenadoon, Belfast

How would you define sectarianism?
It's the way people slag each other, 'Taig', 'Prod', all that. It's like when you feel strange crossing over the town and that's you worried someone will be able to tell you are a Protestant. It's the Catholic/Protestant thing.
Female, 26, Protestant, Prehen, Derry/Londonderry

What does sectarianism actually mean? How would you define it?
Being sect... In my opinion, being sectarian is like if you're going down, if you're in the wrong area and you see a Catholic and you just say all, call all Catholics 'taig' and they would call Protestants 'huns' and that's being sectarian. Just saying all 'taigs' are bad, but not all

Catholics are bad, that's just being sectarian in my opinion. But other people have different opinions on being sectarian.
Male, 16, Protestant, Dundonald

Violence and hatred

4. Sectarianism as violence and hatred

Many saw sectarianism as linked with cultural violence, and 'bitterness' or hatred:

Could you give a definition in your own words of what sectarianism is?
Violence. (It)'s not lies. It's true. That's all it seems to be – violence.
Male, 17, Protestant, Caw, Derry/Londonderry

What is sectarianism?
To me, it's violence. That's it. Killin', killin' each other. And usually over nothin'.
Female, 20, Catholic, Shantallow, Derry/Lononderry

How would you define sectarianism?
I don't know, just all the violence. There's a load of fighting about it.
Male, 17, Catholic, Lenadoon, Belfast

So, what is sectarianism?
Bitterness. ...Being bitter.

What does bitter mean?

It's just hateful towards the other side. Just don't like them at all just. You're not even giving anybody a chance. You know, they're out there, they're out there in the street fightin' people they don't even know. ... It sounds, it sounds stupid, but it sounds stupid because it is stupid. I just don't agree wi' it at all I think it's pointless and pathetic. I do! (Laughs) It's probably because I went to integrated. Integration in school shows you a lot of stuff about it too, like. That nobody is different, we may look it, but we're not.
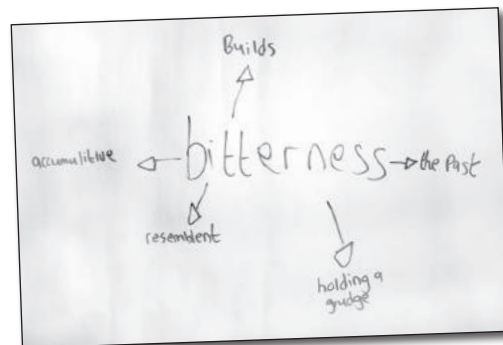
Female, 18, Catholic, Waterside, Derry/Londonderry

Can you define sectarianism? What does it mean?

Hate.

Okay. Hate of what?

Hate of each others' different cultures. Misunderstanding of different cultures and a lack of understanding or a want to understand, ye know.

Female, 34, Catholic, West Belfast

Northern Ireland and the Troubles

5. Sectarianism as related to Northern Irish culture and the Troubles

Some participants in *Facts, Fears and Feelings* discussed sectarianism as part of Northern Irish culture and often linked this to Troubles-related incidents. As one young person included below phrased it: '... it's special to Northern Ireland'.

This is not unusual. Comparing other research, TRIPROJECT results, for example, indicated that when respondents were asked 'what are the Troubles?', over 60% indicated that it was 'something that involved sectarianism'. 46% noted it has 'something to do with paramilitaries' and 21% stated that the Troubles were 'anything that happens in Northern Ireland' (Roche 2005a:268-269). When examined against statistical data such as this, purely qualitative results for 'what is' or 'can you define' sectarianism ties in with such data. In this way, sectarianism, the Troubles, and everything related to the culture of emergency and previous decades of 'high' level violence are intimately linked, and bespeak an interconnectedness to the contemporary culture of sectarianism.

This definitional category of sectarianism for *Facts, Fears and Feelings* participants most often included paramilitaries, police or security forces, specific Northern Irish political figures and other elements that are Troubles-related. This view was not only held by older participants, but often some of the youngest participants in the project saw sectarianism as currently linked to the Troubles.

What does sectarianism mean?
The UDA and all that craic. IRA. Ye know. It's Troubles.
And it's still here, so it is.
Male, 17, Catholic, West Belfast

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What is sectarianism?

It's this here. The way we live. It's special to Northern Ireland. It's the Catholics hating the Protestants and the Protestants hating the Catholics. I'll never understand it. I think it's stupid.

Female, 25, Catholic, City Centre (Strand Road), Derry/Londonderry

If someone asked you to define sectarianism, what would you say?

It's all the, all the army and paramilitaries. And it still is, too. Paramilitaries and the cops, and RUC, and PSNI. The way that the rescue people, the way they get battered even trying to get there to help people. Probably it's bombs, like the Omagh bomb, and people getting shot and murdered over everything. Taxi drivers, even.

Male, 25, Protestant, North Belfast

What is sectarianism, can you define it?

Like the IRA or the UVF where they're fighting against...like fighting against each other. It's all like one sector or the other and they just didn't agree. That's my own view of it. It's just the way I look at sectarianism. Like, there's actually a girl turned around and said to me: 'On both sides there's bad uns and good uns and whatever,' she says. 'But I understand we wouldn't have wanted

2 - Derry Journal, Tuesday, 3rd June, 2008

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Derry Journal

Sectarian trouble must be stopped

Sectarian disturbances at the interface between Bishop Street/Upper Bennett Street and the Fountain Estate are a particularly depressing feature of modern day life in Derry.

Both factions blame each other and there have been claims that the presence of the PSNI does not help the situation.

It is important that responsible figures on both sides of the community do everything in their power to reduce the tensions that all too often come to the surface.

Regardless of who's responsible for starting the trouble - and it is clear that there are malign influences on both sides - clashes of this nature cannot be tolerated.

While such incidents are quite rare in Derry, they still cause untold damage to the image of the city.

te walk down the road and be stopped by the peelers every two minutes and searched and ye know. Have door kicked in and all.'
Female, 31, Catholic, West Belfast

If you could define sectarianism, what does it mean?
People, like paramilitaries and all fighting, and all with each other and that there.
Male, 16, Protestant, East Belfast

If I was to say something is sectarian, how would you define that?
Like people from like two sides who don't get along or like cause violence and, ahmm, end in Troubles things. Individuals that don't get on with each other, groups, paramilitary groups.
Female, 17, Protestant, Lisburn

Concluding

Scotland's executive has attempted to confine sectarianism to a meaning for their society and dedicated efforts to combat sectarianism. Part of Scotland's *Sectarianism: Don't Give It, Don't Take It* campaign, a definition of sectarianism for Scotland states:

> *Sectarianism (religious)*
> *A narrow-minded following of a particular belief by members of a denomination that leads to prejudice, bigotry, discrimination, malice and ill-will towards members, or presumed members, of another denomination. Sectarianism can occur in different ways, either at an individual, group, cultural or institutional level.*

Noting in the end the variety of arenas in which sectarianism can occur and its many levels, Scotland's executive are probing into the impact of the word, not just its meaning.

In a short discussion of the very same name as this chapter, 'What is Sectarianism in Northern Ireland?' Duncan Morrow, Chief Executive Officer of the Northern Irish Community Relations Council (NICRC), states (www.nicrc.org.uk, 2008):

> *The definition of what we actually mean by 'anti-sectarianism' rather depends on what we mean by 'sectarianism'. It is not fully possible to entrap the*

nuances of feelings, passions intellectual nicety or gut reaction conjured up by a discussion of sectarianism. It is not just the bigotry and prejudice, the de-humanised, emotionless, ruthless cynicism that leads to sectarian murder. It is also the ghost at the feast of much polite society in Northern Ireland. While it can be and often is the reality of life in working class housing estates, it is equally present in the leafy and apparently more 'civilised' suburbs. It is ingrained into the fabric of society …

Morrow then goes on to ask: 'What is it?'

'It' is probably best described by those who live the reality themselves and this chapter intended to detail some of the thinking behind the gut reactions and passions. What Northern Ireland now needs to think about is how these categories and definitional views are taken into account when planning actions to combat sectarianism. Indeed, our actions and ideas of 'anti-sectarianism' will come from how we begin to pin down and define sectarianism in the Northern Irish context.

In the end, 'it' is best understood in the nuances of daily life. It is, as the young people explain, a politician, the paramilitaries or the shirt one wears. It is like situations in the Middle East. It is tied to meanings of 'North', 'South' and 'country'. It is paramilitaries, bombs and deaths. It is street fighting. It is who you date. Sectarianism is, in sum, complex and cultural. It is perhaps best examined and tackled in this way and perhaps best summed up by one young man from Belfast:

How would you define sectarianism, like, what is it?
People just fightin' with each other all the time. Do your head in like. ...It's everything. Where I travel…. Sports…. Everything. Aye, who I date, and where I want to go.
Male, 17, Catholic, Ligoniel, Belfast

Chapter 3

Bounded Contentment

Facts, Fears and Feelings findings

- Young people involved in the *Facts, Fears and Feelings* study demonstrated limited exposure to the opposite community and 'cocooned' lifeways. Just under two thirds of the young people involved in this study were isolated from the opposite community to such an extent that they expressed being 'unaffected' or 'untouched' by sectarianism.

- Young participants were seen to be encased or 'wrapped up' by aspects of their community life in what is described as a 'cocoon'. When encased within a cocoon, it takes effort to leave it and to find a passage out due to a protective coating that is preserved to ward off any intruders. Since nearly 2 out of 3 of our participants found themselves in this type of environment of exclusion from the other community, a 'cocooning' between communities has occurred where 'separate' but 'content' was acceptable for many of the participants in the study.

- Only when their relative isolation was discussed with them did young people begin to consider the segregated circumstances in which they lived.

●   **This exclusion was complicated by fears about travelling
     through, shopping or socialising in areas occupied by the
     other community. 3 out of 4 participants stated that they
     would be concerned or fearful if they went into an area of the
     opposite community.**

●   **Outside of cross-community programmes when they were
     in school, a substantial number of young people had never
     entered areas of the opposite community for any reason. For
     some young people their exposure was so limited they felt
     'best' or most comfortable when, as many put it, 'inside' their
     own community. This isolation left them feeling relatively
     unconcerned with the effects of sectarianism.**

●   **Young people expressed that they live in areas where they
     interact with members of their own communities but have
     little concern for the workings or movements of the other
     community. Many young people living in enclaved areas
     found themselves very tied to their 'home' environments and
     described most movement as intra-area movement, staying
     close to 'what ye know'.**

●   **Importantly, although many young people demonstrated
     very limited long-term exposure to the other community,
     recognising such segregation, many felt that this should
     not be the norm. Two thirds of *Facts, Fears and Feelings*
     participants, including some who discussed highly segregated
     lifeways, discussed possibilities for a 'better' and less divided
     Northern Ireland.**

Bounded Contentment

Introduction

The previous chapter explored the meanings and nuances of sectarianism as it is interpreted by young people involved in *Facts, Fears and Feelings*. This chapter explores one of the three main themes that arose through conversation with young people – that of segregated living. This chapter discusses the personal interpretations of sectarianism as related to a state of segregation, focusing on how young people view their exclusion from the other community. Here, *Facts, Fears and Feelings* examines how they interpret their segregation and how young people discuss it, what fears they have about moving through areas of the opposite community and, finally, whether they see segregated living as a problem.

Inside the cocoon: facts

Other recent research in heavily segregated areas in Northern Ireland has illustrated, either statistically or through description, some effects of limited communication or exchange of persons, goods or services between communities (Hargie, Dickson and O'Donnell 2006a and 2006b, Catney 2005, Jarman 2005, Roche 2005a and 2005b, Ewart and Schubotz 2004, Sinclair et al. 2004, Smyth et al. 2004, Shirlow et al. 2002).

Jarman (2005) and Ewart and Schubotz (2004), for example, note many factors in the formation of attitudes towards sectarianism among Belfast youth, such as schooling, family, friends, symbols, murals, parades and marches, the media, segregated 'neutral' spaces, interface areas and the paramilitaries, while Shirlow and his co-authors (2002) explore the understanding of sectarian geography and the difficulties traversing it in North and East Belfast.

Catney (2005) as part of the *Donegall Pass Action Research Project*, found that one of the main factors for territoriality was the cohesion and intra-movement among community members. Her research found that the participants saw their areas as 'home' and often were content to live within their communities the rest of their lives. Research with TRIPROJECT in Derry/Londonderry also concurred with results such as these, with over 60% of respondents enjoying living in the city and over 30% happy to remain there 'all their lives' (Roche 2005a:91).

However, research investigating sectarianism among those most at risk of social exclusion, such as young people who have never been employed or who are currently unemployed, shows this alienation and 'encampment' to be even more severe. Hargie, Dickson and O'Donnell's (2006b) recent work with a variety of employed, unemployed and previously employed young people aged 16-24 across Belfast has been a milestone in contributing to policy-oriented research devoted to investigating the world view of young people who may be more at risk of exclusion within Northern Irish society. In their results, the authors found that among those once employed and now unemployed that the vast majority had left school at age 16 with minimal qualifications. This group was almost equally divided on whether they would be willing to find work in an area dominated by the other community. Fear of physical attack, lack of identification with

the host community and influence of upbringing were some of the factors noted about negative feelings toward taking a job in areas not of their own community. Furthermore, according to the authors, for many, thinking about working in an 'outgroup' area was conditional upon not being harassed, not having their religious background identified, and the job being short-term. Most felt that sectarianism in Belfast stood in the way of employment (Hargie, Dickson and O'Donnell 2006b:5).

Of those currently employed when interviewed for the study, while most had cross-community contact prior to work and found it beneficial, bigotry and threat of intimidation were still particularly prevalent in determining areas of Belfast in which they would work. Less than a quarter stated that they would be prepared to work anywhere in the city, and the issue of travelling through an area of the opposite community posed a bigger threat than the worksite itself (Hargie, Dickson and O'Donnell 2006b:6-7).

Finally, those who had never been employed showed similar feelings to those who were once employed. About half stated that they would consider taking a job with people of a different ethnoreligious background. However, most expressed a willingness to work in neutral areas.

Perhaps most importantly, the respondents displayed a type of seclusion or life in a 'bubble', where a young person was reluctant to work outside his immediate locale (Hargie, Dickson and O'Donnell 2006b:4).

Facts, Fears and Feelings found that this type of seclusion does not only occur in relation to employment but has impact on all sorts of life activities. Building on this metaphor, rather than a 'bubble' that can be 'popped' unintentionally, young people involved in *Facts, Fears and Feelings* were seen to be encased or 'wrapped up' by aspects of their community, as if experiencing life in a type of a cocoon. When encased within a cocoon, rather than an accidental 'pop' to exit, it takes effort to leave a cocoon and to find a passage out due to a protective coating that is preserved to ward off any intruders. Since two thirds of our participants found themselves in this type of environment of exclusion from the other community, a 'cocooning' between communities has occurred where 'separate' but 'content' was acceptable for many of the participants in the study.

Living in areas which are comprised of residents of only one community background is a preferable choice for many Northern Irish residents. For example, the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey (NILT) asked a question related to residential preference among its respondents since 1998. Findings indicate that between 19% and 26% favour living within a community with members of their own religious affiliation (Jarman 2005:33). Indeed the Young Life and Times (YLT 2003) survey illustrated that young people, too, showed preferences for single identity residential areas, schools and work places with one in three young people preferring to live in a community with members of their own religious affiliation and more than four in ten favouring segregated schools (YLT 2003 and Jarman 2005:33). Recent YLT results (2007) show similar findings with 23% still preferring to live in areas with people of their own religion.

As discussed, authors Hargie, Dickson and O'Donnell (2006a and 2006b) as well as Smyth et al. (2004) and Roche (2003 and 2005a) have investigated the impact of what has been termed a double penalty for a

significant number of young people in contemporary Northern Ireland. Facing problems associated with poverty, high levels of low educational attainment, prolonged unemployment and experiencing affects of sectarianism and the legacy of the Troubles in their areas, makes young people more vulnerable to social exclusion (Smyth et al. 2004 and 1998, and McVicar 2000). These aspects along with other aspects of a young person's social and familial life can create a binding effect where young people see their life within their own communities as the only world in which they 'fit best'.

One young, Catholic woman from Derry/Londonderry participating in a group interview sums up this feeling of 'best fit' that many young people expressed throughout *Facts, Fears and Feelings*:

I see it like, my parents, well my Da is kind of, worked in the factory and then got made redundant. So he sees the dole as the way te get on. But I wouldn't want to be away from my family, so I wouldn't. And see the likes of people at university level, that's not me, so it's not. I don't know, it's that none of my family didn't even get the likes of GCSEs.

It's more than just, than just not having the job, like. Or me workin' or whatever. I like it here with family, friends. It's the streets of Derry, or whatever! Ye know, the history of what we (Catholics) went through and all. I'll stay in the Creggan. I'll stay here with my wains (children/babies) and all.

Female, 17, Creggan, Derry/Londonderry

Other authors have shown that young people who are unemployed often do not see themselves as socially excluded, and have found that young people who are seen as most disadvantaged by governmental standards, often place more importance on living within a certain community, rather than moving out for economic reasons (Hargie, Dickson and O'Donnell 2006a:145). Equally, young school leavers and those from working class backgrounds can be influenced by the tradition of skilled labouring in families, and seek to obtain skills in areas that have been in 'in the family', such as joinery or bricklaying. Young people in working class areas in Northern Ireland often note that they are affected by parental admonishments to 'leave school and get a job' (Roche 2005a and 2003). Young people then want to find routes to skilled and semi-skilled employment, rather than pursuing education. More than just a symptom of unemployment acculturation, young people often see themselves as fitting in 'best' within the traditions of their local areas. As expressed in the excerpt above, not only family and friends matter, but local histories as well.

Such emphasis on local communities and often the legacy attached to those communities has significant implications for issues related to sectarianism. Responses to questions related to sectarianism and other aspects of living in their areas revealed that young people often were contained within cocoon-like situations of never leaving or having to leave their own communities. Everything they needed to survive and thrive could be found inside this bounded environment.

This type of cocooning was expressed in a variety of ways. Such remarks, however, indicated the extent of the segregation that some young people lived within, creating a situation of what I would term 'bounded contentment'. It is not that many of the young people did not feel that cross-community programmes were beneficial, or that they were against mingling and socialising with the opposite community. Rather, it was the case that many

young people involved in *Facts, Fears and Feelings* had no need to mingle with the members of the opposite community, and felt safer staying within areas that they 'knew'.

'Do you think sectarianism affects your life?' was a query asked of almost all participants in the study. The answer to this query and others surrounding the topic of sectarianism and segregation led to responses that most often revealed that sectarianism had 'no affect' on them or that it did not shape their lives. The reason most frequently cited for this was that the young person really never left their own areas.

You're talking to the wrong person, nah I just don't care! I've never really seen it (sectarianism). But as I say I only really met Protestant people when I went down the town to BIFHE and by that time I just I don't care 'cause I was old enough. I was 18.

Male, 23, Catholic, Beechmount, West Belfast

Sectarianism doesn't affect me. I just run about up my own up where I live. I don't go out of here. I just stay in here.

Male, 17, Catholic, Turf Lodge, Belfast

I'll never leave it. I went to school here, and everything. I'll die here. I know it. I know the area, like. Like why? Sectarianism really doesn't come into it, like. It doesn't bother me like. I mean, I know some Catholics, but I never had to work with them or live with them or anything, so it's not really a problem.

