



**Unionist  
Concerns & Fears  
of a  
United Ireland  
The Need to Protect the Peace Process  
&  
Build a Vision for a Shared Island  
&  
A United People**

**Senator Mark Daly**

Based on the recommendation of the Report  
by the  
Joint Oireachtas Committee  
on the

Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

'Brexit & The Future of Ireland Uniting Ireland & Its People In Peace and Prosperity'

Based on writings and contributions, including those by:

Michael Nesbitt - Ulster Unionist Party Leader (2012-2017)

Reverend Kyle Paisley

Trevor Ringland – Irish International Rugby Player and Co-Chair of the Northern  
Ireland Conservatives Political Party (2013-2014)

Reverend Norman Hamilton – Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland 2010-11

Unionist Political Representative

Raymond McCord - Victims' Rights Activist

Anonymous Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist (PUL) Community member living in Greater  
Belfast

Dr James Wilson – Served in the British Army during the Troubles  
Conducted Focus Groups with the Independent Orange Order, Loyalist Flute Band,  
UDR/Irish Regiment Veterans, and the East Belfast Mission at the request of Senator  
Mark Daly

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## 1.0 Introduction

In 2017, I was honoured to be appointed Rapporteur for the first report in the history of the State, by a Dáil or Seanad Committee, on achieving a United Ireland. The 1,232 page report, 'Brexit & The Future of Ireland: Uniting Ireland & It's People in Peace & Prosperity', was adopted unanimously by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.

The report made 17 recommendations, one of which states:

***“Fears and concerns of the Unionist community need to be examined, understood and addressed comprehensively by all stakeholders in advance of any referendum.”***

This recommendation is the basis for this research paper. The majority of the research compiled on unionist fears and concerns of a United Ireland were individual submissions given to me following my request to each contributor. I also commissioned Dr James Wilson, who served in the British Army during the Troubles, to carry out primary research. An undertaking was given to the participants who requested it, that their identities would be protected, and that their views would be included in the report in full.

While it is acknowledged that the sample sizes of the groups in Dr Wilson's research are small, their views give an indication and important insight into the feelings, thoughts, and fears and concerns of their peer groups and communities. I am grateful to all participants for taking the time to make their contributions to this research.

The urgency to address the issues in the submissions and research is underlined by the growing realisation that a plebiscite on a United Ireland as provided for in the Good Friday Agreement is possible/probable at some stage and could occur in the short to medium rather than the longer term. However, any possible referendum must not happen as a knee jerk political action. The Brexit referendum has taught us an important lesson: you do not hold a referendum until every possible outcome has been examined and prepared for, where possible. This referendum particularly cannot be rushed or used for political gain; the hard won peace we all enjoy on this island is at stake. The holding of a referendum without proper preparation and engagement, particularly with the unionist community, would lead to the fulfilment of the warning “policy neglect seldom goes unpunished”.<sup>1</sup>

Lady Sylvia Hermon, Independent Unionist MP for North Down and widow of the former Chief Constable of the RUC, said in an interview with the BBC, “I am worried about the consequences of Brexit. In my lifetime I never thought that I would see a Border poll and I am now convinced that I probably will see a Border poll.”<sup>2</sup> She is right when she said in the same interview, “Brexit has and will change everything.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John Bradley, 'Towards an All-Island Economy', (2016) < [http://www.irish-association.org/papers/john\\_bradley.asp](http://www.irish-association.org/papers/john_bradley.asp)> accessed 1 May 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Gareth Gordon, 'Unionist MP Lady Sylvia Hermon expects to see border poll', (2018) < <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-43995962>> accessed 1 May 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Former Northern Ireland First Minister Peter Robinson believes the North should prepare for the possibility of a United Ireland. Speaking at the MacGill Summer School in Glenties, Co Donegal, he said he does not think Northern Ireland will want to leave the United Kingdom, but that is no reason it shouldn't prepare for the eventuality:

"I don't expect my own house to burn down but I still insure it because it could happen," he said.<sup>4</sup> The former leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) said he would accept the results of a border poll which led to Northern Ireland joining the Republic. "As soon as that decision is taken every democrat will have to accept that decision," he said in response to a question from the audience.<sup>5</sup>

Significantly, he also compared moving towards that scenario without preparation to the decision to leave the EU. "I don't believe Northern Ireland will want to leave the United Kingdom, but if it does happen we would be in a terrible fix because we would be in the same situation as leaving the EU where nothing was negotiated or decided about what was going to happen after."<sup>6</sup> Mr Robinson said he believed the unionist community in general would also accept the results of a referendum on unification but would want some "protections," similar to those the nationalist community currently enjoys in the North.

The Times Newspaper reported of a confrontation between the British Prime Minister Theresa May and the Brexiteer MP Jacob Rees-Mogg during briefings on Monday the 15<sup>TH</sup> of May 2018. Prime Minister May is reported to have said she is not confident of certain victory in an Irish border poll. "I would not be as confident as you. That's not a risk I'm prepared to take. We cannot be confident on the politics of that situation, on how it plays out."<sup>7</sup> The Belfast Telegraph reported that Sophie Long, the former communications officer of the Progressive Unionist Party, the political wing of the Ulster Volunteer Force, said unionists should "prepare for the possibility of a United Ireland".<sup>8</sup> Many believe the next census in 2021 will show what would be considered a unionist minority and it is estimated by some that it will convert into a voting majority for nationalists in the next decade. In October 2018, for the first time ever, an opinion poll in Northern Ireland showed that a majority of 56% would vote for a United Ireland in the event of a hard Brexit & a hard border<sup>9</sup>.

In light of this evidence and statements, not least from members of the Unionist communities, a referendum on a United Ireland is possible within a decade. It is concerning that there does not seem to be the same realisation of this fact among the Government in the Republic.

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<sup>4</sup> Conor Gallagher, 'North should prepare for united Ireland possibility - ex-DUP leader', (2018) < <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/north-should-prepare-for-united-ireland-possibility-ex-dup-leader-1.3578620>> accessed 1 May 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Sam Coates, 'Theresa May and Jacob Rees-Mogg clash over Brexit deal', (2018) < <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/may-and-rees-mogg-clash-over-brexit-deal-vg9ml05fz>> accessed 1 May 2019.

<sup>8</sup> 'Why unionists should discuss Irish unity now from a position of strength and not weakness', (2017) < <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/general-election-2017/comment/why-unionists-should-discuss-irish-unity-now-from-a-position-of-strength-and-not-weakness-35633437.html>>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/brexit-would-boost-support-for-united-ireland-poll-finds-1.3616129>

The submission to the 2019 draft National Risk Assessment by Deputy Sean Fleming, Chair of the Oireachtas Public Accounts Committee and I, “National Risk Assessment 2019 Void due to Omission of Possible/Probable Referendum on a New Agreed Ireland” is included in the appendix and outlines the reticence of the Government to prepare for the possible/probable referendum on a New Agreed Ireland.

However, a United Ireland that just replaces one system of majoritarianism with another will not achieve the aim of protecting the peace process and building a vision for a shared island and a united people. I would like to thank all those who contributed.

### **Acknowledgements**

Thanks to all those I met and spoke with in my research for this report all of whom showed me generosity with their time and great hospitality. I would like to thank all those who I met who made submissions and those who were unable in our conversations gave invaluable insight. Particular thanks to ; Michael Nesbitt -Ulster Unionist Party Leader (2012-2017), Reverend Kyle Paisley, Trevor Ringland –Irish International Rugby Player and Co-Chair of the Northern Ireland Conservatives Political Party(2013-2014), Reverend Norman Hamilton Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland 2010-11, An unnamed Unionist Political Representative, Raymond McCord -Victims’ Rights Activist, Anonymous Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist (PUL) Community member living in Greater Belfast, Dr James Wilson –Served in the British Army during the Troubles and all those who participated in his focus group - Independent Orange Order, Loyalist Flute Band, UDR/Irish Regiment Veterans, and the East Belfast Mission. Noel Dempsey, Sean Campbell, Cormac Brennan, Ellis Scherer particular thanks for their hard work in compiling this report , to Caroline Mulvaney and Grace Coyle

## 2.0 Executive Summary

**“Fears and concerns of the Unionist community need to be examined, understood and addressed comprehensively by all stakeholders in advance of any referendum”.**

This was a central recommendation of the report entitled 'Brexit & the Future of Ireland: Uniting Ireland & Its People in Peace & Prosperity' published in 2017. The report was adopted unanimously by the all-party Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. The Rapporteur for the report was Senator Mark Daly.

Senator Daly followed up on this recommendation by contacting many stakeholders in the Protestant/unionist/loyalist community, from church leaders and unionist politicians to former loyalist paramilitaries, to start the process of engagement to ascertain what their “fears and concerns” might be. This research report is the result of these contacts.

Mike Nesbitt, former leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, articulates one of the fears of unionism: “the fear is that their identity will be denied”<sup>10</sup>.

Reverend Kyle Paisley is of the view that there are other reasons for unionists rejecting the idea of re-unification than just religious or political ideas. The lack of unity in the six counties shows how difficult it would be to get unity in a thirty-two county Ireland. Issues such as economics and the NHS will be crucial in consideration of a United Ireland. “I think there are other, more practical reasons for their rejecting the idea of re-unification than just religious or political ideas. To begin with, if there is no unity in the six counties of Northern Ireland, how can there be heart-felt unity across thirty-two counties?”<sup>11</sup>

A unionist public representative who gave the submission on the basis of anonymity spells out clearly the kernel of the fear, “Unionists do not have fear about a United Ireland. Unionist fear is a United Ireland”. He also states what unionism is by saying it is about a belief in the existence of Northern Ireland and that “its interests are best served in the United Kingdom”. In addition, many unionists would see the breaking from the UK as “a historic complete and irreversible failure of their core politics and identity” and he goes on “any talk or discussion on a United Ireland by unionism is seen by many as tantamount to negotiating surrender” This public representative believes the other issues that concern unionists in any consideration of a United Ireland include economics, the NHS, the EU, terrorism and the glorification of terrorists and their activities in the Troubles, identity and symbols of that identity.<sup>12</sup>

Raymond McCord, a victim’s rights campaigner, believes that Brexit cannot be used as an excuse for a United Ireland. Based on his own personal experiences he does not trust politicians, North or South. The Government in the Republic, he believes, shows no interest in unionist victims. He will accept whatever result comes from any referendum, but he states, “how can we have a United Ireland when we don’t have a united people in Northern Ireland?”<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> 4.1 Submission by Ulster Unionist Party Leader Michael Nesbitt (2012-2017)

<sup>11</sup> 4.2 Submission by Reverend Kyle Paisley

<sup>12</sup> 4.5 Submission by an Anonymous Unionist Public Representative

<sup>13</sup> 4.7 ‘Unionism versus a “United” Ireland’, Raymond McCord

An anonymous Protestant/ Unionist/ Loyalist (PUL) community member living in the Greater Belfast area made a submission, in which they stated that they have “serious concerns of the consequences of the Republic of Ireland absorbing one million people into a country where they have lost their identity” and “I was born an Ulsterman and chose my identity as British and as such like my forefathers I do not identify with the Irish Culture”.<sup>14</sup>

Reverend Hamilton, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (2010-2011) states “It appears to be the case that those who seek a United Ireland have little skill in, or interest in, uniting communities and building relationships as the necessary conditions for deep political discourse of huge constitutional import”. The Reverend goes on to say, “I have great resistance to a referendum in the foreseeable future, not least because of what has been learned (or not learned) from the recent referendum in the UK”.<sup>15</sup>

Trevor Ringland, former Irish International rugby player and co-chair of the Northern Ireland Conservative Party (2013-2014), in an interview with Mark Rainey of the Belfast Telegraph on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 2019 spoke about how there was “no space in New Ireland for me”<sup>16</sup>.

The report on uniting Ireland from the Joint Committees on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement contained a submission by Dr James Wilson, who served in the British Army during the Troubles, which outlined some of the unionist’s fear of a United Ireland. This submission is available in full as Appendix 2 of this research. In it Dr Wilson outlined that, along with the normal concerns that all those in Northern Ireland share about a future all island health service and the economy, there are real and genuine fears among the Unionist community in Northern Ireland that the land would be taken from them, there would be retribution on members of the security forces and their community’s identity would be lost.

Dr Wilson’s previous findings are more comprehensively analysed in research and focus groups which Senator Daly commissioned Dr Wilson to undertake specifically for this research report. Dr Wilson conducted this research among members of the Independent Orange Order, a Loyalist flute band, UDR/Irish Guard veterans and a focus group at the East Belfast Mission. What it makes clear is the “mother of all fears” for the Unionist community is “effectively our home would become a foreign state”. Within that overarching fear is the belief that they could not “really be British in a United Ireland” that they would be “assimilation” and they would effectively become “second class”, “planter citizens” in a United Ireland. There is also a fear of “Triumphalism” by nationalists and republicans. The pressing need to address these and all the other fears in the unionist community in advance of a referendum is clear.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> 4.5 Submission by an Anonymous Unionist Public Representative

<sup>15</sup> 4.4 Submission from The Very Reverend Dr Norman Hamilton

<sup>16</sup> 4.3 Submission from Trevor Ringland

<sup>17</sup> 4.8 ‘Brexit and The Future of Ireland: The fears of Northern Protestants concerning unity’, Dr James Wilson. Report commissioned by Senator Mark Daly

In some of the submissions, the fear of violence is spoken about. There is an urgent need to address the loss of memory of harm uncovered in this research among the 'Agreement Generation' and in other groups who could be exploited by some to use violence to try to maintain the status quo. The Agreement Generation is classed as those born during or just after the peace process. Senator Daly worked with the UNESCO World chairs in Children, Youth and Civic Engagement Dr Pat Dolan, Dr Mark Brennan and Michael Ortiz, senior advisor on counter terrorism at the National Security Council in the Obama administration and the first US Diplomat appointed by the State Department on the issue of countering violent extremism who devised a strategy to be implemented in Northern Ireland. The research "Northern Ireland Returning to Violence as a Result of a Hard Border due to Brexit or a Rushed Border Poll: Risk to Youth" is included in full as Appendix 3 of this research. This report and its recommendations urgently need to be examined by the Irish Government.

Dr James Wilson, in his introduction to the research specially commissioned for this report by Senator Mark Daly, focuses on the views in relation to the issue of a United Ireland of some of the demographic represented by the 18% of the population in Northern Ireland who would find this "almost impossible to accept", as reported in the 2014 NILT Survey's Political Allegiances Module<sup>18</sup>. Some of the views of this 18% we have highlighted previously and Dr Wilson's focus group findings are published later in this report. In contrast, 82% of the unionist community "would happily accept the democratic decision", "would not like it but could live with it" or "don't know" which is just 7%<sup>19</sup>. Notably, Rev Mervyn Gibson, Grand Secretary of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, has said, "The only thing that will take us into a united Ireland is a vote of the majority of the people. As a democrat, I'll accept that."<sup>20</sup>

Many of the submissions, including that of Dr Wilson's focus groups, referenced a fear of a United Ireland being that of triumphant nationalism. This fear is not without foundation and that is why we in the South must change not only our vision of a United Ireland but also how we speak about it. Language was a key component of negotiating the Good Friday Agreement and it remains key component of the peace process. With hard work, we must move from the language of the past such as a 'United Ireland' and all the dread and fear which it creates in the minds of our unionist friends and neighbours. We must instead change to the language of the need to protect the peace process, build a vision for a shared island and a united people in a New Agreed Ireland.

The Brexit referendum has taught us an important lesson: you do not hold a referendum until every possible outcome has been examined and prepared for, where possible. In his submission Raymond McCord explains the work he is currently undertaking to allow clarity on this issue "I have a challenge in the courts of Belfast and Dublin relating to a Border Poll. I am not calling for a Border Poll, what I am calling for is legislation to be put in place that a Border Poll can and must be held when certain conditions are met. Those conditions must be set out and abided by all."<sup>21</sup>

This research has shown now is the time for the Irish Government to address the unionist communities' fears and concerns of a united Ireland. It is clear the Irish Government must follow through on the recommendations contained in the Joint Oireachtas Committee of the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement report entitled "Brexit and the Future of Ireland, uniting Ireland and it's people in peace and prosperity".

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<sup>18</sup> Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey, [https://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2014/Political\\_Attitudes/FUTURE1.html](https://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2014/Political_Attitudes/FUTURE1.html)

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/we-are-not-going-to-be-bribed-out-of-the-united-kingdom-orange-order-chief-1.3951739>

<sup>21</sup> 4.7 'Unionism versus a "United" Ireland', Raymond McCord

The Government should establish a New Ireland Forum 2 as recommended in the Joint Committee's report, not only to set a pathway to achieve the peaceful reunification of Ireland but more importantly uniting the people who call this island home.

In order to create the new future, we all wish to see for the coming generations we must embrace true reconciliation in the knowledge that true reconciliation means giving up all hope of a better past for the aspiration and hope of a better future for the coming generations.

#### **Unionist Fears & Concerns of a United Ireland**

1. Loss of Identity and the place of unionism within a united Ireland
2. Triumphalism
3. Retribution on former members of the RUC, British Army and Prison Officers
4. Land would be taken off unionist farmers
5. Return to Violence
6. European Union
7. Health, Welfare and the Economy

### 3.0 Identifying Unionist Fears and Concerns of a United Ireland

As Mike Nesbitt states in his submission “I do not speak for unionism in fact, nobody does,”<sup>22</sup> this report does not speak for or include every fear and concern that the Unionist community has in relation to a United Ireland. However, some of these fears are articulated by members of the Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist communities in this research. There are common threads in the submissions we received based around 7 broad topics: loss of identity and the places of unionism within a united Ireland, triumphalism, retribution on former members of the RUC, British Army and Prison Officers, land would be taken off unionist farmers, a return to violence, the European Union, and health, welfare and the economy. In this section we quote the concerns and fears from the submissions we have received and the focus groups conducted by Dr. James Wilson.

The individuals and groups who contributed to the research for this report or have spoken about this issue includes:

Michael Nesbitt - Ulster Unionist Party Leader (2012-2017)

Reverend Kyle Paisley

Trevor Ringland – Irish International Rugby Player and Co-Chair of the Northern Ireland Conservatives Political Party (2013-2014)

Raymond McCord - Victims' Rights Activist

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**Appendix 1:** ‘Flagging it Up’ by Dr James Wilson

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**Appendix 3:** Northern Ireland Returning to Violence as a Result of a Hard Border due to Brexit or a Rushed Border Poll: Risks for Youth

**Appendix 4:** Submission by Deputy Seán Fleming and Senator Mark Daly to the 2019 Draft National Risk Assessment, “National Risk Assessment 2019 Void due to Omission of Possible/Probable Referendum on a New Agreed Ireland”

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<sup>22</sup> 4.1 Submission by Ulster Unionist Party Leader Michael Nesbitt (2012-2017)

## 1. Loss of Identity and the place of unionism within a united Ireland

“For those who cling to the binary, and there are many unionists who do, the fear is that their identity is denied”

~*Ulster Unionist Party Leader 2012-2017 Michael Nesbitt*

“Perhaps the most important aspect of the division in Northern Ireland is the understanding that for some, the conflict is of identity and not politics. The implication of the removal of the flag at City Hall show how important symbols of identity can be to some Unionists and the lengths they will go to defend them. Unionists rightly fear that in a united Ireland the symbols and identity that they hold dear will be removed from them.”

~*Unionist Public Representative*

“Will the Union Jack be flown? Will the Tricolour only be flown on certain days? Will playparks be named after loyalist terrorists? Will Orange Lodges be able to march through O’Connell Street--Sinn Féin in reversal? These are some of the questions some Unionists will be asking”

~*Raymond McCord Victims Rights Campaigner*

“What’s the point in celebrating the Twelfth in a United Ireland?”

~*Loyalist Flute Band*

“This ‘identity’ issue is central to any debate in Ireland, for it raises some simple, and as yet unanswered questions. Why exactly should anyone who claims or values a ‘British’ identity be even remotely interested in turning their backs on that for an as yet undescribed ‘Irish’ identity.”

~*Very Reverend Dr. Norman Hamilton OBE*

“I was born an Ulsterman and chose my identity as British and as such like my forefathers I do not identify with the Irish Culture.”

~*Anonymous Protestant Unionist Loyalist community member living in greater Belfast*

“I think people would feel as though their country is being took away from them”

~*Members of Loyalist bands*

When I open my bedroom curtains, what would be different? Would the mailbox be green? Are the police officers Garda? Is the Irish Army billeted in Palace Barracks? Does BBC Radio Ulster even exist anymore? Am I cut off from my roots?

~*Ulster Unionist Party Leader 2012-2017 Michael Nesbitt*

## **2. Triumphalism**

“Would cenotaphs be removed and replaced with Hunger Strike Memorials?  
Would historic names like “Queens” and the “Royal Victoria” be trashed?  
In keeping with Dublin train stations, would our premier airport become the Bobby Sands International?  
Would street, roads and parks be renamed after IRA dead?”  
Would Michael O’Neill keep his job, or would Norn Iron face assimilation and our National Anthem ring out no more at Windsor Park?”  
~ *Queries raised in Dr James Wilson’s report “Brexit and the Future of Ireland: the fears of Northern Protestants concerning unity”*

“The naming of a Newry play park after Raymond McCreesh the attempt to create a terrorist shrine at the Maze...have effectively silenced moderate Nationalist arguments.”  
~*Anonymous Unionist Public Representative*

“The fear of being a second class citizen in a state that gives primacy to Gaelic culture.  
The fear of a rewriting of the history of the Troubles to glorify the IRA.  
Fear of Sinn Fein bully boy tactics and ‘the harsh treatment they dish out to their own people’.  
A removal of all British heritage, war memorials and culture.”  
~*Fears raised by Protestants in Dr James Wilson’s report “Brexit and the Future of Ireland: the fears of Northern Protestants concerning unity”*

“Fear that one can’t really be British in a united Ireland ruled by triumphalist Shinners  
Fears of assimilation or being second class “Planter” citizens.”  
~*Fears raised by Protestants in Dr James Wilson’s report “Brexit and the Future of Ireland: the fears of Northern Protestants concerning unity”*

## **3. Retribution on former members of the RUC, British Army and Prison officers**

“Fear of show trials against former members of the security forces.”  
~*East Belfast Mission Focus Group*

“Fear of retribution. In the 30 years of the Troubles, it was common for neighbours to threaten, abuse and kill each other on a sectarian basis. One reason why the former members of the Security Forces are a ‘hard to reach group’ in terms of peace and reconciliation is that they fear revenge and retribution for having served in the Crown forces. The IRA did not take any Protestants prisoner. Thus Tiofaidh ar la was to backfire on the Republican movement as it stiffened Protestant resolve never to surrender. The belief of post Unity retribution still lingers amongst former soldiers, policemen and prison officers, even though the vast majority never went to bed plotting to kill anyone.”

*Extract from the submission by Dr. James Wilson included in Section 4 of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement Report “Brexit and the future of Ireland, uniting Ireland and it’s people in peace and prosperity”.*

#### **4. Land would be taken off the unionist farmers**

“Our farmland would be confiscated and given to Catholics”

~*The Loyalist Flute Band Member*

“First the fear of dispossession. In the original Plantation of Ulster, it was first assumed that the Gaelic lords would assume responsibility of raising tax for the Crown. After the flight of the Earls, new undertakers had to be found. Many were second rank Ulster Gaelic nobility. The incoming “Planters” became tenant farmers – not owning the land, but paying rents. Most Catholic gentry lost their lands after the 1641 Rebellion and Williamite wars. There was a sectarian competition for tenure which fostered the rise of agrarian solidarity groups:- Defenders, Oakboys, Hearts of Steel, Peep of Day Boys, Orange Boys, Ribbonmen, Fenians. It is a matter of record that – particularly in the nineteenth century -many Catholics lost their tenancy to Protestants, as landlords perceived Protestants as loyal to the Crown. In 1870, Gladstone’s Liberal government passed the Land Act gave tenants the right to purchase, and many Catholics saw their ancient rich tribal lands now “legally owned” by Protestants, whilst they had to settle for ‘less favoured areas’. This resentment has festered for over 100 years and resurfaced during the Troubles. There is an expectation amongst some Catholics west of the Bann, that Irish unity- the mythical Aisling aspiration - will bring with it a restoration of land to them and eviction of the Protestants.”

*Extract from the submission by Dr. James Wilson included in Section 4 of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement Report “Brexit and the future of Ireland, uniting Ireland and it’s people in peace and prosperity”.*

#### **5. A return to violence**

“What are the implications for the nation of Ireland to have a very significant section of its population NOT having allegiance to the new state – and not wanting to? Does the history of republican violence not warn us against this being even contemplated (to say nothing of tit-for-tat violence and the associated and deepening criminality)?”

~*Very Reverend Dr Norman Hamilton OBE*

“I can see us living in a land that will return to violence and murder”

~*Raymond McCord*

“Does anyone really believe having “one nation” will bring peace and justice to this land? Will a United Ireland push bring us a new generation of terrorists?”

~*Raymond McCord*

“We need an army!”

~*Members of the Independent Loyal Orange Institution*

“It’s not like you fight a long war and get beaten. The Prods are unbeaten. They don’t see why they should accept a democratic decision by the Irish nation when they have always been told that they are alien planters who don’t belong here.”

~*Members of UDR/Royal Irish Regiment veterans*

“I don’t see where the Garda [sic] and the Irish Army have the resources to contain major riots in over 70 towns, plus getting their units wiped out in well-staged killing grounds. They would have to raise a Catholic gendarmerie, like the B Specials, and then you will have civil war, way beyond the Troubles II and more like Bosnia”.

*~Members of UDR/Royal Irish Regiment veterans*

Dr James Wilson, in his introduction to the research specially commissioned for this report by Senator Mark Daly, focuses on the views in relation to the issue of a United Ireland of some of the demographic represented by the 18% of the population in Northern Ireland who would find this “almost impossible” to accept, as reported in the 2014 NILT Survey’s Political Allegiances Module . Some of the views of this 18% we have highlighted previously and Dr Wilson’s focus group findings are published later in this report. In contrast, 82% of the unionist community “would happily accept the democratic decision”, “would not like it but could live with it” or “don’t know” which is just 7%<sup>23</sup>.

Dr James Wilson & Will Glendinning’s report “Flagging It Up” is included in the appendix of this research. Wilson and Glendinning’s report analyses the 2012/13 flag protest, which happened as a result of the change to the protocols around the flying of the Union flag over Belfast City hall.

Also included in the appendix is the research report by UNESCO Chairs Professor Pat Dolan and Professor Mark Brennan “Northern Ireland Returning to Violence as a Result of a Hard Border Due to Brexit or a Rushed Border Poll Risk to Youth”.

## **6. European Union**

“While Northern Ireland as a whole voted to remain in the EU there remains a cohort, especially within Unionism, which views the EU as a corrupt force which they are willing to sacrifice much to leave. It is estimated that Unionism voted 60% “leave” in some accounts. Given the weight political unionism has placed on Brexit, with the DUP and TUV being almost universally in favour of leaving, and with a large number of Ulster Unionists advocating and voting “leave” it is clear that re-entering the EU in a united Ireland would simply rub salt in the wounds of some Unionists.”

*~Unionist Public Representative*

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<sup>23</sup> Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey, [https://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2014/Political\\_Attitudes/FUTURE1.html](https://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2014/Political_Attitudes/FUTURE1.html)

## **7. Health, Welfare, Employment and the Economy**

“Britain has always placed a huge value on its NHS. This was underlined with it even having a place at the opening ceremony of the Olympics in London. The idea of a health care free at the point of service is indeed an admirable one and one which some Unionists would feel would be stripped from them if they left the UK.”

*~Unionist Public Representative*

“Due to the troubles the Community in Northern Ireland have a higher than proportional requirement for welfare support. When I look to the Republic of Ireland, I see that support of this level is not available, nor affordable. The PUL community is less likely to ask or receive support, and has a lower capacity to self-help compared to the CNR community. Therefore, we would see the same or higher-level issues with no hope of support.”

*~Anonymous Protestant/ Unionist/ Loyalist (PUL) community member living in Greater Belfast*

“Our education system is beginning to struggle, but again when we look at the Republic of Ireland and see the costs families have to pay, we see how much better off we are. Education is the great leveller of all men, and we must protect it to provide all our children a fair chance in life.”

*~Anonymous Protestant/ Unionist/ Loyalist (PUL) community member living in Greater Belfast*

“Then there is the question of economics. Can a United Ireland give the same benefits as are in the United Kingdom? Some economists say it can. Some say it can't. More uncertainty! It is, perhaps, economics more than anything else that influences men in relation to their political outlook. A good health system depends on a good economy.”

*~Reverend Kyle Paisley*

“Within Unionism there has rarely been a debate about the economic advantages of a United Ireland. Most Unionists take it for granted that their economy is stronger in the UK because of the massive sum of money provided to NI through the subvention. This is used as justification for the Union. While unionism has been poor at selling the economic benefits of the Union to outside its traditional base, Unionists have a fear that their economy will suffer post-unification and the things that they take for granted will be taken from them. The assurance for Unionists that quality of life will be better in the UK is one that some Unionists feel is their best bet for the long term preservation of the Union”

*~Unionist Public Representative*

#### 4.1 Ulster Unionist Party Leader Michael Nesbitt (2012-2017)

*Mr Nesbitt entered into politics as a broadcast journalist, private sector CEO, and Commissioner at Commission for Victims and Survivors. He has represented Strangford in the UUP since 2011, and he led the UUP from 2012-2017. He formerly chaired the Committee of the Executive Office and currently chairs the All Party Group on Sport and Recreation.*

I start with a disclaimer-I do not speak for unionism. In fact, nobody does, although it is true to say the DUP are the dominant force in unionist politics, just as the Ulster Unionist Party used to be. But even the DUP does not command the support of the majority of all who describe themselves as unionists. Indeed, many of us are very uncomfortable that fellow citizens in Great Britain may think the DUP speak for all of us - but that's another issue.

So, these are personal thoughts, based on a combination of listening, observing and thinking, on the question of what might concern a unionist about constitutional change.

The first concern is of a repeat of what happened in 1921. Partition cut loose a significant number of unionists / protestants and they did not fare well, to put it mildly. I do not see any profit in rehearsing what happened, not just because the story is well known but more importantly because I do not believe it could happen again. It is increasingly accepted that the unionist warning that "Home Rule is Rome Rule" was accurate at that time, just as it is indisputable that it is no longer the case.

The Ireland of today is a progressive, pluralist country, embracing previously unimaginable social policies like marriage equality and reproductive rights. The Taoiseach's words of welcome for Pope Francis earlier this year underlined how Ireland has transformed, just as the State visits of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 2011 and President Michael D Higgins in 2014 proved relationships have been re-imagined.

A more realistic concern is what role and purpose unionists would have under new management arrangements. No one advocating for a United Ireland has told me, or any unionist I know, that they want me in the new dispensation and more importantly, why they want us. Yes, I hear them express their desire for constitutional change. That right is enshrined in the 1998 Belfast / Good Friday Agreement, which I support.

I have also heard talk of protecting the rights of unionists in the event of constitutional change. But that falls short of making a credible argument for "Brits In". Remember, for many unionist people of a certain age, the very words "United Ireland" are synonymous with the IRA and therefore bombs and bullets, death and destruction and the attempted coercion of the unionist people, summed up in the republican chant "Brits Out". The apparent U-turn needs explaining.