Female, 23, Protestant, Waterside, Derry/Londonderry

I just hang about in my own area. I never meet them.
Male, 16, Protestant, East Belfast

We have our own things to do. Ye know, because we have our own bonfires, like, in August. (Laughs). It's something for them to do in July and then something for us to do in August. It's your community thing.
Female, Catholic, 18, West Belfast

I mean, we live separate. There really is no reason to mix up, if ye know what I mean. I know that sounds bad, like. But it's true. Everyone says: 'Oh go on such and such a residential with themins!' But what's the point, like, really? I dunno. We live our life, they live theirs.
Female, 17, Protestant, Caw, Derry/Londonderry

In conversation with one young person, the reality of segregated living became very clear. Living on the 'city side' of Derry/Londonderry, the young woman had a discussion with me regarding whether she enjoyed living in the city and how she did not mix with any members on the opposite community. Illustrating a cocooned lifestyle, this young woman had never ventured to the Waterside area of the city and was completely unaware of areas on that side of the city. As she phrased it: 'All those places are in the Waterside and Protestant people live there.'
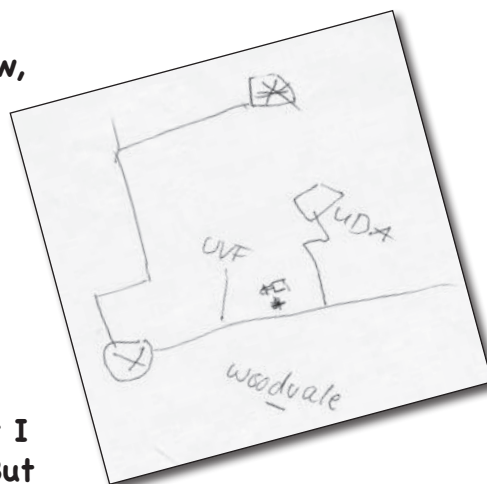
So you like living here. Do you think it's getting better in terms of that stuff (cross-community contact)?
No.

Do you think that's because as you explained, you don't encounter Protestant people?
Aye.

If I said you might have to go to the Waterside, to Tullyally to go to a training agency there, how would you feel about that?
Where's Tullyally?

Do you know Caw or Nelson Drive?
No.

Do you know Altnagelvin?
Aye. The hospital, like ...

Okay. What about Irish Street?
No. I don't know anywhere in the Waterside. ... All those places are in the Waterside and Protestant people live there.
Female, 19, Catholic, Rosemount, Derry/Londonderry

Many young people involved in the *Facts, Fears and Feelings Project* discussed being 'unaffected by sectarianism'. Young people who stated this, did not feel unaffected because they had integrated well with the other community, but rather were unaffected because, for them, sectarianism was not present in a life that is segregated. As one young person put it: 'Sectarianism really doesn't come into it.' Education and training, their

families, their friends and the communities in which they lived, provided for them almost all, if not all, that they needed, adding to a bounded contentment inside the cocoon.

Living in this segregated way is complex, however. Young people who portray a 'fine' life in a cocoon may be subject to myriad factors of societal abandonment. Aside from the usual complaints about young people as brought on by adolescence from older adults, young people in Northern Ireland are often seen as 'hoods', hooligans and troublemakers (for example, Roche 2003 and 2007, Hall 2002, Jarman and O'Halloran 2001) This type of image of the 'troublemaker teen', whether applicable or not, haunts many young people in Northern Ireland. As Smyth, Hamilton and Thomson state (2001:13):

> *The alienation of young people in certain communities is fairly comprehensive. Furthermore, these suspicions are not limited to their neighbours within their own community. Similar features of their status in the wider society often throws them back onto their own community as their sole arena for entertainment, achievement or fulfillment.*

This type of societal suspicion, often coupled with school leaver or unemployment status and social exclusion enhances the attractiveness of living in a life apart, where, as one young person put it: 'You are accepted for being who you are just, in your community.'

Going into a different 'country': fears

Reliance upon the local and familiar network of daily living, however, was not the only reason for their relative lack of contact with the other community. Young people most often related their limited exchanges with members of the opposite community due to perceived and actual fears of being in a dangerous situation with members of the opposite community. As one young Catholic male, from the Strand Road area in Derry/ Londonderry put it: 'That's "Indian Country"'. Discussing travelling into or shopping in the Waterside, this young person harkened upon old American Western film portrayals of the battles between Native Americans and those vying for their lands.

And would you ever go to the Waterside? Say to socialise or …?
To the Waterside? That's 'Indian Country?'

What?
'Indian Country'? (laughs). It's just ahhmm, a, a word some people use. My dad uses it for it all the time.

What do you mean by it?
That it's bad, like. Wile dangerous, like. It's a joke, like, but it's kinda the truth. I just don't go over there. I stay over here.
Male, 17, City Centre (Strand Road), Derry/Londonderry

Authors have discussed this type of aversion of going into other communities, and examined this through looking at levels of tensions in the area at certain times of the year, at certain times of the day, experiences within interface areas, problems with travelling to school, and in relationship

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to the physical barriers that impeded movement (for example, Hargie, Dickson and O'Donnell all 2006, Jarman 2005, Roche 2005a, Lysaght and Basten 2003, Shirlow 2002, Murtagh 2002 and 1999, Darby 1986).

Fear or worry can be a powerful agent in society, particularly among members who may have limited contact with each other. Some psychologists refer to this as 'intergroup anxiety', where people experience discomfort when interacting or anticipating interaction with members of the other community. Belief that the 'outgroup' members are dangerous or potentially harmful is one of the main feelings of negative expectations. Regarding this anxiety, Whitley and Kite (2006:225) state:

> *The theory (intergroup anxiety) postulates these negative expectations exist for one of two reasons: either because the person has had little contact with the outgroup and so sees the outgroup in terms of stereotypes that are often negative or because the person has had negative experiences with members of the outgroup in the past and bases expectations for future interactions on those experiences. Regardless of the reason, intergroup anxiety can lead to avoidance of outgroup members and hostility toward the outgroup.*

In the *Facts, Fears and Feelings Project*, both scenarios involving perceived suspicion of members of the other community, as well as worry due to personal negative experience with the other community were stated. Young people often expressed their anxiety of exchange with members of the opposite community using words that indicated a prohibition on movement – words like 'couldn't' and 'shouldn't'.

So where are the places you think you 'shouldn't go'?

Well the Catholics couldn't go near Tigers Bay, Shankill Road or nothing like that.

And what about Protestants is there somewhere they 'couldn't go'?

I don't know, I don't know where they couldn't go like.

Male, 17, Catholic, Turf Lodge, Belfast

Fulfilling intergroup anxieties and particularly those that indicate implicit fears, perceptions of the opposite community through related stories or suspicions were most common. 'Just hearing about it' was reason enough to avoid going into areas that were of the other community.

Do you ever hang out with Catholics?

No. They (from a cross-community excursion) asked me to go over but I'd be a wee bit funny going over there.

Okay, you would be worried?

Yeah.

Okay.

I'm sure they would be worried coming over here, too.

Female, 16, Protestant, East Belfast

You'd be stupid to walk up the Fountain do you know what I mean? 'Cause if somebody says, 'are you Catholic', that's the sad place right there, and you'd probably get your knees done if you're a Catholic walking through the

Fountain, you know what I mean like, or if you were in Tullyally, you would definitely avoid Tullyally you wouldn't do up that direction anyway like,
Female, 27, Catholic, Derry/Londonderry

Would you feel you could walk freely into the Shankhill?
No. I wouldn't know how to take everybody kind of thing. I don't know, I just wouldn't feel too comfortable because I never like go down there or anything, so I wouldn't.

Would you go into the Falls area?
I don't know, I've heard things about down there!

Female, 16, Protestant, Dundonald

Ok, would you go there (into a Protestant area)?
Naw.

How come?
Just hearing about it.

Female, 19, Catholic, Rosemount, Derry/Londonderry

… a walk up the Shankill Road?
Oh nah I wouldn't. Aye that is a barrier like, you couldn't go in there, 'cause you could get kilt (killed).

Do you think it (sectarianism) affects where you go like?
Aye, you couldn't go...I wouldn't go in there.

Are there other places you wouldn't go?

Aye, any Protestant places I wouldn't go to.

Male, 17, Catholic, Turf Lodge, Belfast

Often fear was tied up in the expression of 'knowing faces', 'not knowing faces' and worries that members of the opposite community could 'tell' that the young person was not of their community.

Use of this expression 'to tell a person is Catholic/Protestant' and analysis of it is not new. 'Telling', or the way members of each community are able to read implicit and explict signs of a person belonging to a particular community, was first used by Burton in his study of a West Belfast neighbourhood (1978). Since then, other social scientists have discussed the way in which young people feel that members of the opposite communities can 'just tell' which community they belong to (for example, Roche 2003, Feldman 1991 and Aretxaga 1997).

Many of young people's fears revolved around this idea that one could 'tell' each other apart, and therefore ran the risk of a negative interchange.

It's like, I don't know, you can tell that they're Fenia... Catholics or whatever. They dress like differently an' that. You just know. The way they wear their hats (baseball caps) an' all. But ye would know, like, anyway. I don't know, you would know.

Male, 17, Protestant, Irish Street, Derry/Londonderry

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I just think the Protestant community is smaller than what the Catholic community is so, like they're bound to know nearly everybody in their community. It's the Waterside like Tullyalley, Caw, Drumahoe and Irish Street, they're bound to know, like, most the people there. If they see a new face they say: 'I wonder who that is'.

Female, 17, Catholic, Waterside, Derry/Londonderry

Aye they know by you driving past all the time. They see you all the time going by. They get to know your face, yeah. They've got us boxed in, it's all Protestants where I live. I'm...we're in the middle.

Male, 17, Catholic, Ligoniel, Belfast

Know what I mean, that's just the way it is.

And they can tell? Can you tell groups of Catholics?
Aye.

How?
You just pick them out. You just know, you do like, you just know.

How though?
You just tell by looking at them.

Male, 16, Protestant, East Belfast

You know?

Say like if you were to go to Belfast (explaining) 'cause one time I went a tour of the interfaces. It was like a Catholic and Protestant bus I was on. Well it was mostly Protestants. Like a work thing. We all got off in the Shankill to the shop to get something. But then I just felt, like, so out of place. I just felt then that know all the people in Belfast, it's all like you know the way that some people looks at you and thinks like: 'Aw she's a Catholic', 'Aw she's a Protestant.'

How did you feel?

Kind of, threatened, like. Just wile careful of what you did, wile careful what you said and everything, like.

Okay. Do you think it would have made a difference if they knew you were Catholic?

It probably would have made it worse up there.

Female, 17, Waterside, Derry/Londonderry

One young woman was able to relate her feelings of anxiety to me by explaining a situation in England, where she found herself freed from this worry.

Like England, like Blackburn. Mummy used to be going with a guy from Blackburn and she took us over a couple of times and we had a ball. It's a really lovely place and the houses and all are gorgeous and everybody is really nice

'cause there's not, it's not Protestant or Catholic or paramilitaries or everybody was just really nice.

I was walking down, it would be like our city centre, it was a big town and I was walking down, and no one was giving me dirty looks and I was like – what's going on, it was really strange.

Female, 16, Protestant, Dundonald, East Belfast

Beyond just general worries or suspicions, many young people expressed a genuine fear of being attacked physically within areas of the opposite community.

…so you think it is dangerous?
To go into the Fountain? Aye.

Okay, and what do you think could happen to you in there?
I was never in it so I wouldn't know like. Probably get battered or something, there two weeks ago we were coming past in the car on the Abercorn Road, know there's entrance off Abercorn Road, somebody just getting battered to death, not to death, like, his face was all busted. They ran up into the Fountain again.

Male, 19, Catholic, Top of the Hill, Derry/Londonderry

Bad, it's bad like, 'cause Catholics around, in the Protestant area, they'd get beat. They would alright like, know what I mean, it's just the way it is.

You think that's still going on?
Aye it is all right, definitely. Catholics came in like, if they were just running about the area just being themselves, they'd get chased out of the area, that's just the way it is like.

Male, 16, Protestant, East Belfast

So you wouldn't travel into the Falls?
Naw. Naw. You, they would, like, know. You would get beat. Bad.

Male, 22, Protestant, Village, Belfast

If you walked down like the Shankill Road … ?
I wouldn't walk down the Shankill Road, I wouldn't take a chance!

Male, 18, Catholic, Ardoyne, Belfast

Is it like mainly Catholic where you live or…?
Some parts. When you go...There's only so far you can go, then it's all Protestants, you can't go in there. ...You'd probably get kilt (killed).

Male, 16, Catholic, Clooney Terrace, Derry/Londonderry

….where you go shopping or travelling or?
Female1: **Aye well saying that like we couldn't walk down the Shankill…**
Female2: **Aw aye, God no way, God I'd be afraid.**
Female1: **We couldn't go over…**

What does it feel like walking up the Shankill?
Female1: **It's scary.**

Female2: **Scary. You would just pee yourself. I walked up it once. I was at a party and it is scary.**

What is it that's scary?
Female1: **(unclear) wheelie bin, running down the street**.
Female2: **Cut up, chopped up and put in a wheelie bin.**
Female1: **They're bitter, I'm not joking.**
Female2: **They are so so more bitter than us, it's unreal.**
Female1: **…Everybody to their own, do you know what I mean… that's about it.**
Females, 24 and 25, Catholics, West Belfast and Whiterock, Belfast

Do you go over to the Waterside?
Do I go over there? Aye.

You do. Do you have friends over there?
Aye. They're not Protestants, but. Top of the Hill (Catholics).

Okay, so would you have friends that are Protestants?
Not really.

Why do you think that is?

See you couldn't go into the Fountain, like, you'd get battered. You're not going to go in there and try make friends like.

Male, 18, Catholic, Garden City, Derry/Londonderry

Fear was also prevalent when discussing travelling into the city centre and possibly meeting groups from the opposite community. *Facts, Fears and Feelings* results illustrate that while those aged over 25 felt reasonably safe using the city centre to socialise, those under 25 preferred to stay within their 'own areas' to socialise. With 72% of TRIPROJECT respondents stating they felt most threatened 'outside a pub or a club' and a further 45% stating that they felt most threatened 'inside a pub or club' socialising can be perceived as a hazardous pastime in the 'wrong' area.

Fears such as these were usually connected to violent incidents which happened in the city centre or incidents that young people had 'heard about.' In the case of *Facts, Fears and Feelings*, these fears were related to shopping or socialising.

We were just out shoppin' like, getting a few bits and bobs, and one of my friends had a Celtic bag with her and it just started like. We got chased, so we did.

Female, 17, Catholic, West Belfast

I'd be feared going over the town. It's not safe. They know you are a Protestant and all. Swear to God. I know that sounds, but I would be worried about it. Some friends of mine got jumped so they did, a while back there, but, I

don't know, I just would shop here or go to Coleraine maybe with my mum.
Female, 17, Caw, Derry/Londonderry

TRIPROJECT results showed that the older a respondent was, the less likely they were to perceive the city as 'dangerous'. Regarding the correlation between age and access, Roche states (2005a:243-244):

> *One could extrapolate that the older age bracket could feel more confident or comfortable with their surroundings, and importantly have more access to private transport. However, another factor of concern … is that young people reported feeling threatened by, and violently engaged with, young people 'around the same age'. Equally … it is those in the younger brackets who engaged more frequently in violent or threatening contact. All these factors may contribute to the slightly older young person's feeling of increased comfort.*

Getting to and from places held a high 'fear factor' for the young people in the *Facts, Fears and Feelings* study. Hargie, Dickson and O'Donnell's work with young employed people show that less than a quarter indicated that they would like to work anywhere in the city of Belfast because travelling through areas of the other community posed a bigger threat than the worksite itself (2006b:6). Finally, over 50% of those involved in a report by the Northern Ireland Policing Board (2005) reported that they had experienced violent or threatening act, and the most common place for this to occur was on a bus. With many participants of the *Facts, Fears*
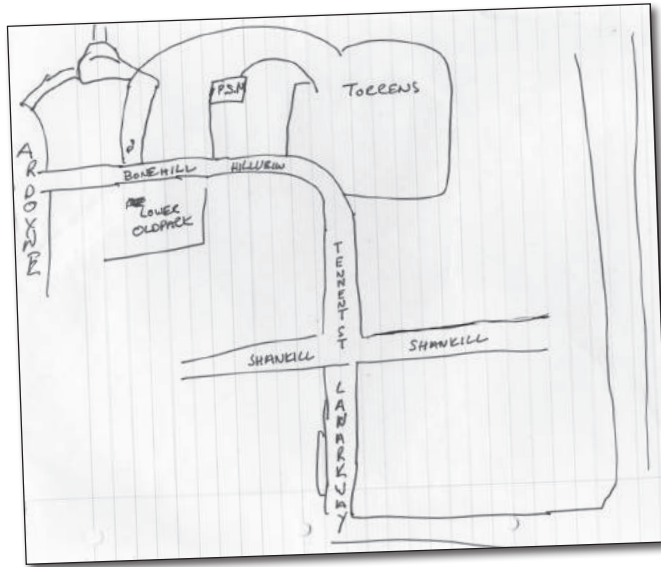
and Feelings study having little legal access to private transport, most participants relied upon public transport or taxi.

It's, I don't know, you get on the bus, people know where you are going, where you live. You can get, I don't know. Get feelings like, you worry if you get off at the wrong place. Ahhmm, at least I used to. It's sometimes like why I would ask my uncle to drive in, you know. It's like, taxis, sometimes people know them too. Unless they have all these ones that are uniformed and all. But it's the way it is. (Laughs.) I guess, you have to get on a bus right!? To get where you are going, like? Or you'll be the first one out! (referring to being fired from a job placement).

Female, 18, Protestant, East Belfast

I can remember when I was younger the bus was getting stoned and windows broke because we were seen as a Protestant bus and we could be told on that, know, we were going to Ballymoney. ...because we was seen as a Protestant going to Ballymoney.

Female, 19, Protestant, Ballycastle

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As we were getting on a train we seen a group of people wearing flute band uniforms, that says 'Ardoyne Flute Band, Red, White and Blue,' 'cause it's like Ardoyne, half and half, I think. And I was all to (friend), ye know: 'Don't speak, we're from DerryLondon'.

They says: 'Where are ye going?' and I says: 'Oh, Londonderry', 'cause they were all, and we knew cause they were in front of us. And where did they sit? Right in front of us on the train. And they were going to Ballymena Twelfth, you know march, and we were really shitting ourselves, we were scared like. I was shaking, and I was all: 'I'm never going to get the train again.' 'Cause they were on about Ian Paisley an all, and 'We're going marching today' and all. And they were just really Loyalist like. And we were just really scared like. 'Cause we were on the train going to Ballymena and you know it's mostly a Protestant area.

On public transport, is it a problem?
Aye, it is. Like trains is anyway. Sure they only have protestant trains from Belfast to Derry, they don't have them for Strabane or Fermanagh, and that's mostly Catholic areas like.
Female, 27, Catholic, John's Street, Derry/Londonderry

Fears involved public travel, taxi travel, walking through an area to get to a destination and walking into an area to socialise. In these cases, there was safety in numbers …

It is a bit awkward because you can't really go anywhere, you have to always ask someone to go through Short Strand. You can't walk through them 'cause you're scared to walk through them just in case you get mugged or shot or anything like that and really they should just, I don't know you should put them all together and beat them all up.

When I have to go into town or anything, I would worry about going past Short Strand or getting a taxi through it 'cause I'm scared of just in case they want to kill anybody. And I'm scared of that just in case it happens to me when I'm there or anything like that, because if I've not got anybody with me. How is my family supposed to know where I am and, you know, it just frighten me sometimes about going through Short Strand. That's why I don't live near Short Strand. I don't go anywhere near Short Strand.

Female, 18, Protestant, South Belfast

Okay, and would your friends from that mixed community club, would they come to your house or…?
No. We would only go in, they would only come over here if we were with a youth group, in with a leader, that's it you wouldn't go in on your own.

Okay, how do you think that we can fix that in Northern Ireland?
I don't know, I seriously don't know.
Male, 16, Protestant, East Belfast

Apart from perceived incidents of sectarian behaviour, there are those who have experienced the threat of sectarian violence or who have been attacked. TRIPROJECT results indicate that 26% of respondents in that survey were involved in 'something sectarian' which involved 'physical threat' and 26% of the sample experienced 'something sectarian' that involved physical contact.

While not all violent interchanges between young people are sectarian in nature, young people noted 'knowing' the difference between incidents that they perceived to be sectarian and those that were not (see also Roche 2003).

Ahhmmm, ye just know. Ye know, I don't know. It's like, you go into the houses over there and they know you are a Catholic. But it's not just fightin' te fight. It's to jump ye. It's to make sure they are tellin' ye te stay away, out of their area like.

Male, 19, Catholic, Gobnascale (Top of the Hill), Derry/Londonderry

Where the incidents were perceived to be sectarian, as one young woman put it, 'put a fear in me, forever'.
I went over, had friends from a wee residential, and went into the Falls and got beat. It was just, awful really like. My mummy was upset. It was like a set up, an attack,

like. ...It put a fear in me, forever like.
Female, 23, Protestant, East Belfast

They were fighting down the Short Strand so they were, and my granny were in hospital at the time and we had to drive past them all when they were all fighting and they had lit a fire in the middle of the road. And we couldn't get past, but my aunty had to put her foot down (to get away).

(Using threatening voice) 'Stop the car. We're taking your car and killing youse 'uns.'

We had to drive straight through the fire. I didn't like that so I didn't because you had to drive through a fire. 'Cause they were all Catholics fighting that was all because it was the Twelfth of July. So it was, I never like that.
Female, 18, Protestant, East Lisburn

Got done in, got beat. There was a crowd of them (Catholics), ye know. I was coming home from the Odyssey, know the Odyssey, I was coming home. A crowd of them got me beat the life out of me.

Do you think that was a sectarian thing.
Aye, know what I mean. It's the only way to look at it.
Male, 16, Protestant, East Belfast

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I just I make sure I go down wi' two or three friends, 'cause I wouldn't go down there on me own, 'specially at night time. I would go down in the daytime, 'cause there's never any Protestants about there.

But I went down there before, at night time by meself to get drink, and some boy come up and asked me for a fag. And I gave him a fag and whenever I turned round to look somewhere, whenever I turned back, he just cut me a slap. Just cracked me on the side the ear for some reason.

I don't know why. And then I just scrubbed it then (ran away), 'cause they was lookin' for a whole pile of boys who were with him. He cracked me so I just cleared then, and that's why I wouldn't go down there by myself again. I would rather go down wi' a couple of friends just in case something like that happens again. ...He was a Protestant for defs.

How do you know that?
I don't know, I don't know, but he was a Protestant, I know for a fact he was (laughs).
Male, 17, Catholic, Top of the Hill, Derry/Londonderry

So you don't think cross-community programmes are a good idea?
Because I used to hang about with them and then they jumped me, so. ...They actually jumped me. They beat me,

that's why. Never trust them ever since. So I don't like them.

Okay. So you would not consider mixing with Catholics at all?
No.
Male, 17, Protestant, Bloomfield, East Belfast

'They live their life, we live ours': feelings

The final section of this chapter focuses on the impact of the segregation and fears of the other community by discussing how young people involved in the *Facts, Fears and Feelings Project* felt about the segregation in their lives.

Ewart and Schbotz found that their participants recognised that because young people mainly socialised within their own segregated areas, this meant that there were restricted opportunities to meet others from the opposite community (2004:50). Equally, Hargie, Dickson and O'Donnell's work with community groups and training providers noted that sectarianism had increased since the Belfast Agreement and the communities had become more polarised (2006a).

Facts, Fears and Feelings results indicate that high amounts of young people, particularly young school leavers and the young unemployed, demonstrate life in the cocoon. Whether by active choice or through 'limited contentment', where young people feel living within their own areas is completely acceptable and are sometimes exacerbated by fears of the other community, many young people discussed segregated living as the best way to 'keep the peace' in Northern Ireland.

Such results are compelling. Two thirds of participants noted their seclusion within their own area and how the affects of sectarianism and segregation did not influence them in any way. One young person described this feeling as 'that's why it feels so secure'.

Does sectarianism affect anything in your life?
Nah, none of it. It doesn't affect me.

And why do you think that is?
I just live in a secure area, where there's no Protestants about there, that's what it is, so it is. I was brought up in the Catholic area. The Top of the Hill, that there's where I was brought up. That there's where I'm from Top of the Hill. It's full of Catholics. No Protestants up there. That's why it feels so secure, ye know what I mean.
Male, 17, Catholic, Top of the Hill, Derry/Londonderry

It doesn't really affect your daily life?
Nah, I always lived in an area that's... Republican, with Catholics. It doesn't affect my daily life, I don't think it would. I mean you can walk anywhere you want to like, (laughing realising her segregation) oh, in my own area!
Female, 27, Catholic, Derry/Londonderry

It doesn't affect me. I love here. I'm not bigoted or anything like. I'm happy stayin' in my own area like.
Male, 18, Protestant, East Belfast

Do you think, do you feel sectarianism affects you on any daily level?
No.

Do you think that's because you don't encounter Protestant people?
Aye.

Female, 19, Catholic, Rosemount, Derry/Londonderry

So how do you think it like affects your life then?
It doesn't affect my life whatsoever. I don't care, see to be honest with ya. (Laughs). I never see them (Protestants).

Female, 25, Catholic, Whiterock, Belfast

Continuing, when asked about the state of segregation and how they felt about that, some young people noted that there was 'peace' in segregation.

How do you feel about people, communities being separated?
It's just the way it is. ...it keeps the peace.

Male, 17, Protestant, Lincoln Courts, Derry/Londonderry

How do you think you could stop stuff (fighting in communities) like that?
If ye just keep to your own side. That's the best thing.

Male, 16, Protestant, New Buildings, Derry/Londonderry

Do you think it's a good idea that people stay separate, or do you think they should…

Aye, it's keepin' the peace, doesn't it. It keeps the peace.

Male, 16, Protestant, East Belfast

Do you think you are segregated?

Aye, we definitely live apart, away from them. That is life I suppose when you look at it. Whatever out there, thinking up in Belfast, Stormont or whatever that the wains are mixing it, it just isn't the way it is going. I know myself that I hardly go into areas where I'd be fearful. Why would I want to take my wains into areas like that? Better to keep everyone safe like, I'd say.

Female, 22, Catholic, Galliagh, Derry/Londonderry

Somebody suggested that you take down the wall between the Fountain, the peace wall; do you think that would work?

No, then they'd just come in even harder then. They would have to end up putting the wall back up again, that's my opinion like.

Male, 17, Agnostic, Hazelbank, Derry/Londonderry

Do you think that it's good that Catholics and Protestants live in separate areas?
Yeah, 'cause there's less fights, if they just keep them on their side and we stay on our side there's less fights.

What do you think of those walls? Do you think they work?
Some of them do, some of them don't, because people still get over them.
Female, 17, Protestant, Imperial Street, Belfast

However, recognising the segregation, some young people, felt that this should not be the norm. 2 out of 3 of *Facts, Fears and Feelings* participants, including some who lived highly segregated lifeways, talked about possibilities for a 'better' and less divided Northern Ireland.

As I say, you get told stories. But then when you meet them they're not...they're exactly the same as you so. I don't mean it to sound that bad, like they're some sort of weird monsters but it's just the same people, it's just normal stuff...the stories die away. I still get told, you shouldn't walk up the Shankill...Ah shut up, for Christ's sake!
Male, 23, Catholic, West Belfast

Do you know different parts of the community are divided by the likes of barricades and stuff like big walls?
Oh ahmm, I feel like that's just like saying that is a separate society like and Catholics and Protestant can't mix cause if there's a big wall then that's saying that they can't get along with each other and there won't be peace between

them two. Like it could be put there from violence but like it's not as bad as it use to be, so they should try and sort something out to make it look like a more mixed society where people get along with each other.

Female, 17, Protestant, Lisburn

Do you think there should be more mixing just across the board?
Yeah, I think so. I've loads of friend and all and they don't like...like to go out places and all, or like go into town and stuff because they see like a group of Catholics and they're like 'oh, my god', like they panic and all but if like they were talking to them and all and they understood that they're just like us. Then I think it would be alright.

Female, 16, Protestant, Dundonald

Do you think the barriers, the walls and the gates, they could be taken down?
Yeah.

Yeah. You don't think there would be a big problem with the communities?
You won't know until it was to happen like, know what I mean.

Would you like to see them taken down?
Yeah. Belfast would improve if it didn't have all this. Like people weren't...Belfast would become bigger if people weren't scared to go into certain areas like.

Male, 23, Catholic, Springfield Road, Belfast

Okay. Do you think there should be more of that, like more mixing?

Aye, more in Derry, like. I don't know some Protestants wouldn't really come over the town cause it's like all Catholics, most of it's Catholics like, so then they can only stay in the Waterside and all.

Female, 17, Catholic, Waterside, Derry/Londonderry

Concluding

The discussed separation, feeling of security within one's own area and relative 'peacefulness' of dependence upon segregated lifeways is complex. Young people are not merely stating that they do not 'like' the other community. Rather they see exposure and exchange as something which is unnecessary. This type of seclusion then leads to fears of the opposite community, whether based on experienced truths or those that are taught or 'picked up'.

Like being inside a cocoon, young people do not see the other community properly but through the sheaths of their chrysalis. This erroneous image leads to all sorts of 'fear factors', based on myths, local history, family history or personal experience. The result is that suggestion of travelling through, into, or staying within a residence area of the opposite community leads to a paranoia that is easy 'caught' by others within their peer group. Even areas that are perceived as 'neutral' can be dangerous if a young person feels they may be confronted by members of the other community.

What is most compelling evidence coming from *Facts, Fears and Feelings* is that just under two thirds of the participants involved in the project were 'unaffected' by sectarianism due to the fact that they did not consider themselves to be in danger when they were in their own areas. When aspects of this segregation were teased out, young people would witness and discuss their segregated lifestyles, but on the whole, young people did not see their segregation as a problem. For many, living separately 'keeps the peace.' Finally, for others, just blending in seemed to be the only peaceable solution.

And how do you find livin' here then?
It's hard like. There's Irish Street right in front of you. And then there's just, your neighbours and all are different, so you have to kinda pretend you're Protestant.

So you pretend…?
It's sick, but.

Is it just to avoid (Aye) conflict?
It's either that or kickings (laughs) windows bein' broke so, what else can we do? A wee white lie.

Male, 17, Catholic, Waterside, Derry/Londonderry (Relocated from England).

Chapter 4

Family and Friends Matter(s)

Facts, Fears and Feelings findings

- Evidence from *Facts, Fears and Feelings* supports and illustrates a continuum between research projects among children and young people. This research shows that young people are genuinely affected by familial and peer audiences.

- Young people in our project showed particular evidence of being affected by family values. Almost all young people attributed their feelings about the other community to being influenced by their immediate guardians' feelings, whether open minded about mixing or, conversely, against mixing with the other community.

- Young people discussed extended family influences, including parents and grandparents. Those participating in the project frankly discussed their parents' and grandparents' feelings towards the other community. Not one participant seemed to feel awkward about discussing their parents' or grandparents' prejudices. A third of young people in the study openly talked about their parents and grandparents having negative views of the opposite community.

- When young people talked about their parents in terms of their influence on their personal prejudices, many young

people would state that it has 'nothing to do with me' or 'I'm okay with it'. This type of distancing from their parents' and grandparents' prejudice would occur even when it was discovered that the young person held relatively similar values. Young people most often saw their parents and grandparents as victims of a conflict and made allowance for sectarian prejudice in their elders. Except in one case, young people did not seek to admit having sectarian prejudice. Rather, these young people discussed it as something connected to family upbringing.

- Most often, young people demonstrated that they maintained close friendship networks within their area. While two thirds of respondents discussed being involved in cross-community projects while in school or some limited contact with the other community, only 1 in 4 young people maintained any lasting or meaningful friendship. This figure also includes those in cross-community marriages or partnerships. It is also important to note that all friendships that the young people discussed were highly reflective of class barriers as well.

- Regarding those who had maintained meaningful cross-community friendships, these young people still were active across the community divide.

- When asked about aspects of cross-community friendships, many young people in *Facts, Fears and Feelings* noted that peers from the other community were 'okay' and that they had 'nothing against them' but often the young person expressed that either they were uninterested in pursuing a relationship, or that they felt it best to stay within their own area.

- Beyond the typical youthful activities involving sport, shopping, and going to venues such as pubs and clubs, camaraderie for many participants also entailed engaging in violent activities that involved groups of friends or extended friend networks from their areas. Some of these activities involving violence included rioting and arranged street fighting. Approximately one third of participants were involved in violent skirmishes either as victim or perpetrator or both.

- Throughout conversation with individuals, almost all skirmishes were explained and justified to some degree through the lens of division. This is an important point in that whether the situation was indeed random, or was indeed sectarian in intent, most young people could readily assign a sectarian label to the attack and have it 'fit' within the divided community construct.

- With regard to maintaining friendships and making new friends, a different kind of media – the advent of online social media networking and Short Messaging Service (SMS), or 'text messaging' – is changing the length and breadth of friendship possibilities. With respect to sectarianism and division, there were both positives and negatives to these technologies. Sadly, young people involved in *Facts, Fears and Feelings* noted how the internet social networking sites were sometimes used to issue sectarian abuse. However, several young people noted how such online networks created opportunities for a new kind of community; they discussed freely chatting to peers of the other community and the friendship-building potential of such technologies.

Family and Friends Matter(s)

Introduction

While the previous chapter explored limited exposure and communication with the opposite community that two thirds of the *Facts, Fears and Feelings Project* participants experience, this chapter moves into the personal circles of the young people and seeks to examine the intimate networks and contacts that influence young people. Here, young people talk about their families and their friends, and the impact that these individuals have on their worlds. After discussing lifeways that were located within their area with regards to sectarianism and segregation, the topic of families and friends was the second most prevalent topic among discussants.   Many aspects of the young person's intimate circle are covered here. Augmenting previous discussions that have investigated aspects of family, school and friends (for example, Ewart and Schubotz 2004, Sinclair et al. 2004) this study aimed to probe some of these and some less apparent aspects of interpersonal relationships. Presented in this chapter, young people discuss being raised 'in it' and some of the feelings that they have about this. *Facts, Fears and Feelings* also expands notions of friendships by including aspects of personal networks through new technologies, such as mobile texting and online social media networking.

Family and being raised 'in it': facts and feelings

Our families and close friends have a large impact on who we become. Multiple studies conducted in areas of divided living, including that of race, ethnicity or sect, have shown that the influence that families have on their children's attitudes toward other communities in their areas is substantial (for example, Connolly 2002, Bar-Tal 1996, Katz and Kofkin 1997, Cairns 1987).

In the Northern Irish context, Connolly's research indicates that children as young as three can exhibit sectarian preferences and prejudices. Furthermore, by the age of six many children show an awareness of violence In Northern Ireland, both paramilitary and sectarian, and by ten or eleven can exhibit sectarian prejudices (Connolly and Healy 2003, Connolly et al. 2002, Connolly 2000 and 1998).

Recent research conducted with older children and young people demonstrates intergenerational and peer influences have a strong impact on how young people come to learn about and feel about the opposite community (for example, Ewart and Schubotz 2004, McCole et al. 2003, Roche 2005a and 2003, Smyth et al. 2004). Across Northern Ireland, half of young 16 year olds queried within the scope of the Young Life and Times (YLT 2007) indicated that their family influenced their views about the opposite community (also Devine and Schubotz 2004). Recent work by Sinclair et al. (2004) with over 114 young people aged 15-17 in Omagh, also indicates the markers by which young people identify each other, including indicators such as a person's name, a school uniform and a residential address. Noted are six factors that the young people identified as important to developing sectarian attitudes. These include (Sinclair et al. 2004:159-160):

Family background,
Social lives, including sport and entertainment,
School,
Media,
Politics, and,
Personal experience.

Threat and violence are also tied in with family and friends. Recent TRIPROJECT results, for example, indicated that young people queried had experiences that they considered to be sectarian. Indeed, nearly 40% had experienced a sectarian event involving 'threatening words', while 26% reported that they had experienced sectarianism through 'physical threat' and through 'physical contact' (Roche 2005a:302-303). Importantly connected to this, young people engaged in violent incidents the majority of which occurred within peer cohorts and in groups of young people their own age. A friend's involvement in violent incidents was one of the main reasons for others to join in (Roche 2005a:250-251).

With regard to family members, research has suggested that some proportion of young people have participated in violent activities condoned by their family members. Ethnographic research in Derry/Londonderry among over 180 young school leavers (Roche 2003) indicates that some young people were encouraged to participate in rioting and enjoyed the experience through familial support. This type of familial encouragement was also evidenced by Kelly when young people discussed being encouraged to participate in activities that are tied to sectarianism or that were sectarian, such as rioting (2002).

Aspects of the development of prejudice in children can be thought of as being encompassed in terms of two types of learning processes. These

two types of processes include direct teaching and indirect teaching, encompassing modeling and imitation (Bandura 1986 and 1977). In families with extreme beliefs, such as those espousing ethnic or racist hatred, children are often taught to 'stay away' or 'beware of' those that are not like 'them', or to despise members of the 'outgroup' (for example, Blee 2002). Indirect teaching, however is more common with children, indirectly 'picking up' (Gibson 1979) verbal, facial and physical cues from parents, relations and peers regarding attitudes towards everything from stereotyping gender roles, to racial profiling, to heterosexist attitudes, to ethnic opinions (Whitley and Kite 2006).

Often negative prejudice is formed between the ages of 3 and 5 years. However, as children become older, and subsequently often more exposed to members of another community, children's prejudice can be seen to decline (Kalin 1979). In areas where children are segregated or where the community may have a significant 'outgroup', prejudiced views towards the other community have been seen to increase or become more complex as children grow older (Bar-Tal 1996).

These discoveries have implications in Northern Ireland's divided context. Indeed, Connolly's work with pre-schoolers in Northern Ireland links the rapid increase in the proportion of children beginning to identify themselves as 'Catholic' or 'Protestant' with the onset of schooling years as part of the segregated nature of the schooling itself (Connolly 2002).

The fact that young people in Northern Ireland have noted their 'family background' as one of the most important contributing factors to sectarian attitudes is important (Sinclair et al. 2004). Even more significant, however, is not just the background of the young person (such as coming from a Catholic or Protestant background) but the direct influence and impact of the family members themselves. A young person's intimate personal circle and the interpretation of events that members of that circle provide for the young person, influences their interpretation of present. For example, Smyth et al. (2004) note that parents often told stories of past events that influenced young people's interpretations of the Troubles and lengthy ethnographic research in Derry/Londonderry indicates that family 'myths' and experiences had an affect on young people's views of the other community (Roche 2003).

Most young people involved in the *Facts, Fears and Feelings Project* discussed the implications of being raised within a divide context. However, few respondents stated that they held sectarian views. In a rare omission of sectarian feeling on this topic conversation, a young woman from Derry/Londonderry sums up:

So you think yourself, that you may have particular attitudes?
Aye, well, biases like, aye. I would. I would have them. How can ye not, like? I've called people 'Orange bastards'. Like, the saints that run around this place! ...

People always says: 'Not me', but we're all reared in here together but not together, like, and then we are told we are to live together like, to catch ourselves on? People don't want to say that they are, you know. But they are.

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That type of mix, that just won't happen overnight, so it won't.
Female, 24, Catholic, Bogside, Derry/Londonderry

Some young people discussed community relationships in negative terms, using words such as 'hate' and 'bitterness' to describe a situation that 'just is'. Others spoke positively about the relationships between communities. The situation that 'is' however, whether positively expressed, or negatively expressed was most often attributed to the way that people within a community were raised.

I just sort of think the same as my mammy and daddy do it's just sort of the way you're brought up.
Female, 17, Catholic, Waterside, Derry/Londonderry

It's the way they've been brought up. They've been brought up to hate each other, that's the way it is.
Male, 17, Catholic, Ligoniel, Belfast

It has to do with the way people's been brung up in it. It's why everyone has so many problems. Why everyone has so much hatred built up.
Male, 19, Protestant, East Belfast

Female1: **It just depends on what way they are, if they not bitter...on both sides, if you're bitter you're bitter if you're not you're not, do ya know what I mean, it just depends...**

Female2: **It's all to do with what way you're brought up.**

Is it?

Female1: **It really is. Even older people, they'll tell ye the same. It's just the way you're brought up...**

Females, 24 and 25, Catholic, West Belfast and Whiterock, Belfast

Many young people, about a third, were positive about their upbringing. This, too, was attributed to the open-mindedness of their parents. Far from the negative impressions above, these young people discussed how their parents had a positive influence upon their views of the other community.