Over the near hundred years of Northern Ireland's existence, unionists have struggled to make the majority of nationalists feel comfortable. Carson defined how the original Stormont Parliament could be considered a success in a speech in the House of Commons in 1920: "*If Ulster does what I ask her to do, and what I hope and believe she will do, in setting up an*

*example and a precedent of good government, fair government, honest government, and a government not for sections or factions, but for all, her example may be followed”.*

No one could argue objectively that unionism succeeded in that challenge and the fear is that replacing one majority with another opens the door to repeating past mistakes, or expressed simply, putting the shoe on the other foot.

The primary concern that I sense is over identity. I happen to think identity is much more complex and fluid than the binary measures of British/Irish, Catholic/Protestant, Orange/Green. Binary identities are very unhelpful to making political progress; binary divides and by definition becomes divisive. Plus, binary is not necessarily that honest.

How many pure Gaels or Brits are there on this island? Give me a committed Irish republican or nationalist and I'll take my chances on finding a relative of theirs who fought for King and Country in the First World War. We have more of a shared past than we imagine, a point emphasised by the Catholic Primate, Archbishop Eamon Martin when he delivered the sermon during the service marking the centenary of the Armistice of World War One at St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November – he began by talking of his uncle, buried in Flanders Fields.

But for those who cling to the binary, and there are many unionists who do, the fear is that their identity is denied. By definition, a unionist's primary goal is to maintain the Union. If it goes, that aspiration disappears, to be replaced with what- Despair? Fear? Anger?

One hundred years ago, partition delivered something for the majority of nationalists and unionists – not what either wanted, but it did give the majority of nationalists a huge degree of independence from London, while the majority of unionists got to remain British. Constitutional change to a single Irish state takes something essential away from unionists, with no clear vision of what will replace it.

I debated this with a senior figure from Dublin this year. He was shocked when I suggested unionists could become the perpetual king makers in Dáil Éireann. His shock was that I imagined political unionism would continue to exist once the Union was lost. To coin a phrase, we aren't going away, you know. The objectives of unionism might change, but the need to represent our people would be even more important than ever, and it is indeed possible that we could hold the balance of power in Leinster House on a frequent if not perpetual basis.

Beyond that, there are all manner of questions about how day to day life would change. When I open my bedroom curtains, what would be different? Would the mailbox be green? Are the police officers Garda? Is the Irish Army billeted in Palace Barracks? Does BBC Radio Ulster even exist anymore? Am I cut off from my roots?

A personal fear is that a border poll – if it comes – is run like the Brexit Referendum in 2016, with people voting without full knowledge of the implications of what happens if the result is for constitutional change. What we need today is a concerted effort to Unite people, not territories. The lack of a Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive is hampering the drive towards a shared future within NI.

The Brexit negotiations put the British and Irish Government at loggerheads, while Brexit when it comes makes the two jurisdictions competitors in a manner not experienced of late - and the breakdown in devolution means the North South bodies are not meeting and those bodies are the only formal setting in which Northern Ireland Ministers and the Government of Ireland focus on areas of mutual interest and benefit.

My final thought is that Northern Ireland needs a long period of stability for its people to prosper. Talk of constitutional change is destabilising and that in itself is a cause for concern. It is often said that human instinct is to resist change, so while unionists need to up their game in selling the benefits of the Union, particularly in a post-Brexit era, those who want constitutional change equally need to make the case. What's in it for a unionist? The first rule of marketing is to make your offer easy to buy. A united Ireland is a counter-intuitive offer for a unionist.

## 4.2 Reverend Kyle Paisley

*Reverend Kyle Paisley is a Minister at the Oulton Broad Free Presbyterian Church in Suffolk, England. He is also the son of the late Ian Paisley, founder of the DUP and the Free Presbyterian Church. Reverend Paisley has been outspoken about his concerns regarding Brexit and its effects on Ireland, and vocal in regards to his late father's relations with the DUP.*

Ireland has changed! The Emerald Isle is considerably different than it was only a few decades ago. It is different socially and politically.

In relation to politics, only a prophet could have foreseen an end to the Troubles in the North. The bitter strife there seemed intractable. People had to hope against hope that things would take a turn for the better. The paramilitary ceasefires, decommissioning, and the re-establishment of local government put soul back into the Province. The Republic's amendment to its constitutional (dropping of her territorial) claim over Ulster was another huge step in the right direction.

Most notably, the decision of the former leader of the DUP, Ian Paisley, to share power with Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness, helped many to believe in a bright future for Northern Ireland and better relations across the whole island.

The bringing together of the two "extremes" of Unionism and Republicanism in an honourable arrangement for government, showed just what was possible. And the spirit in which the aforesaid conducted their business together showed that English rule was not necessary to political stability, so long as leaders COULD WORK TOGETHER to make a difference for all concerned. That the Assembly had the final say in local government assured those who feared outside interference.

But a bad spirit got in and ran amok through political life in Northern Ireland, frustrating patience, stifling progress and eventually bringing things to a shuddering halt.

With the battle over Brexit, things are more uncertain than ever, especially for Unionism. This uncertainty has given impetus to republicans and nationalists to seek re-unification.

In the absence of a local Assembly what have Unionists to fall back on? There is no historic precedent for them trusting a Conservative government to save them. And if a Labour government under Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell was in power (which is always a possibility, considering the uncertainty of these times), Unionists would feel more besieged than ever.

But why do Unionists still balk at the idea of a united Ireland?

Articles II & III are changed, and with them succour to aggression has been removed. The power of the Roman Catholic Church is certainly not what it used to be, and is likely to decrease further. And secular Unionists in Northern Ireland would have the social liberties they crave if Ireland was one. Unionists are constantly being told that in an agreed Ireland there would be room for Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter. But still Unionists of all shades, religious, political and secular are not biting the bait.

Unionist Fears & Concerns of a United Ireland, The Need to Protect the Peace Process & Build a Vision for a Shared Island & A United People

I think there are other, more practical reasons for their rejecting the idea of re-unification than just religious or political ideals.

To begin with, if there is no unity in the six counties of Northern Ireland how can there be heart-felt unity across thirty-two counties?

Then there is the question of economics. Can a united Ireland give the same benefits as are in the United Kingdom? Some economists say it can. Some say it can't. More uncertainty! It is, perhaps, economics more than anything else that influences men in relation to their political outlook. A good health system depends on a good economy.

THE UNITED KINGDOM IS BY NO MEANS A FLAWLESS POLITICAL UNION. But then there's the old proverb – "Better the devil you know, THAN THE DEVIL YOU DON'T."

### 4.3 Trevor Ringland – Irish International Rugby Player

*Trevor Ringland is a former international rugby player who was a member of the Ireland National Rugby Union Team, representing the entirety of the island in the Six Nations Championship and in the 1987 Rugby World Cup. After retirement, he entered into a political career and was the Vice-Chairman of Ulster Unionist Party's East Belfast Branch. Since leaving the Ulster Unionist Party he was the Co-Chair of the Northern Ireland Conservatives Political Party (2013-2014). This contribution was included with his permission.*

**Trevor Ringland: 'No space in new Ireland for me'**

**MARK RAINEY IN THE BELFAST NEWSLETTER  
PUBLISHED: 08:45 SATURDAY 23 MARCH 2019**

**A recent upsurge in divisive Irish nationalist rhetoric has left a leading anti-sectarianism campaigner convinced “there’s no space in their Ireland” for even moderate unionists.**

Trevor Ringland said the sentiments expressed at a show of unity from nationalists in January, coupled with the increasingly entrenched position of Sinn Fein, indicates a drift away from reconciliation with the unionist community.

“Nationalists have become emboldened because of the Brexit uncertainties and the renewed hype around calls for a border poll,” he said.

“People are believing their own rhetoric without facing up to the reality that our future is intertwined, and the only way we can succeed socially and economically is by making Northern Ireland work and great relations across this Island and between these islands.”

The Belfast solicitor and former Irish rugby international resigned from the Ulster Unionists in 2010 over the then party leader Tom Elliott’s refusal to attend a GAA match.

Mr Ringland was also a former co-chair of the NI Conservatives and has been involved with a number of cross-community organisations.

“The message that [nationalist Beyond Brexit] meeting at the Waterfront sent to me was: ‘Boy, are we going to get our own back when we get control’. All of this needs hand-braked very quickly and a touch of reality brought to bear,” he said.

“The [Belfast] Agreement still holds firm, but we need to find a way of unpicking the damage done by the St Andrews Agreement, because under the original agreement if you didn’t like the way your parties were delivering you could kick them out.

“But the changes at St Andrews basically consolidated the position for both of those extremes. We want our politicians to do politics, we want them to share responsibility, but if we don’t like what they’re delivering we want to be able to change them.”

Mr Ringland said his concerns around hardening attitudes were raised following an encounter with a leading Sinn Fein politician at a function in 2017.

“Just after the last NI Assembly elections I challenged a senior Sinn Fein figure. I said ‘you have pressed the hate button during that election campaign and it’s going to be very hard to put this back in its box’. His response was ‘I’ll not take lectures from the likes of you.’ I went back to my wife and I said: ‘No matter what I say, there’s no space in their Ireland for me.’

“The only way to pursue their constitutional preference is by making this place work, by making Northern Ireland work, and the sooner that dawns – not just with Sinn Fein, but with Irish nationalism as a whole in Northern Ireland and across this island – then the sooner we can get on with making this place a better place for all of us.”

Commenting on the ‘civic unionism’ event at Queen’s University last month, Mr Ringland said the message from Sinn Fein president Mary Lou McDonald lacked credibility.

“I have been involved in events like this for years, and you just get fed up with the same old rhetoric. They listen but they don’t hear,” he added.

“When I first met Martin McGuinness I said to him: ‘I disagree with what you did before but if you are prepared to work for the betterment of all the people in the future, then I will work with you.’ Unionism needs to be challenging but pragmatic in dealing with republicanism.”

Having spoken of the need for reconciliation at the QUB event last month, Sinn Fein president Ms McDonald provoked anger from across the political spectrum just weeks later when she posed with an ‘England get out of Ireland’ banner at the St Patrick’s Day parade in New York.

#### 4.4 The Very Reverend Dr Norman Hamilton

*The Very Reverend Dr. Norman Hamilton is the former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and convener of the Church's Council for Public Affairs, 2010-2011*

I am grateful for the opportunity to place on public record my concerns about any immediacy in holding a referendum on Irish unity. A little context might be useful.

1. I come from a fairly strong Unionist background, but due to my Christian faith I have no real angst about any longer term change in the politics of the island. It is a profound Christian perspective that nations rise, and nations fall, and whilst one may have preferences and opinions, none of these should create an identity that overrides the core Christian identity. I went to university in Dublin, as did my wife. I am a former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland - and it is unambiguously an all-Ireland denomination - again reinforcing the fact that my Christian faith knows no borders on this island.

2. With that said, I have great resistance to a referendum in the foreseeable future, not least because of what has been learned (or not learned) from the recent referendum in the UK which, like an Irish referendum, has massive constitutional implications.

3. Even at this stage, the UK referendum has made a number of things very clear:

3.1 A majority vote doesn't bring consensus - indeed it has divided the UK in dramatic terms.

3.2 A referendum campaign majors on slogans / sound bites / social media promotion / fears / lies and NOT on a careful examination of facts or truths by the electorate, or even in the presentation of them.

3.3 A referendum, as such, tells us nothing about the detail of what is being voted for - and what the downsides of a proposal really are.

3.4 A referendum is merely a 'snapshot' of public sentiment at the time of the vote - and that sentiment can change dramatically shortly afterwards.

3.5 Elected reps appear to fragment drastically when the implications of the result become clearer. Representative democracy crumbles, and major political decisions are at the mercy of volatile populist forces.

4. It is fascinating – and not a little scary – that there has been so little specific or focused public debate among UK politicians on the question of 'identity' that so influences voters. This 'identity' issue is central to any debate in Ireland, for it raises some simple, and as yet unanswered questions. Why exactly should anyone who claims or values a 'British' identity be even remotely interested in turning their backs on that for an as yet undescribed 'Irish' identity. In what ways is an 'Irish' identity better for a Unionist in Northern Ireland than a 'British' identity? Answering this question goes much deeper than simply asserting that unionist 'culture' (such as marching and Ulster Scots) would be protected in a new Ireland. What are the implications for the nation of Ireland to have a very significant section of its population NOT having allegiance to the new state – and not wanting to? Does the history of republican violence not warn us against this being even contemplated (to say nothing of tit-for-tat violence and the associated and deepening criminality)?

5. All of these and other issues need to be carefully and publicly discussed as integral to even the decision to have a referendum at all. The ideologically driven call by SF for an early referendum avoids giving proper respect to the electorate - especially that part of the electorate which sees itself as having most to lose if a referendum were to bring a 'Yes' vote. In particular there is little or no substantive detail about what this 'New Ireland' would actually look like in practice - and that is likely to be very different from what those proposing it would want it to look like.

5. Accordingly, let me outline some of the major things I would be looking for as preparation for taking the decision to even hold a referendum (which is separate from the content of a referendum).....

5.1 Focused public discussion on what it would mean for all sections of the population to have a significant number of citizens in a new Ireland not wanting to be there.

5.2 A clear statement of what the governance of the island of Ireland would look like.

5.3 A clear statement of the timings and nature of transitional arrangements.

5.4 A clear statement of how weaknesses in the proposal which come to light later would be addressed (cf the weaknesses of the governance arrangements in Stormont).

5.5 A clear statement on the myriad of issues that affect everyday life and ordinary people (cf the Withdrawal Agreement between the EU and the UK)

6. In essence, the focus for those seeking a referendum ought unambiguously to be on clarity across all the substantive issues so that the electorate knows exactly what is being put on the table. The absence of this in the current Brexit debate has been one of its most serious shortcomings, as evidenced by the plethora of views currently being offered.

7. Might I suggest that these issues are likely to require years of focused discussion, and that calls for an early referendum are seriously irresponsible and seriously divisive, and should be firmly resisted by all responsible leaders.

8. Whatever the merits or demerits of any proposal, the debate over Brexit has shown, and continues to show, the poverty of political and public discourse when decent inter-personal relationships appear to count for so little. Much has been made of the need for truth recovery when speaking of the legacy of the past. One of the key issues for political discourse on this island, North and South, is the need for 'relationship recovery' amongst political and civic leaders. Even the current fractious tone of North/South comment has in it a serious warning of the damage and polarisation poor relationships inevitably bring.

9. It appears to be the case that those who seek a united Ireland have little skill in, or interest in, uniting communities and building relationships as the necessary conditions for deep political discourse of huge constitutional import. That is a huge barrier still to be acknowledged, never mind overcome.

(Rev Dr) Norman Hamilton / 2 May 2019

#### 4.5 Anonymous Unionist Public Representative

Unionist's do not have fears **about** a united Ireland, Unionists fear **IS** a united Ireland.

If one asks what a Unionist is, then you may receive different answers depending on who you ask. Unionists range from those of a civic background to those of a religious background and all in between.

Some Unionists are Unionists by birth speaking of belonging to a Unionist community or family whereas other feel much less comfortable viewing unionism, essentially a political opinion as representing a community. All however share the common goal of believing in the existence of Northern Ireland and believing that its interests are best served in the UK.

Unionism has been inseparable from Protestantism since plantation but of course recently has been cemented with prominent religious figures, such as Ian Paisley, rising to prominence. However, while in the past this common religion has acted as a unifier, it can also limit unionism's desire to engage in outreach both within religious and social minorities.

Unionists can find it very difficult to speak about their fears in a united Ireland because many would see the breaking of Northern Ireland's links to the United Kingdom as a historic, complete and irreversible failure of their core politics and identity. Any talk of this would be seen as negotiating surrender.

While Unionism has always been a diverse body of people, I will attempt to address some of the main concerns that some unionists may have. Not all Unionists share all of these concerns but it is my opinion that all Unionists share some of the following concerns.

##### The Economy

Within Unionism there has rarely been a debate about the economic advantages of a United Ireland. Most Unionists take it for granted that their economy is stronger in the UK because of the massive sum of money provided to NI through the subvention. This is used as justification for the Union. While unionism has been poor at selling the economic benefits of the Union to outside its traditional base Unionists have a fear that their economy will suffer post-unification and the things that they take for granted will be taken from them. The assurance for Unionists that quality of life will be better in the UK is one that that some Unionists feel is their best bet for the long term preservation of the Union.

##### The NHS

Britain has always placed a huge value on its NHS. This was underlined with it even having a place at the opening ceremony of the Olympics in London. The idea of a health care free at the point of service is indeed an admirable one and one which some Unionists would feel would be stripped from them if they left the UK.

### The EU

While Northern Ireland as a whole voted to remain in the EU there remains a cohort, especially within Unionism, which views the EU as a corrupt force which they are willing to sacrifice much to leave. It is estimated that Unionism voted 60% "leave" in some accounts. Given the weight political unionism has placed on Brexit, with the DUP and TUV being almost universally in favour of leaving, and with a large number of Ulster Unionists advocating and voting "leave" it is clear that re-entering the EU in a united Ireland would simply rub salt in the wounds of some Unionists.

It is important to note that some senior Unionists figures were strongly rumoured to have voted "remain" but did not publicly campaign for "remain" because of the strength of feeling in their electorates. All in all BREXIT has provided a further unescapable dynamic that policy makers cannot shy away from.

### Terrorism

Unionism will for the foreseeable future associate the actions of the IRA and Sinn Fein with a united Ireland, despite that fact that Sinn Fein are simply a fringe party in the Republic. Many Unionists can point to a family member or friend who was injured as part of the Troubles. They view these men as defending their Queen and Country and therefore any acceptance of a united Ireland would be a betrayal of their legacy. It remains my belief that the terrorist campaign has entrenched people in the respective political silos.

Bearing in mind the narrative that many Unionists see, that of a military fighting against terrorist grouping, Nationalism, especially Sinn Fein has done little to counter the narrative that a united Ireland would be foisted upon unionists as a victory of one people over another. In fact Unionists today fear that the actions of those that tried, and often succeeded, in causing them harm would be held up as an example to future generations.

One need only look to the Raymond McCreesh playpark as a prime example of the glorification of terrorism that occurs in nationalist controlled political institutions. Another prominent example would be the glorification of Mr. Begley days after the people of the Shankill gathered to remember those killed in a bomb he was involved in placing.

The actions of Nationalists within Belfast City Council regarding the flag were seen as an attack on Unionist identity and provoked a substantial response from those who may not have been politically engaged previously.

### Identity

Perhaps the most important aspect of the division in Northern Ireland is the understanding that for some, the conflict is of identity and not politics. The implication of the removal of the flag at City Hall show how important symbols of identity can be to some Unionists and the lengths they will go to defend them. Unionists rightly fear that in a united Ireland the symbols and identity that they hold dear will be removed from them. When looking at the Republic of Ireland, after succession, there were removals of British identity such as the reinstatement of the name of Cobh after it was renamed Queenstown.

### Loyalty

Undeniably some unionists feel a loyalty to the UK that would supersede all the above arguments. Loyalty can be unconditional and in fact some Unionists claim that their loyalty would continue even in the event of a betrayal of unionism by the rest of the UK. Examples of this can be found in their response to the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

### Political

When nationalism has gained control of political institutions they have done little to counter this narrative. The naming of a Newry play park after Raymond McCreech the attempt to create a terrorist shrine at the Maze, the removal of symbols of British culture and identify and the weaponized of Irish language in Nationalist controlled councils have effectively silenced moderate Nationalist arguments.

Unionism has frequently drawn a parallel between the actions of republicans and nationalists in Northern Ireland with how they would be treated in a United Ireland. In political institutions where nationalism has gained control, their actions have been viewed as bullish, insensitive and downright disrespectful and this has particularly raised eyebrows when coupled with words and straplines relating to equality and fairness.

In conclusion, I feel that the actions of Nationalists, both the violence of the IRA and the political actions mentioned above have contributed to the fact that Northern Ireland has retained political affiliation based on religion and have made Unionists much less likely to accept a united Ireland regardless of platitudes offered by its supporters.

#### 4.6 Anonymous Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist (PUL) community member living in Greater Belfast

1. This paper highlights my views with regard to the concerns of the Unionist community in the unlikely event of a reunification of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland or on the initiation of a border poll. This submission is a personal response and does not represent a submission on behalf of any organisation or body that I am a member of. The items identified on the submission are not exhaustive, but hopefully provides an overview.

#### Background

2. I am a member of the Protestant Unionist Loyalist (PUL) community living on the suburbs of Belfast. I was born an Ulsterman and chose my identity as British and as such like my forefathers I do not identify with the Irish culture. I have extended links to the Irish identity through family connections in Donegal and through family members who served in Irish regiments within the British army.

3. I like many other protestants from Northern Ireland took our holidays in Portrush, Ayr and Blackpool identifying with the United Kingdom as opposed to taking holidays in the Republic of Ireland were, we didn't feel welcome and were concerned for our safety.

#### Sport

4. In sport my main interest was football, or soccer, just another of the small issues which highlight the PUL community. I support the country of my birth Northern Ireland (NI) not a foreign team, and whilst I have an interest in rugby, I do feel alienated from the national rugby team who play all their home games in Dublin and play the Irish national anthem. Sport can unite and I feel this would be one of the main losers as the result of a border poll were the communities would become more polarised and entrenched.

#### The Troubles

5. As a child of the 70's I grew up in our most recent troubled past, through the IRA terror campaign waged against the British culture and way of life, regardless of whether you were a man, woman or child. I was fortunate that I didn't live in Belfast or a border area where the violence visited on a daily basis. Never the less I was touched and scared by the troubles with one of my neighbours being the grandfather of one of the babies murdered in the Balmoral showrooms bombing. Our coalman had his wife burnt to death in the La Mon Hotel bombing.

6. The troubles were not a topic of conversation in our home and my parents welcomed everyone and shielded myself and my sister from as much as possible. Their desire in life

was for us to have a normal civilised upbringing in a country which was being torn apart on a daily basis and the cruellest and barbaric acts foisted on its community.

7. My first political awareness was with the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the anger that this raised in the PUL community. My experience of this again was not through home life but through the media and watching from afar. The anger at that time was a foreign government being given a say in the running of our country, this same government had provided a safe haven for the IRA to operate in border areas, refusing to extradite those responsible for murder and destruction and who had been linked with providing support to these terrorist organisations.

8. I vividly remember the brutal murders of Corporals Wood and Howe and the animalistic attack on the two men, the gloating of those leading them off to be butchered and nobody doing anything to prevent the murders. These acts were perpetrated in the name of the Irish Republican goal of a united Ireland.

9. Next was the Shankill bombing. The murder of men, women and children. A young man that played football with me in our church team had his mother and nephew dug from the rubble. The baby was in a pram and this is probably the reason that he survived. The images of the Irish Tricolour and Gerry Adams carrying the coffin with "honour" of the terrorist child killer who carried out this atrocity entrenched my view that this Ireland was not the place for me.

10. As a proud Orangeman I shall never forget those 334 brethren who were murdered as a result of the 'troubles' and the heartache this brought to their families and friends. Should we never forget one of the horrific events as that at Tullyvallen Orange Hall which took place 1 September 1975 when republican gunmen attacked an orange meeting and killed five innocent men and wounded seven others.

11. Or the Darkley massacre carried out on 20 November 1983. Three gunmen attacked worshippers attending a church service at the Mountain Lodge Pentecostal Church killing three and wounding seven.

## **Cultural War**

12. When the violent attacks started to ease a new war was waged, a cultural war, which began with a carefully planned and executed attack on the Loyal Orders and cultural identity. The systemic erosion and confrontation on the Ormeau Road, Drumcree, Londonderry, Dunloy, Glengormley and numerous other small parades. This saw a united front with the Irish Government, Sinn Fein and the SDLP uniting in their attacks on the cultural expression of the Unionist people. All this happened while Sinn Fein paraded with and in memory of those that had died in the IRA. Unlawfully built memorials beside protestant places of worship were paraded to without any outcry, while the Loyal Orders were refused to parade on main arterial routes. These double standards and the fact that the Irish Government refused to challenge the double standards again lead to an alienation of anything Irish. A Senior Member of SF and the IRA advised at a Community meeting when asked if they had lost the war stated, "No their aim was to smash the Orange and this they had achieved". This was after a campaign they had tried to justify by saying it was to remove the British.

13. This alienation continues today. There is an erosion in Northern Ireland of the PUL identity and the criminalisation of those that are deemed to be leaders in the community. There are restrictions on bands playing any music including hymns, restrictions on the flying of our national flag, discrimination in jobs for our youth based on their religious background; we see our youth educationally under achieving with no support, our schools closing and social housing not being replaced, our churches, halls and businesses burnt, we see our community displaced and we have an ongoing campaign to make everything from the PUL community demonised.

14. We witness the rewriting of history and the victim maker becoming the victim. We can visualise life in an all-Ireland through the actions of Councils that become majority CNR, and the immediate enforcement of Irish culture, the eradication of the British culture and with playparks named after terrorists, the enforcement of Irish signage and the misuse of "shared space". All this is happening while we are part of the United Kingdom. Our well-founded fears are what will happen when we become a minority community? The historical evidence of the events in the 26 counties of the Irish Free State clearly demonstrate that we will not be welcome or accepted.

15. With the formation of the Irish Free State the law breaker became the law maker. The pogroms against the protestant communities in the Irish Free State commenced immediately on its formation with murders, boycotts, cultural terrorism and the introduction of marriage laws resulted in the largest movement of population until the second world war. The misuse of the Irish language as a weapon in the campaign against the Protestant Community assisted in excluding them from jobs and promotions. Family farms were lost as families didn't want to risk their young men being murdered as they tended to them. The Protestant Community effectively became second class citizens.

16. The historic actions of the Irish Government and the Republican movement to date suggest to me that my community and its generations to come have no place in a united Ireland when it comes to our culture, traditions and beliefs.

## **Business**

17. Manufacturing in Northern Ireland is heavily biased towards the UK market. When it comes to exports Ireland is only third on our customer list. With Brexit approaching why would we want to exclude ourselves from our largest economic market.

18. With a United Ireland there will be significant costs for the Irish Government to pay for their dream. These taxes will have to be implemented across the country which in turn will lead to additional burdens on business. Why would any international business or for that matter home grown business wish to stay in an area with increased taxes on the edge of all markets? The twenty-six counties in the current Republic of Ireland would have to increase their taxes to support the six counties of Northern Ireland. This will lead to frustration within their areas and demands that all areas are funded the same, leading to a rundown of the six counties of Northern Ireland. In conversation with those in Germany, a country whose people were split, and then wanted to unite, there is a lot of anger of the West having to subsidise the East while the young all leave and chase high wages in the West.

### **Irish Cultural Identity**

19. The perception of Irish Cultural identity is that connected to the Irish language, Irish dance and GAA sports.
20. The Irish language has been used as a political weapon of division and exclusion by Sinn Fein. It is not seen as inviting or inclusive. It is used to as a form of demarcation with housing estates marked out and new builds identified with Irish street names to ensure those from a PUL community need not apply.
21. The naming of GAA grounds and trophies after IRA members is seen as the glorification of those responsible for heinous crimes within our country. The use of GAA grounds and clubs for the funding raising of proscribed organisations and the glorification of IRA members ensures a barrier to the GAA as a sports body for the PUL community.
22. Irish dance would have been one of the areas of inter community involvement, but the last thirty years has seen even this engagement decrease. This decrease is because of the divergence of the PUL community from all things Irish, because of the cultural disconnect with the term “Irish” and the move to Ulster Scots/ Highland dancing.

### **Health Provision**

23. The current health provision in the Republic of Ireland is a major concern to the people of Northern Ireland. In the event of a United Ireland the services we have built and invested in would have to be maintained. Families would have to pay for visits to the Doctor, A&E and for prescriptions. Socially and economically deprived families will not be able to have the medical provision they currently have.

### **Welfare Support**

24. Due to the troubles the Community in Northern Ireland have a higher than proportional requirement for welfare support. When I look to the Republic of Ireland, I see that support of this level is not available, nor affordable. The PUL community is less likely to ask or receive support, and has a lower capacity to self-help compared to the CNR community. Therefore, we would see the same or higher-level issues with no hope of support.

### **Education**

25. Our education system is beginning to struggle, but again when we look at the Republic of Ireland and see the costs families have to pay, we see how much better off we are. Education is the great leveller of all men, and we must protect it to provide all our children a fair chance in life.

## **Stability**

26. Having lived through the recent troubles I have serious concerns of the consequences of the Republic of Ireland absorbing one million people into a country where they have lost their identity.

27. They will no longer be Unionists or Loyalists. They will see themselves as being taken over by a country to which they have no affiliation, and no empathy. They will see symbols changing, costs rising, law breakers becoming law makers, economic down turn and little hope for the future. Will there be a reaction? Will this see the mass migration of the PUL community? Is this the main aim of a united Ireland? The land of the free provided you are from one particular background. I do not envisage a united Ireland as a warm home for me or my children.

28. Perhaps the true Irishman will remember these words spoken by Captain Wilfred Spender of the Ulster Division's HQ Staff, 'I am not an Ulsterman but yesterday, the 1st July, as I followed their amazing attack, I felt that I would rather be an Ulsterman than anything else in the world'.

#### 4.7 Unionism versus a “United” Ireland

Raymond McCord

*Mr McCord is a welder from Belfast and the author of “Justice For Raymond.” McCord grew up in Northern Belfast where he often experienced violence between Protestants and Catholics. Throughout his life he often stood up to the violent gangs in his area, but when in 1997 his eldest son was murdered by a Protestant paramilitary group, his fight against violence became personal. His book outlines his crusade to find his son’s killer and bring them to justice.*

What type of unionism would or could accept a united Ireland? What type of unionism can believe a safe and welcoming place in a ‘united’ Ireland?

With all the rhetoric that comes from the leadership of Sinn Féin and comments from some Dublin based politicians regarding BREXIT, “wee statelet” and demands for a border poll no one who calls themselves a Unionist would feel they would be equal citizens in a United Ireland.

Fear of a “Rome Rule” country are long gone but the real fears of being second class citizens and being worse off in terms of health, education, and finance all play major parts in Unionists rejecting a United Ireland.

There will not be “liberal” Unionists and hard-line Unionists, only Unionists. Politicians who desire Northern Ireland to unite with the Republic of Ireland have yet to explain the benefits of one country. BREXIT cannot be used as an excuse to bring about a United Ireland. How can the wishes of around 1 million Unionists (Protestants) plus many from the Catholic community be persuaded to abandon the union with the rest of the U.K.? I believe in a border poll the majority in Northern Ireland would vote to remain part of the U.K.

Since the formation of Northern Ireland sectarianism has been the biggest obstacle to a stable land. Discrimination and orange and green politics blight the country. Unionists see terrorism being glorified by Sinn Fein and unionist/British culture being eroded by Republicanism. Protestants will argue that if nationalists/republicans can do so much harm to unionist culture now, then what would it be like with no union to the U.K. and the country run by Dublin.

I can see us living in a land that will return to violence and murder.

There are political figures that unionists will never trust, particularly those linked to the IRA. Patronising words have no real effect on unionists with a party like the DUP whose main focus is on what they believe in and not what their voters want. A United Ireland is only a dream for many. Let’s not think it’s only the DUP that will reject it, rather, no matter how much is promised by those who seek unity the deciding factors will be that Protestants do not trust or believe that they would be safe in uniting the land.

Trust and belief!