I could have been a real hateful, political minded, and I wasn't. I think it was a lot to do with my parents as well ye know. They didn't force it on me. My dad was really involved in whatever shape or form, but he didn't force that on me. It might have been different if he had of had sons, ye know. They could have joined or whatever ye know, because two daughters and that's it.

Female, 34, Catholic, West Belfast

My parents were really, they were fine like. They never well, they would shout and all in front of the TV and all, but they never really told us what to believe. 'It's your decision at the end of the day' like they used to say. So I make up my own mind.

Male, Protestant, 17, Waterside, Derry/Londonderry

There was cross community in my family. Has always been a big thing because you would have, especially growing up in an estate like the Fountain. You know, it's just so one sided ...My mum would do cross-community as well ye see. ...It would have been the way I grew up.

Female, 22, Protestant, Fountain, Derry/Londonderry

Now I think I'm quite lucky the fact that society now a days is moving towards a more peaceful society. So I'm definitely not sectarian now but I will admit that I was before. ...Just from growing up. My mum and Dad never really pushed me like. Any time say they heard me or seen me doing something they would...just looked at me and were just so disappointed, were disgusted at me. It was hard to deal with at the time because you knew they were just so disappointed in ye. That there was probably a big change as well for me.

Male, 17, Catholic, Glengormley

Young people participating in the *Facts, Fears and Feelings Project* frankly discussed their guardians' feelings towards the other community, whether they were positive, neutral or negative. Not unlike the findings of Sinclair et al. (2004), young people expressed that they were very influenced by their parents. Well over three quarters of *Facts, Fears and Feelings* participants discussed their parents and grandparents with regard to sectarianism and their own personal feelings about it. These results are comparable with recent findings from the Young Life and Times survey (YLT 2007). In that year's survey, when the 16 year olds involved in the study were asked about what they felt had been the most important influence on their views, 50% responded that it was 'my family'.

While parents obviously feature heavily in terms of influence, the young people involved in the *Facts, Fears and Feelings* study often discussed their grandparents as well. In a discourse on the little research undertaken on the extended family in Northern Ireland, Evason, Lloyd and Dowds (2005) examine the role of grandparents in Northern Irish families. Utilising responses from the Northern Irish Life and Times survey (NILT), the authors found that the vast majority of grandparents were 'close' or 'very close' with their grandchildren at 94%. Many grandparents, 33% of all respondents helped with childcare during the day and 20% helped with babysitting in the evening. As the authors state: 'What is perhaps most interesting is that 14% of grandmothers have had to cut down or give up work to help look after their grandchildren.' Important to note here is that we should be aware that young people have a more extended network of familial influence than just their immediate parents. Considering the majority of *Facts, Fears and Feelings* participants were aged under 24 years, many participants have grandparents who have lived through the Troubles. Many young people discussed the importance of their grandparents in their lives.

When discussing parents' and grandparents' opinions regarding the other community, young people used words to describe their parents such as (positive to neutral) 'laid back', 'okay with them', 'open minded' and (neutral to negative) 'they only mind when…', 'prejudiced', 'bigoted', 'hateful' or 'bitter'.

For those with parents or grandparents who were openly negative about members of the opposite community, not one participant seemed to feel awkward about discussing their family members' prejudices. Almost all participants discussed the importance of these influences on their perceptions of members of the opposite community. Equally, young people plainly discussed their parents' or grandparents' feelings, whether they were 'open minded' or not.

A third of young people openly discussed that their parents and grandparents held negative views of the opposite community.

My parents are bigots. Well, my mummy is, for sure. I have no problem saying that. They went through a wile lot though. It just is the way it is with them.
Female, 18, Protestant, Caw, Derry/Londonderry

It's probably just bred into them when they were youngsters just. Probably just bred into them. Could be their dad, it could be their mum that's a bit funny on it, just bred into them. ...My dad would be very bad on it. Doesn't bother me.
Male, 16, Protestant, Nelson Drive, Derry/Londonderry

My dad, he would be wile, wile... He hates Protestants so he does.

Male, 18, Catholic, Hazelbank, Derry/Londonderry

(Discussing why she left a cross-community project with a friend)
Her mummy, her mother didn't want it to be cross-community.

So some people on the course had parents who didn't want it to be a cross-community thing?
Yeah.

Female, 17, Protestant, Foylevale, Shankill Belfast

My da. My dad and my ma I suppose like. They really don't like themins. They're bitter so they are. What like can ye do? It's, they hate the PSNI so they do as well. It all has to do with what they know from before like. Canny blame them. There's like fuck all you can do about it like.

Male, 19, Catholic, Bogside, Derry/Londonderry

I'm a Protestant. All my family is Protestant. I didn't know about Catholics or Protestants and I was wondering, you know what I was until I asked my mum and she told me I were a Protestant. I asked her

what a Catholic was and she went: 'It's them that want to fight all the time'. And I went: 'Alright then'.

Female, 18, Protestant, East Lisburn (relocated from England to Belfast when a teenager)

My granda is a, a bitter person. I've talked to him about it like. But he didn't like the way people would go over the Catholic side when they married and all.

Female, 17, Shankill, Belfast

Have you ever been affected by sectarianism?
Aye, the UVF blew my uncle up before. Up in the bar at (area). Years ago. Back in all the Troubles. Before I was born, so it was. It's not really talked about now.

Do you think your grandparents feel anger about that?
Aye, they wouldn't like themins like. I've nothing against them.

Male, 17, Catholic, Turf Lodge, Belfast

When the young people discussed their family members as having openly prejudiced values, the young people talked about their parents or grandparents in terms of their influence on their personal sectarian or anti-sectarian feelings, many young people would state that it has 'nothing to do with me', 'I've nothing against them', 'I'm okay with it', or 'I don't care'. This type of distancing from parental views would occur even when it was discovered that the young person held relatively similar values.

When parents and grandparents were discussed as having prejudiced values, the young people involved in the project often excused these beliefs due to the experiences that their parents or grandparents had.

Couldn't meet people from the other areas in truth. There was many, that many stories I was told. You go up there and you get killed, they know where you live, they're keeping track of you. Stuff like that.

Do you think that's true?
Not at all. It's all crap. Well you had to when you where younger. I was ten and I was ohh, this is all really scary.

Who told you these stories?
My da. Scary. Da. But he lived through it like he lived through the bad times like. He had friends that were killed and stuff.

Male, 23, Catholic, West Belfast

Parents it all depends what each parent says ...Parents start it. I don't really get involved. My mum said this, my dad said this. There's no point in falling out with people over that.

Male, 16, Protestant, Nelson Drive, Derry/Londonderry

That's what it's all down to, personal issues, ye know, somebody in their chain of family history has been shot, you know. Maybe I would have been a different person if my sister was shot instead of that wee girl, maybe I just would have hated everybody, all the soldiers in the world, ye know.

Female, 35, Catholic, West Belfast

Ahmm, I wouldn't have a problem going up the Shankill but I guess some people would have a problem going up to the Shankill, to that place. I could go. ...I would guess that some people like my da and ma like would probably go out of their way than to walk up to the Shankill if it was closer. But they're afraid. It's like you walk past the wall and the barricades and and then they're like: Who's taking notes? Where's the cameras? ...and sort of, 'Did that blind just move?' I don't care.

Male, 21, Catholic, Beechmount, West Belfast

Well my granda. It's probably just bitter from actually the events of the Troubles. Like my granda, two of my actual neighbours were all police men and you know its just wee things that just show how bad the situation was. Like every morning they went out, part of their routine, and get down on their hands and knees and check under their car. And I think there's maybe just that kind of feeling of the fact that that these people are or could have been in the war, in danger by

them or organisations, by terrorists organisations. So there's a bitter feeling because they were worried that they were going to be killed and stuff like that. Also the suffering as well, because there has been a lot of suffering and there are people who have been affected by it a lot so.

Male, 17, Protestant, East Belfast

With the exception of one young person in this study who openly discussed having prejudiced values, young people were reluctant to admit or were confused as to whether they held sectarian prejudices. This was even the case for young people using sectarian language to describe the other community.

By distancing themselves from their parents' or grandparents' views or explaining their family members' actions by highlighting that they may have a personal historical grounding for their prejudicial views or fears, young people were giving allowance to their family members due to those experiences. While this could be viewed as a situation where members of the family are claiming victim status for their kin (Cairns and Mallet 2003), it is also important to remember that Northern Ireland is in the midst of change. By stating that they are 'okay' personally with people from the other community, project participants may be trying to inhibit or play down their family members' prejudice to avoid giving those interviewing them a negative impression. Particularly in cases where the young people may hold similar views as those within their family circles, Northern Ireland's recent efforts to communicate anti-sectarian goals and strategies may be a

motive for young people to control their own prejudiced reactions. Studies among students in America have shown that young people can learn to inhibit their true feelings to those outside of their immediate families if they know the situation to be one where they may be seen to be prejudice (see Towles-Schwen and Fazio 2001).

Equally important to consider, young people often discussed that situations of living have 'changed' since their parents and grandparents eras. Again, comparing this to other research, in addition to seeing the Troubles as 'something that involves high levels of violence' (62%) and 'something that involves sectarianism' (58%), young people involved in the TRIPROJECT results show that young people view the Troubles as 'something that happened in the past' (53%) (Roche 2005:268-296).

Discussing the changes to Northern Ireland in relation to their own views compared to those of their family members', some young people in *Facts, Fears and Feelings* note that 'it was different then when the Troubles and all was on'. However, despite this difference, young people still showed signs of deliberation regarding this difference between 'then' and 'now'.

Do you think it's better or worse than when your parents were growing up?
It's different than when the Troubles were on, that is for sure like. But I don't know, my da had all these, these things he did, riotin' and all, friends put in the blocks and all. It is different. But, I mean I go out like, not now, but did, and riot with the Huns. It's the way it is like.
Male, 17, Catholic, Gobnascale, Derry/Londonderry

Do you think Northern Ireland is better now than when your parents were younger?

Ahmm, I think it is a bit you know, it depends you know. You still have your areas which are like sort of no go areas, you feel, ye know. I've never ever felt that I couldn't go anywhere, but a lot of people would feel that they would have no go areas. Ahmmm, I don't think it's as bad now.

Female, 22, Protestant, Fountain, Derry/Londonderry

Do you feel it is much better than when you grew up?

Not as it was, you know. Life's a lot easier, as in, there's no soldiers shooting. There's no, what I remember, you know. Compared to my own kids … that your parents aren't out banging bin lids and warning that there's the Brits are coming, get in, get the kids down ye know. All that kind of thing, ye know. The kids couldn't go out and play 'cause the Brits were coming to come up and they're going to shoot, ye know. I didn't live in an interface where you were fighting with the Protestants. It was the soldiers were coming in and just thinking that there were gun men all around these estates and it wasn't, it was wee kids up at their windows looking at soldiers ye know. You don't have that, you know.

Female, 34, Catholic, West Belfast

Do you think it's better or worse than it used to be?
I don't know, better probably.

And do you think Northern Ireland is going to get even better?
Yeah, it should.
Male, 16, Protestant, East Belfast

Do you think that Northern Ireland is better or worse than when your parents were growing up?
Hard to tell like. I've had no problems, but you'll probably find the town will go mad tonight and tomorrow night. I don't see the point like. They have St Patrick's Day Protestants have the Twelfth. Just let them get on with it. That's the way I see things.
Male, 19, Nelson Drive, Derry/Londonderry.

The above are just a few responses to this query. In discussions like these included above, while older participants who observed their parents during the seventies noted the marked difference in terms of Troubles activities, many young people who were below the age of 20 still used a watermark of rioting, violence and other 'low' level occurrences to gage this difference.

Sadly, despite the fact that many felt that 'Northern Ireland was better', many still felt divided living was best:

Do you think your generation's Northern Ireland is better than your parents'?
Aye, it would be definitely.

Okay. How come?

Because back then they had the Troubles for like...I don't know how long it was ...but anyway, they were frightened all the time like. They didn't really have like, know like walls like the Fountain had and up in Belfast their divisions.

So you think those kinds of walls are useful?
Aye. Ummm (nodding).

Okay, so you think they should keep them?
Aye.

Female, 17, Nelson Drive, Protestant, Derry/Londonderry

Friends and friendships: facts and feelings

Aside from immediate family, close friends are equally important to young people. Often friends and 'best mates' take on an ideal sibling role and are highly influential to how a young person views their world. In Northern Ireland, some recent studies have explored aspects of friendship and how peer groups influence the young person's view on sectarianism. Smyth et al. (2004) for example, have discussed how social activities and sport have affected young people's friendship choices, while Devine and Schubotz (2004) note that same-religion friendships are sometimes influenced by peer pressure.

Regarding friendships, several major goals surrounding proper growth in adolescence occur between the ages of 13 and 25 (Wall 1968).   Three of these include:

- **A social self oriented to others and emancipated from parents;**
- **A working self – with self knowledge and self respect; and,**
- **An interpretivistic self where decisions can be made from a variety of philosophic, religious, political outlooks.**

In general, when a person selects a friend, we have a tendency to select someone very much like ourselves with attitudes and interests similar to ours. During adolescence, close friendships are very much related to those of the same age, and due to this, personal resources are much the same which leads to limited exploitation of individuals (Ball 1981, Hazzard 1986). Research also shows that class can be a factor in choosing and maintaining friendships (Hargreaves 1967, Nash 1973).

Northern Ireland presents a slightly different terrain for young people to cultivate friendships across communities. Recent Young Life and Times (YLT 2007) results indicate that 27% of young people involved in that survey noted that they had 'two to five' friends from the other religious community. However, almost equal numbers, 22%, stated that they had none at all. *Facts, Fears and Feelings* have found that while two thirds reported having had some or occasional cross-community contact, such as excursions while in school, only 1 in 4 young people discussed lasting or meaningful relationships with members of the other community. This figure includes those in cross-community marriages or partnerships.

It is also important to note that all friendships that the young people discussed were highly reflective of class barriers as well.

When asked about aspects of cross-community friendships, many young people in *Facts, Fears and Feelings* again noted that peers from the other community were 'okay' but often the young person expressed that either they were uninterested in pursuing a relationship, or that they felt it best to stay within their own area.

Do you have any Catholic friends?
No.

Okay. Why do you think that is?
Just 'cause I'm from down here and being brought up not to like them, more or less.

Do you not like them?
Doesn't bother me. They've never done nothing wrong on me, so.
Male, 16, Protestant, East Belfast

Do you have any friends who are Protestant?
Naw, I had friends from the Tech, like but I didn't keep contact.

Female, 19, Catholic, Rosemount, Derry/Londonderry

Do you have friends that are Protestant?
Nah. Wouldn't work just.

Why do you think that is?
Dunno. Just. I live in here. It just doesn't work like. You'd never see them. ...Don't want to like either. Why bother like.

Male, 18, Catholic, Creggan, Derry/Londonderry.

Do you have a mixed crowd of friends?
Mostly Protestant.

Okay. Are they from school?
Aye.

Okay. Have you met any Catholics in here?
Not to hang out with. But, ahh, chat to them like.

Male, 17, Protestant, Lincoln Courts, Waterside Derry

While many young people discussed participating in a cross-community programme at some point during their schooling years, only 1 in 10 young people participated in such events regularly. While recent Young Life and Times results (YLT 2007) indicate that 40% of their respondents attended a cross-community project outside of school, the young people involved in *Facts, Fears and Feelings* demonstrated far less participation in such activities now that they had left school and were in training or seeking employment.

Even among those who did participate in cross-community activities, cross-community friendships were discussed as prohibitive and often difficult in that young people could not find a place to meet up with their new friends. Linking with the previous chapter of this report regarding worries and fears of travelling into areas of the opposite community, young people involved in *Facts, Fears and Feelings*, discussed such aspects as important barriers to continued friendship. Importantly, recent Young Life and Times results (YLT 2007) indicated that although young people participated in cross-community events and programmes, access to each other's homes was not as prevalent an activity. When respondents were asked how often friends from the other community visit their homes, 25% stated 'very often'. However 36% noted that only 'sometimes' friends visit, 26% stated that 'rarely' they visit and 13% stated that they 'never' visit their homes.

Facts, Fears and Feelings also indicated that young people faced barriers when bringing friends of the opposite community into their areas and to their homes. While this aspect is also touched upon in the next chapter regarding community pressure, it bears noting here. For those who were able to maintain cross-community friendships, access into their communities always posed a problem.

Would you bring your friends from the group home to your house?
Not a chance like. I wouldn't risk it. It's alright when you're at it and all, but I wouldn't. Some of themins from Tullyalley and all!
17, Female, Catholic, Galliagh, Derry/Londonderry

Went to loads of meetings and got to know each other; got to know about each other's religions, made a DVD about like how the two communities should come together and stuff, been away on a couple of trips and then went away to Berlin.

Do you think that's been helpful for you to meet other people from the other community?
Yeah. I live in a complete Protestant area. No Catholics at all and I've been able to bring them down to my house at the weekends for a drink. Nobody's ever found out.

Do you think it would be a problem if someone found out? They must know that you go to this cross community group?
No.

Would you have trouble if people found out?
I don't think it would be that bad. Probably a good dig in the face or something like that. Or warned or, or whatever.
Male, 16, Protestant, East Belfast

I have Protestant friends, they would be able to come in into my area, but they says we wouldn't never be able to come in to their area 'cause, if anyone knew a thing, 'cause everyone knew they were …(explaining) When we did, they used to come up, like after work and all, or come up at the weekends for a drink, with my cousins and all. But people knew what they were and it was alright. But they says we wouldn't be able to go over to where they lived 'cause if anyone knew we'd be killed, or somethin' would happen to us.

Male, 17, Catholic, Springfield Park, Belfast

Groups of friends: facts and fears

Concerning friendships, adolescents have a tendency to form into groups of chums, cliques and crowds (Hurlock 1967, Hazzard 1986).   In Northern Ireland, groups of friends are no less important. Young people often spoke of their friendships and the activities that they would do 'if someone else was doin' it'. This can be for reasons of pure camaraderie, or, as discovered in the previous chapter, young people also seek out companionship for reasons of safety or when having to travel through areas of the other community.

Camaraderie among friends comes in many usual varieties such as sport, religious service attendance or other social activities:

Well I'm in the Army cadets like ...Been in that for the last few years.

Male, 16, Protestant, East Belfast

Play footie with the fellas. Best craic...

Male,18, Catholic, Creggan, Derry/Londonderry

...the girls and I would go out, 'like, 'bout once a week or so. It's like 'come on girls, gotta get goin'!

Female, 32, Catholic, West Belfast

My church. I have friends from there as well...

Female, 17, Protestant, East Belfast

I would be at the local youth club. It's good when everyone is down...

Male, 16, Protestant, Lincoln Courts, Derry/Londonderry

Elsewhere studies have emphasised the importance of the sporting and socialising landscape in which young people participate in Northern Ireland (Ewart and Schubotz 2004 and Roche 2005a). Beyond the typical youthful activities involving sport, shopping, and going to venues such as pubs and clubs, camaraderie for many participants involved in the *Facts, Fears and Feelings Project* also entailed engaging in violent activities that involved

groups of friends or extended friend networks. Some of these activities involving violence included rioting and arranged street fighting.

Almost all young people in the study noted violent skirmishes as part of life within their communities. 1 in 3 young people discussed being involved in such activities, as victim or perpetrator or both. While other investigators have examined aspects of youth rioting and fighting through the lens of disorder (Hansson 2005), what was particularly stressed in conversation with the young people involved in *Facts, Fears and Feelings* was the group dynamic of engagement and how these activities were connected to segregated living and sectarianism.
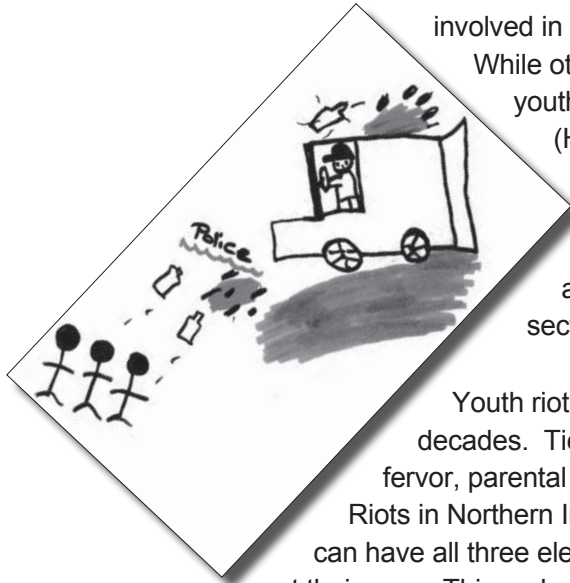
Youth rioting has been happening in Northern Ireland for decades. Tied up in street rioting are aspects of political fervor, parental encouragement and recreation (Roche 2003). Riots in Northern Ireland, particularly those initiated by youths, can have all three elements, just two elements or even one element at their core. This makes the situation complex. Young people often receive mixed signals regarding rioting and while it can be something parentally encouraged at one moment in time, can later be discouraged by communities or even the same parents who condoned the activity initially (Hansson 2005, Roche 2003, Jarman and O'Halloran 2001).

A mother from Belfast, a young participant in the project, provides an interesting perspective on parental consent:

Ye know, my sister with her oldest living in North Belfast and her youngest one, ahmm she's three boys, they live in the New Lodge, and they've got Tigers Bay. And he (one son) would have done the rioting thing.

She just says: 'He's only rioting.' What do you mean he's only rioting? He could get shot, he could get a brick in the head or brick somebody else and kill somebody. It's just she loved that whole connection down there, you know. She just loves North Belfast and doesn't see rioting as a problem. His mates are doing it, ye know, she just has no... I don't know.

Because of her husband and his huge family, ye know, she would be socialisin' in circles with themins and that's all they talk about, that's all they deal with.

Female, 34, Catholic, West Belfast

However, the young people who were involved in rioting for any reason, saw this activity, *de facto*, connected to sectarianism and the segregated context. Whether for reasons of fun, political incentive, or prejudice, ultimately this activity was discussed in the context of groups of friends, and was tied in with the segregated and sectarian context. Countless excerpts from young people discussed the nuances, fears and genuine fun that they had being involved in rioting with their friends:

It's all, ahmm, 'Prods' and 'Taigs' and all that. Wile craic, like. I dunno. It's whenever, the 'riot season' you know what

that is. .... It's sectarian but it wouldn't, I don't know. The wains (children) are even at it sometimes. It's like, what we do sometimes. Bored. I dunno.

Male, 17, Catholic, Top of the Hill, Derry/Londonderry

Were you ever part of riots, and stuff like that?
Female1: **Aye I still riot. Fuckin' right I do! Up the Springfield.**
Female2: **I love it!**
Female1: **Good craic.**
Female2: **It is. ...**

So like what happens when there's a riot, like…?
Female1: **Everybody does...it's nuts.**
Female2: **Everybody makes petrol bombs, paint bombs and...**
Female1: **Everybody to their own.**
Female2: **Everybody to their own. ...**
Female1**: They do, they hate the Irish. Everbody hates the Irish.**
Female2: **See up there on the Springfield Road. They beat loads of people and they were just protesting 'cause they were coming down the road. See at the end of the day it's our road, it's nobody else's, do you know what I mean? God forgive me. It sounds terrible but I know...**

Female1: **It is our road, it's different. We can't walk up and down Shankill. Why should we let themins walk on ours?**

Females, 24 and 25, West Belfast and Whiterock, Belfast

When I was younger, ahhh staying just in my great granny's house up in Ardoyne. Just walk out and Ardoyne riots and stuff like that there. ...I used to go up to her house when she was alive and just I knew people from around Ardoyne at the time and you'd go out and you'd muck about with them and you'd just sort of get dragged into the riots and you don't know what's happening. It's scary. Just staying up in my great grannys and you would call around to the mates, say the mates I had at the time, like their big brothers would just drag you 'round.
It was scary, you don't know what to do. You're just standing there, to be honest. You're really shitting your self. That's how I felt anyway looking back on it that's what I remember feeling.

Would you say people were sectarian?
Yeah, definitely. Definitely sectarian riots.

Why would you say that?
You can hear everyone shouting -- like all the vulgarities and stuff like that there. I didn't know so much at the time because I was only...I don't know what age only ten, nine or ten ahmm but you look back at stuff on say the news and you just knew they were sectarian or like you knew it

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Riot filmed on mobile phones

DRUNKEN youths can be seen hurling full cans of lager at police on film footage of last weekend's city centre riot, uploaded onto the Derry Journal website.

Youths at Shipquay Gate are seen to repeatedly pelt police vehicles and officers in riot gear with the missiles.

In other mobile phone film footage of the disturbances, a mass of youths converged at Shipquay Gate can be seen locked in a standoff with police at Shipquay Street. Many in the crowd appear not to be actively involved in any abusive behaviour, although some can be seen to throw missiles and gesture at police.

At one stage, during a police charge, a young male appears to be knocked to the ground by riot control officers.

Log onto derryjournal.com for footage of the disturbances.

was from the other side. You knew that the Catholics were fighting the Protestants and the Protestants were fighting the Catholics.

Male, 17, Catholic, Glengormley

It would happen around the marching, but, ahhhm, people do it 'cause they want to, just in my opinion. I have te say it's fun like. I've been at a few, get the mates 'round and get like out there. And just to throw shite like that there at the Catholics. ...Northern Ireland wouldn't, North Belfast wouldn't be in Northern Ireland without riots like.

Male, 18, Protestant, North Belfast

I used to go about brickin' people like in the riots. It would be hard for me te tell them not te do it like. ...Sometimes they just want te start a fight so they can get at themins.

Female, 20, Catholic, Galliagh, Derry/Londonderry

Down for a riot once in a while like. Nothing to do ...If you go down for a riot you get chased by the cops and all you have a bit of fun like it's something to do. It is! ... It's something to do. Nothing else to do so you just go down for a riot. It'll never stop, there'll always be riots like, they'll never stop. It'll never stop, just...there'll be a riot every year at least one riot every year.

How do you know where these riots are?
You don't. You go start it, that's it!

How do you start a riot?
I don't know you just go down, slabber to the 'Orangies' or you go (unclear) slap in the head. They go and get everyone, then you start throwing stones and bottles and...and then they bring petrol bombs, and all sorts, paint bombs and everything's brought in to it. You get split open and all like, your head starts bleedin' and all if you get hit with stones. You go and get it cleaned out and you're back about half an hour later.

Who cleans it out?
Yourself. You go home get it washed and a wee bandage around your head and then you're back down again. It's a bit of fun. But you're half cut when you're thowing stones and all like but it's just a bit of fun. ... It's better when you're sober, you've a better chance of getting away. No it's just good fun there's nothing else to do so you may as well go down and start a riot and hopefully hit some 'Orangie' in the head with a brick!

Would you feel bad then?
I wouldn't feel bad like, know what I mean? They're throwing them at you if they hit any one of youse'uns,

they're not going to feel bad about it like so. The many of them you get, the better.

Does it matter who starts it?
Naw, just who finishes it. That's it! Naw, it's whoever stops first loses, that's it. It's just, you're there to fight. You're there to fight, that's it. Fight them in the middle of the road. Put the windies (windows) through just, a bit of fun!

... You can't beat rioting like. It's just good it's...you get a buzz and enjoy yourself.

Male, 16, Catholic, Lenadoon, Belfast

Young people indicated feelings of fun, prejudice and fear when discussing rioting. Rather than consistently seeing the young people's activity always as recreational or stemming from 'boredom', the segregated nature of these events needs to be taken into account. As illustrated above, some young people expressed genuine fear regarding such activities and, equally, many expressed attitudes of strong sectarian prejudice when involved in such activities. Young people also did note differences between the 'seasonality' of 'rioting' and some differences between organised street fighting.

Organised fighting, where young people arranged a fight in or at a particular venue, and street fighting, a situation where often fights would merely erupt, was also something young people discussed in relation to friendship, community division and sectarianism. What made these fights different from 'rioting' was that *Facts, Fears and Feelings* participants often discussed organised and street fighting as something related to personal retribution.

In these cases, young people often organised the fights after a person may have had a 'mate' or heard about a mate involved in a slight or scuffle. Rather than some of the recreational nature of some of the rioting at interface areas (Jarman and O'Halloran 2001, Roche 2003), young people often spoke of selecting 'neutral areas' (such as city centre venues), or secluded areas (such as fields or parks), to arrange these skirmishes.

Female1: **There's some fighting between boys up there (at the Cave Hill, Belfast) between Catholic and Protestant boys up there. Yeah they kind of run into each other. (Explaining) Like when the girls in our school had been slabbering to other Catholic wee girls on the internet going: 'Aye Im going to fight you...' Do you know where the Castlecourt is? Like beside Castlecourt.**

So is it a good place to go not to get caught fighting and stuff?
Female2: **But it's also a place like where say if (name) was a Catholic going out with a Protestant I couldn't go into her area to fight her because, ye know, you'd feel that there all going to be more people there. They would jump me! ...**

Female1: **...vise versa the other way 'round. It's a place that they could have met up and fought or... without having to worry.**
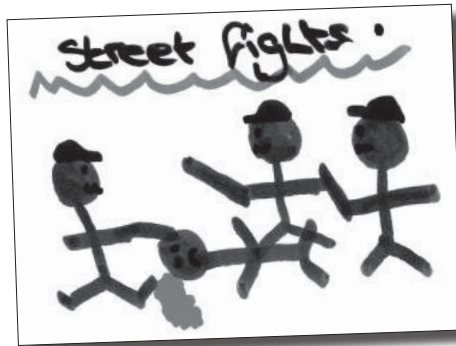*Females, both 17, Protestant, Foylevale and Shankill, Belfast*

Why wouldn't you fight in your own area?
I don't know, it's, ahmm, better to get things sorted somewheres where they canny have a load of them on top

of ye. That's why we would have the fight somewheres else like. Like on the outskirts or the centre or whatever.

Male, 16, Protestant, East Belfast

We would go to the fields like sometimes. ... Just outside, beyond like over Creggan. I remember this one time some fellas and I was out and all this went on, all 'Taig' this and that, so we like arranged it for out there.

And when did this happen?
Like a year ago or so.

Male, 17, Catholic, Top of the Hill, Derry/Londonderry

Beyond organised fighting over an issue between groups, mostly fear pervaded ideas of street fighting and the less predictable nature of them. These types of incidents usually ran down the sectarian divide. While 'rioting' was embedded within historical constructs and was usually discussed under the auspices of a 'reason' or a 'season', and organised fights were often part of feud among specific groups of young people, street fighting could 'just' occur, and was more risky. Tied in with issues of 'knowing' and 'telling' groups of individuals from other communities, young people discussed these sorts of eruptive fights that 'just' occurred.
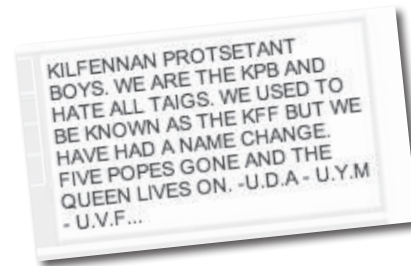
Do you ever feel worried when you go into town?
Aye, all the time. All the time.

How do you feel about that?

It's just, aye, go into town and say a crowd of Catholics are standing and you and your mates walking up, minding your own business, talking away, and then they all start chasing ye and all, for nothing. Know what I mean, that's just the way it is. ...

KILFENNAN PROTSETANT BOYS. WE ARE THE KPB AND HATE ALL TAIGS. WE USED TO BE KNOWN AS THE KFF BUT WE HAVE HAD A NAME CHANGE. FIVE POPES GONE AND THE QUEEN LIVES ON. -U.D.A - U.Y.M - U.V.F...

Okay. So, that goes on in town?

Big time.

Male, 16, Protestant, East Belfast

Even when participants witnessed fights between groups of young people from their own community, this was discussed sometimes as a case of mistaken identity.

There's a load of Catholics from West Belfast. West Belfast is mostly Catholics. There's only one big Loyalist estate in West Belfast which is the Shankill but most of them, most of the ones in town are Catholics because Catholics or Prods would sometimes run about in fives and sixes. But Catholics go in twenties and thirties. Especially down towards the Odessey and all. There's all Catholics down there. But sometimes you can be mistaken for a Catholic, and you would be mistaken for a Prod. Sometimes Prods fight with each other in the town and Catholics fight with each other as well.

Male, 16, Protestant, Dundonald

While discussing aspects of fighting and the 'ins and outs' of procedure may seem far from ideas of friendship, young people involved in *Facts, Fears and Feelings* openly discussed the 'low' level violences that occurred within their respective areas and streets, and that occurred in the name of camaraderie. While some sorts of fighting, such as 'rioting', can have predictable consequences, other types of fighting with or for chums have more risky elements.

> I am a proud fenian and taig, i fucking hate ian paisley, dirty orange bastard should be given an old traditional kneecapping, doesnt matter anyway he is about to fall into his grave anyway, less ...

> normal good hard working loyalist lad, i hate all fenians especially little taig cunts that slabber but arn't as big as their mouths and won't meet me so i can kick tha fuck outta them.

What is apparent from our conversations about violent skirmishes is that young people usually defined and perceived the fights as something connected to the division between communities. While other authors, such as McGrellis (2004) for example, discuss some forms of 'random violent attack' that respondents can not explain, for young people in this project, almost all skirmishes, at some point in conversation, were related to the segregated and sectarian nature of the areas in which they lived. This is an important point in that whether the situation was in actual fact a random occurrence, or was indeed sectarian in intent, most young people could readily assign a sectarian label to the attack and have it 'fit' within the divided community construct.
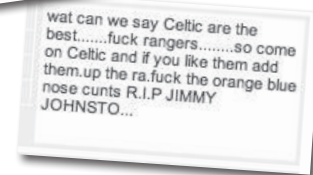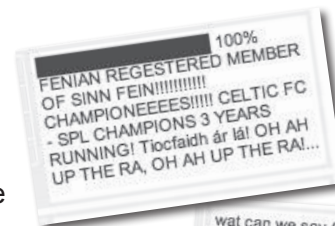
New friendship networks: fears and feelings

Elsewhere media coverage in Northern Ireland is discussed by young people as having a definite and detrimental impact on attitude formation of young people in Northern Ireland (Ewart and Schubotz 2004). Participants of *Facts, Fears and Feelings* echoed many of these concerns.

With regard to maintaining friendships and making new friends, however, a different kind of media – the advent of online social media networking and Short Messaging Service (SMS), or 'text messaging' – is changing the length and breadth of friendship possibilities. Being able to 'chat' digitally, post pictures, and exchange views through 'texting' and social media sites is fun and contemporary. Such sites of exchange are proving to be a place where young people not only invite their current friends to 'join', but also dialogue with new friends.

Internet sites such as *Bebo* and *MySpace* were the most popularly discussed social media networking sites used by young people in *Facts, Fears and Feelings*.   And many of these sites were used often. Young people logged on and checked their individual sites and 'message boards' as one young man put it: 'Like, seventeen times a day!'

> 100%
> FENIAN REGESTERED MEMBER OF SINN FEIN!!!!!!!!!! CHAMPIONEEEES!!!!! CELTIC FC - SPL CHAMPIONS 3 YEARS RUNNING! Tiocfaidh ár lá! OH AH UP THE RA, OH AH UP THE RA!...

> wat can we say Celtic are the best.......fuck rangers........so come on Celtic and if you like them add them.up the ra.fuck the orange blue nose cunts R.I.P JIMMY JOHNSTO...

However, as mentioned in the above excerpt of conversation with two young women on the project, fights and skirmishes could also be arranged using this new media. Equally and sadly, young people involved in *Facts, Fears and Feelings* noted how the internet social networking sites were sometimes used to issue sectarian abuse.

There's a lot of fights, there's fights arranged over Bebo. It's mad like on Bebo because whenever you go on you see all these people and they go into like a wee comment box and all the comments, they're some of the comments aren't nice. I don't read them, I just go...I just exit off them and then go onto my own one.

So the comments are…
For anyone to see.

Okay, would they say … would they be sectarian?
Yeah, some can be really cheeky then there's some that's Okay like – 'Hi!' and all. But then there's other ones that can be really, really cheeky on it.

When people say stuff like that, like when they call people 'Taigs' or that kind of thing, do you think that they really dislike the other community?
Yeah.
Female, 17, Protestant, East Belfast

<i><-- Me.. Mon Da Hoops. =]</i>
Fuck The Huns.
Waiting For... November, My 17th So I Can Drive&&Going Away To Glasgow We My Mammy. :D ...
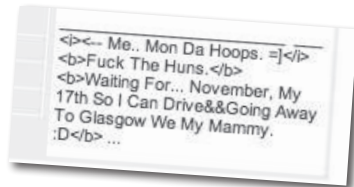
I've got Bebo. ...People can (post) UDA and UVF skins and LVF skins and stuff like that on there. Catholics will have INLA and IRA pictures of Bobby Sands. We have one of Michael Stone and stuff like that. But some of it's just, most of the ones on Bebo just don't like paramilitaries. They're just, 'Up The Hoods', just 'Up The Joyriders' and stuff like that there.
Male, 16, Protestant, Dundonald

What about stuff like Bebo and stuff like that?
Female1: **I talk to them (Catholics) (online).**

You do? Are you guys both on Bebo?
Female2: **Yeah.**

Then you get to know people and you become friends with them? Does that happen? Or…
Female1: **Yeah, but it says where you're living and people would write from the Falls or from the Shankill and then they still talk, but you would get some who would write KAT or KAH.**

What's that?
Female1: **Kill all Taigs and Kill all Huns. Huns would be Protestant and Taigs would be Catholics.**

Do people take that seriously do they get upset and write back or?
Female2: Yeah, they would write back.
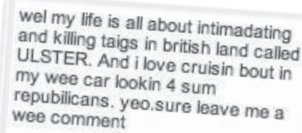
Females, both 17, Protestant, Foylevale and Shankill, Belfast

Research into computer communities or environments has shown that the online environment can influence communication. One of the compelling elements of it is the relative anonymity. This creates a situation where the user is provided with freedoms in two very particular and complimentary ways: a freedom from constraint, but also a freedom from responsibility (Thurlow et al. 2004). Important research in this area is beginning to flower. Scotland's *Nil By Mouth* campaign for a 'More Tolerant Scotland' has commissioned an interesting piece on the extent of sectarianism in content on unofficial football messaging boards for several football clubs

including Celtic, Rangers, and Liverpool (O'Loan et al. 2005). Their findings revealed that where sectarian content was found, these included offensive stereotypes, accusations of bigotry, threats of violence and references to Northern Ireland (2005:5). Often called 'flaming', some messaging can contain deliberately provocative, insulting or inflammatory postings. This sort of messaging comes from this free style of communication that is not nurtured in face to face conversation. More anonymity means less regard for consequence and responsibility (O'Loan et al. 2005:5).

wel my life is all about intimadating and killing taigs in british land called ULSTER. And i love cruisin bout in my wee car lookin 4 sum republicans. yeo.sure leave me a wee comment

Young participants of *Facts, Fears and Feelings* illustrate that messaging of this type occurs regularly among them. Sadly, not only online messaging is included in such provocative outbursts. Text messaging, too, can be used in this way. Several young people reported having text messages sent to them in school of a bullying or sectarian nature. One young woman relates such an episode after having attending a cross-community excursion.

And you think it came from one of the participants?
It had to have come from them like. It was, ahmm, so close after it. 'Fucking Fenian bitch'. I mean I was like, I was like wile, I don't know.

My dad wanted to talk to the people, the organisers and all but I just thought, naw, there's no point. ... We'll never really know who sent it like. But, I reckon... anyways, I was wile disappointed 'cause like, I thought we'd gotten on.

Female, 17, Catholic, Creggan, Derry/Londonderry.