Those in Dublin give Protestants in Northern Ireland the belief that all that they will get is broken promises. Will the schools be integrated? Will Protestant schools be second class schools? Will Protestant schools be forced to close? How will schools be treated financially? Health, will our health service be the same? Will it mean that we pay for doctors, hospitals, and dentists? What type of health service will we have?

Truth and justice. How do we access truth and justice? The victims of the Troubles particularly those from the Unionist community will be supported by the Irish State. A government based in Dublin would need to explain how the Unionist people would be represented and what rights they would have. Is it going to be a power sharing government based on what we had at Stormont?

Will the Gardaí have a 50-50 policy? Will the McBride Principles apply? Will the street names be in English? Will the Union Jack be flown? Will the Tricolour only be flown on certain days? Will playparks be named after loyalist terrorists? Will Orange Lodges be able to march through O'Connell Street--Sinn Féin in reversal? These are some of the questions some Unionists will be asking. Is it possible for someone from the pro United Ireland parties to explain how the needs of all the people be met?

What will the parties who are pushing, and sometimes threatening, for a United Ireland do if Unionists reject the thought of it? Many full public dialogue meetings will be needed, and those meetings cannot be controlled by a majority from one side or the other.

In terms of justice and those campaigning for it the Irish Government has been very selective and have a very poor record in challenging the British state. How will they improve that? My own son Raymond McCord Jr was murdered on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November, 1997 by the U.V.F. Due to an investigation by the then Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, Nuala O'Loan it was proven that there was connection between the killers and the RUC/PSNI Special Branch. This report was accepted as truthful by the British Government, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the Chief Constable of the RUC/PSNI, yet no one has ever been charged and the Irish government has been silent on this.

The Irish government has raised the Pat Finucane murder yet my son's murder is forgotten. Is it because he came from the unionist community or is it because collusion between the killers of the U.U.F. and the British state were involved in the murder? Personally I have no faith or confidence in the Dublin Ministers helping Unionist victims.

My politics are simple, I vote for the best candidate, not the political party. My choice is not based on religion or some to be broken promises from political parties. I would like to remind anyone reading this, as it affects many, many victims and survivors, from north and south of the border. "When the State denies the truth it denies justice. When the State hides the truth, it denies democracy." That is what happened and continues to do so.

I have little enough faith in the justice system without seeing how successive governments in Dublin have failed victims. Maybe this is one of the occasions that Dublin and London secretly work together. I live under constant death threat by loyalist terrorists and I accept that is the life I have to lead while chasing justice for my son. The Unionist politicians, i.e. the DUP, have no interest in truth and justice when the State's hand is involved. They are a

party in denial. Sinn Féin is the same when it comes to victims of the IRA. To move forward in any way towards debating a united Ireland the victims' issues must be resolved. I listen to the two biggest parties here in Northern Ireland, the DUP, and Sinn Féin speeches. They do not ask, instead they make demands. Democracy denied.

At the minute BREXIT is causing major concerns in this island and none of the political parties are making any worthwhile contributions to ease the fears that exist over the border. I hear demands from all sides that are selfish and self-serving most of the time. Sinn Féin is trying to use it for a United Ireland and the DUP is using it to stay within the Union. No one is explaining why!

I challenged the British government over BREXIT as I wish to remain within the E.U. My challenge went all the way to the Supreme Court in London, yet no political party in Dublin approached me to support me or offer advice. Again, I ask myself why? But those parties in Dublin weren't on their own as the parties in Northern Ireland who voted to remain also gave me a wide berth, in particular Sinn Féin.

Political parties must and should be prepared to speak to anyone, not just the "great and the good."

Now I have a challenge in the courts of Belfast and Dublin relating to a Border Poll. I am not calling for a Border Poll, what I am calling for is legislation to be put in place that a Border Poll can and must be held when certain conditions are met. Those conditions must be set out and abided by all. If successful the orange and green sectarian politics are taken out of it. No longer can political parties here in Northern Ireland especially use the Border Poll as a "big stick" at election times. No longer can they make promises such as the "union is safe is you vote for us" or "vote for us and a united Ireland." This is sectarian politics of the worst kind.

Personally, if and when there is a vote on the Border issue I will accept whatever the result is as long as I'm an equal, irrelevant to my political beliefs. As it stands now I cannot see a united Ireland in my lifetime as there is no one out there telling the unionist people the benefits of being one country. There are, as I have previously said, many factors which I believe would make a United Ireland a real place for ones for the unionist community.

Unionist voters vote for the DUP out of fear, not because they agree or like their politicians. The fear is simply that it is either vote for a sectarian narrow minded party that denies rights to many people in Northern Ireland that are taken as normal in the U.K. and Ireland or allow Sinn Féin to be the largest party. That is the choice most unionist people believe is here.

As this is about a United Ireland there is one question I must ask: "How can we have a United Ireland when we don't have a united people in Northern Ireland?" Does anyone really believe having "one nation" will bring peace and justice to this land? Will a United Ireland push bring us a new generation of terrorists? As a democrat I must be prepared to listen to all the arguments for and against. I only hope and pray that everyone feels the same.

Unionism will I believe listen to those who seek a return to one country on this island but this is a two way street, those who seek a return of no border and therefore a United Ireland

must also listen to Unionism and its people, and not attempt to force them into a situation where the wishes of the Unionist people are ignored.

Peace comes way before anything, including a United Ireland. Democracy is the key factor. Let us all hope that is the case. An island of equals, but not only equal when it suits a political agenda. Unionism has many questions that need to be answered and answered truthfully. Will it be unity at any price?

For me I want a country where my grandchildren are equal citizens, have freedom of speech and expression and if their way of life is better in a United Ireland then as part of the U.K. then I must think and consider change. A romantic dream of being one country is just not enough. As someone from the unionist community who doesn't celebrate or glorify the actions of terrorists from within our community, nor watches Orange Order parades I wonder how the formation of a "unified" Ireland will deal with certain aspects of unionist "culture." Respect, culture, social issues, health, education, and integration in schools and housing means tolerance by all are issues that a United Ireland will need to deliver on.

Lastly, the DUP can ignore the majority of voters in Northern Ireland regarding the referendum on BREXIT when the people voted to remain how will they accept a vote for a United Ireland? Democracy is not yet a fully paid up member in Ireland. 1690 and 1916 cannot decide on how we live. They are part of history, not part of the present.

**4.8 Brexit and The Future of Ireland: The fears of Northern Protestants concerning unity.**

**Dr James Wilson**

**Report commissioned by Senator Mark Daly**

**Dr James Wilson**

*Dr Wilson is a freelance consultant, lecturer, and historian, specialising in conflict issues. His doctorate was on the origins of Orangeism and the evolution of Ulster unionism. In 1998 he facilitated the historic accommodation between the Apprentice Boys and Bogside Residents. He is also a founding member of Veterans for Peace UK Belfast chapter.*

**The Independent Loyal Orange Institution**

*A group that was formed in 1903 in order to oppose the use of the Orange Order in party politics. The Orange Order was a group that formed in 1688 to aid the Prince of Orange in his battle to protect Protestantism.*

**Loyalist Bands**

*Marching Bands mainly made up of young people, who partake in parades throughout the year. The goal of these parades and performances are to provide community building activities for Protestant youths as well as perform unionist marching songs.*

**UDR/Royal Irish Veterans**

*The Ulster Defence Regiment was an infantry regiment of the British Army formed in 1970 in order to assist in the defence of Northern Ireland. It was the largest regiment in the British army and was made up of mostly part-time recruits. In 1992 the regiment amalgamated with the Royal Irish Rangers to form the Royal Irish Regiment.*

**East Belfast Mission**

*The East Belfast Mission is a charity organization that has been registered since 1985. They offer a variety of services across many communities, particularly in East Belfast. In Ireland the group is a part of the Methodist Church.*

## INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of the 'Brexit and the future of Ireland' report, there was a growing awareness amongst Irish nationalists that to northern unionist/Protestant demographic, the prospect of a border poll in the near future, with 50% +1 meaning their leaving the United Kingdom and joining a united Ireland – all as a corollary of Brexit – filled certain cohorts of that demographic with apprehension and loathing.

Indeed when Democratic Unionist Leader, Arlene Foster was interviewed about the prospect, she replied:

***'If it were going to happen, I am not sure I could continue to live here. I would feel so strongly about it, I would probably have to move.'***<sup>24</sup>

But what are the deep rooted fears and suspicions that would force such a drastic action? In an earlier discussion report, Research Co-ordinator and Derry/Londonderry businessman Colm McKenna called for the Oireachtas Committee to take the matter seriously:

***'The key task [of the Oireachtas Committee] is both to understand and address comprehensively the fears unionists hold of a united Ireland'***<sup>25</sup>

This brief both determined the style and the source material of the research. There was simply no point in interviewing Protestants who were politically neutral or agnostic on the issue of sovereignty. Such constituencies have historically underestimated the depth of feeling, or belong to the 24% to 40% of Protestants who would either be "happy" or "could live with" a united Ireland.<sup>26</sup> Instead, I selected four cohorts from the demographic representing 32% of the Protestant population,<sup>27</sup> who would find a united Ireland "almost impossible to accept".<sup>28</sup> The four cohorts were:-

- The Independent Loyal Orange Institution (900+ on parade 12 July 2018).
- Loyalist band.(This popular culture has now displaced soccer amongst PUL youth).
- UDR/Royal Irish veterans. ( Approximately 70,000 men and women).
- East Belfast Mission. (Reach into loyalist heartland and paramilitaries).

### **The Independent Loyal Orange Institution. Eight participants (Ballymoney, 11 April 2018)**

'We need an army!' The elderly man who uttered these solemn words was a senior member of the Independent Loyal Orange Institution. He and his peer group of Independent Orange leadership had just been confronted with the demographic paradigm of an impending Catholic majority, and the dismal vision for unionism as articulated in the Daly report.<sup>29</sup>

The setting was the Jubilee Room of the Independent Loyal Orange Institution in Ballymoney, County Antrim.<sup>30</sup> The group gathered around the table for the focus group represented the collective leadership and opinion makers of the smaller Orange fraternity. One got the sense that it was not the first time that they had – informally at least – discussed the prospect of a united Ireland.

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with Patrick Kielty, *My dad, the peace deal and me*, (BBC 1 NI, 4 April 2018).

<sup>25</sup> McKenna, Gosling, McArt, *A new Union Ireland; post Brexit Economic & Political Consultative Draft* (7 May 2018), p.22.

<sup>26</sup> Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey, (2014) Module - Political Allegiance, Variable – Future.

<sup>27</sup> Note- Many plebeian loyalists describe themselves as atheist/no religion, and although staunch cultural Protestants, and not counted as being "Protestant" in census returns.

<sup>28</sup> NILT survey (2014). Module – Political Allegiance, Variable - Future

<sup>29</sup> Senator Mark Daly,(Rapporteur) *Brexit & The Future of Ireland: Uniting Ireland & its people in peace & prosperity*, (House of Oireachtas, 2017).

<sup>30</sup> Focus Group convened 11 April 2018.

The Independent Orange Institution has its roots in the unease felt by a demographic of plebeian and, for the majority Presbyterian Orangemen, that the landed gentry and the mill owners were using early twentieth century Home Rule crisis to manipulate the Orange Order. To impose social control on a demographic that – loyalty to Empire apart- had grievances relating to industrial conditions, low wages, and the failure to implement the 1870 and 1903 Land Acts in certain unionist areas such as County Antrim.

The first public demonstration of the new Order, on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1903, took place to Knock, outside Belfast, and amongst the platform party was the Rev D.D. Boyle of Ballymoney. His only act that day was offer up a prayer, but for this action he was expelled from the Loyal Orange Institution. In protest at the treatment of their clergyman, over thirty North Antrim lodges returned their historic warrants to the Grand Lodge of Ireland offices in Dublin, and the County Antrim demonstration of Independent Orange Order took place in Ballymoney on 12 July 1904. Many of the original thirty one Independent warrants are still working, and Ballymoney remains the hub of the organisation.<sup>31</sup>

Some of the early Independents were radical in their politics, as the 1905 Magheramourne declaration with its non- too cryptic support for Home Rule testifies. But as time passed they evolved into a distinct group, with more emphasis on evangelical fundamentalism on their platforms, than the “old Order”, whose platform parties always had the obligatory Unionist bigwig seeking the Orange vote.

This tendency to attract fundamentalist clerics led, in the early 1960s to a young firebrand preacher, Ian Paisley, to be a regular and popular speaker at Independent Orange services and demonstrations. When Paisley entered politics in 1970 he retained his association with the Independents, but never joined them.<sup>32</sup> His fiery Twelfth of July speeches from the Independent Orange platform were a vintage blend of politics, Protestant evangelism, and the humour of early twentieth century music hall. The crowds packed ‘the field’ of the North Antrim demonstrations to hear him, in stark contrast to the miserable few who dutifully bothered to stay and listen to the traditional resolutions delivered in boring monotones from the orthodox Orange platforms like Finaghy.

Quite a few Free Presbyterians/Democratic Unionists went one step further than Paisley and joined the Independents. Gregory Campbell and Mervyn Storey are amongst them. Of the survey sample, 87.5% were Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), and 12.5% were Free Presbyterian. None were de-churched, and all were regular attenders, some three times per week, which suggests Sunday evening services and mid week prayer/bible study.

Table 1

Perceptions of the Good Friday Agreement	Independent Orange			
Would not vote for it today	62.5%			
Would vote for it	12.5%			
Abstain	25%			

It is quite remarkable that after twenty years, the much vaunted Belfast Good Friday Agreement still struggles to gain traction with the over 50s who cringe at ‘terrorists in government’ .

On the question of loyalist paramilitary activity, the Independent Orange was near unanimous. 87.5% thought their families would like to see paramilitaries disband and disappear. Only one dissenting voice felt that his family and wider community ‘tolerate paramilitaries’ as these organisations “may be needed someday.”

<sup>31</sup> *Why an Independent Orange Order*, (published by the ILOI of Ireland , 1961), pp.8-9.

<sup>32</sup> Paisley was initiated in the membership of Prince Albert Temperance LOL 1892, he clashed with a brother Orangeman, a young RAF Chaplain and left the lodge never to return. He paraded in his ABOD collerette. Source, Rev Dr Warren Porter, in conversation with the author, 1991.

Support for a Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act and an Irish Language Act were rejected by 75% with one dissenting voice of support.

Then the key question: *In the event of a border poll and a majority in favour of a united Ireland, do you think people in your family would :*

- |  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| • Accept the decision                                  | 62%                 |
| • Support resistance by force and protest              | 37.5% <sup>33</sup> |
| • Think about relocation to the mainland Great Britain | 0                   |

The level of acceptance- not support- at 62%, is not far away from the Gold Standard of Northern Ireland opinion polls, the NILTS survey of 2010, that put grudging acceptance amongst Protestants, at border poll in favour of unity at 57%.<sup>34</sup>

What is interesting is that this demographic – convened in focus group just five days after the screening of Arlene Foster's infamous interview with Patrick Kielty- completely rejected her view that **'I am not sure I could continue to live here. I would feel so strongly about it I would have to move'**.<sup>35</sup> Whatever their response they were not going to surrender their homes in Ulster.

The reference to the Foster interview stimulated some interesting discussion. One pensioner made the following comment:

***'It would not be a practical decision for many to just run away, assets would have to be disposed, farms and lands sold at panic market prices, my family would lose contact with friends – both Protestant and Catholic- and where would you go? Our roots and lives are here.'***

I then turned the discussion to what their sense of Britishness actually was. As many of the answers to that question are common to all the focus groups, I will list them at the end of the section.

Finally, before completing the questionnaire, I asked the group to consider the reason why Arlene Foster so feared a united Ireland that she would have to move.

- The fear of being a second class citizen in a state that gives primacy to Gaelic culture.
- The fear of a rewriting of the history of the Troubles to glorify the IRA.
- Fear of Sinn Fein bully boy tactics and 'the harsh treatment they dish out to their own people'.
- A removal of all British heritage, war memorials and culture.

The fear of confiscation of land did not feature strongly. Antrim was settled by Scottish Presbyterians prior to the Plantation as the Gaelic chief outsourced skilled farmers to increase his rent years and even built them the first Presbyterian church – later seized by the Church of Ireland – in Ballymoney. Any of these Antrim Orangemen whose family were farmers would only have gained ownership of land in the late 1920s.

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<sup>33</sup> One participant was very clear that his protest would be peaceful.

<sup>34</sup> Survey of political attitudes in Northern Ireland, <http://ark.ac.uk/nilt/2010/PoliticalAttitudes/NIRELAND2.html>

<sup>35</sup> Arlene Foster in interview with Patrick Kielty, *My dad, the peace deal and me*, (BBC1NI, 4 April 2018).

As the questionnaires were being handed in, one senior Orangeman kept writing. He never once paused, and the prose flowed easily. He clearly had something on his mind, and a clear sense of composition. I have recorded it in full:

***Whilst I recognise the basis of these fears due to the historical factual experience of my co-religionists left in the Republic after partition. Their experience of murder, intimidation, alienation and boycott led many to leave and those left were forced to live in fear and silence. Their culture, history and faith almost a guilty secret. However, history is also a more positive tutor in that the nationalist/republican minority left in the Northern Ireland provide the perfect template for a minority response. They have grown, thrived, united, mobilised and eventually resorted to disruption and an armed struggle to thwart the democratic wish of the majority in that jurisdiction. That would be my response to a united Ireland.***

It is not a response that he had just thought of on the spur of the moment, but one that he had articulated over time. A response that could be delivered with passion from an Orange platform, should the day ever dawn. In plagiarising the general behaviour of northern Catholics circa 1920- reunification, the new strategy for resistance hinges on the Protestant population being able to avoid assimilation and remain a separate nation within the Irish state.

This strategy might well emulate the 1920s nationalists in boycotting the institutions and elected assemblies of the State. Indeed the statement implies that a section of the PUL community might well 'resort to disruption and armed struggle' in direct emulation of the IRA.

One presumes that this armed struggle would follow the pattern of low intensity civic war:- acts of terrorism, attacks on commercial property, police and military, academics, judiciary, and of course the seat of government – now Dublin.

Unlike Irish nationalist terrorism this armed struggle will not require a political wing. This is perhaps the key dichotomy with the IRA, and a possible weakness. In the past Troubles, loyalist terrorists were simply fighting and committing acts of terror to maintain the status quo – the Union with Great Britain. What will motivate these future volunteers? A forlorn hope that the British will return? A new Northern Ireland based on repartition? An independent Ulster?

The Greek Cypriots boasted that EOKA could sustain a long war against the British, and they did with some success as they fought for *Enosis*.<sup>36</sup> However when faced with the more draconian methods of the Turkish army in 1974, the EOKA doctrine proved ineffective as the Turks rounded up the young men in villages like Syskilpos, led them up the mountain where they 'disappeared',<sup>37</sup> and relocated entire populations.<sup>38</sup>

A guerrilla army can move though a sympathetic people like a fish moves through water.<sup>39</sup> Drain the water via a brutal ethnic cleansing – as in North Cyprus- and the fish dies.

As I reflected on the Independent Orange meeting, three impressions formed in my mind: **First**, their deep welled feelings of a particular Britishness. This was not however the multi-ethnic, secular Cool Britannia of the 2020s. Few or none of these men had ever worked or lived in contemporary Great Britain. The image on the wall of the Jubilee Room of HM Queen Elizabeth II, radiant as a youthful freshly crowned Monarch set the tone for the time warp. Independent Orangeism's Northern Ireland is an idealised 1950s historical theme

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<sup>36</sup> Ironically translates "union"

<sup>37</sup> Presumed dead.

<sup>38</sup> As many as 160,000 people relocated.

<sup>39</sup> Attributed to Mao Zedong.

park. That's why elderly English visitors who visit revel in the nostalgia of conservative values, the fundamentalist Reformed expression of a bygone age.<sup>40</sup>

*When I go to Northern Ireland, I am looking back at my youth in the 1950s. I remember in Sheffield on Whit Monday nine Protestant Sunday Schools used to parade to a service with the Boys Brigade, Sea Scouts, Boy Scouts, Cubs, Brownies, Girl Guides- scores of children walking behind a banner carried by some adult....Its the Blue Remembered Hills: you can't go back. We can all see that community and experience a sense of loss- because we know where we have come from. But it makes me angry that an entire community should be demonised for no greater crime than being out of fashion.*<sup>41</sup>

**Secondly**, there was a genuine fear and mistrust of Sinn Féin. I will return to this theme below. The Orange fraternity lost 335 members to Provisional IRA violence during the Troubles.

**Finally**, the threat that, in event of an Irish unity, the Protestant population, or a substantial demographic within it, would resort to disruption and armed struggle, cannot be ignored. If this declaration of resistance were to be read from an Orange platform in the aftermath of a 50%+1 border poll, then it would gain popular traction and support. One in seven of the new Irish state would be alienated from the Irish nation, bereft of any sense of belonging or loyalty.

### **The loyalist flute band--fourteen participants, ( Moneymore, 26 April, 2018).**

#### **What's the point in celebrating the Twelfth in a united Ireland?**

It was a small but immaculately kept Orange hall in County Londonderry. A group of young men with Miller flutes had gathered for a weekly practice. As is common in contemporary flute band culture, they had a busy diary of parades to attend throughout the summer.

Long gone are the days when an Orange band simply existed to lead the lodge on the Twelfth and other loyal order occasions.<sup>42</sup> Since the early Seventies, a culture was born whereby Orange and loyalist bands participated in a season of exclusive band parades. These fulfilled two key functions : First they provided focus for young Protestant youth, they joined a band, found peer group "mates", gained a sense of collective pride in who they were and where they came from.

Interviewed in 2000, Gregory Kernohan captures the mood in the village of Galgorm in 1975; *The [loyalist music] culture had always been in the area, in the forms of Loyal Orders and Lambeg drumming etc, but very little for youth, thus the idea of a band.*<sup>43</sup> *As with most ideas of this sort, finance would be the main obstacle, so they set about raising money by various methods. On 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> July [1975], door to door collections were taken up....a jar of sweets was purchased at the huge outlay of ninety pence. This was taken door to door and funds were raised by people paying to guess the amount of sweets in the jar.*<sup>44</sup> *The grand total of these efforts was forty three pounds and ninety two pence. By September the band had sufficient funds to buy their first instruments, ....four side drums, a bass drum and thirty flutes at a cost of £335.15.....Little did these founder members realise what they had just*

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<sup>40</sup> Ruth Dudley Edwards, *The Faithful Tribe*. (Harper Collins, 1999), p.xi.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>42</sup> In the 1960s a band at most would be out parading the 12<sup>th</sup> July, Relief of Derry Day, Black Saturday and possibly a District Church parade – about five times during the year.

<sup>43</sup> Here Kernohan unwittingly captures the basic dichotomy between a Protestant settlement and a Catholic sense of parish. There is no equivalent to the GAA community structure to promote sport and Scor' activities. Everyone is left to find and make their own entertainment.

<sup>44</sup> It is significant that the band did not resort to a raffle. This reflects the Reformed evangelical culture in Bible Belt Ballymena in this era, even good causes like the band could not be seen to break the taboo.

started would become one of the best known bands in N Ireland and Scotland, "**Pride of the Maine Flute Band**".<sup>45</sup>

By contrast with Pride of the Maine, the flute band at the focus of research as a 'lodge' band. Its primary function was to be the 'melody' flute that led the lodge but by the late 1990s it had begun the metamorphose in to a more robust blood and thunder style persona, with the white shirts and simple band caps exchanged for expensive and militaristic uniforms.

While it still remained a lodge band – founded in 1903 to lead the lodge- the band is well respected in the 'Ulster Bands scene' for good music, discipline and decorum.

It has to be said that since the ceasefires of the 1990s, the loyalist band culture has become more militaristic in its character. The marching has lost its 'carpet roller elbow swing' with the arm now swung straight. Daft looking caps with oversized hackles have disappeared, replaced with berets or SD peaked caps, and well bulled DMS boots are now the approved footwear.<sup>46</sup> The drill and precision of female standard bearers would make an Irish Guardsman proud.

No research has been established why these little bands, who survived for so long in simple white shirts and basic glengarry bonnets with a very rudimentary style of drill and march, should in the post 1995 period transform into the militarist expression found today.

I would offer two possible explanations:

(1) The influence of a cohort with the bands fraternity that are known as "the bands that have connections." This description is short hand for a band (generally with no Orange Lodge connection), who have been adopted or formed by a Loyalist paramilitary organisation. This connection can vary from being merely the colour party of that organisation, to every band member being a sworn member of the organisation. With paramilitary funding to ensure street cred and prestige, these bands became well dressed. In one case, the drum major – who was also a UDA commander – swanned around in a £1,000 costume that looked like a cross between Liberace and a Latin American dictator.

(2) The other factor is that with the redundancy of the UDR/Royal Irish Home service battalions, a good many ex-soldiers found fulfilment in the marching band culture. They brought with them their high standards of dress and decorum.

The second function of the band culture is that operates in a league like environment of mutually supported parades. The incorrect assumption by many northern nationalists is that the Orange Order organised band parades. What is actually happening is that the local band supports a N Ireland wide network of band parades, and then hosts its own parade where it can lift a street collection. These band parades can attract large crowds of paying supporters. The Dunloy Accordion Band in Ballymoney is recorded by the Parades Commission Website as drawing a crowd of 10,000 + spectators.<sup>47</sup>

In terms of age, this was chosen as a youthful target demographic, with 71% being in 18-25 age group, and 21% being 26-35. The group was 50/50 Presbyterian and Church of Ireland. The Presbyterians declared as regular church attenders, and by contrast all but one of the Church of Ireland declared as de-churched, but did not use the designation atheist.

To test world view, the group were asked about their support for a referendum on Equal Marriage. 71% were against such a referendum. Both females present supported it.

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<sup>45</sup> Gregory Kernahan, 'Pride of the Maine Flute Band; a musical tradition twenty years in the making' in *New Ulster; The journal of the Ulster Society*, (No. 40, Summer 2000), p.17.

<sup>46</sup> An average band uniform is now reported in the region of £500 per member.

<sup>47</sup> Parades Commission website . [www.paradescommission.org](http://www.paradescommission.org)

## Would you support the issue of an Irish Language Act (with a full text of what it meant) being put to a referendum?

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No 85% - Don't Know 14.28%

One comment was made from the floor that Irish Language signage was 'appearing like mushrooms' in Mid Ulster.

I approached Mid Ulster Council about their policy on Gaelic signage –  
*Tnig le co'na'atheoir ar bith iarratos a dhe'anaml fa' choinne comasrhe da'theongach ach litir fhoir mea'lth a sheoladh ehujaím ag [willie.wilkinson@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:willie.wilkinson@midulstercouncil.org)*

If the Council gets a petition to change the road/street to Gaelic, they ballot everyone on the electoral ward who has a vote. On return of the ballot papers, 50% + 1 sees change, less than 50% the name remains in English.<sup>48</sup>

When we turned the discussion to politics, 57.12 % said they would vote against the Belfast Good Friday Agreement if it was offered in a Referendum tomorrow, only 14.28% said they would vote for the GFA, and 28.56% after 20 years still didn't know.

At one level, this opinion sample is remarkable. And yet, I would argue that it is accurate of where this post conflict PUL demographic is at. Three factors shape their negative opinion: First, it must be remembered that only 57% of the PUL voters supported the Belfast Good Friday Agreement in 1998. And of that pro agreement electorate, many had concerns and doubts. In general they voted for 'peace', but not a 'process'.<sup>49</sup>

Secondly, from the beginning the DUP attacked and scorned the BGFA. They demonised David Trimble as a traitor, and encouraged a basic mistrust of the agreement. Indeed Orange Order leader, Rev Mervyn Gibson is on record as saying that 'the peace accord was never sold to the Loyalist community by the main unionist parties, rather they were consistently warned of the dangers they face'<sup>50</sup>

Finally, when the DUP and Sinn Fein came into partnership in 2007 under a much mutated St Andrews' Agreement, they deliberately ditched the underpinning concept of reconciliation and allowed re-sectarianism to fester in what was *de facto* a two party sectarian state.

The PUL non -professional demographic, 71% of the sample born after the ceasefires and indeed some post BGFA, now reject the concept of a consociational power sharing devolved government as they see it inherent with dangers to their rights, freedoms and identity.

But what form of government would they want?

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- A staggering 85.68 % wanted 'Direct Rule by Westminster, no Stormont, no North/South bodies'
  - The remaining 21.42% wanted a diluted assembly, with MLAs paid to 'give scrutiny to Westminster legislation'.
  - There was zero support for a devolved administration with legislative powers.
- 

These opinions require analysis and explanations.

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<sup>48</sup> Interview with William Wilkinson, Building Control Office, Mid Ulster Council, (6 July 2018).

<sup>49</sup> Hayes & McAllister, *Who voted for peace? Public support for the 1998 Northern Ireland Agreement.* (on line 2007).

<sup>50</sup> Nolan, Bryan et al, *The flags dispute: anatomy of a protest*, (QUB, 2014),p.142.

First, the 'Direct Rule' period is synonymous with the Troubles, (1972-1996). Already this dark episode of Irish history has been elevated in the Protestant collective memory to what we historians call 'a heroic period', that is on a par with the Siege of Derry, Battle of the Boyne and the Battle of the Somme. A time of heroism, unionist unity and valour.

I have anecdotal evidence that many plebeian Protestants have a strong nostalgia for the Troubles when, financially and psychologically they were much better off. Many thousands had well paid careers in the security forces, and the element of risk gave them a high status of respect in their community and on 'the mainland.' Terrorists were not in government but rather, languished in prison cell or were facilitated in dying for Ireland. This was particularly true during the early 1990s when, in terms of body count, the Protestants were 'winning' [sic] the war of sectarian attrition.

Secondly, whilst the conflict ensued there could be no British withdrawal. Retrospectively Protestants now voice a carefully couched nostalgia about the Troubles - that a younger generation, denied those well paid careers, and job satisfaction – feed on with envy. The reality check is that the British Government has given certain undertakings to the Irish Government that the constitutional future of Northern Ireland will never feature a direct rule settlement de jure to integration.<sup>51</sup>

The second forlorn hope of a scrutiny role, was indeed mooted as recent as 2018 by Ulster Unionist Robin Swann, but falls short of the devolved administration envisaged in the BGFA.<sup>52</sup>

The levels of support for loyalist paramilitary groups (UVF/UDA/UFF/RHC) threw up a wide range of results

Do you think that people in your family :

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- 14.28% Support or sympathise with paramilitary activity today.
  - 14.28% supported paramilitary activity in the past
  - 7.14% tolerated paramilitary activity as it 'may be needed some day'
  - 21.42 % wanted to see paramilitaries disbanded
  - 28.56% never mention paramilitary groups
  - 14.28% "don't know" what family thinks about paramilitaries
- 

The context was then changed to "your community" and what they might think:

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- 21.42 %support paramilitary activity today
  - 21.42 % supported paramilitary activity in the past
  - 21.42% tolerate paramilitary activity as it might be needed someday
  - 14.28% would want to see disbandment
  - 21.42% never mention paramilitary activity
  - 21.42% don't know.
- 

As to the future and a 50% +1 border poll in favour of a United Ireland .

How would people in your community react?

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- ZERO Accept the democratic decision peacefully.
  - 57% would support resistance by physical force and protest.
  - 42% don't know.
- 

<sup>51</sup> Friends of the Union, Publication No 15, *Third Ian Gow Memorial Lecture*, London, 1993.

<sup>52</sup> *Belfast NewsLetter*, (14 March 2018)

How would people in your family react?

- 7.14% (1) thought they would accept.
  - 64.26% would support resistance by physical force and protest
  - 28.50 % would probably relocate to the British mainland.
- 

When these results are compared with contemporary research by the Mitchell Institute, QUB, amongst young PUL adults in a County Antrim town (again with a strong loyalist band culture ) asked the same questions, with “Don’t know” in place of the relocation option.<sup>53</sup> A useful comprise is established.

How would people in your community react?

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- Zero would accept the decision
  - 79% would support resistance by force
  - 21% don’t know
- 

How would people in your family react?

- 23% accept the decision
  - 39% would support resistance by physical force
  - 39% don’t know
- 

Typical of Protestant culture, the emphasis is moving from the abstract of community or collective, to the personal or individual. Without the stimulation of fiery rhetoric or mass rallies to stoke up emotions, these young Ulstermen are already radicalised. They will not bear the stigma of the generation who failed Ulster.

It is obviously one thing to ‘tick a box’ with no consequences, as opposed stepping up to the firing point and taking human life/risking one’s own. But in the ensuing discussion I got a flavour of the fears and aspirations that generated such levels of testosterone.

- ‘I think people would feel as though their country is being took away from them.’
- ‘Our farmland would be confiscated and given to Catholics’

**This belief was widely held by the group. It transpired that the infamous interview by Jimmy Doris and Daniel McShane on the fate of Protestant farmers after Irish unity is common knowledge in the vicinity . The village of Coagh is just up the road from the Orange Hall, and some of the older men in the group personally knew Derek Ferguson, who had been murdered by the Coalisland unit of the East Tyrone Brigade.<sup>54</sup> They were able to recall the names and details of the Active Service Unit involved.**

- 
- **Fear of Sinn Fein triumphalism and retribution.**

**There was little or no animosity towards SDLP or even Fine Gael or Fianna Fail, but even amongst this youthful cohort of Protestants, I could detect no sense of trust or expectation of fair treatment from Sinn Fein.**

There was a sense that for these young Protestants- life as they knew it would stop- after Irish unity. One even when further than the elders of the Independent Orange.

**“There would be no point of celebrating the Twelfth of July any more in a united Ireland..forget about the drums and flutes until we have new victories to celebrate...”**

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<sup>53</sup> Gladys Ganiel, *Ex-combatants and post liberal peace building in Northern Ireland; challenging the cultures of militarism*. Under review for academic publication, used with kind permission.

<sup>54</sup> A full text of the Doris/McShane interview is available in : Kevin Toolis, *Rebel Hearts; journeys within the IRA’s soul*, (Picador Press, 1995), pp.40-41.

As I left the Orange Hall, I was approached by an older man who had witnessed the focus group. He said the “Big Mark Daly Book has given the young cubs a wakeup call”.<sup>55</sup>

I asked him if he believed their pledge to armed resistance was serious:

**“God Aye, folk laughed at Carson’s Volunteers in 1912. The Germans they met in the trenches on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916, they weren’t laughing. These young boys will fight for their land and their values – it’s in their DNA.”**

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### **UDR Veterans, nine participants, (Coleraine, 3 May, 2018)**

**“So what’s the Sit Rep?”<sup>56</sup>**

This focus group was convened in a Welfare Office of the 5<sup>th</sup> (Londonderry) Battalion UDR Regimental Association. The room was decked with photographs, memorabilia and easy chair/sofas – a regimental museum meets a sergeant’s mess. Apart from three, the group would all have qualified for a Translink pass. I explained that whilst we would be surveying attitudes of a polemic nature, we would not be discussing party politics which is contrary to the Rules of the Regimental Association.

**‘The Battalion was deployed continually [without break or respite] on operations in Northern Ireland between 1970 and 1992, and was involved in over 900 significant terrorist related incidents. 27 members of the Battalion were Killed in Action, 7 were disabled as result of action on duty. Six members of the Battalion have been murdered off duty’.**<sup>57</sup>

In the 1970s the British Government had concerns that coffins arriving back on a weekly basis from Northern Ireland with the remains of soldiers killed by the PIRA would build up sentiment for “Troops Out” Movement and calls for a British withdrawal. This led to the policy of “Ulsterisation” – whereby native Ulstermen and women serving with the RUC and UDR were brought to the centre stage of the conflict and ordered to police their neighbours. The policy outlined in *The Way Ahead* was based on the assumption that the Great British public would care less about dead UDR and RUC casualties, than Englishmen. It had the disastrous effect of neighbour policing neighbour, and as the Provisional IRA hit back, neighbour killing neighbour. It resulted in a dirty sectarian civil war.

Unlike the regular British Army, who served a few months and were then rotated, the UDR were forced to serve continuously – and without the security of a camp or barracks – were more at risk off duty than on. As one UDR veteran put it bluntly:

**“The English soldier climbs into his helicopter and goes back to England, the UDR soldier goes back to his home every night, which is effectively in a combat zone“**

In terms of confession, the focus group reflected the urban PUL demographic Presbyterian 44%, Methodist 11%. Church of Ireland 33%, atheist 11%.

In terms of religious practice, they also reflected the urban working class trend towards secularisation: Regular church goers 44%. Dechurched 55%

The question relating to Loyalist paramilitaries – there was no support at family level for paramilitaries past, present or future.

To the uninitiated, this total rejection and abhorrence of loyalist paramilitaries may come as a surprise. It is contrary to the orthodoxy that the UDR were in collusion with terrorist groups.

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<sup>55</sup> All focus groups were given a chance to inspect *BREXIT & THE FUTURE OF IRELAND; Uniting Ireland & and its people in peace&prosperity*, (Rapporteur’s Report by Senator Mark Daly, 2017).

<sup>56</sup> Military Abbreviation for “Situation Report”

<sup>57</sup> Lieutenant Colonel TJ Camp, OC 5 Royal Irish Regiment, (personal letter to the author, 25 Nov. 1997)

This needs explanation. It is accepted that the loyalist paramilitaries did infiltrate the UDR, RUC and Regular Army. They recruited from the same demographic . Even today with stringent vetting it was possible for a committed terrorist to infiltrate the elite Royal Marine Commandoes and for years stockpiled ammunition and explosive equipment for use by Dissident Republicans.<sup>58</sup>

Ciaran Maxwell was radicalised as a teenager after being beaten up by loyalists. Young Protestants growing up with a daily experience of Provisional IRA bombing and shooting were vulnerable to the attractions of the paramilitaries, and using the security forces as a resource for sourcing training, intelligence and even weapons.

There were areas where the level of malfeasance could have been as high as 5% -15% in some units.<sup>59</sup> Battalions based in North Armagh, South Antrim and Belfast were amongst the highest, reflecting the level of loyalist paramilitary presence and activity in these areas. By contrast, in battalions in the far west such as Fermanagh, collusion with the loyalists was unheard of due to their non existence in a conservative rural community.

The members of the focus group had , during the Troubles, been on the receiving end of violence from both republican and loyalist terrorists. Research conducted with this very group in 1998, revealed that 37% were victims of violence, 15% had survived murder bids , and 6% had had their homes attacked (by loyalists).<sup>60</sup> They had also utter contempt for ‘ceasefire volunteers with their drug rackets and funding scams’.

In separate interviews, veterans spoke of experienced NCOs and officers, who calmed things down when a comrade was murdered, who intervened when pro-IRA supporters taunted UDR patrols about recently killed comrades, when threats were made against family and loved ones about what would happen to them – in graphic detail – after *Tiocfaidh ár lá*. “ The UDR gave you a focus, you felt you might just be doing some good. That you standing there in the rain checking vehicles might just deter a bomb or a killing. It was like a safety valve. You also got a good steer from good men on the moral values of keeping to the law. Without the UDR, I would have been certainly tempted to join the paramilitaries in the 1970s to counter the PIRA attacking my community. ”

“We knew we were hated by the PIRA. Not because of our military skills or reputation like the Paras, but because of our local knowledge. We knew the family connections and the ties of intermarriage that often linked a PIRA unit, we could discern the different variations in accent – like Derry from Strabane. We knew the roads and lanes like the back of our hand.”

On the question “ If the Belfast Good Friday Agreement was to be put to a referendum vote again:

For = 22%      Against =44%      Abstain = 33%

Preferences for governance

- |                                      |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| • Direct Rule from London            | 33% |
| • DR from London with MLA scrutiny   | 44% |
| • Return devolved rule & Civic forum | 22% |
| • Don't Know                         | 22% |

Discussion reflected the apathy and derision that the cohort felt for politicians in general.

- “Why are they still getting paid?”

<sup>58</sup> [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) Ciaran Maxwell, the dissident republican who infiltrated Royal Marines (31 July 2017).

<sup>59</sup> Pat Finucane Centre: *The hidden history of the UDR*. (2014).

<sup>60</sup> Colonel (Retd) George Lapsley, in *Gone, but not forgotten*, (5 UDRA publication, (1998,.Appendix C),

- “Too much sleaze and insider trading like the ash for cash”

#### Irish Language Act

- 22% in favour
- 66% against
- 1% don't know enough about it.

The fact that a minority in favour exists at all, it remarkable, bearing in mind these men had clear memories of how the language was weaponised by Sinn Féin/PIRA during the Troubles, and promises in *An Phoblacht* that after the English were driven out of Ireland, their language would follow. <sup>61</sup>

In event of a border poll and 50% + 1 for unity, what do you think your family would do?

- 11% accept decision
- 88% support resistance
- 22% consider re-location depending on the power of Sinn Fein

The potential role and power of Sinn Féin in a united Ireland was a key factor for these UDR veterans. There was a real concern for the possibility of retribution against those who had served in the Crown Forces.

“Not just physical violence, but a rewriting of history that airbrushes the fact that the PIRA were responsible for over 2,000 killings, and a new ‘history’ by Sinn Féin that most of the bombings and shootings were conducted by MI5 proxy agents.”

- “We are constantly demonised. The UDR has been placed on a par with Hitler’s SS. I dread the thought of what will follow unification. Sinn Féin have yet to decommission the mindset”.
- “They [Sinn Féin] talk of reaching out to unionists, yet they still celebrate the actions of their volunteers in killing Protestants – many of whom were non-combatants .

The UDR veterans saw a militancy in their community. Again 90% saw the strong possibility of armed resistance by the Protestant population.

- “The Flags Protest was a no win situation for loyalists, yet you saw the mayhem caused. Kids born way after the ceasefires.”
- “It’s not like you fight a long war and get beaten. The Prods are unbeaten. They don’t see why they should accept a democratic decision by the Irish nation when they have always been told that they are alien planters who don’t belong here”.
- “I don’t see where the Garda [sic] and the Irish Army have the resources to contain major riots in over 70 towns, plus getting their units wiped out in well-staged killing grounds. They would have to raise a Catholic gendarmerie, like the B Specials, and then you will have civil war, way beyond the Troubles II and more like Bosnia”.

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<sup>61</sup> Conway Mill, 18 May 1982.

**East Belfast Mission, six participants (Skainos Square, 16 May 2018)**

The final focus group was hosted by East Belfast Mission.<sup>62</sup> The only church in Belfast to host and promote an Irish Language Class. The new Skainos (Skin) building is a corner stone of community development and regeneration on the Newtownards Road. **Senator Gerald Craughwell was visiting Skainos that day, and was invited to attend the session as an observer.**

Interestingly none of the attendees actually belonged to EBM Methodist congregation. The only two regular attendees of their place of worship were 'Presbyterian' and 'Evangelical (independent) Christian Fellowship'. The rest were de-churched and secular atheists. In contrast to the other cohorts, this demographic, May Day was a parade day, reflecting the Shipyard heritage of East Belfast.

**Due to the current tensions in the East Belfast Loyalist community, I have been asked by East Belfast Mission, to edit some sensitive material from this section of the report.**

As is borne out by more comprehensive research, secularised East Belfast supports the call for a referendum on same sex marriage by 83%. This is very representative of urban secularised working class Protestants.<sup>63</sup> It was also noted that de-churched Protestants never describe themselves as 'lapsed Protestants' but as atheists, whereas Catholics in the same de-churched state, will use the term "lapsed", but still define identity as "Catholic". This cultural practice distorts census returns as loyalists with strong unionist views do not get included in the sectarian head count.<sup>64</sup>

The fears expressed by these loyalists about Irish unity were all too familiar.

- "Fear of retribution against the unionist people".
- "Fear of show trials against former members of the security forces. A rewriting of history to glorify Irish Republican violence".
- "Fear that one can't really be British in a united Ireland ruled by triumphalist Shinnners"
- Fears of assimilation or being second class "Planter" citizens.

Despite these fears, there was a staunch sense of resolve that these loyalists would not be "doing an Arlene" but would stand their ground in Ulster. "I will still remain in East Belfast" Brian Ervine (former leader of the PUP) made two pertinent comments.

- "There is a lot of young loyalists out there, who missed the war, champing at the bit for military glory"
- "We need Northern Ireland to work. If it doesn't, a united Ireland will certainly not work".

<sup>62</sup> Skainos Square, East Belfast (16 May 2018)

<sup>63</sup> Shirlow, University of Liverpool.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*

## Conclusions

What then can we say about Protestant fears about Irish unity?

- Fear that close connections with kith and kin in GB would be lost for ever. 27%

The east/west link, particularly with Scotland, is special. In my own family, the Galloway and Ayrshire coast is more familiar than Donegal. Here we have a sense of kinship. The concept of a land bridge or even a tunnel will always be thwarted by the Beaufort Dyke, but when I worked and lived in British Columbia, the Canadian government had made every effort to downsize the travel cost from Vancouver and the provincial capital of Victoria with ferry costs for as low as \$2.24. It is just four miles shorter than the Belfast Cairnryan route.<sup>65</sup>

In political terms, a Scottish Secretariat in Belfast would do much to foster close links between kith and kin.

- Fear that Protestant land would be confiscated – 40%

The threat is a matter of record. The fear is real, particularly in Tyrone and along the border.

- Fear of retribution. 64%

This feeds on the *Tiocfaidh ár lá* war cry, and the west bank of the Foyle, largely devoid of Protestants is seen as a foretaste of what lies in store. The United Ireland would be a cold house for Protestants. Particularly if they didn't pretend to enjoy being assimilated into a state that is essentially foreign to them.

- Fear of the primacy given to the Irish (Gaelic) language and culture would render non-gaels to second class citizenship. 72 %

This reflects the entrenched positions on the Gaelic language that have festered since 2007. Now signage is perceived as the linguistic equivalent of red, white and blue kerb stones, reduced to marking sectarian turf. Lessons need to be learned and quickly. In Scotland, the *Achd na Ga'idhlig* (Alba, 2005), was careful to secure Gaelic as 'an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect with English', but it should be noted that 'equal respect' has no clear legal definition and falls short of equal validity with English.<sup>66</sup>

There is also a growing awareness amongst promoters of the Scottish Gaelic, that signage, whilst warming the hearts of the passing Gaelilgeoir by raising the profile of the language, does not increase fluency, and simply alienate non Gaelic speakers, as the text is unintelligible and foreign to the majority of Scots.<sup>67</sup> Ironically the minority of Scots Gaelic speakers are Scottish nationalists, so the problem in Scotland is neither political or sectarian.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Vancouver has a population of 610,000 and the Island 775,347. By contrast the isolated Galloway area has a sparse population of 148,002 and poor road network to the central belt (Glasgow/Edinburgh)

<sup>66</sup> Wilson McCloud, *Gaelic in contemporary Scotland*,

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> In the 2014 Referendum 53% of the Highlands & Islands Comhairle nan Eilean siar voted to remain in the UK.

- Fear of show trials against former members of the security forces and a rewriting of the history of the Troubles to glorify Irish republicanism. 72%

Again the long memory of threats and promises, plus the dismal vision of control that is exercised in a “Shinnergrad” that does not tolerate dissent.

- Fear that one can't truly be British in a united Ireland ruled by triumphalist republicans. All reference to British heritage, memorials and culture would be removed. 100%

### **Everyone ticked this box.**

When I asked three of the group why it resonated with them, the reply was the word “triumphalist”. The fear of a Sinn Fein orgy of victory demonstrations and actions. In a civic unionist meets nationalists at QUB in 2018,<sup>69</sup> one nationalist post graduate Conflicts student said he would like to see all British icons and memorials removed from the campus. When I pushed him on this, he declared that he found the war memorial offensive.

The QUB war memorial records the dead (all religious faiths) of two world wars, who were alumni of the university. Neither war was waged against the Irish nation. Indeed many Catholic Irishmen volunteered in World War 2 to fight fascism.

When I enquired if it should be replaced by a statue commemorating Sean Russell, I got nothing but a scowl. Other Protestant queries included :

- Would cenotaphs be removed and replaced with Hunger Strike Memorials?
- “Would historic names like “Queens” and the “Royal Victoria” be trashed?”
- “In keeping with Dublin train stations, would our premier airport become the Bobby Sands International?”
- “Would street, roads and parks be renamed after IRA dead?”
- “Would Michael O’Neill keep his job, or would Norn Iron face assimilation and our National Anthem ring out no more at Windsor Park ?”

A key question must be the morale of these dissenting demographics. In a recent publication Paul Gosling and Pat McArt lift a quote from the late Dr John Robb, whom they describe as a ‘liberal unionist’ [sic] where he states that Protestants were feeling ‘increasingly demoralised and threatened’ and that they ‘were in a terrible state’.<sup>70</sup>

The inference lifted by Gosling and McArt is that the Protestants must be in a worse state in 2018.<sup>71</sup> However, this may be based on two incorrect assumptions; First that John Robb, blighted and socially limited by his very privileged upper class roots, had any insights into the state of the Protestant working class mindset. As he admitted in the same interview, “What do I know of Carnany ?” (Local Protestant housing estate).

Secondly, the McKay research was conducted in the aftermath of 1998 Drumcree. It was a time when morale was at an all time low. The Protestants had taken a beating. They had not got down the Garvaghy Road. Without any command or public statement they had, as individuals retreated to lick their wounds. Like the Israel of the Old Testament, “every man

<sup>69</sup> South Dining Hall, 12 March 2018.

<sup>70</sup> Paul Gosling and Pat McArt, *A new union Ireland 2015*, (pamphlet 7 May 2018), p.21. The original quote is in Susan McKay, *Northern Protestants; an unsettled people*, (Blackstaff Press, 2000), p.271.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

fled to his tent.”<sup>72</sup> No prophet or politician stood on a platform to announce that the Siege of Drumcree was over and that the Protestants had lost.<sup>73</sup>

That was twenty years ago. A new generation now squares up. In the aftermath of the 2012 Flags Protest, I was one of the few researchers acknowledged as having connected with the elusive leadership of the protest.<sup>74</sup>

*‘ The Drumcree protest was badly organised. The Orange [Order]bussed men to Drumcree by the thousand. They rioted in a field, contained by the Army. What if they had stayed at home, and staged hundreds of protests across the country?’*<sup>75</sup>

The hard lessons of Drumcree had obviously been learnt by the 2012 team.

Secondly, as part of this research I attended a loyalist band parade in Ballymoney.<sup>76</sup> Despite a mid-week event, there were large crowds of youth and over forty bands. After the well-disciplined parade a “Sash Bash” was held in the town’s High Street. I witnessed expressions of solidarity as youth of different camps (UDA, UVF, non aligned ) sang, danced and celebrated. I was reminded of the camp fire sessions of the Ghurkha Rifles.

*“Don’t bury me in Erin’s fenian valleys ,  
take me home, in Ulster let me rest.  
And on my grave stone,  
carve a simple message,  
Here lies a soldier of the UVF.*

I saw young men, some of who were in the earlier focus groups, arms linked around each other, like a team bonded for a cup final.

Much drivel has been written about how Protestants could retain a unionist identity in a united Ireland.

Owen Polley explores the misunderstanding;

*Sinn Féin continues to patronise unionists by claiming it wants to explore ‘what they mean by their sense of Britishness’ and to listen to our views on ending partition.....Sinn Féin exploits ambiguity created by unionists who maintain that their main priority is simply to have their identity and culture recognised, rather than play a full role in the United Kingdom.....Sinn Fein can understand quite easily the notion that unionism is [just] a culture or [national] identity. But it dares not contemplate that the Northern Ireland unionists’ Britishness springs from a deeply felt entirely rational allegiance to the United Kingdom. This attachment cannot be accommodated in a united Ireland.*

*Unionists’ main priority is not to have their identity and culture recognised but to play a full role in the United Kingdom...*

*By definition, Northern Ireland unionism would not survive a united Ireland. People like me, and presumably Arlene Foster whose British citizenship is bound up with a political loyalty to the United Kingdom would lose both our nation- state and our sense of belonging by staying here.*

*Effectively our home would become a foreign state.*<sup>77</sup>

That perhaps is the ‘mother’ of all fears. It is one that Irish nationalists need to address.

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<sup>72</sup> 2 Chronicles 25.22.

<sup>73</sup> Would it be the same if a Border Poll heralded a 50%+1 ?

<sup>74</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Informal conversation with Flags Protest leader.

<sup>76</sup> Dunaghy Flute Band annual parade, Ballymoney, 18 July 2018

<sup>77</sup> Owen Polley, *I’d share Foster’s impulse to leave a united Ireland.* (Belfast News Letter, 20 April 2018).

## 5.0 Conclusions

Mike Nesbitt, former leader of the UUP, said, “I do not speak for unionism. In fact, nobody does”<sup>78</sup>, however some of the quotes and findings from submissions and research regarding Unionist fears and concerns are worth highlighting and restating here. There were 7 broad topics: loss of identity and the places of unionism within a united Ireland, triumphalism, retribution on former members of the RUC, British Army and Prison Officers, land would be taken off unionist farmers, a return to violence, the European Union, and health, welfare and the economy. Those in favour of and advocating for a New Agreed Ireland need to understand the overarching fear and concern in the unionist community is that “effectively our home would become a foreign state”<sup>79</sup>.

Fears and Concerns of the unionist community of a United Ireland in the submissions and research to this report include:

- Fear of retribution against the Unionist people
- Fears of assimilation or being second class “Planter” citizens
- Fear that close connections with kith and kin in Great Britain would be lost forever
- Fear that Protestant land would be confiscated
- Fear of the primacy given to the Irish (Gaelic) language and culture would render those who consider themselves to be British to second class citizenship
- Fear of show trials against former members of the security forces, and a rewriting of the history of ‘the troubles’ to glorify Irish republicanism
- Fear that one can’t truly be British in a united Ireland ruled by triumphalist republicans
- All reference to British heritage, memorials and culture would be removed<sup>80</sup>
- “I can see us living in a land that will return to violence and murder”<sup>81</sup>
- “It is clear that re-entering the EU in a united Ireland would simply rub salt in the wounds of some Unionists.”<sup>82</sup>
- “Can a United Ireland give the same benefits as are in the United Kingdom?”<sup>83</sup>

In Dr Wilson’s focus groups there was a universal fear: triumphalism. The direct quotes below further highlight the fears and concerns of the Protestant/Unionist/ Loyalist community;

- “Would cenotaphs be removed and replaced with Hunger Strike Memorials?”
- “Would historic names like “Queens” and the “Royal Victoria” be trashed?”
- “In keeping with Dublin train stations, would our premier airport become the Bobby Sands International?”
- “Would streets, roads, and parks be renamed after IRA members?”
- “Would Michael O’Neill keep his job, or would Norn Iron face assimilation and our National Anthem ring out no more at Windsor Park?”<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Submission from Ulster Unionist Party Leader Michael Nesbitt (2012-2017)

<sup>79</sup> ‘Brexit and The Future of Ireland: The fears of Northern Protestants concerning unity’, Dr James Wilson. Report commissioned by Senator Mark Daly

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> ‘Unionism versus a “United” Ireland’, Raymond McCord

<sup>82</sup> Submission by an anonymous Unionist Public Representative

<sup>83</sup> Submission by Reverend Kyle Paisley

<sup>84</sup> ‘Brexit and The Future of Ireland: The fears of Northern Protestants concerning unity’, Dr James Wilson. Report commissioned by Senator Mark Daly

## 7.0 Recommendations

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar set himself the challenge of engaging with everyone about the future of the whole island at his address at the 20th anniversary of The Good Friday Agreement, in the U.S. Library of Congress.

**“There is now a particular onus on those of us who currently hold the responsibility of political leadership. We are a new generation. It is time for us to step forward and play our part. That is why we must engage young people in the future of our island. In the months and years ahead, I for one want to engage with the next generation – the Agreement Generation – to build on those achievements.**

**Our mission now is to imagine the next twenty years. Not only to imagine it, but then to build it.”<sup>85</sup>**

This vision must urgently be implemented by the Taoiseach. He must engage not only with the Agreement Generation but also all those in the Unionist/Loyalist/Protestant communities in this process. The Government must listen to the real and genuine fears outlined in this report. The government, working with all sides, must develop and implement a plan to address those fears and concerns. The Government must set out clearly how they will protect the peace process and build a vision for a shared island and a united people in a New Agreed Ireland.

The Government needs to establish a New Ireland Forum 2 as recommended in the report “Brexit & the Future of Ireland Uniting Ireland and it’s People in Peace & Prosperity”, “The establishment of a New Ireland Forum 2 is recommended to set a pathway to achieve the peaceful reunification of Ireland”<sup>86</sup>. This report was adopted unanimously by the all-party Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. Issues in relation to unionist fears and concerns regarding a United Ireland should be addressed by the Irish Government and the New Ireland Forum 2. The Forum’s remit in that area could include but would not be limited to:

- A. The fear that you cannot be British in Ireland after unification.
- B. The role of the British State, its Monarchy and the Commonwealth in Northern Ireland after unification.
- C. How symbols of British identity would be included in a New Agreed Ireland.
- D. Fear of retribution of those who were in the British security forces during the Troubles.
- E. Proposals to land and property owners in the Unionist community to address their fears.
- F. Details on a referendum on a New Agreed Ireland as provided for in the Good Friday Agreement.

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<sup>85</sup> ‘National Risk Assessment 2019 Submission by Sean Fleming TD & Senator Mark Daly’

<sup>86</sup> ‘Brexit & The Future of Ireland: Uniting Ireland & Its People in Peace & Prosperity’, Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

G. A cost benefit analysis of a New Agreed Ireland.

H. Young people in the most disadvantaged communities being exploited by paramilitary leaders.

It is clear from the submissions and research that a failure by the Government to engage and address the fears and concerns of unionist will have serious consequences for all the people who live on this island. The words of Seamus Mallon, Deputy First Minister for Northern Ireland 1998-2001, should be listened to by the Irish Government: “Nationalists need to show generosity if they’re ever going to persuade unionists of the benefits of a united Ireland”.<sup>87</sup>

We must also listen anew to the advice of the man voted by the people of Ireland ‘Irish man of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’ T.K. Whittaker. He wrote a ‘Note on North-South Border Policy’ to the Taoiseach Jack Lynch written on the 11th of November 1968 on the eve of ‘The Troubles’. In it, Whittaker foresaw the long term nature of achieving a united Ireland and that it required the best of ourselves and a collective understanding.

**“We were, therefore, left with only one choice, a policy of seeking unity in Ireland between Irishmen. Of its nature this is a long-term policy, requiring patience, understanding and forbearance and resolute resistance to emotionalism and opportunism. It is not the less patriotic for that”.**

**T K Whittaker**

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<sup>87</sup> <https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/politics/united-ireland-only-possible-if-nationalists-show-generosity-to-unionists-says-mallon-38143343.html>

# *Appendices*

# Flagging it up

A 'rebuilding the bridges project' by the Parish of Errigal and Desertoghill

Will Glendinning and James Wilson

The "flags protests" that manifested themselves across Northern Ireland last winter were significant in that they were stimulated by the electoral pressure (democratically applied) of the Catholic nationalist population to change and modify the symbols that have become enshrined in the tradition of unionist majority rule.

This study investigates the impact of the protests on the small town of Garvagh, a Plantation frontier settlement with a long history of contested space. It notes the animation of a new generation to militant action, the dangers of politicians couching the events in the doomsday language of the centuries old sectarian conflict, and highlights the need for a dedicated programme of reconciliation.

Glendinning Consulting Ltd would wish to thank the Community Relations Council for funding the study and St Paul's Garvagh (the Parish of Errigal and Desertoghill in the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe) for seeing the need and doing something about it.

We would also like to thank the groups and individuals that facilitated the research; the Community Foundation, the John Mitchel's GAC, TBF Thompson Ministries, Rev Brian Brady, and Coleraine Borough Councillors Loftus, Archibald and Holmes. Thank you very much indeed.

Dr James Wilson who brought local knowledge, connections and his expertise to the project and carried out the main part of the work.

A footnote to our study is that our clients, St Paul's Parish of Errigal and Desertoghill have been awarded the prestigious "Good Relations Award" by the Office of the First Minister & Deputy First Minister, in recognition for their not inconsiderable efforts for peace and reconciliation.

*Will Glendinning.*

*Flagging it up: The impact of the loyalist flag protest on community relations in Garvagh.*

Will Glendinning & James Wilson

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**Disclaimer.** In researching and writing this report, the authors have consulted widely and annotated a range of response across the sectarian divide. We would clarify that neither the opinions expressed nor the conclusions reached may necessarily be the official view of the Church of Ireland.

## Executive Summary

This piece of research was funded by the Community Relations Council, Northern Ireland, in response to a request by St Paul's Parish Church, Garvagh, whose Rector was concerned by the damage that the 2012/13 flag protests (relating to the decision to limit the flying of the Union flag from Belfast City Hall) had done to relations between Protestants and Catholics in Garvagh. As it stands this research is unique as a case study into the phenomena now known as the "Ulster flag protests" and its corollaries for community relations.

Garvagh is a small town of less than 3,000 population straddling the arterial A29 between Coleraine and the Mid Ulster towns of Magherafelt and Cookstown. It has been described as a frontier town as it is a Plantation (Protestant) settlement juxtaposed with undisturbed areas of the indigenous Irish (Catholic) population. The electoral Garvagh ward which includes Glenullin reflects this demographic proximity with Protestants making up just 49.9% of the population. The town has an MDMR deprivation ranking of 240.

As a frontier town, Garvagh has an unfortunate legacy of sectarian violence stretching back to the seventeenth century. Many of these incidents, outrages and murders are enshrined in the collective folk memory and still commemorated. The period of the Troubles (1970- 94) reopened these old wounds. Even with the cease fires and the Good Friday Agreement, sectarian tensions still festered in Garvagh, and the Catholics who live and work in the town can relate a sad trilogy of unabated hate crimes and abuse directed towards them.

The 2012/13 flags protest was a response to a democratic decision by Belfast City Council to restrict the flying of the Union flag to designated days. This decision came at the end of a unique year in the United Kingdom. British patriotism was at an all-time high, as the celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee was followed by the Olympic Games and jingoistic adoption of *Team GB* by corporate Britain with the Union flag branded across a wide range of consumer products. Northern Ireland had an additional slice of Union nostalgia as the centenary of the Ulster Covenant was celebrated ...at Belfast City Hall.

A few weeks later the century old tradition of flying the flag on a daily basis was amended by the Council decision and unionists reacted with Province wide protests. One discernable feature of these protests was that it mobilised a new demographic – the generation were had missed the Troubles and were cyber literate. Garvagh, like the majority of the seventy five Province wide protests was animated by 'texting' and had its own discreet *Facebook* page. Loyalist 'blood and thunder' bandsmen provided both the leadership and the muscle of the Garvagh protests.