Disinhibition, combined with anonymity can prove to be a powerful agent when issuing sectarian harassment or threats. Equally, as discussed earlier, some sectarian threats are eventually played out in real skirmishes when arrangements are made through these media.

With this said, there is a positive side and much positive potential to this new community making. Recent initiatives to harness such potential prove this possible. In a programme between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, computer technology was used to link schools cross border in a collaborative effort to promote cultural awareness among primary and post-primary pupils (Austin et al. 2003). The positive results of instituting such a program have been manifold, including an awareness of the cultural identity of distant peers as well as increased ability with Information and Communications Technology. While it could be said that because this program was instituted in schools and therefore was subjected to some monitoring it did not reveal the same results as it would have completely unmonitored, the positive results should not be overlooked. Indeed, 70% of pupils involved saw the project as helping them to relate to pupils from other schools. This was done primarily through what was termed a 'student café' and the exchange of information helped the students to appreciate a culture other than their own. Equally, students in both sectors expressed interest in following up on their links with actual face to face contact. The social element of the project formed a basis for a future working relationship (Austin 2000).
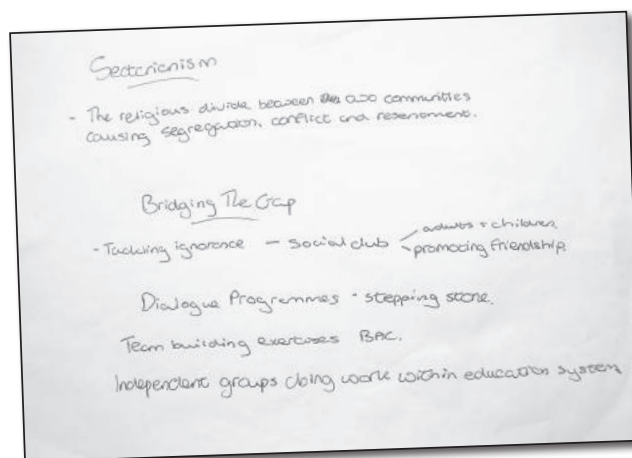
Young people involved in *Facts, Fears and Feelings* also had positive experiences with online social networking. Discussing aspects of such communication, the online community became just that – an opportunity for another type of community outside of the one in which they often felt prohibited from bringing friends from across the divide.

I've a few Protestant friends as well that I talk to like on the internet.

Is it hard to socialise in real life?
Aye. If you were to meet up you would meet up in town or something 'cause everyone's there it's just mixed but like you wouldn't really take a chance on going in and meeting them in their own community or they wouldn't do the same here, just 'cause probably a bit dangerous like in case someone find out and something happening.

And do you think is it just a threat to them or is it a threat to you as well?
It would be a threat to both sides like but...

Do you think people would be angry if you brought them into your community?
Aye something like that, aye.
Male, 18, Catholic, Ardoyne, Belfast

I like talking to them (Catholics) on the internet. It's good. You can message and all that and not feel worried about, like, about meeting or whatever. You can just be there and talk.

Female, 16, Protestant, North Belfast,

wHo CaRes?iF uR bEsT m8 Is A pRoTeStAnT oR cAtHoLic? PpL gEtTin KiLlEd FoR bEiN a CeRtIaN rELiGiOn ItS a LoAd Of CrAp If U dNt CaRe JoIn tHiS bAnD w0oP w0oP xo

This is a band for the people who did the cross-community thing with common purposes lol !! such good craic!! this page can also b a good thing to keep i touch with everyone !!! plz leave...

Concluding

Young participants in this study openly discussed how their immediate family members and friends had a large impact on their world views. While some held quite negative views of the other community, some held fast to the idea that Northern Ireland should be and could be more integrated. Young Life and Times results (YLT 2007) indicate that 82% respondents stated that if more cross-community projects were formed, relations between the communities would be better. And participants in this project would agree. For those who had maintained friendships, these young people still were active across the community divide and participated in cross-community programmes.

Hazzard (1986) notes that obligations of friendship are positive because they are voluntary. There are no laws and few ceremonies. Making friendship is one of the most socially positive aspects of humankind. In sum, friendship is an 'invitation' (Greeley 1971). And in this way, while some the young people in this study noted that the invitation, at times, is not open to them, many simultaneously and genuinely are finding alternative ways to extend that invitation all the same**:**

Online, like. Chatting. We go on and talk about things. There's a lot of Catholics and Protestants that do it like. Even chat about the, the news like and what's happening. It's good. I canny believe you're not on it like! I'll put you on as a friend, okay? You can, you can register and then we can message each other, okay?
Female, 18, Catholic, Prehen, Derry/Londonderry

Chapter 5

Community pressures

Facts, Fears and Feelings findings

● **Although immediate family members have a large impact on how young people feel and interact with members of the other group, the larger community in their areas - the subtle pressures that community 'people' or members can place on young individuals - is one of the things that young people discuss as the most restrictive.**

● **Several young people involved in this study were told by their families to stop participation in sports or other cultural interests traditionally thought of as being connected to the opposite community. This was because they were told it would put their families at risk in their communities. In each of these cases, individual family members were supportive of the initial interest, but fears of disapproval or reprisals from community members led the young people to cease their activity.**

● **Looking at aspects of remaining within the community and having a 'life of one's own', most young people felt that choices regarding marriage and permanent partners were their decision and beyond family influence. In cases where young people married across the community divide, parents were in most cases supportive. However, in almost every**

case where the couple married and tried to locate in their area or in a new area, the new couple was initially bullied or eventually forced from the area in which they lived.

● Although many young participants discussed the transition in their areas away from paramilitarism and paramilitary violence, 8 out of 10 young people involved in the project discussed some remaining pressures from continuing paramilitary influences in their areas.

● Warnings and punishment of anti-social behaviour continues. A complex issue, young people discussing this issue in *Facts, Fears and Feelings* were both in favour of these continuing enforcement regimes and against them. Because those that are involved in such warning and punishments were referred to as 'the paramilitaries', under historical initialisms or local euphemisms, the traditional concept of paramilitary community guardians or other forms of subtle influence coming from community members still remains an important factor in how young people deal with their decision making.

Community pressures

> NB: For complete anonymity, all participants have been identified by their sex and religious affiliation only in this chapter. Area and age have been removed.

Introduction

The first three chapters of this report have explored the personal meanings of sectarianism in the Northern Irish context, the cocooned state of 'bounded contentment' that many young people experience living in segregated areas, and the influence that immediate family and close friends have on their lives. This chapter steps forward to explore some issues personally affecting young people but examines this in the context of wider community norms and community pressures.

Due to the fact that two thirds of *Facts, Fears and Feelings* participants have expressed cocooned lifeways within Catholic or Protestant enthnonationalist / ethnoreligious areas, it is important to examine the wider influences on the immediate family that contribute to this seclusion. This chapter will examine myriad experiences past and present that are discussed by the young people involved in *Facts, Fears and Feelings* in an effort to highlight the pressure that the nebulous 'community' has and maintains in segregated, and economically and socially marginalised areas. Exploring how young people interpret their communities and, to a certain extent, are expected to adhere to the norms within their communities, is important to this study. It

is not just 'people', neighbours, or paramilitary influences alone that affect young people. The 'community' is viewed here as large and less explicit. It is made up of 'streets' and neighbours, opinions and reputations. These factors, and a whole host of other implict feelings about how one 'ought' to act or be within a community, influence decision making when sectarianism is involved. These feelings of how a person 'ought to act', coupled with the reputation of the institutions that are embedded within that community often comprise the identity of a community. It is this identity that is most often upheld and defended. Interpretations, feelings and fears about what 'people in the community' may 'think' or 'do' when a person acts outside these expected norms influence young people in this study in complex and multiple ways. In sum, this chapter examines community norms and pressures connected to segregation and sectarianism which continue to keep boundaries between communities in place.

Giving it up: facts

All young people involved in the project discussed aspects of community pressure as having some sort of an affect on their lives. This ranged from using language such as 'people told me', to noting specific individuals within their community areas that would disapprove of certain conduct. Neighbours and others within a community can have a huge impact on how parents, and in turn their children, react to stereotyping. Authors such as Katz (2003) stress that although direct attitudes can be passed down through prejudiced families, the making of stereotypes and prejudice is usually more indirect. In sum, beyond family, the making of prejudice often has to do with the roles that other people in the community play. In a poignant recounting of how communities affect decision making, authors Feagin and Vera (1995:159 as noted Whitley and Kite 2006:283) recount a story from a white woman in her twenties who they had in their study

regarding racial prejudice. This woman recounts a tale when she was playing with some paper dolls when she was a child:

> *I'm playing with my black paper dolls, having a good time. Then somebody comes to visit my parents, and they saw these dolls. And they say, 'Oh, you let her play with nigger paper dolls? You let her do that?*

Later, her parents take her dolls from her. The woman states:

> *To this day there's this little something in me that, I want those paper dolls back. Because that just wasn't where my head was at, I wasn't about being black or white, I just wanted those paper dolls.*

Influences from community members in segregated environments can be strong. Not unlike the visiting neighbours voicing their opinions on the parents' choice of allowing their daughter to play with a certain type or colour of doll, young people involved in the *Facts, Fears and Feelings Project,* spoke of myriad, subtle ways that a larger 'community' or 'people' in their area directed some of their choices.

Several young people in this study discussed situations of being 'told' to give up certain pastimes. Some remember their times fondly when they did participate, but sadly many feel that these activities still can not be discussed openly with their own community members.

The following excerpt details how a young woman was discouraged from continuing a recreational activity that was interpreted as putting her family

at risk, and her continuing worries over revealing her participation in such activities, even now.

I actually joined the RAF for juniors, my dad let me, which was a shock, but it was where I lived then. I could and I could wear a uniform, ye know. It was like the Brownies or the Girl Guides but it was to do with the RAF, ye know and I couldn't…'cause I would be pre-judged.

You couldn't tell anyone?
No. No. My friend, she came from a mixed marriage and she introduced me. Great, something new to do, ye know, loved it, brilliant. I got to go to places where I would never have went before, flew planes, everything.

How old were you?
Maybe 13, 14, ye know.

You couldn't tell people here, in this class? (She shakes her head) No?
They're staunch Republicans, the lot of them.

You couldn't even tell them now?
Not even now. Nooo. They wouldn't say it to my face,

but I know that they would pre-judge me on my views.

(Continuing) I don't know, it just was appealing to me and when we left, my mum and dad split up, we moved down to (area) with my mum...I joined the boat, what do you call it...ahmm...it would be like training to be a Marine in America. Only my dad went mad then because I was older. I was 17. I was working and he just said: 'It's too much of a risk where you live.'

And he stopped me. And they actually phoned me, ye know and says: 'Why?' Because there were probably two Catholics in the whole place. I said work commitments, I'm working, I can't go to training, I can't do this and we were doing exams. I couldn't say because my dad wouldn't let me, ye know. But it shows you it was OK where I lived (previous community) for me to do that but when I came (new community) he just said: 'No!' And he said: 'You're putting us at risk.' So I had to stop, otherwise I could have been, God knows, you know what I mean?! ...But, I have my wee log book and everything.

Female, Catholic

In a group conversation, a young man relayed to me his recent disappointment when his family discouraged his active participation in a sporting activity due to fears about getting him or the family 'into bother.'

It was on a, ahmm, wee trip with some other ones from school, like. ...We tried Gaelic football and all. I really liked it ye know. (Explaining) It's a wee bit like rugby. You score by putting it over the bar. Anyways, I play football and all up at (area). Like I thought I could play this too, you know go down and join. The boys said how good I was at it like.

My dad was alright like but my ma, she started to worry like. And then that was about it. She said that them bringing me over and all would be too much hassle or whatever. I just said like: 'I'll get (name) to bring me over' and then, that's when, they just said: 'No.' I says: 'Why?' 'It's too risky, it's not what Protestants play', is what they said. 'It could get you in bother'. They were worried.

How did that make you feel?
I was upset, like. Still am. It's a good game so it is.
Male, Protestant

Another young woman discussed with me her disappointment about her family's worries over an admired pastime in which she sought to be a part:

Brilliant. Mummy brought me, brought me down to Dublin to see the (Irish dancing) show and all. I remember we took the train. I just thought the dancing, like was, like amazing ye know? ...The dresses and all.

What happened then?
My mummy's friend had said they thought the notion of the dancing, Irish dancing, was something we shouldn't be doing in our area, ye know. Our area being (paramilitary group) and all and what it would look like. ...I thought it was stupid but mummy got upset. 'Ohh maybe we shouldn't let me do this' like and (sister) just went mad like, 'cause she kept sayin' like: 'What does this look like and all and people are talking and all'. Then, well, I thought I shouldn't do it. I just left it then. It doesn't matter.
Female, Protestant

This type of discouragement stems from worries of community abandonment and reprisal rather than exclusively from parental discouragement. This worry or fear about 'the community' stemming from individual relatives and

families becomes a self-determining prophecy for communities – where even though parents often are supportive of such activities, tacit feelings that the community would disapprove overshadow the benefits such activities can yield for the young person and the community as a whole.

For better or for worse: feelings

Communities are built by the individuals who live in them and, as discussed earlier in this report, many young people in Northern Irish working class communities seek to make their new home where they were raised themselves. The benefits of such local support are manifold. Young people returning to areas in which they were raised rejuvenate areas and maintain community cohesion. Young people have children of their own, adding to the community population and its liveliness. Youthful exuberance has the capacity to reinvent areas that often have been left deprived due to lack of industry and outward migration.

Although in 2001 the Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) survey found a 'significant decline' in attitudes towards mixed marriage, surveys still show that many young people would not be supportive of a family member marrying someone of a different religion. Statistics indicated in 2003 that 27% of young people queried would not be supportive of such a union (YLT 2003). Moving on from individual preferences, recent Young Life and Times results (YLT 2006) indicate that 66% noted that 'most people' would mind 'a lot' and 'a little' if a close relative were to marry someone of a different religion. Specifically, respondents stated that 18% of 'most people would mind a lot' and 48% of respondents stated that 'most people would mind a little' when asked the question: 'Do you think most people in Northern Ireland would mind or not mind if one of their close relatives were to marry

someone of a different religion' (YLT 2006). Only 22% noted that 'most people would not mind'. When it comes to love, marriage and mixing, Northern Ireland communities and their families nevertheless show that cross-community relationships are not entirely favoured.

Facts, Fears and Feelings results also illustrate this point and these feelings. In conversations with young people on the topic of moving on from their natal family and marrying, most felt that dating and marriage was something that young people noted was 'down to them'.

How would you feel if your parents disagreed with a cross-community relationship?
It's up to me, like. I'll do what I want. It's down to me.
Male, Protestant

We tried to go together like, but it didn't work like.

And was this because of the community thing?
Nah. I did what I wanted. ...I would too (marry cross-community), if I loved them like.
Female, Catholic

Would you date a Catholic?
Aye, no problem.

How would your parents be about that?
Don't really have a say in the matter do they? Know

what I mean. Don't really have a say in the matter, that's it!
Male, Protestant

Equally, while parents' and guardians' feelings were considered, some young people felt that their parents would be in favour of what made them happy.

Just a night out, he was there in a Celtic top and I was talking away to him. He was talking away to me and he was asking me just like where I was from and stuff and he goes to me: 'Are you a pig or a cow?' You know, meaning was I a Protestant or a Catholic.

And I laughed at him and I says: 'Ah I'm a pig.' And he went: 'Alright.' And he just kind of walked away a wee bit. And then I went after him 'cause he was so dead on and I says: 'What's wrong?' And he says: 'Aw I didn't think you would want to talk to me … I'm a Catholic.' And I says: 'Well sure what's wrong with that? Like, know, I don't have anything against it, some people do, but I don't.'

And like his face just lit up because he actually talked to a Protestant that didn't have a big problem with that at all.

What if you had of started going out with that guy then and brought him home, how would that have been?

Ahmm, I don't know. I'd say it would be a tough situation in my family to explain to them that I was going with a Catholic person. My mum would be alright with it I'm her wee girl you know and like everything is just alright. But like perhaps (relative) him being in the (political group) and stuff and like.

...But at the end of the day I think they would still let me have my own decision. It would be hard for me to sit down and tell them because I know my (relative) wouldn't be happy about it.

Female, Protestant

Regarding matchmaking and dating, as above, many found the notion of dating outside their religious affiliation acceptable. However, many were still worried. This worry, again, usually stemmed from a belief that the broader community would not approve.

Have you ever dated a girl who's a Catholic?
No.

Would you?
I don't know. ...Like, say, my ones wouldn't be too happy about it. Like Protestants wouldn't be too happy about it and then if I was to go over to the (area) the Catholics wouldn't be too happy about it. So from both sides, I wouldn't be too popular.

Male, Protestant

Have you ever dated anybody from the other community?

No. ...I don't know I'd be kind of worried you know the way young ones. ...Young ones are still bitter. I'd be just worried in case like say his friends were bitter to me or something.

Female, Catholic

Where young people had attempted to date outside of their own religious affiliation, location of rendezvous became important and often times a problem. As above, fear about how extended families may feel about a mixed relationship and worries of community reprisal influenced the decision making of the young people involved. Specific communities were noted as 'laid back' and 'alright', while other and community areas were seen to be problematic.

Have you ever dated a Catholic?

Aye. I have. Six, five months just.

Did you have any hassle?

No. See, (area) would have been laid back. (New area) I wouldn't have done it in there. Lets just say would have been burnt out or something, they're mad 'round there.

Male, Protestant

I was going with a wee girl that was Catholic, from (area) ...Had to meet half way. I didn't want to go to (area) like.

Where did you meet up?

Just met up the town. She got a bus from (area) into town and I got a bus from (area) into the town and just met up in the town.   ...Our, well, we couldn't meet in them just.

Male, Catholic

I had, went with a fella and he was in the Orange Order. I was 18, met him in the centre of town. It didn't say 'Orange Order' on his head, but ahmm his friend gave me a photo of him in a sash, which I didn't...that didn't annoy me, but my dad found it.

Okay.

In truth it was hell. I was like: 'It's only a photo!' Ye know. 'Look what he's wearing!' I was like: 'So what!' It was like a band uniform. It just didn't annoy me. It really didn't. Where it did him.

I just took the photo and aye right okay I'm not going out with him any more. But I did you know. But it fizzled off because of his family finding out about me, it had to stop, he couldn't...with him being in the Orange Order he couldn't be seen going out with a Catholic, ye know, so. It was on both sides, you know, through the parents and where we lived again.

Female, Catholic

Like there's a street called (name) that's mixed. But even that there seems quite split too cause there's a side that people can't go into it. But that's not as bad as some other ones. There's (name) and (name). They're very Protestant estates and no Catholic, like, is allowed in there. Ahmm, I know a Catholic who went in there and got stabbed.

Who stabbed him?
The (paramilitary group) 'cause that's a (paramilitary group) estate so it is and they back each other.

How did it make you feel when your mate's boyfriend was stabbed?
I was just shocked, 'cause like, he'd been in there loads of times before and they just, they found out. That he'd been coming in there. And when they seen him in there, they brought like bricks and came to her house and they ahmmm, they just asked for him. And then they stabbed him, and he was on their door. He was left in her door step! I was really like shocked to how that could happen for a Catholic brought in to a Protestant estate, so I was.

How long ago was that?
That was two years ago.
Female, Protestant

In this study, 19 young people involved in the project stated that they were in 'long-term' relationships, partnerships, engaged to be married or married. 6 of these relationships were cross-community. When young people became engaged, took a life partner or married across communities,

almost all young people who were part of *Facts, Fears and Feelings* had a negative experience in the communities in which they lived or chose to live. Many were bullied or taunted out of their communities, while some were subjected to physical attack. This often happened in the person's 'home' community.

Equally, young people often discussed others who had been part of cross-community marriages in the past, and these negative experiences were held up as examples of how cross-community marriages were difficult or just did not work**.**

Would your fiancé live in(area)?
Not a hope. For the wain's (baby's) sake and because I got beat up last year. Got jumped. ...I was left with two black eyes, and a lot of bruising on my ribs. A lot of bruising to my arms. 10 contusions on my head 14 X-Rays at (hospital) on my head alone. Six X-Rays on my arms. One arm in a bandage and another in a sling. ...