There is evidence from the focus group research that the flag protest damaged the already fragile community relations in Garvagh. The town betrays all the symptoms of the dysfunctional social syndrome identified by Neil Jarman as 'contested space'. In addition there is clear evidence that a new youthful demographic who have no sense of the war weariness of the Troubles have re-sectarianized and feel obliged to prove themselves as the generation who 'will not fail Ulster'. It is possible to argue that OFMDFM policies that have jettisoned mainstream proactive measures of reconciliation have failed to secure cohesion in post conflict communities such as Garvagh.

Left alone, the Garvagh brand of sectarianism will continue to fester and manifest itself in hate crime and malicious acts of bigotry. The intervention needs to be coherent, joined up and engage with the institutions that have reach and influence. It is regrettable that not all Garvagh's churches have been actively involved. There is however a coterie of Catholic and Episcopalian clergy and laity who are willing to take risks, engage and have difficulty conversations about named issues. There is consensus that some form of cross community network should be formed. The Church of Ireland Rector, Rev Paul Whittaker, has established regular contact with the leadership of Garvagh United Loyalists and is keen to develop this relationship through a dedicated project that will get beyond pandering to single identity and reflect the real world of Northern Ireland 2013. A Northern Ireland – like Garvagh electoral ward - where Protestants are no longer a clear majority of the population.

## 1. Garvagh- socio-economic profile

Garvagh, is a small country market town,( population 2,795) <sup>1</sup>, located in the Borough of Coleraine and straddling the A29 arterial route along the Bann valley to Mid Ulster. The religious demographics of the town and its encatchment ward of Ringsend are annotated thus:

Ward	%Catholic 2001	%Catholic 2011	difference	% Protestant 2001	%Protestant 2011	difference
Ringsend	51.70	49.80	-1.9%	47.4	46.2	-1.2
Garvagh	45.6	47.3	1.7	53.6	49.9	-3.7

Much of the religious change in Garvagh is reflected in new private housing developments, whilst the traditional NIHE estates have remained predominately Protestant. The traditional Catholic area of Garvagh ward was Glenullin.

Deprivation profile – ward % and Deprivation rankings

Garvagh scores an MDMR deprivation ranking of 240

Unemployment	No access to A car	Rented accommodation	Lone parent	Education And skills Ward rating	Crime & disorder
5.58%	15.68%	28.82%	7.11%	242	334

## 2. Background to the protests: The third dimension.

To understand the full significance of any episode of sectarian conflict or protest, the researcher needs to know the precise relationship of the locality in which it occurred to the rest of the mosaic settlement. However, ATQ Stewart argued that the chequerboard on which the game is played has a third dimension. What happens in each square derives a part of its significance and perhaps all of it from what happened there at some time in the past. In Garvagh, locality and history are wedded together. <sup>2</sup>

The phenomenon of *Garvagh Flags Protest* that became a weekly event in the town during the winter months of 2012/13 cannot be dismissed as either as spontaneity or a simple reaction to the lowering of the Union flag over Belfast City Hall. The protests were the product of human agency and have at least three causal or background aspects that help explain the phenomenon.

<sup>1</sup> NISRA 2011 census. Ward 95JJ10

<sup>2</sup> ATQ Stewart, *The narrow ground*. (Belfast, 1969).

## 1. Historical background.

Garvagh is a plantation settlement established by the Canning family, agents of the London Guild's Honourable Irish Society in the early seventeenth century. The settlement has been described by at least one historian as *a frontier village* – 'the fertile lowlands to the north and east [Aghadowey, Moneydig, Boveedy] were planted by English and Scottish settlers, while the high ground to the south and west [Glenullin, Ballerin, Ringsend] was largely in the possession of the original inhabitants'<sup>3</sup> As a frontier village it was to see battles between Planter and Gael during the 1641 Rebellion and in a skirmish during the Williamite wars.<sup>4</sup>

At the Garvagh fair on 23 May 1813, Catholic Ribbonmen gave the Protestants a beating. Protestants found solidarity in the Orange Order, and at the June fair reversed the result. With the July fair came the decider, and as the Ribbonmen approached the town via the tree lined avenue that bordered Lord Garvagh's estate, Orangemen who were also Yeomen fired into the crowd killing several around the third tree of the avenue.<sup>5</sup> The 2013 bi-centenary of this fatal ambush was celebrated by the Garvagh District Cultural Society in a three day festival funded by Ulster Scots Agency.<sup>6</sup>

The reputation of being a staunch Protestant town is thus synonymous with Garvagh. The crude sectarian brawling of the nineteenth century was given a political veneer in 1912, with the third Home Rule Crisis and Garvagh became a focal point for Ulster Volunteer activity. In the 1920s, Garvagh, Boveedy, Moneydig, Aghadowey and Englishtown all raised strong sub district detachments of the Ulster Special Constabulary.<sup>7</sup> Generations of Garvagh Protestants would serve with the "B men" until stood down in 1970.

## The Troubles

Garvagh saw its fair share of the Troubles. The Ulster Defence Regiment's "E" Company was established in Coleraine and their 24 Platoon was based in Garvagh. Because of the "frontier" nature of the location the platoon was to see a lot of action.

On the 23 July 1974, Garvagh got its first major car bomb. Corporal John Conley was killed in action trying to clear residents from Bridge Street. Later the PIRA hijacked a clergyman's car and was carried out a gun attack on a part time soldier. He returned fire and survived. On 11 November 1976 part time soldier Winston McCaughey was killed off duty. On 10

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<sup>3</sup> Aiken McClelland, "The battle of Garvagh" *Ulster Folklife*, Vol. 19 (1973).

<sup>4</sup> Rory Fitzpatrick, *God's Frontiersmen; the Scots-Irish Epic*, (London, 1989) p.249.

<sup>5</sup> Thus the reference in song, and the contemporary references such as the *Third Tree Glasgow Rangers Supporters Club*.

<sup>6</sup> Ulster Scots Agency website, [www.ulsterscotsagency.com/battleofgarvagh-commeration-festival-3-6](http://www.ulsterscotsagency.com/battleofgarvagh-commeration-festival-3-6) July

<sup>7</sup> Sir Arthur Hezlet, *The B Specials; a history of the Ulster Special Constabulary*, (London, 1972), pp.239-240.

August 1979, the IRA murdered a Protestant civilian Arthur McGaw at Moneycarrie Road Garvagh in a case of mistaken identity for his brother who was part time UDR. On 15 June 1985 the PIRA shot and killed RUC Reservist Willis Agnew at Gortin Road, and on 1 July 1989 killed Reservist Norman Annett visiting his mother's home on the Carhill Road. On 1 December 1990 the IRA murdered former UDR soldier Bertie Gilmore outside his new home in Kilrea. The final murders were on 20 April 1994 when a PIRA gunman shot and killed Alan "Smudger" Smith (former soldier) and Protestant civilian John McCloy in Main Street on 20 April 1994.<sup>8</sup>

At one level these killings spread over a twenty year period have the same rate of fatality as the cumulative total of road traffic accidents in many UK towns. However there are psychological differences that decree that such killings leave a deeper scar in the collective Protestant memory.

First, the deaths were not through accident or negligence. They were acts of deliberate human agency and the agents were members of the Provisional IRA. The perpetrators came from the Catholic community, and the funerals of their victims ended up at the Protestant graveyard. The Catholic community were perceived as having a level of culpability.<sup>9</sup>

Secondly, the deaths were inflicted to a demographic which is a very settled community, united by social networks, generations of inter marriage and powerful oath bound fraternities such as the Orange Order. The Smith/McCloy funerals attracted almost 2,000 mourners. The tremors caused by the killings ran deep into these demographic fault lines.

Finally, in the wider context of the Troubles, Kenneth Bloomfield makes the point that If the UK as a whole, with a population of 58 million had experienced death pro rata to the Province with a population of 1.6 million, the total would have been 130,000.<sup>10</sup>

The loyalist paramilitaries were established in Garvagh as early as 1973 with the local hamlet of Culnady being a hub of UDA operations. There are memories of the town being blocked by a parade during the UWC strike of 1974.<sup>11</sup> After the signing of the Anglo-Irish agreement and an increase in PIRA violence, there was a marked loyalist backlash in the South Derry/Garvagh area. On the 14 February 1989, the UFF killed John Joe Davey, a veteran republican of Gulladuff, the followed with the killing of PIRA volunteer Gerard Casey, Shamrock Park, just across the Bann in Country Antrim on 4 April 1989.<sup>12</sup> On the 16 August 1991 they killed Thomas Donaghy at Portna Kilrea, and on the 2 April 1992 killed veteran republican Danny Cassidy outside his home in Coleraine Street.<sup>13</sup> On the 25 March

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<sup>8</sup> Sutton Index of Deaths, (CAIN) *Conflict Archive on the Internet*.

<sup>9</sup> Steve Bruce, *Edge of the union*, (Oxford, 1994), pp.47-48.

<sup>10</sup> Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, *We will remember them*, (HM Stationary Office, )paragraph 25.

<sup>11</sup> Garvagh resident David \_\_\_ recalls a parade but no barricades or protest.

<sup>12</sup> CAIN incorrectly attributes this killing to the UVF.

<sup>13</sup> Loyalist bands still play *Danny Boy* as they pass were his family live in Bradden Place.

1993, the UFF killed four men in Castlerock. One of them, James Kelly was in the PIRA. Many Garvagh loyalists were suspected of collusion with these killings and quite a few had their homes raided and searched by the Security Forces. None were charged or convicted. There were no loyalist prisoners from Garvagh, but one from Aghadowey.

Loyalist bands have a tradition of playing “loud and proud” when they march through the Catholic area of Coleraine Street and Braden Place, Kilrea, past the homes of Republican prisoners/ ex-combatants and UFF murder victims. On 7 July 2013, two young men died in a road traffic accident outside Kilrea. One was Christopher O’Neill, chair of Sinn Fein Kilrea and a grandson of John Joe Davey . On 12 July 2013, Kilrea Orange District made their traditional feeder parade along Coleraine Street past the O’Neill household. All the bands in the parade ceased playing and the Orangemen marched to a single drum beat. Sinn Fein Councillor Ciaran Archibald praised it as “an act of common decency”.<sup>14</sup>

The Drumcree standoffs saw a little disturbance in Garvagh. Number Four( Garvagh) District had leadership such as the Rev Dr Warren Porter, and on a few occasions in 1996 there were token protests for about 15 minutes by men in suits on Garvagh Main Street. Undoubtedly Garvagh Orangemen participated in protests on the Kilrea Bann Bridge and at Drumcree, but Garvagh itself remained dignified and quiet.

Following the ceasefires, the representatives of the PUP and UDP attempted to get involved in community development in Garvagh but were asked to leave the GADDA meeting and subsequently this local fringe unionist expression in constitutional activity faded.

#### **Sectarianism in Garvagh in recent times.**

- 29 April 2006 Catholic owned hotel windows broken
- 7 May 2006 Sectarian attack on home of Siobhan & Michael Conway
- 11 May 2006 Catholic homes attacked – windows broken
- 4 July 2006 Catholic school attacked
- August 2009 twenty windows of Catholic owned homes and business broken, including a pub, butchers, and café.
- 15 Nov 2009, a 21 year old Protestant abducted,beaten and dumped in Rasharkin
- 8 January 2011, petrol bomb attack on Catholic home in Killyvally Pk. Car attacked and burnt out.
- 11 July 2012, GAA club sign on top of bonfire
- Dec 12- Feb 2013 – weekly protest in Gravagh.
- 11 July 2013, death threat to John Dallat MLA on top of bonfire.

#### **Catholic perceptions of Garvagh.**

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<sup>14</sup> Councillor Ciaran Archibald, personal submission to report, 09 10 13.

“It’s a black hole” was one reaction. However in the discussion that followed it transpired that the speaker was not a native to the district. Those who were born in or around the locality – whilst very conscious of loyalist bigotry – tended generally to more forgiving.

Our modest research revealed three distinct demographic Catholic groups; those living in Garvagh, those living in Glenullin and those living in Ringsend/Ballerin. The Garvagh residents feel the poor relations. They have vividly disturbing memories of their childhoods in Garvagh:<sup>15</sup>

- No [Protestant] friends wanted to play with you when the Twelfth of July approached.
- We were sent to relatives in Kilrea/Ringsend before the Eleventh night.
- I sat with my parents – lights out – just a wee torch as the band blathered around our house and we could hear the sectarian abuse “fenian bastards”.
- Ash Wednesday and a lot of abuse on the bus.
- I went to the Trikeeran [Catholic Maintained] Primary and seemed to have a lot more homework and academic push than my friends who went to Garvagh primary. Few of my Protestant peer group has any qualifications and none went to university. Education did not seem matter to working class Protestants.
- I remember the Derry Gaelic team coming to our school. We were all kitted out in Oak Leaf tops [Derry GAA strip] – My parents told me to keep my coat zipped up until out of Garvagh.
- I live in \_\_\_\_ [Private development] I have a neighbour who stops speaking to me as the Twelfth approaches. He got loyalist flags up at the entrance to the drive.

One of the saddest recollections was of a long term friendship from childhood with a Protestant – then one night in the marching season to be called a “fenian bastard” – it hurt after all the years of playing and growing up together.<sup>16</sup>

### **Ballerin and Glenullin**

- I have always socialised in Garvagh - I have good Protestant friends from the Grove [predominately Protestant farming townland east of Garvagh] One night they got attacked for being seen drinking with us in the Central [bar].

The tradition of social drinking in Garvagh and socio-economic contacts with Garvagh Protestants seems to be longstanding in Ringsend/Ballerin . However there was a street wise sense of who is to be avoided as they “had connections with loyalist paramilitaries” and a cognisance of recent UDA recruitment amongst the young.<sup>17</sup>

There is also a liberally minded sense of toleration – an expectation that Protestants will put up flags and buntings for the Twelfth of July and then take them down again. Garvagh loyalists have however abused this goodwill.

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<sup>15</sup> Group work sessions Garvagh 16 10 13

<sup>16</sup> Group work session

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

- The [Garvagh] loyalists are not content with putting up a few Union and Ulster flags for the Twelfth, **they have to be in your face.**
- It was not just the Union and Ulster flags, I find the UDA, UVF and Parachute flags particularly offensive.<sup>18</sup>
- The entire summer is marked by band parades. Garvagh and the A29 is closed and the traffic is diverted – we get visitors [tourists] lost in Glenullin.

The Glenullin demographic are more compact and have adroitly evolved a self contained sense of parallel community. They still shop in Garvagh, - groceries , take-aways, fuel and building supplies- but have little social interaction with the town. Some parents send their children to the pre-school play group in the Controlled (Protestant) Primary school site and raised the question as to why the school flies the Union flag every day.<sup>19</sup>

The internet and sites such as *The Knowhere Guide* allows some interesting comments to be made about Garvagh;

*There is a collection of public houses in the town, but only a few you can go into depending on your religion, eg the Canning Arms. If you are a Catholic don't dare go in as you will receive a kicking from [named individual ]the local UVF/uda/rha/uym head man. I also think he is head of the Mafia...<sup>20</sup>*

Beneath the veneer of post conflict and polite coexistence it is emerging that Garvagh, prior to the flags protest, was a cold house for Catholics with a sustained history of intimidation, verbal abuse, random attacks on private property and a crude sectarian segregation/apartheid enforced with random threats of violence.

Background – Events Province-wide in 2012.

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Focus Group 30 10 13

<sup>20</sup> [www.knowhere.co.uk](http://www.knowhere.co.uk) , Garvagh, Londonderry. "Parts of this information supplied by, Stacy, Tweedy McFaul, Timothy Reid, K.McQuillian, *et al....*" ( Last updated 2008:10:14).

2012 was a remarkable year in terms of flag waving. First it was the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. Special Jubilee Union flags were commissioned and erected across the UK to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the coronation on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2012. Prime Minister David Cameron encouraged street parties, and for once even the shady boulevards of the London borough of Finchley were bedecked in red white and blue bunting and indistinguishable in their Britishness from Garvagh.

The Jubilee celebrations morphed into the 2012 London Olympics. This event generated a national pride bordering on jingoism that has been rarely seen in the United Kingdom. Corporate Britain saw a unique marketing opportunity and created a sales pitch around support for Team GB. Thus Union flags appeared on a wide range of merchandise from chocolate to toilet rolls. Significantly the lasting iconic image of the 2012 Olympics was of a victorious young woman (Jessica Ennis-Hill) who, in a moment of spontaneity wrapped herself in the Union flag following her winning a Gold medal. This image of individuals wrapped in Union flags would find less spontaneous reproductions in the streets of Ulster a few months later.

The final flag moment of 2012 was the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant centenary. The highlight of this Unionist celebration was a carefully choreographed re-enactment at Belfast City Hall. Thousands gathered in Royal Avenue, as they had done in 1912 (and 1985)<sup>21</sup>, and the some politicians donned Edwardian dress to recreate the sepia image. Perhaps the re-enactment was done in a witting way to create a sense of stasis. That nothing had changed in one hundred years, the Union was secure, and the Union flag was flying daily over City Hall as it had always done. Three months later this tradition which had endured since 1906, came to an abrupt end as a new flag protocol was the majority decision of the City Council.

### **Belfast City Hall – 3 December 2012**

It is not the remit of this consultation to investigate and comment in great detail on the events at Belfast City Hall on evening of 3 December 2012. It is sufficient to record that in the local government elections of 5 May 2011, Sinn Fein became the largest party in the Council with the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland holding the balance of power.

In June 2012 the Belfast City Council Policy Committee commissioned a 16 week public consultation report by Policy Arc Ltd to review the policy of flying the Union flag from the City Hall and other council buildings every day of the year. Journalist Ann Maguire reported while Unionist councillors indicated their opposition to a change in the 365 day policy, there was a “quiet acceptance” that they would lose the decision when it came to a

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<sup>21</sup> As many as 200,000 may have attended the 1985 protest. Arthur Aughey, *Under siege Ulster Unionism and the Anglo Irish Agreement*, (Blackstaff Press, 1989), p.86.

vote.<sup>22</sup> Significantly the Alliance Party had mooted a compromise proposal that the flag should fly on designated days as legislated for government buildings and civic buildings in Great Britain.

“ My Party’s (Alliance) position is well known on the [flags] issue. We want respect for the Union flag. We do not want it used as a threat or a weapon”.<sup>23</sup>

In the days before the vote on flag policy, the DUP printed and distributed 40,000 leaflets calling on people to protest about the Alliance Party decision. The tone of the leaflet could be described as emotive.

“ At the moment Alliance are backing the Sinn Fein/SDLP position that the flag should be *ripped* down on all but a few days. Let them know you want the flag to stay.”<sup>24</sup>

On the 3 December 2012, Belfast City Council voted by 29 votes to 21 in support of the Alliance amendment that the Union flag should only fly on designated days. As the vote was taken some of the 1,000 protestors who had gathered in May Street stormed the rear courtyard of building and got access close to the council chamber. The meeting was adjourned for 50 minutes and PSNI and City Hall staff secured the building.<sup>25</sup>

Fifteen PSNI officers were injured in the riot outside City Hall and each night of that week, the protests spread like wildfire to other towns and villages throughout the north. Commentators noted a new phenomenon in the coordination and orchestration of protests, the use of social networking sites such as *Facebook* and *Twitter*.

**“Protest Garvagh Friday 6pm, meeting at carpark.”** <sup>26</sup>

The first reported protest in Garvagh was a modest affair on Friday 7 December, but the following week the protest got a shot in the arm with the appearance of TUV leader Jim Allister . By the 11 January 2013 the Garvagh protest was one of seventy five listed on the *Facebook* page *Light up our sky for the red white and blue*.<sup>27</sup> By 27 January 2013 the self styled Garvagh United Loyalists had their very own *facebook* page, and in stark contrast with the hooded masked persona that they presented on the street, their “likes” web presence is littered with candid images of themselves, family and associates.<sup>28</sup>

### **The impact of the protests – a Catholic perspective.**

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<sup>22</sup> Ann Maguire, *Belfast Telegraph*, (4 June 2012).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>24</sup> [www.cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues](http://www.cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues). Unionist Leaflet distributed in East Belfast Westminster Constituency that Peter Robinson lost to Alliance

<sup>25</sup> Minutes of Belfast City Council, held in the City Hall on Monday 3 December 2012.

<sup>26</sup> *Facebook* entry 18 01 13, reported on [www.nicrowdmap.com](http://www.nicrowdmap.com) . Note there may have been earlier entries on *facebook* but they had been removed by the time of current research.

<sup>27</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=143546032462141&id=144113](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=143546032462141&id=144113)

<sup>28</sup> <https://en-gbfacebook.com/garvagh.unitedloyalists>.

- It [the protest] was no surprise. I could name every one of them [the protestors] They had a chance to show they are big men.
- My friends from the Glen were recognised and called ‘fenian gypsies’
- We stayed away from Garvagh on a Friday night.
- My wife is a nurse, she was on call and tried to get through-they battered her car with a football.<sup>29</sup>
- I saw them attack a lorry – the police were light on the ground and slow to respond.
- I recognised a few and spoke to them- they seemed embarrassed.
- I had to walk through them to get to work – it was frightening.
- We don’t disagree with the right to protest peacefully – but do they have to hide their faces and intimidate people.
- We stopped shopping in Garvagh and went to Coleraine or Wilsons [shop at Bushtown].
- There appeared to be a lack of leadership from Unionist councillors.
- Did your [Protestant] clergy not condemn it from the pulpits?

#### **The impact of the protests- traders’ perspective.**

- It killed Friday night trade in Garvagh. Especially in the key period coming up to Christmas.
- Customers recognised as Catholic were verbally abused.
- It was so bad we considered closing on Friday nights
- We could not get deliveries into the premises. This disrupted trade.

#### **The impact of the protests – focus group -clergy. <sup>30</sup>**

##### **What are your recollections of the flag protests?**

- I did not want to be associated with it (CofI)
- I avoided the town. I did not want my presence to heighten tensions. (RC)
- I was shocked that a local elected representative opened his office to serve tea to protestors.

##### **Was it a surprise that the flag protests spread to Garvagh?**

- Yes and no- Garvagh has a reputation.
- It was almost expected in Garvagh.

##### **Did the protests disrupt church life?**

- Yes- Parish services.
- Yes – Boys Brigade.

##### **Protestant only – were any of your congregation involved?**

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<sup>29</sup> *An Phoblacht* (31 March 2013) reported the incident as a stone being thrown, but an interview with the victim’s husband (30 10 13) has established that it was a football.

<sup>30</sup> Focus Group, TBF Thompson Centre 11 October 2013

- Yes – I engaged in dialogue after the protests – I am keen to avoid a repetition. This led to this piece of CRC sponsored research.

**Do you know any victims of the protests ?**

- Yes- they said things like “here we go again ...Protestants protesting”.
- Yes – business folk and traders complained about loss of business.

**Do you consider it the role of churches to be involved?**

- Yes, we need to model Christ.
- By our leadership get people together.
- It is regrettable that the other [Presbyterian] clergy in the town have chosen not to be involved.

**The women’s’ view.**

The Community Foundation has facilitated a cross community Garvagh Womens Network.

This was the first group discussion that they had ever had about a named contentious subject.<sup>31</sup>

**Kerbs and flags.**

- The UDA flags fly at the entrance to my estate all year around.
- Some towns like Limavady have a flags forum- it would be good to have one in Coleraine [council area] and agree when flags go up and down.
- Painted kerbs make the town look tacky and cheap.

**The flags Issue.**

- I lived in England – on our townhalls the flag does not fly every day.
- Could the Union flag and Tricolour not both fly?
- No- the Republic has no sovereignty.
- The compromise of designated days seems fair.

**The impact of the flags protest.**

- I had to walk through them with my children- it was scary.
- It disrupted our lives and work on a Friday night.
- I was sent home from work – no trade.
- It achieved nothing.

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<sup>31</sup> Glendinning Consultants would wish to record their gratitude to Karen Eybin. Community Foundation Garvagh, for facilitating and hosting this focus group.

## Moving on – reconciliation

- St Paul's [Church of Ireland] is to be commended- are the other[Presbyterian] churches not involved?
- We are all Garvagh based but would love more engagement with women from Ringsend/Ballerin and Glenullin.

## Councillors

The consultants contacted the elected representatives who are closely connected with Garvagh district.

- Rosin Loftus SDLP (08 10 13)
- Ciaran Archibald Sinn Fein (09 10 13)
- Adrian McQuillian MLA DUP
- Richard Holmes Ulster Unionist. (31 10 13)

Only Adrian McQuillian declined to give an interview. All councillors were asked the same questions.

### 1. Does Coleraine Borough Council have a flag policy?

- The Council [Coleraine] does not have a flags policy. The union flag flies at the main council office and the depot. (SDLP)
- Although I personally feel quite strongly about the flying of flags, I would not have the backing within the Council to change current policy. Given the Haas talks are about to address these issues there is no benefit in raising the issue at present and it would only antagonistic to do so. However I do think the council should come into line with the policy at Stormont and that has been adopted by Belfast City Council. (SF).
- The Union flag has always historically flown on Council buildings . I am not aware of any policy. (UUP).

### 2 How do you feel about the flying of the flag from Belfast City Hall?

- I support the democratic decision of the councillors. (SDLP).
- I do not see how there logically can be an issue! It was a democratic vote and the policy is in line with what happens in the rest of the United Kingdom, how can Unionists have an issue with that? (SF).
- On a personal note, I would like to see it [the Union flag] fly all the time as the capital of Northern Ireland but accepting the democratic will, then flying on the specified days as happens in many other parts of the UK is acceptable. I think the lesson in all this is the need to get out and vote if you want to influence what happens in your town or city. (UUP).

### 3 Is there a history of sectarian tension in Garvagh?

- There is a long history of sectarian harassment directed towards Catholics in Garvagh. I have a list of complaints at the office. (SF).
- Yes, over the years a constant referral of things like broken windows, verbal abuse and flags Catholic owned business or kerb stones painted outside Catholic homes. Bands playing outside Catholic homes and business on the eleventh night. Kids intimidated when down the [Garvagh] town in a sports [GAA] top. (SDLP).
- In terms of community relations in Garvagh, and again on a personal note that there are troubles within the town which are reflected throughout NI society at large with some members feeling the need to mark out territories against what they perceive to be the other side. As someone involved within NI politics, I want to do everything possible to help our society advance to a situation where it is no longer deemed necessary for anyone to mark out territories. I believe we will have to do this over the longer term and start with young children and help them to understand the history and culture of the various parts of our society. (UUP).

#### 4. Specific incidents during the flags protest?

\* Yes, cars having to make detours, verbal sectarian abuse and a ball thrown at a car. (SF).

\* yes- I have to say complaints about traffic diversion. (SDLP)

\* I am aware of specific incidents arising from the flag protests and also the impact on traders in a small town such as Garvagh. (UUP).

#### 5. Where these incidents reported to PSNI?

\* Yes, complaints were raised with the community sergeant. (SDLP)

\* Yes, but unless the individual makes the complaint, no action is taken. (SF)

#### 6. Are you aware of any impact to Garvagh traders during the protest?

\* Yes- Garvagh traders lost business – pubs, cafes, takeaways, petrol stations and supermarkets. (SF).

\* None came to complain- but I knew they were hurting. (SDLP).

\* The last thing Garvagh needs is for any more shops to be vacated due to the economic downturn or other factors. (UUP).

#### 7. Do projects like this – where people talk about a named subject- help the process of reconciliation ?

- It can do no harm. What happens in Kilrea is linked to Garvagh. For example flag flying seems to be a mirror image. An agreed protocol or forum would be desirable.(SDLP).

- Talking is the only way to resolve these issues – keep talking to the people involved! (SF).
- Yes. We need to talk and engage with others. (UUP)

The Loyalist (flag protestors) view.<sup>32</sup>

#### **How did you get involved with the flag protests [in Garvagh]?**

- We saw the news from [Belfast] City Hall, and got texts and tweets from friends. We knew things would be happening in Ballymena, Carrick, Broughshane and Ballymoney. Garvagh was not going to be left out.

#### **Did you [the protestors] know each other?**

- It's a small town – we went to the same schools, youth clubs, and [loyalist] bands. We knew all the protestors were true blue [loyalists].

#### **What did you hope to achieve?**

- Maximum disruption. Draw a line in the sand and show the Sinn Fein scum that Garvagh loyalists were not going to take it lying down.

#### **How did the decision by Belfast City Council to fly the flag on designate days affect you?**

- It was an attack on our British Sovereignty. If Catholics don't want to live under the Union Jack they should move to the Free State. Our culture and our Britishness is under attack.

#### **Why did you change to white line protests?**

- I did not want to change to white line, but the police seemed happier with it.

#### **Why did the protests stop?**

- The police came out and warned us that we would be charged.

#### **What sort of project would you like to see to engage young Garvagh loyalists?**

- Garvagh is a Protestant town. We need to build unity. I go through Catholic towns in Tyrone and see murals and IRA memorials. I want a formal flag pole with a single big Union flag in Garvagh.<sup>33</sup> I was behind the banners on the lamp posts [CRUN single identity project] Here in Garvagh we paint Lambeg drums it would be good to teach Lambeg drumming and have drumming contests in the town.

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<sup>32</sup> Preliminary meeting notes- 04 September 2013 , St Paul's parish hall Garvagh.

<sup>33</sup> This demand is remarkably similar to the official submission to Haass by Sinn Fein 18 November 2013

## Would you consider any form of cross community encounter?

- No way ! They[the Catholics] have their culture, we have ours.

Five clear observations emerged from the meeting and subsequent observations.

- First, these were young men in their twenties.<sup>34</sup> A new generation who had come of age after the ceasefires and GFA. They are also the generation nurtured by the cyber community. The protests were innovatively animated by social network sites. Paradoxically whilst the protestors were hooded and masked on the street, their social media personas were in stark contrast with candid images and overtly voting their “like” for GUL Facebook page.
- Throughout the interview the young loyalists conveyed the sense of young men who believe that their hour had finally come. They were no longer ceasefire volunteers who has missed the war and paraded around on the strength of other men’s glory. It was as if they sensed that their generation had come of age, and had a date with destiny. One got a sense that they had something to prove. An obligation to be “ultra staunch” or “super Prods” and the flag protest gave them a chance to be blooded and win their stripes.
- Thirdly, it is clear that the ‘Blood and Thunder’ fraternities provided both the leadership and muscle for the protests. One fraternity in particular has close connections with an obscure loyalist paramilitary group.<sup>35</sup> Another group has skilfully exploited the protest to network, recruit and confirm their role as crucial in the **active** defence of the Unionist status quo.<sup>36</sup>
- It is also clear that the protest rallied the support many unaffiliated bands and individuals. They are consumed by a naïve desire to see the PUL community united against Irish republicanism. There is no evidence of a coherent structure but rather a loose affiliation of groups connected by a discrete online community.<sup>37</sup>
- Disturbingly the young loyalists have no personal trauma or any memory of war weariness from the Troubles. They see no purpose in ‘conflict transformation’ as their cultural identity is built on a glorification of sectarian conflict, and they reject democratic politics as “it did not stop the flag from

<sup>34</sup> Young women were prominent in the protests, but the Garvagh leadership was male.

<sup>35</sup> The group may well have its origins in what was originally styled the Orange Volunteers, see Brian Kennaway *The Orange Order; A tradition betrayed*, (London, 2006),pp.56-60.