(It was) because I was seeing (Catholic fiancé).

And where did this happen?
Around the corner from my house. ... I wouldn't walk through the estate again. No. I walk to my mum's and that's it. My mum lives in the quiet street as they like to

call it. There's only...It's mainly ye know, young families that live on that live on that one street it's not really yahoos.

Female, Protestant

My uncle and his girlfriend, my uncle's Catholic and she is Protestant. They live together and they're always getting their house broke into and broken windows and stuff because of their religion.

Where do they live?
They live down (area) and then they moved to (area) or somewhere like that. ...Her mother's house got burnt down because of it.

They're still together?
Yeah. They have a wain and all.

Does the baby have a religion?
It's probably in the middle.

Male, Catholic

You two live in separate houses then?
Yes at the minute, but that was, the only reason was because of the religious thing. The place that I used to live in before they came down very heavy on us. A lot of Protestants moved out and a lot of Catholics moved in

and we got an awful lot of trouble. So it's really only a means to an end if you know what I mean because I'm in a new area now and its pretty good, pretty quiet. So we're all right there, we just went through a bad patch then, fighting and arguing and that there.

It was down at (area) we used to live in. It was in the last year that I got out of it until the house we're in now. But it was pretty bad. ...He was the forced to leave. ...People seen him as a turncoat, as they called it 'cause, because he was married to a Protestant.

What about your kids, how did they react?
Not very well. They were, ahmm, frightened of it all because there was an awful lot of drinking and shouting and bawling and all. So that came about for him to stay up there with his mommy to give the kids a wee bit stability, kind of thing. But they're ok now.

I mean he certainly was threatened an awful lot of times that things were gonny happen to him, but unfortunately you have to take everything seriously because when you're in that situation you never know when an outsider is gonny come in quite willing to do something just to make the headlines maybe.

What kind of threats?
On the street. Em, they'd do your windows, try to break your windows. Paint bombs, stuff like that there. That

went on for two years. ...loads of things. We used to have people standing outside, they were drinking, shouting stuff in through the window. That my husband, he was gonny be shot, gonny be killed. Degrading things like if you were to have washing out you would have got stuff threw at the washing. ...kicking the walls, singing (paramilitary slogan). Em, just stuff like that there. Things were said that shouldn't have. The kids wouldn't go outside. It got to the point that they wouldn't even ask to go out and play in the garden because the children would have spat at them and stuff like that there.

They had said that they were gonny have me killed and that they were gonny burn my house and all that there. So I got, one of the ones from one of the organisations to come to the house. But I didn't get any satisfaction from him because the next week they were repeating my whole conversation outside my front door that I had had with him.

 ...Nothing ever got any better and I went.

Female, Protestant

Things fizzed with them, ye see. They kept getting hassle and everything so they finished.

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When was this?
About a year ago like.

How long were they together?
Ages. 10 years like? But they always got hassle. It wasn't working inside where they were living and it just got mad like recently. So (sister) came home and that was that.

Who did all this do you think?
The (paramilitary group). They got the rest (of the community) to go along with it all. They put their windows through and chucked bottles at their house and all. They found shite smeared on their step and all. Couldn't just leave them alone. Fucking pathetic if you ask me, so it is.
Female, Catholic

Warning, touting and other community pressures: fears

Beyond the pressure of mere 'people' in the community, or what could loosely be conceived of as neighbours and others who pass judgment, most young people directly discussed the continuing presence of paramilitaries in their areas. Since the late 1960s in Northern Ireland, several forms of authority have had a lengthy, consistent and complicated presence in Northern Ireland, including various regiments of the armed services of the United Kingdom, the policing services and the paramilitaries (for example Roche 2008 and 2007, Jarman 2007, Mulcahy 2006, Byrne 2004, Crawford 2003, Knox 2002 and 2001, Ní Aoláin 2000, Weitzer 1995, Burton 1978). To attempt to remove one of these forms of authority from the working class

community understanding of authority or 'policing' during the height of the Troubles would be an error, for within that state of emergency, communities in Northern Ireland had grown used to alternative and local forms of community authority, and many community members came to rely upon them for protection.

As a result of these particular intricacies of authority within Catholic and Protestant communities, Northern Irish neighbourhoods face a situation of what Smyth, Hamilton and Thomson have called a 'crises in authority' (2001:16). Highlighting how communities had become used to the influence of both military and paramilitary authority in their areas the authors state:

> *The transition out of violence and militarisation that characterised the Troubles threw up a range of political and social problems that, although experienced in other transitional societies, did not have easy solutions. The population had grown used to militarisation and violence, to a lack of policing. People knew where they stood whilst violence was ongoing. Its ending called for a new dispensation, that inevitably disrupted the old (violent) order. The new situation called for new responses, and very often this was not anticipated, and confusion and uncertainty resulted.*

Transition from a previous order of violence tied-in with paramilitary control, to a new mandate that urges communities to avail of 'bona fide' police authority, is complex. Northern Ireland proves that point.

Following the Belfast Agreement, paramilitaries held their ceasefires in the main, but vigilance in their respective areas continued. As release of prisoners proceeded, a condition stipulated by the Peace Agreement, intra-community feuds broke out among some paramilitary groups and community allegiances were redrawn in many areas. In a climate where communities previously depended on paramilitary vigilantism to help control their own areas, worries over the increasing 'lawlessness' of areas began to emerge. To some degree, members of both communities felt confused over which organisation or person they should turn to for authority and control of their area.

If we expand this brief synopsis to include young people, the situation becomes more thorny. Young people often look upon figures of authority within their communities as role models, particularly if their community supports that view. Local paramilitaries and those who had been serving sentences related to Troubles-related crimes were and are often seen as local heroes and important members within communities to which allegiance should be upheld (Smyth, Hamilton and Thomson, 2001).

Since the period of the Peace Agreement, there has been an expectation that ex-combatants and local paramilitary members will change their roles within communities. Often ex-paramilitary members and ex-combatants have altered their community profiles by establishing or working through Community Restorative Justice programmes, which aim to use peaceable and restorative measures rather than retributive measures, to repair relationships between those wronged within a community. These organisations often work with young people who have engaged in 'anti-social activity' and their communities to mend the rift between them.

However, not all paramilitaries and their members ceased 'low' level violent activities. Paramilitary 'punishments' and vigilantism increased after the period of the Agreement (Knox 2001) with many communities still under forms of paramilitary influence (Roche 2007, Hansson 2005, Kennedy 2003 and 1994, Knox 2002 and 2001). The messages about such vigilantism by paramilitaries have become mixed in the community, with some supporting the continuing use of such mechanisms for control, and others condemning it. Elsewhere, this communal middle point is described as a 'consensus of misconsensus' (Roche 2007:229).

Communal opinions concerning paramilitary punishment beatings, whether Republican or Loyalist, suffer from what I would term a 'consensus of misconsensus' – where ordinary everyday community members 'miss' each other in consensus of opinion concerning the results of such punishment regimes, but come together in agreement regarding the continuing debate surrounding the topic, tacitly allowing and relying upon the practice to continue. The intra-community paramilitary policing and vigilantism in both communities consequently should be considered to suffer from a circular conundrum where many community members often feel punishment is too harsh or unjustified, but similarly support the efforts in both abstract and actual terms, out of a lack of confidence in the police service, perceived personal need, a perceived community loyalty or plainly fear.

Since this new era post-Peace Agreement, young people on the whole felt and feel targeted and confused. This is due to the continued control of their behaviour in communities by local forms of authority, coupled with mixed messages that they receive regarding whether this type of vigilance from paramilitaries is now appropriate. Set adrift with few in the community to admire and respect, often young people were and are seen to literally 'run riot' over communities.

Many of the problems and confusions with authority in community areas since the Belfast Agreement in 1998 are exacerbated by a large population of disaffected and marginalised youth. Many young people instill fear in their communities, while simultaneously, paramilitary elements within communities still carry out warnings and punishments, which in turn instill fear in the young people.

Although complaints are down and some confidence is growing, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) is still mistrusted and often perceived as 'no better than they used to be' as the former Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) by both Catholics and Protestants in working class areas (Roche 2008). Paramilitary elements are often still called upon in many areas to 'sort things out' (Jarman 2007, Roche 2007, Hansson 2005, Byrne 2004). At publication of this document, 18 Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC) reports testify to the fact that intercommunity and intracommunity violence from paramilitaries is decreasing. However, despite the reported decrease in these activities, it is important to remember that often these figures do not reflect the reality that many young people simply do not report their attack or present at hospital with their injuries (Roche 2007). Equally, paraphrasing one 18 year old man participant in *Facts, Fears and Feelings* from Belfast: 'Saying somethin' is gone and doin' that are, well, they are just different things'.

What is important to remember here is that young people may be referring to 'paramilitaries' in their area, when in reality these may be groups that were formerly recognised as such, or groups now claiming such status. Despite this, because young people perceive of certain members in the community as still within those groups or attached to such groups, socio-historic notions of what paramilitaries are and who paramilitary members are, still remain at play post-Agreement.

Recent research also bears this out. TRIPROJECT showed that paramilitary presence and knowledge of paramilitaries was evident with 34% of young people in the sample having reported affirmatively that they knew individuals their own age involved in the paramilitaries. There was almost no gender variation between any of the choices. However, proportionally more Protestants than Catholics reported that they knew people their own age within the paramilitaries. 53% of Protestant respondents compared to 25% of Catholic respondents stated that they knew people their own age involved in the paramilitaries. Knowledge also increased slightly with age. 33% of those aged 18 years and under, 30% of those aged 19-21 years, and 41% of those aged 22 years and over reported that they knew people their own age in the paramilitaries. Regarding family members that are or were in the paramilitaries, 19% stated that they had family members that are or were in the paramilitaries, 27% stated that they did not know whether family members were involved in the paramilitaries. Of those claiming familial involvement, almost twice as many males (25%) compared to females (13%), responded affirmatively. Overall, responses were relatively evenly distributed between community affiliation and age.

In *Facts, Fears and Feelings*, while familial or peer involvement was not addressed, young people involved in the project aptly discussed the dilemma of continuing paramilitarism in connection with the cocooning effect of the segregation and sectarianism.

I, I've been approached by (paramilitary group members). Well not quite right. I've been approached by a friend who is a supporter of (them), who said: 'Do you fancy coming along to one of these things?' I said no but. Ahhm, so that's maybe an example of how it (sectarianism) affects me still.

Male, Protestant

Aye like. It's part of it (sectarianism) like. It's, they're (paramilitaries) around like. It's that people, ahmm, people know where to go like. People says like they, they're supposed to be on arms layover or whatever like, but saying somethin' is like gone and people sayin', ahmm, doin' that are, well, they are just different things like.

Male, Catholic

Equally, young people knowledgeably discussed the continuing presence of paramilitaries in their areas, and discussed this with some ease. 8 out of 10 young people involved in this study discussed the remaining pressures from paramilitary influences in their areas. Knowing that paramilitary presence has decreased and is supposed to be ceasing, one young person summed up how she felt about their presence.

(Area) estates got a fair bit. ...It is strange if you wanted to go looking for loyalist paramilitaries you'd find them easy. If you wanted to sort of alienate yourself from it or if you wanted to sort of cut yourself off from reality you

probably could. It's not as if everyone on the street in balaclavas and handguns and stuff but you used to always know they're there.
Female, Protestant

Other young people discussed the confusion that has ensued since paramilitary policing has been declining in their areas.

I think it went a bit haywire when the paramilitaries, sort of, had nothing to do with it anymore because they kept the lid on it. When they, sort of went away the local yabos or whatever you want to call them just went mad; destroyed peoples property, schools, everything. People basically says: 'We're not going to take this, we're going to have to say to these fellas...whatever, this is our community and you're destroying it! We're not going to let you. We're going come out and stand and move youse on.' ...The greater people come out then the more the yobos will go: 'I'm not going over there.   They're not going to let us drink and do whatever we want.'

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It worked. It actually probably moved the problem on somewhere else, but it wasn't in where we were living, you know.

It's hard to say. I think they (paramilitaries) do solve a lot of problems but they also, they don't solve a lot of problems, you know. A lot of things don't get resolved, it's hard to find a balance.

Female, Catholic

Facts, Fears and Feelings participants often voiced approval or disapproval of such forces in their communities. Some felt paramilitary presence 'good' because they help to provided guardianship at times when police may be unable to punish the offender. Such examples were linked to personal or communal experience.

Like in (area) of you need to get in touch with anybody (unclear). Cars come 'round and they can move people on. Where I live now, you do get people standing about and all but it wouldn't be really bad know the way it would be in (area) or...so but people, you wouldn't really see community workers around our way. ...You'd see the police now and again, if somebody say, had a fight with her husband. But people living 'round wouldn't like that, the police getting phoned, no matter what it's for, say if your husband beats you up.

So, for example, you keep getting beat up by your husband?
Now that it's all quiet they don't mind as much if you need

to phone them, if you're getting beat up and you need to phone them, phone them, you know. As long as you don't go to see anybody else. If they come to your door the same time as the police come to your door, it doesn't work. Do you know what I mean?

So you choose one or the other?
Um hmm (affirmatively).

Female, Protestant

I don't know what they actually did te him, beat him or...He was supposed to be going into peoples' houses at Christmas and goin' to the toilet on the settee and all, know and things like that. ... People in the area were glad that he was caught (by the paramilitaries).

Female, Protestant

I don't know. I think, I guess, it's better I guess with (paramilitary group). They control things better. They, say, stop the joyriding and craic like that. You can telephone the police 60 times and not get like the same amount of, ahmm, of control like.
Male, Catholic

Others, too, felt that such presence was 'bad'. Often, these criticisms were linked to forms of paramilitary behaviour that were not seen as associated with nationalist fervor, but rather with criminal activity.

What do you think of the paramilitaries?

Ahmm, to be honest, genuinely have no respect for any of them. I disagree with the entire principles of what they do in terms of murder and justifying murder because, tit for tat killings, I see them as, you know, pulling our country down, pulling us away from any sort of progress. Ahmm, also if the (paramilitary group) means, being inactive at the minute, a lot of the Loyalist paramilitary groups, at least if you could say anything about paramilitary groups in the past you could have least have said they're fighting for what they believe in, they're fighting for their nationality, they fight for, you know, something that's really close to their heart and everything. I still don't see it as an excuse, but least you could say that. But now...it's drugs, it's money, it's crime, it's just, it's bad.

Female, Protestant

Paramilitaries are stopping Catholics and Protestants going around with each other, mixing with each other. If the paramilitaries would stand down, there would be a lot more better community.

Female, Catholic

They think they can do things 'cause they're really saying that they're trying to calm the community down when it's themins that's making it worse. (People) go to the paramilitaries because it will scare them more. ...The people know who to go to, just because they've lived there all their lives.

Female, Protestant

Certainly TRIPROJECT results tie in with such sentiments and numerically highlight the knowledge of and ambivalence towards paramilitaries in young people's areas (see Roche 2005:203-229).   For example, in Question 4.1 of the TRIPROJECT questionnaire, young people were asked to 'agree', 'disagree' or to 'neither agree nor disagree' regarding two statements concerning paramilitary involvement within the community. These were: 'I believe that paramilitaries should look out for their own communities' and 'I believe that paramilitaries should punish antisocial behaviour within their communities'. The question, stemming from discussions with young people, highlighted the two aspects that popped up most within discussion groups.

The result of these inquires illustrated that young people remained interested in maintaining a paramilitary presence in their communities. 42% agreed that paramilitaries should 'look out' for their own communities. A further 38% were on the fence, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with this statement. Only 20% stated that paramilitaries should not look out for their own communities. Interestingly, responses became a bit more uncertain with age, the highest percentages of neither agreeing nor disagreeing fell within the age brackets of those aged 19-21 years (45%), and those aged 22 years and over (43%).

Importantly, 32% of young people queried believed that paramilitaries should punish antisocial behaviour.   And 35% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

Although it may be the case that young people complain about paramilitary action within their communities on behalf of the community, it is revealing that 51% of those who agreed that paramilitaries should look out for their own communities and 34% of those who agreed that paramilitaries should punish antisocial behaviour were young people 18 years and under. Equally revealing is that these feelings regarding guardianship and punishment were almost evenly split between genders.

Throughout *Facts, Fears and Feelings* most young people felt that 'warnings' regarding anti-social behaviour was still an important part of maintaining the community or just the 'way' things worked. Hansson also notes that while some young people feel that paramilitary presence was necessary to 'protect' their areas' others saw this control as 'giving the area a bad name' (2005:90). Inevitably, many participants saw the continued presence of paramilitaries in their areas as something that maintained community cohesion, for better or for worse. This was expressed in a
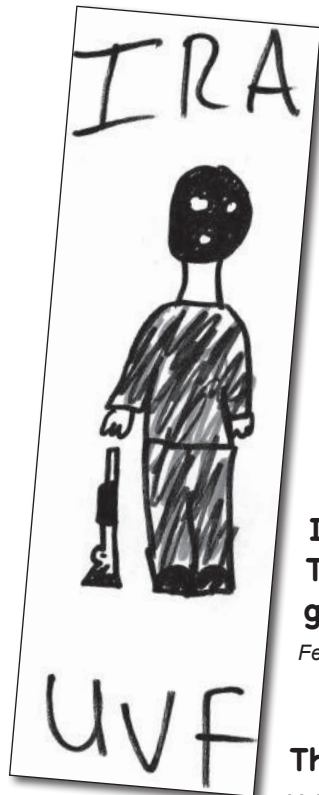
variety of ways. Some stated that families within areas for long periods of time benefited from such protection, while others merely stated that such presence 'was the way it is'.

They keep their noses clean now. They got a big warning afterwards. There's people because the girls got warned afterwards. I was told this ...that they had been warned, ahmmm, by people, like, ahmmm, because our family had lived there for so long and because my dad's family had lived there.
Female, Protestant

I don't know like people use them to just, I don't know. They use them to keep the hoods away. I think that's good. They help keep the peace up where we are living.
Female, Catholic

That's who runs the street more or less...
Male, Catholic

Control and pressure from paramilitary members takes many forms and, in some cases, has yielded control between areas of the same ethnonationalist/ ethnoreligious community. A few young people from Protestant areas discussed feuds between areas of varying paramilitary loyalty and some of the nuances of keeping to one's own community. On occasion, young people were warned to 'go home' to their own areas if they

had been seen 'causing bother' in a different Protestant area. Again, the young people discussing such incidents had mixed feelings about whether this type of authority in areas was 'good' or 'bad'.

My area is all (paramilitary group). I've got a few warnings and stuff like that for going into different people's estates, different parts of (city). I was messing about there and I got a warning to go back home, that if I messed about on the estate that I was getting, getting hit. ... I was messing about and I was near fighting and I was slabbering and stuff like that or being...

So you were getting in trouble because you were causing fights in a different area?
Aye. They phone, they know where, like knew where I was... I was trotting up to meet a wee girl. The wee girl knew where I was from and knew what area I was from and all the commanders know each other so they phoned the area and said, gave my name and all. My mate's in the paramilitaries and he got told to give me a warning just to stop messing about.

Okay. To stop causing trouble. Okay. Do you think that stuff's good that they do that, or bad?
It can be good sometimes and it can be bad sometimes. Sometimes people get a beating for people for, take beating for other people but it can be good in a way too where if someone else comes into your estate and wrecks it and people come to your estate and steal cars and stuff like

that then they can put them out and stop crime and all up in the areas.

Male, Protestant

Do you think it's ever going to get solved?
Not with the IRA and UDA and all.

Ok. What do you think of them?
I like the people in the (paramilitary group) but the things they do to people they don't deserve it like. But they only deserve it if they done something really bad. (Gives example).

Well he got threw out of Northern Ireland for a couple of days but he got let back in and he had to get a broken arm. ...(paramilitary group) done it. Just walking up with his girl and the next minute done in. He had no one there to help him.