<sup>36</sup> One commentator has argued that the PSNI encouraged an illegal organisation to commandeer the protest thus creating a leadership they could do business with. Newton Emerson, *Irish News*, (19 December 2013).

<sup>37</sup> [www.ulsterpeoplesforum.co.uk](http://www.ulsterpeoplesforum.co.uk) and

being ripped down”. They also see the flag issue as “worth more than lives, never mind a mere economy.”<sup>38</sup>

It is abundantly clear from the meetings with this new generation of loyalists, that after a year when they were constantly reaffirmed and reassured in their sense of Britishness by the mainstream Unionist parties, they now feel abandoned and no longer trust their politicians or indeed the democratic process.<sup>39</sup> Ominously the commemoration of the 1912 Ulster Covenant celebrated a tradition of ignoring democracy and imposing one’s will by physical force.

## The Protestant View

### ***“They shouldn’t have taken the flag down!”***

It was 19 December 2012. The *Irish News* carried an apocalyptic front page Ian Knox cartoon of Belfast being dragged back to the worst days of the Troubles. A mature middle class Presbyterian women spied the newspaper and let vent to her indignation.<sup>40</sup>

“Well – they shouldn’t have taken the flag down! ”

When pressed she conceded that while she would never join the protests herself, she harboured a strong measure of empathy with the flag protestors, both in Garvagh and Belfast. Her stance betrayed evidence of two distinct symptoms. First she clearly saw the democratic decision by Belfast City Council as a major infringement on her identity and Britishness. To her it was a simplistically single transferrable argument that tapped into her collective tribal memory of key words and historic reference points making her vulnerable to the political dog whistles of ethnic entrepreneurs.<sup>41</sup> Secondly, she reduced the event to a crude argument of cause and effect. The Union flag had been taken down, so it naturally followed that there could only be violent protests in the streets. Like switching on the café’s electric kettle, it was a natural outcome to have boiling water.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Jonny Byrne, *Flags and protest: Exploring the views, perceptions and expressions of people directly and indirectly affected by the flags protest.* (Intercomm, December 2013), pp.26-27.

<sup>40</sup> Cornerstone coffee shop, Garvagh 12 December 2012

<sup>41</sup> Roger Macginty, <http://rogermacginty.com/2013/15>, *Dog Whistle Politics – a wonderful YouTube example.*

<sup>42</sup> Interestingly Republican apologists once used a similar logic to defend IRA violence. “The British Army are occupying the Six Counties, hence we have war.”

## Wider Loyalist grievances ?

Writing in the *Sunday Times*, columnist Newton Emerson made the following observation:

The flag row has churned up a list of loyalist grievances including restrictions on Orange parades, the pursuit of “one sided inquiries” into murders such as that of Pat Finucan, and the general erosion of “British identity”, made all the more fraught by last week’s census results [2011] showing Protestants falling below 50% of the population. This is all seen as zero-sum and do or die, expressed in terms of “concessions” [to Catholic Nationalist community], without any articulate expression of how loyalists might respond without blocking the road and waving placards. The age old cry has gone up that “them ones gets everything and we get nothing”.<sup>43</sup>

Emerson goes on to argue that the Protestant communities fail to appreciate that the peace process involved regular concessions by the Republican movement on issues such as decommissioning, disbandment, criminality and an acceptance of policing and *de jure* British authority/administration in Northern Ireland.

He also identifies that the greatest cliché of loyalist disaffection is that their communities need real leadership. Can this mean, he argues, that the loyalist political project has failed and with nothing but militancy to take its place, the Protestant people must be led away from the sectarian negativity that is loyalism ?<sup>44</sup>

## Evidence of a mellowing in Protestant view. Group session 18 Nov 2013

### What are your memories of community relations when growing up in Garvagh?

- No memories of flags or kerb stones, but I remember the control zone with the oil drums.
- Yes, the kerbs were red white and blue when I was growing up – I was unaware of it until friends from university pointed it out.
- I remember the crazy eleventh night parades- we stayed away.
- I can remember two school busses going to Coleraine – one Protestant, the other Catholic. Any Catholic on our bus got a hard time.

### The flag protest in Garvagh – did it surprise you?

- Not really. The Garvagh loyalists are well organised through the bands.

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<sup>43</sup> Newton Emerson, “Flag up principle of crime and punishment to loyalists”, *The Sunday Times*, (Irish edition, 16 December, 2012), p.22.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

- The numbers on protest was surprising.

**Did you have any encounters with the protestors?**

- Yes, one night there was a meeting in Main Street [Presbyterian] . I had to walk through the masked hooded men. It was scary.

**Did you have any empathy with the protestors over the flag issue?**

- None – any sympathy I had evaporated with the violence.
- No- they don't represent me.

**What's the future for cross community relations in Garvagh?**

- The churches need to set the example.
- We need to show Christian compassion to the Bradleys [family who were attacked].
- I remember when the only band parade in Garvagh was the cancer research – now there about a dozen loyalist parades over the summer.<sup>45</sup>

**Would you like to meet Catholics and discuss how we improve community relations?**

- Yes! That would be useful.
- It would need some structure or facilitation.
- It would also be good not just to talk, but do things together as a community.

**What did the Flags Protest achieve?**

Four interesting perspectives here:

- It failed to restore the flag [to City Hall 365 days]. The issue of flags, the past and parades are all related and will be for Mr Haass to decide. (Unionist).
- It was useful exercise in mobilising loyalism. If we can generate that level of protest over a flag, what could we not do over a major issue like sovereignty? (Loyalist).
- It has put community relations in Garvagh back thirty years. (Garvagh Catholic).

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<sup>45</sup> The loyalist band parade is a phenomenon of the Troubles. The Parades Commission website records an average of 18 parades in Garvagh. 10-12 of these would be "loyalist band /loyal orders.

- The protest failed and it was a PR disaster for Northern Ireland in general and Belfast in particular.. (Garvagh Protestant)

## Monday 4 November 2013 – Sectarian attack in Garvagh

We had hoped to write this report in the past tense, but on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2013, the arson attack on a Catholic home has made this a clear and present account of sectarianism in Garvagh. See *Diocese Press Release*.

We have outlined the factual history of the town and the Troubles. How then do we explain the lingering bitterness and latent capacity for violence?

### Making sense of sectarianism in Garvagh.

In Part 1 of this report, we noted that the 2011 Census recorded that for the first time since *the* Partition of Ireland, Protestants are no longer an outright majority in Garvagh ward. In this respect it may be significant that with a “hung electoral profile”<sup>46</sup>, demographically Garvagh could be described as a unique microcosm of Northern Ireland. This “loss” of dominant majority status has a yet to be researched impact on the Protestant psychic, but may well resurrect the 1912 precedent of ignoring the sovereign will of Westminster parliament and resisting democratic change “by all necessary means”.<sup>47</sup> In this scenario, unionism and democracy becomes an oxymoron, and a new generation takes to the streets to prove that will ***not be the generation to fail Ulster***.<sup>48</sup>

It is also possible to argue that the abortive failure of the flags protest to restore the Union flag to City Hall may result in young loyalists turning on the “enemy within”. Catholics whose physical presence in what was once a staunch town is perceived as an encroachment and threat to Protestant hegemony. The corollary is mindless violence on soft targets such as the Bradley family whose only crime is to be living for three generations in the “contested space” which is now Main Street, Garvagh.

### Contested Space.

This term is particularly relevant to rural areas and differentiates the patterns and behaviours from the ‘interfaces’ that are evident in urban areas and where there is often a physical boundary/barrier. That may be a road/river or a ‘peace wall’. Contested Space was

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<sup>46</sup> Newton Emerson, *Irish News*, (December 13 2012).

<sup>47</sup> Ulster Solemn League and Covenant 1912.

<sup>48</sup> Banner carried by flag protestors. Observed at protest, Shankill Road, Belfast.( 19 December 2012).

first used in this context in the research document *Beyond Belfast*<sup>49</sup> Below is an extract from Chapter 6 of the report.

### **'Forms of Contested Spaces**

*Contested spaces will emerge or be created institutions where members of different communities live segregated lives and where persistent or recurrent tensions result in the patterns of segregation being manifested in some physical form or in the ways that people behave. Contested spaces thus assume a pattern of segregation but are more than just segregation. The research has identified a variety of forms that contested space may take in towns and villages across Northern Ireland. It may occur in three main forms:*

- *As a relationship between a population centre and its hinterland;*
- *Where tension or violence occurs in the central area of a town or village; and*
- *Where tension or violence occurs between residential areas.*

*Each form may display slightly different characteristics depending on the scale of the settlement, the nature of the interaction between communities and the transience or permanence of the division. From this we have identified eight broad types of contested space; these are broadly listed in an order which begins with those patterns that are more evident in rural areas and moves to those which are more evident in an urban environment. The exception is the border which is broadly rural but is also a diverse environment and is considered last:*

**1. Centre – Hinterland:** *A predominately single identity small rural settlement, surrounded by a hinterland with a large percentage of the 'other' community.*

**2. Neighbouring Villages:** *The area between two highly segregated but physically close villages or small communities.*

**3. Divided Village:** *A small rural settlement where tensions are worked out in the centre rather than between residential areas.*

**4. Contested Centre:** *Similar to the above but in larger towns which may have largely segregated central areas where tensions are played out on occasions.*

**5. Thoroughfare:** *A single identity community which members of the 'other' community pass through on a regular basis.*

**6. Neighbouring Estates:** *The boundary area between two single identity residential estates.*

**7. Protected Territories:** *Residential boundaries that are marked by a physical barrier, similar to those in Belfast.*

**8. The Border:** *The border has been identified as a specific type of contested space, but which has different characteristics in different areas.*

*It is also important to acknowledge that there are other forms of segregation or factors that influence segregation in rural areas of Northern Ireland. In particular these include elements of the physical landscape such as rivers, lakes, mountains and hills which provide barriers that may socially be perceived as 'natural' forms of segregation; or patterns of land ownership, particularly when land ownership is also associated with community background and which results in restrictions on willingness to sell land out of the community or to members of the 'other' community. Whilst it is acknowledged that an attachment to a particular area of land and intergenerational ownership and stewardship of land can be a positive factor*

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<sup>49</sup> Jarman, Bell and Harvey, *Beyond Belfast*, ( Community Relations Council , 2010).

*in rural communities, such assertions of 'natural' control may also be factors that further consolidate segregation. We consider that without the existence of an element of contestation over space, such features or activities do not on their own meet our criteria for being classified as contested space.'*

The nature of the issues in Garvagh raised in this report and in the history of the area and its surrounding hinterland can be identified in the Beyond Belfast Report. Garvagh can be seen as **1. Centre – Hinterland**: *A predominately single identity small rural settlement, surrounded by a hinterland with a large percentage of the 'other' community such as Glenullin and Ringsend/Bolerian.*

Also the designation of **5. Thoroughfare**: *A single identity community which members of the 'other' community pass through on a regular basis.* This relates to the A29 and the traffic through the village.

There is in addition the interconnection between Garvagh and Kilrea. They have opposite demographic profiles. It has been reported in this and other research that the events in one regarding parades/protests/flags has an impact in the other. Thus there could in addition be issue of **2. Neighbouring Villages**: *The area between two highly segregated but physically close villages or small communities.*

## **A Province wide problem.**

These studies reveal that the sectarian issues in Garvagh are not unique to the village, and the flag protest has highlighted a crisis in community relations across the country.

This sad situation prompts the key question. Why now, fifteen years after the Good Friday Agreement and almost two decades since the cease fires, should we have high residual levels of sectarianism and conflict in contested space like Garvagh? It is a matter of record that after the resumption of devolution in May 2007, the Northern Ireland Executive initiated the development of a new strategy on community relations. On 27 July 2010, the OFMDFM launched the *Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration*. However when this policy was subject to academic analysis by Professor Jennifer Todd, she revealed some clear conceptual shifts away from the previous policies designed to improve community relations in Northern Ireland.

**Cohesion jettisons the goal of reconciliation....**The community relations task [now] focuses upon creating shared and safe spaces, through local community involvement, and encouraging 'mutual accommodation'. **While these admirable goals, they fail to harness all the good will, positive potential and cultural energy in the society.** It is far from clear that a government goal of 'mutual accommodation' is enough to **hold off the dangers of re-sectarianisation especially among the young.**<sup>50</sup>

The young Protestants of Garvagh have clearly experienced re-sectarianisation.

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<sup>50</sup> Jennifer Todd, Joseph Ruane, Mark Dunne, *From 'A Shared Future' to Cohesion, Sharing and Integration': An analysis of Northern Ireland's Policy Framework Documents.* (Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, October 2010), p.3).

It was the conclusion of Professor Todd *et al* that the official government policy could fail to develop an adequate strategy for intervention, pander to a reification of tribal cultural identities and significantly jettison the crucial goals of 'encouraging shared neighbourhoods, tackling the multiple social issues, and thus entrenching community separation, exclusion and hate.'<sup>51</sup>

Any initiatives at local level in Garvagh will be of limited success without a root and branch change in community relations policy that restores the key concept of reconciliation, ceases to lump individuals in tribal camps, ceases to feed the sectarian tumor of single identity and a promotes a proactive strategy of intervention to undermine sectarianism.

## Options to improve community relations and challenge sectarianism

- Identifying another village area such as Kilrea with similar issues and designation of *contested* space and carrying out exchange so that both can learn from each other. Researching possible joint work between groups in Garvagh and Kilrea to:
- Develop a cross community forum for dialogue to identify areas of tension or possible conflict, **and** engage in joint activities such as cultural, economic and social.

**In all the focus groups – with the qualification of the young loyalists- there was enthusiasm for such a group, not only to host difficult conversations about named subjects, but to be proactive in reconciliation. However, it should be noted that the Garvagh United Loyalists are clearly not yet ready or willing to engage in any form of cross community dialogue. One cannot fast track reconciliation, but it does need to start.**

To the process of reconciliation we would add the caveat that “good business is good for community relations and good community relations is good for business”.<sup>52</sup>

- Both Catholic and Protestant traders supported the establishment of a “*Garvagh and District Chamber of Commerce*”.
- This would not be a time wasting talking shop, but seek the assistance of Coleraine Borough Council to promote a positive image for Garvagh.
- Lessons could be gleaned from villages like Crossmaglen who have done much to address the issue of negative image.

## The Churches

- Encouragement must be given to all Protestant churches in Garvagh to help them address the poor relations with their Catholic neighbours, and see such Christian attributes as part of their active ministry.

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* p.4.

<sup>52</sup> Will Glendinning – Garvagh Parish Church, research paper feed back (28 November 2013).

- Denominations consider a dedicated programme for good relations and tackling sectarianism.

Security and policing.

- Custodial sentences for sectarian hate crimes and improved CCTV now that Garvagh has lost its police station.

### **Youth**

- A joined up policy of intervention to tackle the culture of sectarianism. It is encouraging that “YEAR”- a multi agency five year programme has just been launched in the Borough. Potential twinning with Kilrea could be explored. A project such as the Messines Peace Park may be appropriate.

**Politics.**

**“It falls on unionist representatives to explain [to their people] that the world has changed , but not ended, once unionists have admitted this to themselves”.<sup>53</sup>**

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<sup>53</sup> Newton Emerson, *The Sunday Times*, (16 December 2012).











# SECTION 4



## 4.0 Summary

In light of Brexit and the challenges it poses for all sides in Ireland, the words of Attorney General Rory Brady (2002-2007) in the foreword to now High Court Justice Richard Humphreys' book 'Countdown to Unity' have never been more relevant.

"It is now for the political world to address when and how it will embrace those challenges and induce that change"<sup>250</sup>

"Unity may have been redefined by the new Articles 2 & 3 of the Constitution but it has remained as a constitutional imperative (obligation). The guarantee that violence will not be used to effect constitutional change is merely one commitment. In parallel to that and of equal importance is the duty to give effect to the firm will of the Irish Nation 'to unite all the people who share the territory of the Island of Ireland'<sup>251</sup>

'Countdown to Unity' identifies how the objective of Unity might be put in place through legal and constitutional measures. This report will highlight briefly those legal, legislative and constitutional measures that can be taken to strengthen the case for unity as outlined by Humphreys.

Up until the Brexit vote on 23 June 2016 the concept of a United Ireland as outlined in Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution for many would seem a distant aspiration. Brexit means that the best future for the citizens of Northern Ireland could well be remaining in the European Union in a reunified Ireland. This option must be explored and examined.

The challenge now is to lay out how to achieve the constitutional obligation of a united Ireland.

As John Bradley in his paper 'Toward an All Island Economy' presented at Queens University Belfast in 2014 pointed out, "the extreme importance of strategic economic planning .....policy errors or policy neglect seldom goes unpunished".<sup>252</sup> As this is a truism of economic planning it is also critically important when it comes to the issue of planning for unification. The UN human development

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<sup>250</sup> Richard Humphreys, Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.Xiii.

<sup>251</sup> Richard Humphreys, Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.X

<sup>252</sup> John Bradley, 'Towards an All-Island Economy', (2016) < [http://www.irish-association.org/papers/john\\_bradley.asp](http://www.irish-association.org/papers/john_bradley.asp)> accessed 2 February 2017.

index ranks the Republic of Ireland as 8th in the world and ranks Northern Ireland at 44th.

However, aside from the New Ireland Forum, the Oireachtas Library and Research service in Leinster House could not find any current or historic reports produced by a parliamentary committee on how the state should achieve its main aim of a united Ireland.

As is pointed out in ‘Countdown to Unity’ published in 2009, seven years prior to the Brexit vote, Justice Humphreys stated there were a number of reasons why a debate and a policy are appropriate at this time.

In this section we look at High Court Justice Humphreys’ reasons why, other than Brexit, the issue of unification should be looked at.

Firstly, the radically different context for the discussion on unity which exists now compared to any time over the last nine decades since partition. Secondly, the case for unity is now actively being made, with support for a United Ireland by 79 per cent in the South, along with, as Humphreys, states “increasing over all vote for the two nationalist parties in Northern Ireland”,<sup>253</sup> demonstrated by the Assembly results of 3 March 2017. Finally, as Justice Humphreys states himself:

“but in the end perhaps most compelling, reason for an examination of the implications of unity is the fact that the constitution itself, in article 3, inserted pursuant to the Good Friday Agreement, refers to unity as the ‘firm will of the Irish Nation’”.<sup>254</sup>

Specially commissioned research carried out by the Oireachtas Library and Research Service for this report outlines the positions of all the main political parties on the Island, North and South, on the issue of unification. It is republished within this section in full. Professor Sean D. McGraw of Notre Dame University in his submission for the Joint Committees Report outlines his research of Irish Parliamentarians attitudes towards a united Ireland.

Attorney General Brady states in the Foreword to High Court Justice Humphreys’ book ‘Countdown to Unity’ that “While consent is a fundamental characteristic of change, Dr Humphreys makes it plain that it cannot be an excuse for political inertia”<sup>255</sup>. High Court Justice Humphreys discusses the issue of political status-quoism due to the concern

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<sup>253</sup> Richard Humphreys, Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.2.

<sup>254</sup> Richard Humphreys, Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.X.

<sup>255</sup> Richard Humphreys, Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.X.

that loyalist paramilitaries could be provoked and attempt to subvert the pursuit of the aim of the Irish people to peacefully achieve a united Ireland as provided for in the Good Friday Agreement. Senator Daly as rapporteur of this report requested White House, National Security Council, Senior Policy Advisor on counter terrorism in President Obama's administration, and the first US diplomat focused on countering violent extremism policy at the State Department Michael R. Ortiz to give a submission on how the threat of future loyalist paramilitary violence attempting to subvert a referendum and unification could be addressed. Anne Cadwallader of the Pat Finucane Center and author of 'Lethal Allies: British Collusion in Ireland' outlines the collusion of the past between the British Security forces and loyalist paramilitaries, and she makes recommendations on how such collusion could be prevented in the future as Ireland pursues unification.

Kevin Meagher, an advisor to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Shaun Woodward 2007-09, outlines in a submission to the Committee his view on the position that the British Government should adopt towards the future of Northern Ireland.

Expert in German unification, Professor Christian Tomuschat from Berlin University, made a submission to the Committee report. The United Nations report on the on-going progress in Cyprus reunification is also published in full. Professor Marcus Noland, former Senior Economist at the Council of Economic Advisers in the Executive Office of the President of the United States, is also a specialist on the issue of Korean unification and outlines some of the lessons for Ireland.

High Court Justice Humphreys in his book 'Countdown to Unity' states that "there is no one single pathway to unity – rather there are alternative, but perhaps related roadmaps to reunification"<sup>256</sup>

In this section the options by Justice Humphreys are outlined. These include Unitary State, Federal/Confederal, United Ireland with continuation of Northern Assembly under the Good Friday Agreement, Joint Authority, Joint Sovereignty, Independent Northern Ireland, Repartition, and Repatriation.

'Irish Man of the 20th Century' T K Whittaker stated in November 1968 in a 'Note on North-South Border Policy' the long-term nature of achieving a United Ireland:

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<sup>256</sup> Richard Humphreys, Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.205.

**‘We were, therefore, left with only one choice, a policy of seeking unity in Ireland between Irishmen. Of its nature this is a long-term policy, requiring patience, understanding and forbearance and resolute resistance to emotionalism and opportunism. It is not the less patriotic for that’**

**T K Whittaker**

‘Note on North-South Border Policy’

T. K. Whittaker ‘s transcript memorandum titled “A note on North South Border Policy” November 1968 is in the online appendix in full

#### **4.1 Recommendations:**

The establishment of a New Ireland Forum 2 is recommended to set a pathway to achieve the peaceful reunification of Ireland.

Establish an international task force with experts in security so that plans to meet any risks may be devised and implemented.

Fears and concerns of the Unionist community need to be examined, understood and addressed comprehensively by all stakeholders in advance of any referendum.

The legacy issues in society outlined by Senator Frances Black and the inter-generational impact of the troubles in terms of mental health consequences and substance abuse needs to be addressed.



## 4.2 Uniting Ireland

At the time of publishing, High Court Justice Humphreys outlined a number of reasons as to why his book 'Countdown to Unity' was appropriate.

“The first such ground is the radically different context for the discussion on unity which exists now as compared to much of the period since 1921. Nationalist self- confidence and self-image are difficult concepts to define, let alone measure. What appears to be significant social and cultural momentum for nationalism/ republicanism is driven by a number of factors and sign posted by a number of significant landmark anniversaries”<sup>257</sup>

At the time of writing Humphreys was referring to the 90th anniversary of the 1916 Rising. However the recent 100th anniversary of the Rising, and more importantly the 100th Anniversary of partition in 2020, and the establishment of the Northern Ireland parliament are more significant anniversaries for the nationalist community.

“Other social and economic developments feed into a growing nationalist self- assurance. Chief among these is the economic growth of the past ten years. Relevant also is Ireland’s increased prestige on the international stage”<sup>258</sup> The UN Human Development Index analysis by the Oireachtas Library and Research service ranks the Republic of Ireland as 8th in the world alongside Germany, Canada and the United States. In Northern Ireland’s case, the analysis places it 44th in the world. The full report is in the online appendix of this section.

The next quote by Humphreys was written 7 years prior to the Brexit vote, a referendum in the UK dominated by issues of immigration and at times racism. This quote was written 6 years before the vote in Ireland on the marriage equality referendum.

“Prior to the 1990s discussion about possible Irish Unity was dominated by the economic implications of uniting a part of a prosperous and liberal United Kingdom with an economically and, it was said, socially backward South. Neither of these objections, if they can be so

<sup>257</sup> Richard Humphreys, Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.2.

<sup>258</sup> Richard Humphreys, Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.2.

described, have the same automatic force as they may have had prior to the recent years, to put it mildly.”<sup>259</sup>

Justice Humphreys states “The second major development which justifies a study such as the present one is the fact that the case for Unity is now actively being made”.<sup>260</sup>

This is also dealt with later in this section regarding political parties’ positions on a united Ireland. Taoiseach Enda Kenny at the McGill Summer School in July 2016 said “The EU needs to prepare for a United Ireland”. Green Party leader, Eamon Ryan TD, on 22 November 2016 in a Dáil debate on the issue of Brexit and Northern Ireland stated that:

“It behoves us to treat that possibility seriously and to be open, honest and clear with each other on the costs and opportunities in moving towards a united Ireland”<sup>261</sup>

Eamon Ryan TD’s comments in relation to the possibility of a united Ireland are just some of many raised in recent debate particularly around Brexit.

Fianna Fáil, Sinn Féin and the SDLP have all issued position papers on the issue of Irish Unity.

In his introduction to his book High Court Justice Humphreys quoted a number of prominent figures including Sir Kenneth Bloomfield to the effect that unity is not unthinkable in principal, which produced a number of interesting responses, including David Adams in the Irish Times:

“The previously unimaginable may not end there.”<sup>262</sup>

Justice Humphreys also quoted one of the architects of the Peace Process Dr Martin Mansergh:

“since debate about a united Ireland will continue, it may be useful to set out the principals that would require to be satisfied for any serious negotiations”<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Richard Humphreys, Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.2,3.

<sup>260</sup> Richard Humphreys, Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.3

<sup>261</sup> Deputy Eamon Ryan, Dáil Éireann ( November 22 2016) < <http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/debates%20authoring/debateswebpack.nsf/takes/Dáil2016112200018?opendocument>> accessed 2 February 2017.

<sup>262</sup> David Adams, ‘Irish Unity Cannot Be Ruled Out’ The Irish Times (Dublin, 16 September 2007) Available at. [http:// www.irishtimes.com/opinion/irish-unity-cannot-be-ruled-out-1.961685](http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/irish-unity-cannot-be-ruled-out-1.961685)

<sup>263</sup> Richard Humphreys, Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification (Irish Academic Press,

Mansergh went on to say:

“What are the advantages of a united Ireland? Essentially, to give the people of northern Ireland, a far more direct and influential say in their destiny, visible representation at international level, the benefits of social partnership and full participation in what could be the most dynamic, knowledge based economy in Western Europe. They would have ownership of a richly varied and internationally recognized Irish cultural heritage.”<sup>264</sup>

Mansergh’s note on “Ireland, and the UK from 1916 to Brexit, the problem of consent” is published in full in the online appendix.

Justice Humphreys outlined the polling results at the time of publication in favour of a united Ireland.

“An opinion poll conducted on behalf of the British Council demonstrated overwhelming support for a united Ireland among the respondents in the South. The survey showed that 68% were in favour with 10% opposed and 22% described as ‘do not know’.”<sup>265</sup>

RTE/ BBC Northern Ireland commissioned a survey by Behaviour and Attitudes on both sides of the border in October 2015 showing a large majority in the Republic, 79 percent saying yes when asked if they “would like to see a United Ireland in my life time”.<sup>266</sup> Only 14 per cent said “No” to the same question. The full RTE/BBC poll section ‘Attitudes to and future status of Northern Ireland’ is included in the online appendix of this section

A Red C Opinion Poll in July 2016 showed similar support for a united Ireland with 69 per cent in favour.<sup>267</sup> The full ‘Support for a United Ireland’ section of the poll has been included in the online appendix of this section. In relation to polling in Northern Ireland Mary Holland, writing in the Irish Times in 2001, stated that “It has been pointed out that opinion polls in Northern Ireland have a notoriously poor record”.<sup>268</sup>

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Dublin 2009 ) p.3.

<sup>264</sup> Richard Humphreys, Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.3.

<sup>265</sup> Richard Humphreys, Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.3.

<sup>266</sup> Red C Opinion Poll, (July 2016) <http://www.redcresearch.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Paddy-Power-29th-July-2016-Poll-Report.pdf>.

<sup>267</sup> RTE/ BBC Poll, Attitudes to and future status of Northern Ireland, October 2015

<sup>268</sup> Mary Holland, Irish Times, 2001.

The Northern Ireland Census has shown that less than 50 per cent of the population have described themselves as British. A new and growing third identification worthy of further exploration is for a people in Northern Ireland to identify themselves as ‘Northern Irish’. ‘Northern Ireland Assembly: Understanding the Northern Irish Identity’ is included in the online appendix of this section. Humphreys continues by pointing out:

“The political context is a gradually but steadily increasing over all vote for the two nationalist parties in Northern Ireland. The fact that Sinn Féin has overtaken the SDLP in terms of the share of the vote perhaps illustrates an increasing radicalisation of the Northern Irish nationalist electorate.”<sup>269</sup>

The Northern Ireland Assembly elections results of 3 March 2017, where after 100 years since the establishment of the Northern State the amount of declared Nationalist members of the Assembly elected nearly equaled the number of Unionist members, demonstrates the trend outlined by High Court Justice Humphreys.

While Brexit is now one of the most compelling economic reasons for the Government to look a fresh at the issue of unification, High Court Justice Humphreys at his time of writing made the compelling constitutional case.

“The Final, but in the end perhaps most compelling, reason for an examination of the implication of unity is the fact that the constitution itself, in article 3, inserted pursuant to the Good Friday Agreement, refers to unity as the ‘firm will of the Irish Nation’.”

In the light of such a declaration, it is reasonable Humphreys states

“to ask what measures Ireland is or could be taking to progress that firm will. Insofar as the article (Article 3 of the Constitution ) refers to the spirit of harmony and friendship and to the diversity of identities and traditions, it is reasonable to ask what legal measures might be envisaged now as to make those objectives into living realities as opposed to ceremonial aspirations.”<sup>270</sup>

“It is as well to bear in mind this major limitation of the value of any individual legal or constitutional measure in terms of the politics of Northern Ireland. While individual, legal and constitutional changes can seek to accommodate the rights, interests and concerns of different

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<sup>269</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.3.

<sup>270</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.4,5.

sections of the community, the fundamental constitutional objectives of each tradition can only be realised in an absolute sense within one state or the other.”<sup>271</sup> (i.e a United Ireland or a United Kingdom.)

‘Countdown to Unity’ identifies how the objective of unity might be put in place through legal and constitutional measures. This report will highlight briefly those legal, legislative and constitutional measures that can be taken to strengthen the case for unity as outlined by Humphreys

“Dr Humphreys has wisely recognised the need to engage in a timely audit of the change necessary to bring about a unification that achieves an island united in all the diversity of its identities and traditions.”<sup>272</sup>

High Court Justice Humphreys also in his book ‘Countdown to Unity’ examines if “the Good Friday Agreement can be contended to be a permanent feature of the Institutional landscape, and to represent a clear road map towards the implementation of a united Ireland, and in particular to set out the conditions under which that scenario might be achieved.”<sup>273</sup>

With protections for the equality of respect for both communities, we can look to arguments for unity that have the capacity to persuade as well as to protect the people of Northern Ireland”<sup>274</sup>.

### **4.3 Unionist view of United Ireland same as nationalist view of United Kingdom**

It might further be said that this state can make all the amendments to its law and constitution that it wishes but at the end of the day the unionist objection will still be there. That is undeniably the case for some if not most unionists, but that is an irremovable feature of the nature of the conflict in Northern Ireland. It is a precise mirror image of the situation under the current dispensation, whereby the United Kingdom can make all of the changes to its own law and that of Northern Ireland that it sees fit, including human rights for all and sundry, as well as further changes to the policing service and any other items on the nationalist/republican wish list, but at the end of the day the nationalist and republican objection to the United Kingdom will still be there.<sup>275</sup>

<sup>271</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.5.

<sup>272</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.Xii,Xiii.

<sup>273</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.6.

<sup>274</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.205.