Male, Protestant

'Touting', or revealing information that should be kept private, and the fear of doing it, is an important community mechanism that also continues to keep community residents in their respective areas. Some young people discussed this aspect of community control

There's a girl beside me and apparently she had phoned (in fraud to social services) ...I mean that's touting the way

they work it out up there. That's touting ye know. You don't do things like that (unclear) but she would have been the only one that would have known the details because she used to go about with her. Nobody on our estate would know anything about her

I think the girl, my neighbour, apparently had been reported for doing this before, squealing on people, so. My friend was just going to go in and she would have killed her. All her money was stopped, it was all up in the air, she wasn't getting any money, she has four kids, ye know. It was bad like. So instead of her just going in and murdering her and ending up in jail, she went to (paramilitary group) and they (unclear). She never admitted to that.

But everybody who knew her went: 'That's bad like, ye know, people don't do that they don't tell on...you don't.'

Female, Catholic

(Paramility group) kick their own people out because it shouldn't be happening. ...They can't get lifted but ... 'cause if anyone touted, they'd be getting done. 'Cause you're not allowed to tout on the paramilitaries.

Male, Protestant

You just don't tout. Touting is like a bad like thing to do. You don't want to be telling people about things in your

area. I'd say if someone was to do that they wouldn't be wise.

Female, Catholic.

Ahmm, then he, well, he was accused of touting like. I mean touting is about the worst thing, a tout, it's bad as you can be like.

Female, Catholic

Concluding

Community pressures take on all sorts of tacit and explicit forms. The presence of 'people', 'paramilitaries' and 'my mummy's friend' in both Catholic and Protestant areas still profoundly influence many young people's choices and how they will act in future. Not surprisingly, Hargie, Dickson and O'Donnell (2006b) observe that when discussing the status of young people with community groups and training providers, these providers note that young people were affected by paramilitarism in their areas and that sectarianism has been the norm in these communities. Indeed, *Facts, Fears and Feelings* participants echo these findings and illustrate that 'people's' influence upon their movements and choices can have a considerable effect on their outlook for the future.

In this way, I propose the list identified by Sinclair et al. (2004) as outlined earlier in this report, describing aspects that young people identified as developing sectarian attitudes, should be expanded to include:

 • **The residue of emergency, and**
 • **Continuing paramilitary influences.**

While many young people felt that they personally were able to transgress some of the prejudice that had existed in times past, some community pressures still were present. In a conversation with one young man who regularly attended cross-community programmes, influences of community pressures were particularly highlighted when he matter-of-factly told me that he brought Catholics into his area and 'nobody's ever found out.'   Although many personal journeys to peace and integration are successful for young people, the pressures and frank acknowledgement of reprisal from communities is still present.

Went to loads of meetings and got to know each other; got to know about each other's religions, made a DVD about like how the two communities should come together and stuff, been away on a couple of trips and then went away to Berlin.

Do you think that's been helpful for you to meet other people from the other community?
Yeah. I live in a complete Protestant area. No Catholics at all and I've been able to bring them down to my house at the weekends for a drink. Nobody's ever found out.

Would you have trouble if people found out?
I don't think it would be that bad. Probably a good dig in the face or something like that. Or warned or, or whatever.
Male, Protestant

Chapter 6

Concluding: looking forward

The title and news article reads:

> ## 'Belfast Puts Faith In Its 40-year-old 'Peace Line'
>
> **BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND**
> **… Ten years after peace was declared in Northern Ireland, one might have expected that Belfast's barriers would be torn down by now. But reality, as usual, is far messier.   Not one has been dismantled. Instead they have grown in both size and number.**
>
> **The past decade of peacemaking has brought political elites of both sides together in a Catholic-Protestant government in hopes that their example would trickle down. Their experiment in cooperation, highlighted by the power-sharing government's first anniversary earlier this month, has encouraged thriving employment, tourism and night life.**
>
> **But it has not delivered meaningful reconciliation. Instead for dozens of front-line communities of Belfast, fences still make the best neighbours. …**

This excerpt from the recent Associated Press article, published in the *Los Angles Times* (17.05.08), gets to the nucleus of what is facing Northern Ireland and the reality of continued divided living. What is important about such a news report is that not only does it seek to show the reality of

life for many people in Northern Ireland, but also that Northern Ireland and her politics are important internationally. A hallmark for other areas experiencing conflict and seeking resolutions across the world, the progress of Northern Ireland peacemaking is something to which the world's eyes and hearts are turned.

While Northern Ireland is surging forward with efforts for enduring solutions, we can not forget that division, segregation and sectarianism, and the fear that is associated with it, are still present in the lives of many. The only way that such long-standing divisions can be tackled is through conscious efforts to monitor progress and to report upon discoveries. This report hopes to be part of that process.

This document is dedicated to exploring what sectarianism is and means for the young people who were involved in this project. What is revealed is sometimes commonsensical knowledge, but perhaps something easily overlooked. It is important to understand sectarianism through the lens of everyday experiences and to see it within the social patterns of life. If sectarianism is approached as pervading understandings within communities, more can be done to tackle the problem.

The topics included in this report reflect the many aspects of the divided worlds that young people living in enclaved areas are facing. 3 out of 4 young people expressed fear of the other community or fear of entering into the areas inhabited by the other community. Two thirds of young people
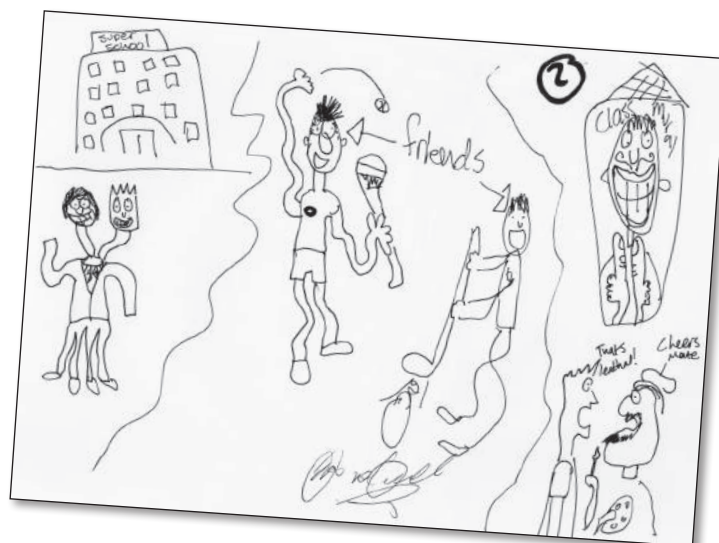
included in this study demonstrated highly segregated socialising patterns and lifeways. Like being wrapped in a cocoon, many young people showed that their lives were bound-up within their own communities with little scope for socialising with those from the other community. Many expressed a contentment or resignation with such circumstances.

Added to this, family and friendship networks can complicate the young person's world by restricting access to those in the other community. Not only parents, but grandparents influence young people with opinions and prejudices. Naturally, young people sympathised with their family's past and experiences, and supported that world view. Close friends were almost entirely found within their own areas, with only 1 in 4 young people able to maintain any lasting friendships with the other community.

The broader community, too, held sway. Most young people commented on 'people' in their community who influenced decision making. Although discussing some transition of paramilitary violence in their areas, 8 out of 10 young people discussed 'the paramilitaries' and still saw certain individuals within their communities as connected to these units. While some felt this type of influence was helpful, others condemned their continuing presence. Life in Northern Ireland for many of the young people in this study is complex and indeed, as the article above states, 'as usual, far messier'.

Complexity is multifaceted, however. Indeed, while two thirds of participants exhibited segregated lifeways, two thirds of young people recognised such segregation and many felt that this should not be the norm. Discussing a 'better' Northern Ireland, most young people felt that more mixing should occur and should occur more regularly. Progress in this respect comes in many variations, and young people have harnessed the capacity for friendship building through new technologies. Writing to friends through

social networking media and creating 'new communities' all of their own design, young people can inspire new visions for a unified Northern Ireland.

Following Connolly (2002), the nature of such research provides the data but not the answers, and this is a drawback. Elsewhere, I have made broad policy suggestions regarding the state of young people and initiatives to work with a shared future (Roche 2006). However, some discussion of good practice can be briefly discussed here to widen the debate.

Children, young people and their families

Anti-sectarian strategies should be built into projects where mothers, fathers and children learn together. Following on from new educational and developmental measures in Northern Ireland to acquaint children with the varieties in our community as a whole, more innovative programmes which involve media should be developed. Initiatives such as *Sesame Tree*, the *Sesame Street* television co-production for Northern Ireland recently aired April 2008, are initial steps for the broader audience.

In addition, localised, person to person initiatives for parents and their children need to be put in place permanently and made priority for government. Throughout *Facts, Fears and Feelings* research, participants who were pregnant or who had children (14 participants) shed light on fears regarding children's sectarian values and/or on what their children 'picked up' from adult conversation. A few mothers were becoming aware that their children were accumulating prejudiced perceptions and were attempting to change those notions or at least trying to prevent their children from using sectarian language. All mothers involved in the study were in favour of

parent/child classes where parents could learn about just how much of their value set is passed onto their children.

Initiatives, such as Glasgow's anti-racism strategy *Different Together*, a booklet for teachers, parents and nursery children, is an illustration of a small initiative that is making a big difference. The booklet, discussing good practice in anti-racism, is attempting to address the rapidly changing racial dynamics in Glasgow *as it is occurring*. Rather than waiting for prejudice to fester, this anti-racial initiative is a pre-emptive move for the better. As a recent report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education found that children of asylum seekers in Glasgow were subjected to taunts on a daily basis, Glasgow City Council attempted to produce a pack that would reach not only the youngest among them, but their parents and teachers as well. Lessons include learning about the significance of religious festivals and different foods, songs and stories from other countries. It incorporates a section for teachers to help them deal with racist incidents in the classroom and a section for parents which encourages them to confront their own prejudices. Such programmes initiated under the guidance of mentors, such as teachers and parents, can have a substantial effect upon how children accept diversity. Integrating such a step into Northern Ireland's nurseries for anti-sectarian strategies can have equally positive results. Established mother-toddler programmes sponsored by bodies such as PROTEUS, Managing EU funding, and hosted by bodies such as the YMCA, also can integrate such anti-sectarian initiatives into their established literacy programmes where mothers and children learn together. Such preventative practice fits well with the principles as established by OFMDFM ten year strategy 2006-2016, for the gradual shift to preventative and early intervention practice. (OFMDFM 2006:18).

If Northern Ireland's adults are inherently segregated and discussed by many of their children as openly prejudice, focus needs to be placed on

parents and children. Elsewhere, suggestions for change in this area have been made (Roche 2006:37). Involving parents is an urgent issue and should start in the pre-school years. Not just involving those pupils who identify as victims of Troubles violence, such as that with OFMDFM sponsored, *Enabling Young Voices*, in a new era *all* children need to be comprehensively involved in anti-sectarian strategies. Parents should be supported to become more confident in fulfilling their responsibilities in a demanding role, encouraging good skills in parenting for both fathers and mothers. Every effort should be made to enhance programmes that support good relations in parenting programmes and government funding should be dedicated to these efforts.

<div style="float:right">**Young people and their friends**</div>

Young people and their friends

As this report has indicated, young people's friendship-making capacities are important to the total growth of the individual. Outside of school, youth service provision is one of the main areas that should be examined for the capacity for young people to mingle often, adequately and consistently for extended periods across the divide. *Facts, Fears and Feelings* research indicates that only 1 in 4 young people in this study were able to maintain any meaningful contact across communities. Considering that so many young people across Northern Ireland live in areas that are highly segregated by ethnonationalist / ethnoreligious preference, this is problematic.

The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) note that although some support has been provided through Community Relations Youth Support Schemes, the value and effects of such programmes were questioned on the basis that contact was not

always meaningful or sustained (NICCY 2004:207). Such research should be heeded. More core funding needs to be put in place to provide services for young people in the 16+ categories. Elsewhere, suggestions made for the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council indicate that a holistic approach means a 5 year, philanthropic-style model of core funding where assessment is examined on a 1, 3 and 5 year basis (Roche 2006:35). Only programmes which can demonstrate service to prolonged cross-community contact should be considered for pilot funding. These programmes would need to show long-term and innovative campaigns to get young people mixing across the divide and be monitored for independent progress reports.

Mechanisms already in place, such as the Northern Ireland Youth Forum (NIYF), local youth councils and Youth Service Liaison Forum (YSLF), should be in consultation with government concerning how to provide further and more lasting provision. New programmes should be piloted through Joined in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence (JEDI) as they are well-placed for monitoring programmes for practice and policy. Equally, Training for Success (TfS) programmes should be encouraged to mingle young people through work placement schemes and monitor the results of such pilot schemes. Healthy funding from DEL and other government sources should be provided for programmes that want to attempt such pilot schemes and that demonstrate this diversity.

The community, continuing violence and other alternatives

Facts, Fears and Feelings research indicates that the broader, more nebulous 'community', and 'people' within it, still affect how young people participate in activities with members from the other community. While this report did not focus exclusively or at length on aspects of sport or cultural activities, it was illustrated that many young people were dissuaded by community members in participating in activities perceived as being part of the tradition of the other community.

Sports, arts and cultural heritage need to be addressed within this segregated environment. No one community may lay claim to a particular type of activity or sport, nor can they stipulate who can participate. This also includes ending exclusive participation in some sport by sex and making sport a gender inclusive environment. Such positive aspects of participation in activities and the potential for friendship needs to be made clear to all children at an early age. Traditionally exclusive activities in Northern Ireland, such as scouting or hurling for example, should be provided with innovative provision to enable access from other community members. This should include free and safe transport to venues where the training occurs and where the games are played or activities are held. Some subsidy should be provided for those who are interested in participating.

Sports Council Northern Ireland needs to expand its remit in this area, drawing attention to the cross-community friendship-making possibilities for young people in these activities. New facilities, such as the Lakeside Centre, imagined from sports providers in Donegal, Tyrone and Monaghan financed by EU INTERREG IIIA Programme, where soccer, rugby and the Gaelic games can all be played in the same facility, are a step in the right direction.

Alternative sports which carry no particular 'heritage mark', such as rowing, track and field, or the integration of new sports for Northern Ireland, such as ice hockey, for both sexes should be encouraged and used as a medium for change. Professional teams such as *The Belfast Giants*, lauded for their ability to draw fans from both communities, could be used to host large events where young people can come and 'try out' a sport. International sponsorship for such reconciliation through sporting could be found.

Regarding the arts, Arts Council Northern Ireland needs to lead a campaign where the heritage of particular activities, such as the many varieties of dance and drumming in Northern Ireland, are celebrated and shared. Individual community programmes that conduct innovative outreach into the other community should be well-subsidised. Individual examples of good practice exist in many areas across Northern Ireland. And new funding for the Re-imaging Communities Programme to tackle visible signs of sectarianism and racism is a progressive move. However, a comprehensive look at how arts projects are mixing young people from both communities, how often and how long young people mingled on these projects, and how many long-term friendships were formed, would be a valuable exercise. Such an examination could be undertaken in joint between JEDI, the CRC, NICCY and the Arts Council.

If young people can be creative and active, mingling with other community members should become less harrowing. Although youth rioting and street

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Thursday 13 September 2007 **Derry** News

news**briefs**

End sectarianism in sport

Speaking in the Assembly debate regarding the Football Offences Act SDLP Sports Spokesperson Pat Ramsey said sectarian and racial abuse has no place in sport.

Mr Ramsey stated that despite the considerable efforts being made at association level in soccer, rugby and gaelic - sectarian, racist and abusive chanting is a reality at sporting grounds week in week around the North of Ireland.

"The Football Offences Act 1991, makes it an offence to make indecent or racialist chants at a football ground. The act defines indecent or racialist chanting as such which is abusive or insulting to a person by reason of his colour, race nationality or ethnic origins.

"Had legislation been in place this summer the taunters of Darren Graham, a Protestant who played at under-21 level for Fermanagh in both football and hurling could expect prosecution and the Ballymena supporters who in the words of Linfield Manager David Jeffries hurled sectarian abuse at his catholic players would be facing the prospect of not seeing another Irish League match for some time," he said.

fighting will need to be continuously monitored due to both the ritualistic aspect of it in Northern Ireland and its recreational capacities, if more young people become interested in activities outside of those that 'fit' within the divided context, some progress can be made. Innovative programmes that help to combat youth violence at interface areas, such as those locally, and often voluntarily, sponsored in the Clooney area in Derry/Londonderry or the Short Strand area of Belfast for example, should be given access to emergency and diversionary funds to help sponsor their continued work.

Examples of good practice, such as the Belfast Interface Project report (2004), which attempts to create a broad set of policy suggestions for areas particular affected by youth violence and rioting should be supported. Equally all structures and actions as laid out in the Community Safety Unit's strategy document to be delivered by March 2007 should be adhered to. A comprehensive and forward-thinking plan, the strategy allows for funding for monitoring within communities of youth crime and violence, as well as providing support for projects aimed at building bridges between young people and their communities, *and* young people and older people (2002:35).

Facts, Fears and Feelings research indicates that paramilitary warnings and punishments continue in Northern Irish working class communities. Although this phenomenon is most commonly connected to intracommunity maintenance, the development of such mechanisms are due to the divided nature of Northern Ireland and should be tackled within the process of building a peaceful Northern Ireland. While restorative justice measures are helping to find alternative ways to relate to young people in the community and restore relationships, research by NICCY indicates that there is considerable tension between community-based restorative justice projects and statutory providers (2004:240). If restorative justice is to

become established as an institution across Northern Ireland for dealing with youth, NICCY's suggestions for involving statutory bodies such as the Youth Justice Agency for Northern Ireland (YJA) and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) are important. Also, transparency and regulation of such organisations are becoming imperative as many young people and community members see confusions between these organisations and previous paramilitary influences in their areas, or do not know what kind of service they provide (Roche 2007 and all 2005). Family Group Conferencing, such as that developed by *Barnardo's* with statutory agencies has proven valuable. Equally, re-integration of previous offenders back into the community through crisis intervention projects with Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) have also been effective measures and show work with all sorts of community members and statutory providers. Organisations such as these need to be encouraged to continue to work within communities, and to communicate with the Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC) as long as that commission operates.

Finally, as illustrated through *Facts, Fears and Feelings*, computer mediated communication and social networking through 'chat' 'rooms', 'groups' and 'networks' has enabled young people to find alternative communities of their own. While some work is being accomplished cross-border to investigate the potential of these mediums, more research needs to be sponsored to examine how to harness such potential. Scotland's research on the extent of sectarianism online (O'Loan et. al 2005) sponsored by the *Nil By Mouth Campaign* for a 'More Tolerant Scotland' is a fine example of how such research can inform not only academic debates, but government policy as well. Research should be undertaken with young people across Northern Ireland to begin to gage the extent of sectarian threat that is issued through these mediums, and conversely, how positive cross-community initiatives

can be filtered through such mediums. As young people and the variety of ways through which they communicate move forward, Northern Ireland should be in step *and* thinking ahead. Pre-emptive measures to integrate positive, cross-community 'chat' communities should be encouraged and these initiatives monitored by the youth agencies that sponsor them.

Conclusion

The *Facts, Fears and Feelings Project* has provided a unique opportunity to examine some of the everyday concerns that working class young people have regarding sectarianism and segregation post-agreement. As the power-sharing government moves into its second year, the issues that it will face regarding sectarianism and the division between communities will be challenging, but not impossible, to tackle. Northern Ireland is given the unique opportunity to challenge other 'isms' simultaneously as it moves forward. These prospects put Northern Ireland in a distinctive position to set standards for how post-conflict communities can deal with division. This position of being an example should not be understated. Although Northern Ireland's conditions are unique, how government tackles issues of sectarianism and segregation in the upcoming decades will set the bar for other areas seeking peaceful resolutions to conflict.

No longer can community members stand behind prejudice as the 'way it is in here', as mingling, knowledge and sharing become everyday in Northern Ireland. As academics, policy makers, volunteers, government thinkers and leaders in Northern Ireland, it is our job to listen to the young people and the upcoming generations to gage what really should be done. While it may seem a simple concept, remembering that sectarianism pervades all sorts of everyday thoughts and actions, will help to keep us focused on combating it for the future.

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