<sup>275</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press,

#### 4.4 Political parties positions on the island of Ireland on unification

This section deals with the political parties' positions on the issue of unification, including those of parties in the South - Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and Labour - and those in the North - SDPL, Democratic Unionist Party, Ulster Unionist Party, Traditional Unionist Party and Alliance Party- and those in both - Sinn Fein, Greens and PBP - as is stated in their parties' aims and objectives.

**Fianna Fail-** "We reaffirm our traditional commitment to...seeking the unification of Ireland and her people through consent."

**Fine Gael-** Proposed as a principle 'unity by consent' in North-South relations – something now standard across parties but condemned at the time by all other parties.

**Sinn Féin-** Continue to campaign for an island-wide referendum on Irish unity - allow the people to have their say.

**Ulster Unionist Party-** With five years to go, we can confidently plan to celebrate Northern Ireland's centenary and do so within the context of its continuing membership of the United Kingdom.

**Democratic Unionist Party-** Our vision is to maintain and enhance Northern Ireland's constitutional position within the United Kingdom, achieving long-term political stability to deliver a peaceful and prosperous future for our people.

**Traditional Unionist Party-** Northern Ireland is and must remain an integral part of the United Kingdom, which needs to salvage its independence by exiting the EU:that is the TUV view.

**Social Democratic and Labour Party-** Ireland's political re-unification remains the biggest and the best idea around. It needs huge preparation. Big ideas deserve better than being reduced to a numbers game.

**Alliance-** Favour further devolution with a move towards a Federal UK.

**Labour-** “Yet I remain of the view that the long-term future of the people of this island would be better faced together.”

**Greens-** “The British-Irish Agreement, and the joint referenda which gave it effect, provided for the balanced constitutional change which the Greens have campaigned for since its foundation. We remain wholeheartedly in support of it. Human rights are for all.”

**People Before Profit-** “PBP is neither Orange nor Green. We are socialist.”

The principal of consent in relation to a united Ireland is a well established principal of the Good Friday Agreement to which the main political parties in the Republic subscribe, as do the main parties in Northern Ireland.

“The EU needs to prepare for a United Ireland” Taoiseach Enda  
Kenny July 2016

Niall O’Connor, the political correspondent of the Irish Independent, reporting from the McGill Summer school in July 2016 stated that:

“In a significant move, Mr Kenny called on the European Union to prepare for the prospect of Northern Ireland Seeking to join the Republic. The Fine Gael leader said a future border poll was now possible in light of the decision by Britain to leave the EU. And Mr Kenny even likened it to West Germany and East Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

"The discussion and negotiations that take place over the next period should take into account the possibility, however far out it might be, that the clause in the Good Friday Agreement might be triggered," he said, "in that if there is a clear evidence of a majority of people wishing to leave the UK and join the Republic, that should be catered for in the discussions.

"Because if that possibility were to happen, you would have Northern Ireland wishing to leave the United Kingdom, not being a member of the European Union and joining the Republic, which will be a member of the EU."

The Taoiseach made the remarks to reporters following his speech at the McGill Summer School in Glenties, Donegal.

"The discussion and negotiations that take place over the next period should take into account the possibility, however far out it might be, that the clause in the Good Friday Agreement might be triggered," he said, "in that if there is a clear evidence of a majority of people wishing to leave the UK and join the Republic, that should be catered for in the discussions.

"Because if that possibility were to happen, you would have Northern Ireland wishing to leave the United Kingdom, not being a member of the European Union and joining the Republic, which will be a member of the EU."

Taoiseach insists on united Ireland clause in any Brexit deal with UK.

Irish Times 23 February 2017 **THE IRISH TIMES**

### **Enda Kenny calls for Brexit deal to include united Ireland provision**

Enda Kenny has insisted Ireland's Brexit negotiating position will not be undermined by his looming departure as leader in the coming weeks.

And the Taoiseach said any Brexit deal should include language that would allow Northern Ireland to easily return to the EU in the event of an united Ireland.

Mr Kenny said the provisions that allowed East Germany to join West Germany and the EU "in a seamless fashion" after the fall of the Berlin wall offered a precedent.

He said that "in such future time, whenever that might be, were it (reunification) to occur, that the north of Ireland would have ease of access to join as a member of the European Union again . . . we want that language inserted into the negotiated treaty, the negotiated outcome, whenever that might occur."

Irish Independent 23 February 2017 **Irish Independent** 

The Taoiseach has insisted on a clause in the Brexit deal to allow Northern Ireland rejoin the European Union as part of a united Ireland.

After a summit with European Commission President Jean Claude Juncker, the Taoiseach said the Good Friday Agreement must be stitched into the outcome of talks on Britain leaving the bloc.

Referring to the fall of the Berlin Wall, he said the EU divorce deal must allow for Northern Ireland to "seamlessly" reunite with the Republic of Ireland if a majority votes for it.

"We want that to remain in such a position that the language of what is contained in the Good Friday Agreement will also be contained in the negotiations outcome," he said at a press conference in Brussels.

Taoiseach Enda Kenny, speaking in Brussels on the 2nd of March 2017 said,

“the Good Friday Agreement contains the opportunity to put in these negotiations language that has already been agreed in internationally binding agreement, that at some future time were that position to arise, that if the people by consent were to form a united Ireland that that could be a seamless transfer as happened in the case of East Germany and West Germany when the Berlin Wall came down.”

Green Party leader, Eamon Ryan TD on the 22 November 2016 in a Dáil debate on the issue of Brexit and Northern Ireland stated that:

“We need to look forward by a year and consider various different scenarios in terms of how things will unfold. However, when I do that, I see nothing but the worst possible news for the North, in particular. In terms of the effect of Brexit and the process, the North will be worst affected because its percentage of trade across the Border is far higher than anywhere else. It will be affected if any border is imposed. It will lose out if, as the UK Prime Minister said yesterday, the corporation tax is reduced to 15%. Any comparative advantage it thought it might have in a low-tax system to try to attract investment will be gone.” I see nothing in the negotiating process other than a very long five to ten year mess in terms of talk around trade agreements. One of our concerns is how a Northern economy will find it very difficult in that environment. “We need the Department of the Taoiseach and the Government to start doing scenario planning around what Brexit might mean and considering the possibility that it would lead to a change in constitutional arrangements. We might have to consider very seriously an all-island constitutional approach and a more united Ireland.” In order for us to have an informed debate on that issue, I ask the Department of the Taoiseach to start working out the cost implications and opportunities that will be available for the State. I know we are at the end of the constitutional process. It would first of all require a series of opinion polls to show that the people of the North are interested in such a process. The Secretary of State would have to sign up to the holding of a Northern referendum before we could have any referendum. It behoves us to treat that possibility seriously and to be open, honest and clear with each other on the costs and opportunities in moving towards a united Ireland. The alternative for the North under Brexit is looking increasingly grave.”<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Deputy Eamon Ryan, Dáil Éireann ( November 22 2016) < <http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/debates%20authoring/debateswebpack.nsf/takes/Dáil2016112200018?opendocument>> accessed 2 February 2017.

## FIANNA FÁIL

Fianna Fáil was the party in Government that introduced the 1937 Constitution with the original Article 2 and 3, and Fianna Fáil was the party in Government that introduced the referendum that amended these two articles which was endorsed by 94 per cent in a referendum. Fianna Fáil's Policy Paper on Foreign Affairs published in 2014 as part of the submission to the Governments review on Foreign Policy and External Relations states that the party "believe in the stable, peaceful and prosperous reunification of Ireland and its people".<sup>277</sup>

The submission also went on to state that

"Fianna Fáil supports the comprehensive engagement between all Parties and people in the north regarding the economic, social and political conditions necessary to create the correct circumstances under which the reunification of Ireland can be obtained."

Working through the Good Friday Agreement and the St Andrews Agreement with Britain as the co-guarantor of those agreements, Fianna Fáil believes it is imperative that there is active engagement with Britain as well as with our EU partners and the United States on working towards achieving the reunification of Ireland.<sup>278</sup>

The Issue of Constitutional Imperative as described by former Attorney General Rory Brady has also being raised by Fianna Fáil as a "duty to give effect to the firm will of the Irish nation"<sup>279</sup> as stated in Article 2 and 3 of the Constitution. Fianna Fáil has stated that "the Unity of the people of this Island in one state remains the aspiration of the majority of the Irish People and its is the duty of our government to work for it with real commitment".<sup>280</sup>

A research paper by the Oireachtas Library and Research Service in Leinster House November 2015 was commissioned with the Title of 'Political Parties position on

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<sup>277</sup> Fianna Fáil, Foreign Affairs Policy Paper (2015)  
<<https://www.scribd.com/document/262347124/Fianna-Fail-Foreign-Affairs-Policy-Paper#?>  
accessed 2 February 2017.

<sup>278</sup> Fianna Fáil, Foreign Affairs Policy Paper (2015)  
<<https://www.scribd.com/document/262347124/Fianna-Fail-Foreign-Affairs-Policy-Paper#?>  
accessed 2 February 2017.

<sup>279</sup> Richard Humphreys, Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.Xii.

<sup>280</sup> Fianna Fáil, Foreign Affairs Policy Paper (2015)  
<<https://www.scribd.com/document/262347124/Fianna-Fail-Foreign-Affairs-Policy-Paper#?>  
accessed 2 February 2017.

unification with Northern Ireland'. An updated version of this research paper which included an analysis of the positions of all the political parties on the island was published in February 2017 after the launch of all the political parties' manifestoes in the Assembly Elections in Northern Ireland. This paper is reproduced here in full.



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## 4.4.1 Political parties' position on unification with Northern Ireland

### Research Paper for Senator Mark Daly

This paper outlines the position of seven Republic of Ireland political parties regarding the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, as described in a previous paper (enquiry number 2015/2017 of November 2015) and updates developments in an Addendum.

This paper also addresses the position of eight Northern Ireland parties' position on this subject, in a new section.

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**Date: Friday, 17 February 2017**

**Enquiry Number: 2017/45**

**Library & Research Service central enquiry desks: Tel – 618 4701**

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## 1. Introduction

This paper looks at the policies of seven Republic of Ireland registered political parties—those of Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, Labour, Sinn Féin, Green Party, Anti-Austerity Alliance-People before Profit and Renua Ireland.

It also looks at the policies of eight Northern Ireland parties represented in the Northern Ireland Assembly before its dissolution in January 2017—those of Alliance Party, Democratic Unionist Party, Green Party NI, People Before Profit Alliance, Sinn Féin, Social Democratic and Labour Party, Traditional Unionist Voice and Ulster Unionist Party.

The policies of the established Republic of Ireland parties (FF, FG, Labour, SF, Green) regarding unification with Northern Ireland could be summarised as variations on a theme of “unity by consent”.

The positions of new party Renua Ireland and new political grouping Anti-Austerity Alliance-People before Profit (AAA-PBP) are harder to ascertain. As Renua Ireland is recently formed it seems not to have yet decided on the position on the constitutional status of Northern Ireland.

AAA-PBP does not have a joint website and no clear statement could be identified, although some of the constituent groups have been critical of the operation of the current peace process.

The positions of some of the eight parties represented in the Northern Ireland Assembly until its dissolution in January 2017 are more polarised.

Three parties state in their published documents that they favour union with Great Britain (DUP, TUV, UUP). Two parties state that they favour a united Ireland (Sinn Féin, SDLP).

The remaining three parties occupy different places on the spectrum. The Green Party in Northern Ireland subscribes to unity by consent and to the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. Alliance states that it favours devolution, with a move to a federal UK, and the development of the North-South Ministerial Council. The People Before Profit Alliance states that it is “neither Orange nor Green”.

## Unity by consent

Unity by consent is a central concept of the Northern Ireland Peace Agreement, also known as the Belfast or Good Friday Agreement, to which the parties subscribe. However, there are nuances in how each party approaches this policy, which are elaborated here.

### Box 1. Extract from The Northern Ireland Peace Agreement

The Agreement reached in the multi-party negotiations 10 April 1998

1. The participants endorse the commitment made by the British and Irish Governments that, in a new British-Irish Agreement replacing the Anglo-Irish Agreement, they will:

(i) recognise the legitimacy of whatever choice is freely exercised by a majority of the people of Northern Ireland with regard to its status, whether they prefer to continue to support the Union with Great Britain or a sovereign united Ireland;

(ii) recognise that it is for the people of the island of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts respectively and without external impediment, to exercise their right of self-determination on the basis of consent, freely and concurrently given, North and South, to bring about a united Ireland, if that is their wish, accepting that this right must be achieved and exercised with and subject to the agreement and consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland;

(iii) acknowledge that while a substantial section of the people in Northern Ireland share the legitimate wish of a majority of the people of the island of Ireland for a united Ireland, the present wish of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland, freely exercised and legitimate, is to maintain the Union and, accordingly, that Northern Ireland's status as part of the United Kingdom reflects and relies upon that wish; and that it would be wrong to make any change in the status of Northern Ireland save with the consent of a majority of its people;

(iv) affirm that if, in the future, the people of the island of Ireland exercise their right of self-determination on the basis set out in sections (i) and (ii) above to bring about a

united Ireland, it will be a binding obligation on both Governments to introduce and support in their respective Parliaments legislation to give effect to that wish;.....

.....

Accessed

at:[http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/attached\\_files/Pdf%20files/NIPeaceAgreement.pdf](http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/attached_files/Pdf%20files/NIPeaceAgreement.pdf)

## 2. Republic of Ireland parties

### ***Fine Gael***

Among the party's achievements listed on the FG website is that of proposing the principle of "unity by consent".<sup>1</sup>

#### **"The party's achievements**

Proposed as a principle 'unity by consent' in North-South relations – something now standard across parties but condemned at the time by all other parties.

**1969**-Fine Gael adopts a policy of Irish "unity by consent". The first party to do so, and highly controversial, it would later become the policy of all parties."

### ***Fianna Fáil***

In April 2015, Fianna Fáil published a foreign affairs policy paper outlining their key positions in the area of international affairs. This paper summarised the party's position on unification:

"We reaffirm our traditional commitment to...seeking the unification of Ireland and her people through consent."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Accessed at <http://www.finegael.ie/history-of-fg/>

<sup>2</sup> Fianna Fáil Foreign Affairs Policy Paper, 19 April 2015. (authored by Brendan Smith TD, Spokesperson on Foreign Affairs and Border Region Development).

The policy is described thus:

**“North/South and British-Irish Relations**

Our Position:

Fianna Fáil continues to seek to secure in peace and agreement the unity of Ireland and its people.

The Good Friday Agreement, which was overwhelmingly endorsed by the people on the island of Ireland, allows for the unity of Ireland with the consent of a majority of the people in both parts of this island. This is a goal Fianna Fáil will continue to pursue. ....

- Direct Involvement by Governments:

We believe that both the British and Irish Governments must continue their direct involvement in consolidating and building on the peace secured in Northern Ireland. The need to implement meaningful proposals to deal with the past and the outstanding elements of the Good Friday Agreement and subsequent agreements, the continuous threat from dissidents, and the challenges of inequality and poverty necessitate direct involvement from the national governments of both states.

- All-Ireland Economy:

The potential of the Good Friday Agreement can be enhanced further to maximise the opportunities presented through the development of the all-Ireland economy which would increase prosperity for citizens on both sides of the border. Cross-border infrastructure projects such as the N2/A5, the Narrow Water Bridge Project, the restoration of the Ulster Canal and Dublin-Belfast Railway upgrade are vital in this regard and should be pursued.

- Implement Fully the Good Friday Agreement:

All elements of the Good Friday Agreement must be implemented in full. As an internationally binding agreement both Governments and the Northern Executive must commit to passing a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland and introducing Acht na Gaeilge.

- North/South Bodies:

Fianna Fáil supports increasing the number of North-South competencies in areas where it is mutually beneficial to do so. Further co-operation in areas such as job creation, trade, educational services in Further and Higher Education, health service provision and policing should be examined.

- Fianna Fáil believes it is time to establish a Border Development Zone as a North-South body which would work to integrate infrastructure and public services in certain spheres such as health, broadband and other utilities.

- North-South Institute

Fianna Fáil calls for further co-operation in the area of education and research through a formal North/South research institute. Our Party will examine the idea of establishing a specific Institute/Department in a third level institution to deal exclusively with North/South developments. This 'Institute' would deal solely with driving the North/South agenda and produce research on the potential for further development in North-South cooperation.”

## **Labour Party**

“Protecting & enhancing peace in Northern Ireland” was identified in July 2014 as one of seven key priorities of the Labour Party in its Statement of Government Priorities 2014 – 2016<sup>3</sup>.

This document stated:

"We remain fully committed to the full implementation of all aspects of the Good Friday Agreement. We will work closely with the British Government to support the efforts of the political parties in Northern Ireland to reach agreement on the issues of parades, flags and dealing with the issues of the past.....

We will continue to develop the North-South institutions, with a particular emphasis on infrastructural development in the border region. We will also develop further proposals on North-South co-operation in health, tourism, and economic development."

The Labour leader set out Labour Party thinking on this issue in a speech by Joan Burton TD on 3 November 2015 in which she stated<sup>4</sup>:

“It is over 30 years since the New Ireland Forum met. We have come a long way since then.

The principle of consent remains paramount.

Yet I remain of the view that the long-term future of the people of this island would be better faced together.

And were that possible, it would not be on the basis of the domination of the one tradition over the other.

It would involve us nationalists recognising the essential British identity of unionists, and unionists perhaps embracing a greater sense of their own Irishness.

So, in the context of the 1916 commemorations, we should set ourselves the challenge of convening a new forum or body.

One that is separate to, but supportive of, the institutions of the Good Friday Agreement, specifically to discuss the island’s future<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Labour Statement of Government Priorities 2014 – 2016, 11 July 2014. Accessed at <http://www.labour.ie/policy/listing/14050994781694430.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Time for a discussion about building a new, agreed Ireland, 3 November 2015 at <http://www.labour.ie/press/2015/11/03/time-for-a-discussion-about-building-a-new-agreed/>

<sup>5</sup> This speech was delivered in the Dáil. Accessed at: <http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/debates%20authoring/debateswebpack.nsf/takes/dail2015110300033?opendocument>

## ***Sinn Féin***

According to its website, Sinn Féin is dedicated to the reunification of Ireland and an end to British jurisdiction in the north of Ireland. Sinn Féin states that it is seeking a new, agreed and united Ireland<sup>6</sup>.

Sinn Féin states that they would:

- “•Continue to campaign for an island-wide referendum on Irish unity - allow the people to have their say.
  
- Build upon the work of the all-Ireland Ministerial Council.
  
- Campaign for Northern representation in the Dáil – northern MPs should be automatically accorded membership of the Dáil with consultative and speaking rights.
  
- Extend voting rights for Presidential elections to people in the North and the Irish Diaspora.
  
- Develop the all-Ireland economy, including having a planned approach to economic development across the island of Ireland, one tax system and currency, integrating infrastructural development and creating a Border Economic Development Zone to harmonise trade and maximise returns for border businesses.
  
- Campaign for a Bill of Rights for all Citizens and an all-Ireland charter of fundamental rights.
  
- Promote the Irish language and culture.
  
- Equality proof legislation before it is produced.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.sinnfein.ie/a-republic-for-all-policy>

- Continue to advance a process of reconciliation.”

## **Green Party**

The Green Party has two Dáil deputies and a senator in the Oireachtas at present. It has councillors on the island of Ireland at local government level and one MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) in Northern Ireland, Steven Agnew MLA, leader of the Greens in Northern Ireland.

A reference to Northern Ireland could not be found in the list of policies of the Green Party in the Republic.<sup>7</sup>

However, the **Green Party in Northern Ireland** subscribes to unity by consent and to the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement<sup>8</sup>.

“The British-Irish Agreement, and the joint referenda which gave it effect, provided for the balanced constitutional change which the Greens have campaigned for since its foundation.

We remain wholeheartedly in support of it. Human rights are for all.”

In May 2011 Steven Agnew MLA, the leader of the Green Party in Northern Ireland, was reported as having affirmed support for the principle of unity by consent and for the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement<sup>9</sup>.

‘Mr Agnew said that the constitutional question was not one which divided the party.

"We have people in the Green Party who are unionists, we have people who are nationalists, we see no contradiction there," he said.

"It shouldn't divide our politics because it is a single issue and it certainly shouldn't decide our society.

"We need to move forward into a shared future, the issue of the constitutional question is enshrined in the Good Friday Agreement. The status of Northern Ireland will remain until the people of Northern Ireland decide otherwise." ‘

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<sup>7</sup> Green Party Political Reform Policy, October 2015. Accessed at <https://greenparty.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Green-Party-Political-Reform-Policy-20151.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Green Party of Northern Ireland manifesto for the Westminster elections 2010. Accessed at: <http://www.greenparty.org/www/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Westminster2010.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> 4 May 2011 BBC News section [Northern Ireland](http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-13277156). Green Party leader Steven Agnew reacts to leader debate. Accessed at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-13277156>

## ***Anti-Austerity Alliance-People before Profit***

This new political grouping was launched in October 2015. The AAA and the PbP each have their own website.

In advance of the General Election of 2016 Anti-Austerity Alliance – People Before Profit published a joint document *COMMON PRINCIPLES: Radical Alternatives & Real Equality, General Election 2016*<sup>10</sup>. However, no reference could be found therein to a policy on the constitutional status of Northern Ireland.

A joint website or a joint published policy on Northern Ireland could not be found. However, it may be the case that these joint policies have not yet been formulated.

In terms of the two constituent organisations making up the AAA-PbP, as noted each has its website, and each is composed of a number of constituent groups.

There are references to Northern Ireland, and/or the Good Friday agreement, on the websites of these various constituent groups (e.g. AAA, Socialist Party). Some of these references indicate opposition to the Good Friday agreement in the past, or are critical of the operation of the current peace process.<sup>11</sup>

However, as these reflect the position of the constituent organisations, and it is not known whether they reflect the current AAA-PbP position, these have not been outlined here.

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<sup>10</sup> Anti-Austerity Alliance – People Before Profit. *COMMON PRINCIPLES: Radical Alternatives & Real Equality, General Election 2016*. Accessed at [http://www.peoplebeforeprofit.ie/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=QHHnddx713ZwNL8XV4zOrTZKxTWaaQ7wHN11\\_EKQqto](http://www.peoplebeforeprofit.ie/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=QHHnddx713ZwNL8XV4zOrTZKxTWaaQ7wHN11_EKQqto),

<sup>11</sup> See for example: references to the Good Friday agreement on the AAA website in the context of its views on the Right2change.: Does the AAA support the Right2Change policy principles? Accessed at: <http://antiausterityalliance.ie/2015/10/aaa-response-to-sinn-fein-and-right2change/>. See also Socialist Party policy on Northern Ireland, accessed at <http://socialistparty.ie/about-us/> and <http://socialistpartyni.net/about-us/#.VktP0k8nx88>

No direct reference could be found on the People Before Profit Alliance website in Northern Ireland relating to the constitutional status of Northern Ireland. However, indirect references included:

“PBP is neither Orange nor Green. We are socialist.”<sup>12</sup>

### ***Renua Ireland***

This new political party was launched in March 2015. Currently it has no members represented in the Oireachtas.

While a number of policies have been published on its website, a policy on Northern Ireland could not be found.

The party on its website has stated that policy formation will take time<sup>13</sup>:

“Those expecting to see fully fleshed-out policies will have to wait for six months or a year. The party has published 16 policies but says that it’s a dynamic process.

“We are not going to make a policy on the back of the envelope,” McCarthy says. “We are not setting out to get salacious headlines. Far too often we have settled for a position where the short road is taken when we have known only the long road can do.”

## **3. Northern Ireland parties**

Eight parties were represented in the Northern Ireland Assembly before its dissolution on 26 January 2017-- Alliance Party, Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Green Party,

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<sup>12</sup> PBP. People Before Profit To Stand In East Derry, February 9th, 2017. Accessed at <http://www.peoplebeforeprofit.ie/2017/02/people-before-profit-to-stand-in-east-derry/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.renuaireland.com/category/news/>

People Before Profit Alliance, Sinn Féin, Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV) and Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)<sup>14</sup>.

Of these, three parties state in their published documents that they favour union with Great Britain (DUP, TUV, UUP). Two parties state that they favour a united Ireland (Sinn Féin, SDLP). The Green Party in Northern Ireland subscribes to unity by consent and to the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement<sup>15</sup>.

The remaining two parties adopt different approaches to the question of the constitutional status of Northern Ireland. Broadly, Alliance states that it favours devolution, with a move to a federal UK, and the development of the North-South Ministerial Council. The People Before Profit Alliance states that it is “neither Orange nor Green”.

Alliance	Devolution and federal UK  Develop North-South Ministerial Council
DUP	Union with UK
Green Party in NI	Unity by consent. Campaigning for NI to remain within EU
People before Profit Alliance	“neither Orange nor Green”
Sinn Féin	United Ireland

<sup>14</sup> NIA. Accessed at <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/publications/party-political-contacts/>

<sup>15</sup> Green Party of Northern Ireland manifesto for the Westminster elections 2010. Accessed at: <http://www.greenpartyni.org/www/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Westminster2010.pdf>

SDLP	United Ireland
TUV	Union with UK
UUP	Union with UK

### ***Alliance Party***

Alliance favours further devolution with a move towards a federal UK.

.....As part of the process of [UK] constitutional change, Alliance believes there is the opportunity to move to a more durable constitutional settlement which supports devolution.<sup>16</sup>

We support a move towards a federal UK, retaining strong links with our European neighbours.

In order to achieve this change across the UK we would:

- Support additional powers being conferred on the devolved administrations. There must be an assumption that the devolved administrations should take on these powers when they are capable and willing to do so<sup>17</sup>.

Also:

- Support the UK remaining part of the European Union(EU)<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Alliance Manifesto for 2015 Westminster Election

<sup>17</sup> Alliance Manifesto for the Westminster election 2015. Accessed at: <https://www.allianceparty.org/document/manifesto/alliance-2015-westminster-manifesto#document>

<sup>18</sup> Manifesto 2016: An agenda to increase the speed of change in Northern Ireland. Op.cit.

While no specific reference could be found in the Alliance's recent manifestos to relations with the Republic of Ireland, indirect references included:

- Further develop the North-South Ministerial Council, including creating a work plan that is informed by a Programme for Government in each jurisdiction<sup>19</sup>.

## ***Democratic Unionist Party***

The DUP favours retaining the union with Great Britain, as stated on their website.

Our vision is to maintain and enhance Northern Ireland's constitutional position within the United Kingdom, achieving long-term political stability to deliver a peaceful and prosperous future for our people<sup>20</sup>.

This is re-stated in their DUP Manifesto for the 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly Election.

Arlene's Vision for Northern Ireland

I want to see a strong, safe and stable Northern Ireland..... where we play a full part in the United Kingdom...<sup>21</sup>

This position had been asserted as one of their five priorities in the DUP Westminster Manifesto 2015<sup>22</sup>.

Our priorities

5 Strengthen the United Kingdom and protect and enhance our British identity

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<sup>19</sup> Manifesto 2016: An agenda to increase the speed of change in Northern Ireland. Accessed at: <https://www.allianceparty.org/document/manifesto#document>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.mydup.com/about-us/our-vision>

<sup>21</sup> Accessed at [http://dev.mydup.com/images/uploads/publications/DUP\\_Manifesto\\_2016\\_v8\\_LR.pdf](http://dev.mydup.com/images/uploads/publications/DUP_Manifesto_2016_v8_LR.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Accessed at [http://dev.mydup.com/images/uploads/publications/DUP\\_Manifesto\\_2015\\_LR.pdf](http://dev.mydup.com/images/uploads/publications/DUP_Manifesto_2015_LR.pdf)

Support for Northern Ireland's constitutional position within the United Kingdom has never been higher. The number of people who want to see a united Ireland in either the short or the medium term is at an all time low. The constitutional future of Northern Ireland has been settled for generations to come.

This has been achieved by agreeing political structures in Northern Ireland that can command cross-community support and by ensuring everyone can play a full part in our society and community.

While we should never be complacent about what has been achieved, the focus must now move to strengthen the United Kingdom as a whole and to enhance our British identity in Northern Ireland.....

From Westminster we want:

- A fair deal for all four parts of the United Kingdom to strengthen the Union;
- Protection in law for the official display of the Union Flag and the symbols of our nation;
- No partisan political deals which would weaken the United Kingdom;

### ***Green Party in Northern Ireland***

The Green Party in Northern Ireland stated in its manifesto for the Westminster elections 2010 that it subscribes to unity by consent and to the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement<sup>23</sup>. (This page is no longer available on the website).

Additionally, in the context of the Brexit referendum, the Green Party manifesto for the Northern Ireland Assembly Election 2016 stated that the Green Party would:

Oppose withdrawal from the European Convention on Human Rights, and will campaign for the UK to remain within the European Union<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> Green Party of Northern Ireland manifesto for the Westminster elections 2010. Accessed at: <http://www.greenpartyni.org/www/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Westminster2010.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Green Party manifesto for the Northern Ireland Assembly Election 2016. Accessed at: [http://www.greenpartyni.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/GreenParty\\_Manifesto\\_2016-for-email.pdf](http://www.greenpartyni.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/GreenParty_Manifesto_2016-for-email.pdf)

According to a statement on the website dated 27 January 2017<sup>25</sup>:

Steven Agnew is one of a number of plaintiffs named yesterday in the “Dublin case” which seeks clarity on the irrevocability of Article 50.

The Green Party leader is joined by [3 other plaintiffs] as litigants in the case. The proceedings seek a referral to the Court of Justice of the European Union on the question of whether Article 50, once triggered, can be unilaterally revoked by the UK government without requiring consent from all other 27 EU Member States.

The Green Party campaigned for Remain in the EU referendum and Agnew is clear that his involvement in the case is about getting the best deal possible for the people of Northern Ireland.

The Green Party leader said:

.....”Any deal on the Irish border will have massive implications across the island and it is vital that the people of Northern Ireland have a say on the final proposal.

“For that to be meaningful the option to Remain must still be on the table...”

### ***People Before Profit Alliance***

No reference could be found on the People Before Profit Alliance website relating to the constitutional status of Northern Ireland.

However, indirect references included:

“PBP is neither Orange nor Green. We are socialist.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Accessed at: <http://www.greenparty.org/green-party-leader-steven-agnew-in-fresh-brexite-legal-case/>

Also:

It is the ambition of the Alliance to operate on a 32-county basis and to offer a radical vision for our country.<sup>27</sup>

This position was reiterated on 26 January 2017 during the NIA election campaign.

People Before Profit offers a different vision... We want to unite Catholic and Protestant workers in a fight against austerity. ..We do not want to create a northern tax haven to partner with the one in south. We want a socialist Ireland which arises out a radical challenge to both states in Ireland.<sup>28</sup>

## ***Sinn Féin***

On the home page of the Sinn Féin website under the heading Latest Assembly election [2017] news, it is stated<sup>29</sup>:

### United Ireland

Sinn Féin is working for a new, agreed and united Ireland where the rights of all citizens are respected and which delivers prosperity. We want to see:

- An island wide referendum on Irish unity.
- A new Ireland, an agreed Ireland.
- Presidential voting rights for citizens in the North.

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<sup>26</sup> People Before Profit To Stand In East Derry, February 9th, 2017.

<http://www.peoplebeforeprofit.ie/2017/02/people-before-profit-to-stand-in-east-derry/>

<sup>27</sup> About People Before Profit. Accessed at: .....<http://www.peoplebeforeprofit.ie/2015/08/about-pbpa/>

<sup>28</sup> People Before Profit Mount Big Challenge In North Elections, January 26th, 2017. Accessed at: <http://www.peoplebeforeprofit.ie/2017/01/people-before-profit-mount-big-challenge-in-north-elections/>

<sup>29</sup> Latest Assembly election [2017] news. Accessed at: <http://www.sinnfein.ie>

- Greater development of the all Ireland economy.

## ***Social Democratic and Labour Party***

The SDLP asserts that their vision is a reconciled people living in a united, just and prosperous new Ireland<sup>30</sup>.

They outline a concept which they term “progressive nationalism”<sup>31</sup>.

It is time for a new type of nationalism. The SDLP’s new vision of Progressive Nationalism will move the ground upon which the constitutional debate on this island rests....

Ireland’s political re-unification remains the biggest and the best idea around. It needs huge preparation. Big ideas deserve better than being reduced to a numbers game.

We believe that it is now time to set out a political roadmap to unity. That’s why we’re establishing a Commission for a New Ireland. It will have two main tasks.

The first task is to conduct a political audit on the current state of North-South affairs, the workings of the North-South institutions, an all Ireland consultation, as well as civic and business co-operation.

The second task will put flesh on the bones of what a reunified Ireland will look like, providing an analysis and recommendations on what kind of institutional structure, what kind of public service and private sector structure and what kind of civic structure a new, united Ireland will comprise.

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.sdlp.ie/about/our-vision/>

<sup>31</sup> Accessed at: <http://www.sdlp.ie/issues/progressive-nationalism/>

Scotland's plan for independence contained 670 pages of work. It scoped out and modelled what a new Scotland would look like. Irish nationalism must match that level of practicality. We must do the same.

The Commission for a New Ireland will attempt to escape from merely talking about unity by actually putting in the hard yards of research which will see it delivered.

Irish Unity is not an idea that we in the SDLP simply commemorate, instead it is something that we continue to aspire to. This Commission will form the basis of our plan to deliver it.

These ideas are further discussed in a document, titled Colum Eastwood's Crossmaglen speech on Progressive Nationalism<sup>32</sup>.

### ***Traditional Unionist Voice***

The TUV is unequivocal in its support for the union with the United Kingdom, as outlined in their TUV Assembly Election Manifesto 2016<sup>33</sup>:

#### Northern Ireland in its national and international setting

Northern Ireland is and must remain an integral part of the United Kingdom, which needs to salvage its independence by exiting the EU:that is the TUV view.

Maintaining the union between Northern Ireland and Great Britain is the only union which matters.

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<sup>32</sup> Accessed

at:[http://www.sdlp.ie/site/assets/files/43036/colum\\_eastwood\\_outlines\\_progressive\\_nationalism.pdf](http://www.sdlp.ie/site/assets/files/43036/colum_eastwood_outlines_progressive_nationalism.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Accessed at <http://tuv.org.uk/>

## ***Ulster Unionist Party***

The UUP expressed support for the union with Great Britain in their Northern Ireland Assembly Manifesto 2016<sup>34</sup>:

With five years to go, we can confidently plan to celebrate Northern Ireland's centenary and do so within the context of its continuing membership of the United Kingdom.... but also recognising that we wish to continue to build better political, economic, social and cultural relations with our friends and neighbours in the Republic of Ireland.

Also they outline Our Vision for you--the Voter:

The 1998 Agreement stated two distinct facts: first, it is your right to describe your identity as you see fit..... The second fact relates to sovereignty; Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom.

The 1998 Agreement enshrined the principle of consent. It was accepted there could be no constitutional change in the status of Northern Ireland as a part of the United Kingdom without the consent of the majority of the electorate in Northern Ireland.....

The Ulster Unionist Party wants to move politics on....but to do so in an environment where we all respect both Northern Ireland's constitutional status and the individual identity of our citizens.....

### Constitutional Change

There is absolutely no evidence that a significant proportion of voters support change, never mind the majority required to make it happen. This is important,

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<sup>34</sup> Accessed at <https://uup.org/assets/policies/ulster%20unionist%20vision%20document.pdf>

because we ensured the law demands proof that there is an appetite for change.....

While ever-vigilant to the shifting nature of the threats to the Union, the Ulster Unionist Party's vision of good government sees a clear focus on the problems that affect us all on a daily basis.

## **Addendum**

### ***Republic of Ireland parties: developments since November 2015.***

#### **AAA-PBP**

In advance of the General Election of 2016, Anti-Austerity Alliance – People Before Profit published a joint document *COMMON PRINCIPLES: Radical Alternatives & Real Equality, General Election 2016*<sup>35</sup>. No reference could be found therein to a policy on the constitutional status of Northern Ireland. No direct reference could be found on the People Before Profit Alliance website in Northern Ireland relating to the constitutional status of Northern Ireland. However, indirect references included:

“PBP is neither Orange nor Green. We are socialist.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Anti-Austerity Alliance – People Before Profit. *COMMON PRINCIPLES: Radical Alternatives & Real Equality, General Election 2016*. Accessed at [http://www.peoplebeforeprofit.ie/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=QHHnddx7I3ZwNL8XV4zOrTZKxTWaaQ7wHN1l\\_EKQqto](http://www.peoplebeforeprofit.ie/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=QHHnddx7I3ZwNL8XV4zOrTZKxTWaaQ7wHN1l_EKQqto),

<sup>36</sup> PBP. People Before Profit To Stand In East Derry, February 9th, 2017. Accessed at <http://www.peoplebeforeprofit.ie/2017/02/people-before-profit-to-stand-in-east-derry/>

## **Labour Party**

The position of the Labour Party was further elaborated in the Labour Party Manifesto 2016:

Labour is committed to a strong all island economy and society. As we enter into a decade of commemoration in 2016, Labour wants to commence a national conversation about the future of our island and within it our many diverse communities.

This new national conversation must explore the potential for greater co-operation in developing our common languages, our many sporting and artistic organisations, increased interaction at local authority level and between state agencies.

Labour continue to support the Good Friday Agreement and the institutions created under it and we will press for the full implementation of the Stormont House Agreement to deal with outstanding issues and for securing agreement on key issues among the parties in Northern Ireland.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Labour Manifesto 2016. Accessed at: [https://www.labour.ie/download/pdf/labour\\_manifesto\\_2016.pdf](https://www.labour.ie/download/pdf/labour_manifesto_2016.pdf)

## 4.5 Political status quo-ism

“While Consent is a fundamental characteristic of change, Dr Humphreys makes it plain that it cannot be an excuse for political inertia.”

Attorney General Brady (2002-2007)

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In this respect the political establishment in the Dáil and Seanad have a key role to play. The advice of John Bradley when speaking in Queens University Belfast in 2014

“policy neglect seldom goes unpunished”<sup>282</sup>

should be listened to. Strategies developed and implemented now could mitigate the potential for those who would wish to prevent the fulfilment of Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution and the constitutional obligation as outlined by Attorney General Brady.

High Court Justice Humphreys stated “faced with such a prospect, {of illegal activity} it may be that sections of opinion within the island may be dissuaded from voting for unity and indeed the response of at least some sections of the political classes” particularly in the 26 counties will undoubtedly be that progressing towards the objective of Irish unity is not worth kicking the sleeping dog of unionist / loyalist paramilitary violence.<sup>283</sup>

Such an approach by Southern politicians would be contrary to the constitutional obligation of Article 3 of the Constitution as outlined previously by former Attorney General Brady.

High Court Justice Humphreys stated:

“The lassie faire approach which might commend itself to some elements of the political establishment might, however be accused of ignoring the regrettable but scarcely avoidable fact that it would be hard to contain the prospects for inter-community hostilities in the event that the historic rights of self- determination of the Irish people was to be

<sup>281</sup> Richard Humphreys, Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.X.

<sup>282</sup> John Bradley, ‘Towards an All-Island Economy’, (2016) < [http://www.irish-association.org/papers/john\\_bradley.asp](http://www.irish-association.org/papers/john_bradley.asp)> accessed 2 February 2017.

<sup>283</sup> Richard Humphreys, Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.153.

thwarted at the instance of what would be in this hypothesis a unionist / loyalist minority.”<sup>284</sup>

Justice Humphreys goes on to explain “It would be a short-sighted view indeed to maintain that the status quo must be continued at all costs in order to avoid any outbreak of violence” .<sup>285</sup>

Professor Sean McGraw and Meadow J. Jackson of Notre Dame University in his research of the members of Dáil Éireann after the 2007, 2011 and 2016 elections used the term ‘status quo’:

Support for unity ‘in principle’, though, is quite different from taking the concrete steps necessary to alter constitutional and legal arrangements in Ireland, Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom to fulfil such aspirations. The need for citizens to approve unification via referendum in both the North and South ensures that actual unity will only occur once popular will demands it. However, the complexity and long-term nature of the solution, the need for widespread support North and South, and the fact that little separates parties on this issue suggests that little will happen to alter the status quo.

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Professor Sean McGraw and MJ Jackson’s entire submission to the Joint Committee for the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement is included in the online appendix of this section.

High Court Justice Humphreys argues that the greatest threat to Irish unity is a loss of nerve by politicians in the Republic.<sup>287</sup>

“A massive loss of nerve by the political leadership of the twenty-six counties is probably the greatest threat to the achievement of Irish Unity.”

<sup>284</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.153.

<sup>285</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.153.

<sup>286</sup> Fr Sean McGraw, ‘Political Status Quoism ‘ (2017) Submission for this report.

<sup>287</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.153.

The only guarantee that the Good Friday Agreement will be complied with is for the two Governments to retain firm joint stewardship of the process throughout. Contemplating this scenario does highlight one perhaps melancholy feature of the Good Friday Agreement, or any other possible agreement that might be envisaged relating to Northern Ireland – namely that the constitutional aspirations of all simply cannot fully be reconciled with in any given institutional structure. While one cannot aim for absolute accommodation of all positions, one can legitimately aim for reasonable coexistence, an objective towards which the Good Friday Agreement provides the best practical means. At the same time, one must keep to the forefront the fact that if any constitutional or institutional framework is to survive, it must be defended against the efforts of those who would seek to undermine it, whether by lawful or unlawful means.<sup>288</sup>

It is an axiomatic in the agreement that political violence is to be consigned to history, that weapons of war are to be decommissioned and the democratic dialogue and the will of the majority combined with safeguards for the majority is to be the way forward.<sup>289</sup>

The Good Friday Agreement again provides a clear road map towards overcoming the challenges that would be posed by unconstitutional unionist violence.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.152,153

<sup>289</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.154.

<sup>290</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.155.

## 4.6 Countering the threat of illegal activity

According to Justice Humphreys:

“The real challenge of unity will be to affect it in a way that minimises unconstitutional opposition from those who may perceive themselves to be at the losing end of the bargain. The measures that suggest themselves in this respect are a firm commitment to maintain the Good Friday structures following unity, continued east-west links, and a rethink of the law on both sides of the Irish Sea to recognize both identities and to build confidence.”<sup>291</sup>

*“History says don’t hope  
On this side of the grave.  
But then, once in a lifetime  
The longed for tidal wave  
Of Justice can rise up  
And hope and history Rhyme”*  
Seamus Heaney ‘Cure for Troy’

“On the other hand Karl Marx’s dictum that history repeats itself as tragedy first then as farce, might suggest that the armed section of unionism/loyalism will not go quietly into a united Ireland, but rather will seek to thwart the democratic will by means of unlawful terrorist violence, possibly coupled with a political dimension seeking repartition. The will and resolve of the two governments to crush such terrorist violence is in many respects the key question on which the future of unity depends. The track record of appeasement of previous unlawful violence by a unionism/loyalism may have created an expectation in elements of that section of the community that the same technique may work again. It will take a firm stance by the two governments to dispel the particular proposition, and to some extent such a stance is prefigured by the language of the agreement, which confirms that the giving effect to the majority position is a solemn international obligation.

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<sup>291</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.155,156.

Any weakening by the two governments could only prove to be enormously destabilising in itself.”<sup>292</sup>

“Given that such techniques found ready success in the past’. ‘One can readily but regrettably predict that the instincts to engage in civil disobedience, disorder, and strikes, if not full scale sectarian murder, bombing campaigns, and other forms of violence’”“One must keep to the forefront the fact that if any constitutional or institutional framework is to survive, it must be defended against the efforts of those who would seek to undermine it, whether by lawful or unlawful means.”<sup>293</sup>

The threat of unconstitutional unionist violence directed against a democratically mandated All-Ireland political unit was underlined by the Forum:

“During the Home Rule for Ireland debates in the British Parliament in 1912, many arguments were advanced by British political leaders in favour of maintaining the unity of Ireland. The British Government had introduced a Bill that proposed to give Ireland a separate parliament with jurisdiction over her internal affairs while reserving power over key issue. However, faced with the Unionist threat to resist this Bill by unlawful force the British Government and Parliament backed down and when the Government of Ireland Act of 1914 was placed on the statute book in Westminster, there was a provision that it would not come into operation until after Parliament had an opportunity of making provision for Ulster by special amending legislation. The message- which was not lost on Unionist- was that a threat by them to use violence would succeed. To the nationalists, the conclusion was that the democratic constitutional process was not to be allowed to be effective. This legacy continued to plague British-Irish relations today. The warning sounding in this passage is by no means of historical interest only, and would continue to be to the forefront in the event that a democratic majority in Northern Ireland in favour of a United Ireland were to begin to materialize.”

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<sup>292</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.204.

<sup>293</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.153

<sup>294</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.153

“Particularly on the part of the two Governments to the principals contained in the Good Friday Agreement that a wish for a united Ireland will be implemented, combined with a brisk pace for such implementation to avoid the creation of any dangerous vacuum.”<sup>295</sup>  
It is the fear of all that the dark days of the ‘Troubles’ would return with extreme unionist and loyalist elements engaging in the full range of tactic from lawful to illegal.

However prior to looking at the issue of violence, the submission from Dr James Wilson outlines the fears of the Unionist Community after a referendum for unification and these concerns need to be addressed.

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<sup>295</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.48,49.

**4.6.1(A) SUBMISSION TO JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT. BREXIT & THE FUTURE OF IRELAND: UNITING IRELAND & ITS PEOPLE IN PEACE AND PROSPERITY. (2017). DR JAMES WILSON**

Economic arguments aside, much of northern Protestant resistance to Irish unity has been based on fear. Fear cannot be ‘perceived’ – it is a real and powerful emotion. This fear can be broken down into three discreet but related roots: Fear of dispossession, fear of retribution, and fear of assimilation into an alien Gaelic culture that eliminates their ethno cultural diversity as British/Ulster Scots.

First the fear of dispossession. In the original Plantation of Ulster, it was first assumed that the Gaelic lords would assume responsibility of raising tax for the Crown. After the flight of the Earls, new undertakers had to be found. Many were second rank Ulster Gaelic nobility. The incoming “Planters” became tenant farmers – not owning the land, but paying rents. Most Catholic gentry lost their lands after the 1641 Rebellion and Williamite wars.<sup>1</sup> There was a sectarian competition for tenure which fostered the rise of agrarian solidarity groups:- Defenders, Oakboys, Hearts of Steel, Peep of Day Boys, Orange Boys, Ribbonmen, Fenians. It is a matter of record that – particularly in the nineteenth century -many Catholics lost their tenancy to Protestants, as landlords perceived Protestants as loyal to the Crown.<sup>2</sup>

In 1870, Gladstone’s Liberal government passed the Land Act gave tenants the right to purchase, and many Catholics saw their ancient rich tribal lands now “legally owned” by Protestants, whilst they had to settle for ‘less favoured areas’. This resentment has festered for over 100 years and resurfaced during the Troubles.<sup>3</sup> There is an expectation amongst some Catholics west of the Bann, that Irish unity- the mythical Aisling aspiration - will bring with it a restoration of land to them and eviction of the Protestants. <sup>4</sup>

Fear of retribution. In the 30 years of the Troubles, it was common for neighbours to threaten, abuse and kill each other on a sectarian basis. One reason why the former members of the Security Forces are a ‘hard to reach group’ in terms of peace and reconciliation is that they fear revenge and retribution for having served in the Crown forces. The IRA did not take any Protestants prisoner. Thus Tíocfaidh ar la was to backfire on the Republican movement as it stiffened Protestant resolve never to surrender. The belief of post Unity retribution still lingers amongst former soldiers, policemen and prison officers, even though the vast majority never went to bed plotting to kill anyone.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M.Pervical-Maxwell, *The Scottish migration to Ulster in the Reign of James I*, (Belfast, 1973),pp. 19-138.

<sup>2</sup>This collective memory not unique to Catholics. There is tradition in my Presbyterian family that we lost our tenure to land in Ballymoney to loyal Catholics for being “out” in 1798.

<sup>3</sup>There is strangely no such claims in the Glens of Antrim, where the Scots invaded in 1560 and expelled the native Irish McQuillian clan. Could it be because these Scots were Catholic?

<sup>4</sup>Kevin Toolis, *Rebel hearts; Journey’s within the IRA’s soul*,(London, 1995), pp.40-41, Focus group with non-establishment Republicans (Cohannon Inn, 24/11/2016).

<sup>5</sup>I can recall the eviction and murder of white farmers in Zimbabwe in the 1990s, and a neighbour (ex-RUC) confided his fear that “that’s what will happen here in a United Ireland”.

It must also be noted that the bombing attacks on Protestant towns and commercial property during the Troubles was not merely destruction of commercial targets [sic], but perceived as part of an IRA agenda to force Protestants out. (James Wilson, Protestant alienation in Newry, Newry & Mourne Partnership Report 1998).  
Fear of assimilation. There is consensus amongst historians that 19th Century Irish nationalism failed miserably to capture the Protestant demographic in the north east of the Island. Rosary beads, Gaelic cultural, blood and soil held little appeal. Secondly, the mantra of “beer and biscuits” protectionism did nothing to protect the Belfast industries of ship building and linen which were competitive in a world export market. Unionism was built on these twin pillars. Irishness became associated with the a southern Catholic theocracy, Gaelic sport, language, and the celebration of militant republicanism- which in N Ireland meant the ongoing armed struggle. Some effort must be made to educate southerners to complex conditionality of identity in the north and the deep well springs of emotion that feed it. One unfortunate (and unforeseen) corollary of the GFA was that it was manipulated to transform the religious divide into an ethno-political dichotomy. In 2007 the OFMDFM wilfully jettisoned civic reconciliation – from then on it was a “shared future” – or sectarian carve up ? Protestants were encouraged to shun all things Irish, and find expression in their own culture.

Protestant attitudes to a united Ireland. The 2010 N Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILTS) surveyed 1,200 members of the PUL community about a united Ireland. 90% of Protestants affirmed the traditional tribal response and a mere 4% opted for a united Ireland. However when the same demographic was asked their response if ‘ a majority of the people voted for it in a GFA style referendum’ , only 18% stated that they would find this destiny hard to accept, (potentially a fight or flight response) , 23% happy to accept the wishes of the democracy, and 57% grudgingly accepting that “they would live with it if they had to”.

This survey was (i) pre-Brexit Referendum and (ii) raises more questions than it answers. Which social demographics make up the 18%? Is it predominate amongst the educational underachievers? Is there a generational divide ? Is it impacted by personal experience in the Troubles? How much driven by economic fears – how much by other factors? And ...has the ground shifted with Brexit?

Dr James Wilson is a freelance consultant, lecturer and historian, specialising in conflict issues. He served in the security forces during the Troubles, and later in corporate counsel in London. In 1998 he facilitated the historic accommodation between the Apprentice Boys and Bogside Residents. His doctorate was on the origins of Orangeism and the evolution of Ulster loyalism. His most recent work was a case study of the 2012/13 loyalist flags protest, and current research via QUB is on the dangers of inherent militarism in British /Irish cultures transmitting a glorification of violence to new generations. James is a founder member of Veterans for Peace UK Belfast Chapter and facilitates a number of reconciliation projects between former adversaries in the Troubles.

Having served in the Crown forces. The IRA did not take any Protestants prisoner. Thus Tíocfaidh ar la was to backfire on the Republican movement as it stiffened Protestant resolve never to surrender. The belief of post Unity retribution still lingers amongst former soldiers, policemen and prison officers, even though the vast majority never went to bed plotting to kill anyone.

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#### **4.6.1 (B) Submission by Pat Finucane Centre on collusion by british security forces - Anne Cadwallade**

The Pat Finucane Centre compiled a submission for the Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, part of which is here in the main body of the Committee report, with the full submission, including supporting original documents, located in the online appendix of this section.

Their submission addresses the collusion between the loyalist paramilitary organisations and the British Security forces. The Irish State needs to learn lessons from this past and ensure the democratic will of the Irish people is not denied by those who would use violence against them and their aims for peaceful unification by consent as provided for in the Good Friday Agreement.

Among the the Pat Finucane Centre's main conclusions are:

With modern methods of surveillance, any group intent on violence, relative to the 1970s and 1980s, would find it far harder to pursue a sustained campaign, especially within the small population and geographical boundaries of Northern Ireland.

If politicians in Dublin and elsewhere are to begin planning for a unitary state, then they need to consider London's past record on failing to focus on the potential for loyalist violence and persuade the authorities that an entirely different focus is needed. – Submission compiled for this Oireachtas report

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<sup>296</sup> Dr James Wilson, *Submission to Joint Committee on the Implementation of Good Friday Agreement. Brexit & the future of Ireland: uniting Ireland & its people in peace and prosperity* (2017) Submission for this report.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

The PFC is confident that the loyalist capacity for violence was enhanced by the encouragement or direct support afforded by various branches of British of military intelligence and RUC Special Branch throughout the conflict from its start to its conclusion.

Aside from the obviously needless and tragic deaths of individuals north (and south) of the border, London's focus on republican violence and its encouragement of loyalist violence (including attacks across the border) led to a primary, political imperative in Dublin to prevent loyalist violence spreading south.

Loyalist attacks, and fear of more, led to a virtual panic in the south that any moves towards a unitary state, however tentative, would inevitably result in a fierce loyalist backlash in the Republic.

In Britain, fear of loyalist violence led to a belief in the "bloodbath theory", ie the inevitability that loyalists would wage outright civil war against the Catholic minority in the event of Britain declaring an intention to withdraw, however worthy that strategic aim might appear.

We claim these policy outcomes were intentional on the part of elements within the British political and security establishment - but we do not say it lightly. These conclusions are the result of 15 years work and are based in hard factual evidence which we invite you and your colleagues to assess.

**MAIN POINTS:**

- + The Ulster Defence Regiment, the largest regiment at the time in the British Army, was established with prior knowledge it would be infiltrated by loyalist paramilitaries
- + This resulted in the training and arming of one section of the community in NI
- + London also knew that intelligence would pass, and did pass, from the UDR to loyalist paramilitaries
- + London took no effective action to vet UDR recruits to prevent known or suspected loyalists from joining the regiment and thus gaining access to training, arms and intelligence
- + London knew there was widespread and systemic collusion between members of the UDR and RUC with loyalist paramilitaries
- + Despite this, London expanded the numerical strength of the UDR, its geographical deployment into particularly sensitive areas and its role into intelligence-gathering
- + London tolerated the existence of the Ulster Defence Association throughout the conflict, until 1992, when it was banned, knowing it was directly involved in violent actions against the nationalist community and that the organisation styling itself the “Ulster Freedom Fighters” did not exist
- + London covertly held talks with both the UDA and Ulster Volunteer Force throughout the conflict, even in the teeth of the Dublin/Monaghan bombings, the single largest loss of life during the conflict
- + Had the same focus and resources been directed at loyalist violence as was directed against the IRA, the capacity of the UDA, UVF etc would have been greatly reduced.

## **FURTHER ISSUES:**

### **(1) Legally-held weapons:**

The PFC would also be concerned at the relatively high level of legal gun ownership in NI (taking into account personal protection weapons, the outstanding Ulster Resistance arsenal from the South African arms importation of 1986, other loyalist weapons which were never decommissioned, weapons held by the RUC and others in the hands of farmers, gun club members etc).

### **(2) London's continuing denial of collusion:**

The British government has not begun to engage with the realities of collusion or its implications for the future.

Our evidence for this comes, firstly, in a letter from the then Minister of State at the Ministry of Defence, Anna Soubry to Mark Durkan, SDLP MP, in November 2013 when she refused to contemplate the possibility that the authorities had not tackled collusion within the UDR (we will attach a copy with our presentation).

Evidence that London has not begun to consider the future security implications for loyalist violence comes in a letter from Andrew Murrison, MP, then parliamentary under-secretary of state for NI dated 24 March 2015 where he says he does not "see any evidence that such subversive or collusive behaviour was led or permitted by the [British] Government. Indeed ... I believe that the evidence suggests the contrary."

We will also attach a copy of this letter with our presentation.

## **CONCLUSION:**

With modern methods of surveillance, any group intent on violence, relative to the 1970s and 1980s, would find it far harder to pursue a sustained campaign, especially within the small population and geographical boundaries of Northern Ireland.

Loyalists have always attacked a soft target – the Catholic civilian population. They do not need huge amounts of high-quality modern weaponry to do so. The potential remains, unless tackled, for major loss of life should loyalists be “spooked” without prior long-term political and security preparations.

If politicians in Dublin and elsewhere are to begin planning for a unitary state, then they need to consider London’s past record on failing to focus on the potential for loyalist violence and persuade the authorities that an entirely different focus is needed.

The PFC is firmly of the view, however, that whatever steps may be considered to counter the potential capacity for future loyalist violence, they must fall within international human rights laws and principles.

This would rule out “shoot to kill”, the illegal use of lethal force such as plastic bullets, torture, internment without trial, impunity for informers and agents, collusion and other failed British undercover counter-insurgency tactics that proved so counter-productive in the war against republican violence from 1969 to 1996.

#### **4.6.2 Preventing violent extremism and terrorism in Northern Ireland and around the world**

Michael R. Ortiz was appointed by Secretary of State John Kerry to serve as the first US diplomat focused on countering violent extremism (CVE) policy at the Department of State. As Deputy Counterterrorism Coordinator, Ortiz led diplomatic efforts to persuade foreign governments and the UN to implement CVE policies and programmes. Previously, he served as Senior Advisor to the National Security Advisor at the White House, was the Director for Legislative Affairs at the National Security Council, and worked in the White House Office of Legislative Affairs. Earlier in his career, he worked in the offices of Senators Obama and Reid.

#### **Preventing violent extremism and terrorism in Northern Ireland and around the world**

For 8 years, I served in the Obama Administration at the White House, National Security Council and Department of State. For most of my tenure, I worked on some of the most critical foreign policy and national security challenges facing the United States, including the battle against ISIL, the opening to Cuba, the Iran nuclear deal and counterterrorism. Most recently, I served as the first senior U.S. counterterrorism diplomat focused on a relatively new component of counterterrorism policy: countering violent extremism (CVE). During my time as a diplomat, I was charged with developing and executing our CVE policy, and learning as much as I could about what triggers and spreads violent extremism. This was no easy task: the radicalization process is complex, and experts around the world are working to better understand it. International research cites many potential factors that lead to radicalization, including segregation, a lack of career and educational opportunities, discrimination, government decisions, among others — all of which are exploited by recruiters from terrorist organizations. As we know all too well, recruiters also exploit the Internet and social media platforms to convince young people to join terrorist organizations in order to leave behind perceived wrongs in their home societies or to fight these wrongs at home. I saw these same scenarios play out across Europe, Africa and

the Middle East, and I think some of the lessons I learned from my experience could be useful in the context of a united Ireland.

#### U.S. Approach to CVE

Since 2015, the United States has made it a priority to figuring out what it takes to prevent individuals around the world from becoming terrorists in the first place. In fact, when I was at the National Security Council, President Obama launched this policy effort by hosting a White House Summit on CVE. We needed to better understand the factors leading people to violent extremism – no two neighborhoods or individuals are the same — through enhanced research efforts.

After identifying these unique local factors, we needed to develop programs that could help communities, including parents, teachers, local leaders, law enforcement and civil society groups, prevent radicalization in the first instance or intervene if an individual was already going down that terrible path.

Of course, these programs were different in each location. In Kenya, I visited a program run by a civil society organization that helped young men and women who had begun the radicalization process, but wanted to reintegrate into society before it was too late. This organization provided counseling services for jobs and education. In exchange for this assistance, the individuals were required to renounce violence and be accountable to officials.

In Germany, a country with a long history of right-wing violent extremism, a civil society organization established a counseling hotline for families to contact if they suspected a loved one was being radicalized and needed help. This gave families an alternative to immediately notifying law enforcement, which they were often reluctant to contact since it could result in arrest even if a crime had not been committed.

In a number of European cities, local police improved their relationships with the communities they served by better understanding cultural norms and building trust with the citizens. In a German city, which had a particularly high number of individuals traveling to Iraq and Syria, one young man formed a partnership with

police, so his community could better understand the police and the police could better understand them. The entire purpose of this young man's effort was to build trust. In each case, collaboration between government, civil society and citizens was critical – a whole-of-community approach to rooting out radicalization to violence. Violent extremism is a unique foreign policy challenge because it often begins as a community-level problem and cannot be addressed easily through traditional diplomatic channels. As a result, a significant component of the U.S. CVE diplomatic strategy has been to convince other national governments and the UN to prioritize this threat internally. In 2016, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon presented his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. Later that year, the General Assembly blessed the plan and, with U.S. leadership, countries are now focused on developing national action plans for preventing violent extremism.

Additionally, the U.S. has helped establish and support initiatives that foster partnerships between state and local governments and civil society organizations in order to share best practices and better understand violent extremism. Some of these initiatives include: the Strong Cities Network, the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, and the Global Counterterrorism Forum's (GCTF) Initiative to Address the Life Cycle of Radicalization to Violence. The GCTF's initiative also includes a unique toolkit, which provides communities with the resources they might need to tackle these challenges. The United States has also supported the Hedayah Center of Excellence for CVE in Abu Dhabi and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) CVE Center of Excellence and Counter-Messaging Hub in Djibouti. Given the local nature of CVE, we need diverse international partners more than ever.

#### Way Forward

Ireland and Northern Ireland have long struggled with terrorism, but have made tremendous progress in security in recent years. As leaders across the island grapple with the concept of a united Ireland, it is important to consider the ways in which future violence could be prevented, including by strengthening counterterrorism and law enforcement efforts, supporting civil society organizations, and religious and educational institutions, and providing citizens with the tools they need to intervene during the radicalization process.

I would recommend the following steps:

First, the government should launch a national-level task force or coordinating mechanism with national and local officials, law enforcement, civil society and other local leaders to examine potential threats, better understand the drivers of violent extremism (even if politically sensitive) and evaluate current resources. This would help everyone have a baseline understanding of what the challenge is and what needs to be done.

Second, this task force or coordinating mechanism should develop a national strategy for CVE. I would recommend following the guidance on the development of national action plans in the UN's Plan of Action. It is absolutely critical that a wide range of voices, including government officials, law enforcement, civil society and educators, among others, be involved in the creation of this strategy.

Third, identify an individual or body to execute the strategy. Some countries designate a CVE coordinator and others create or designate a government agency with a CVE mandate. There must also be clear metrics for progress in strategy execution and communications mechanisms to regularly engage with local communities. In most cases, these are very local issues that must be resolved at the local level.

Unfortunately, there is not an easy fix to violent extremism. However, given U.S. leadership and international efforts on this issue for a number of years, there is now a global support architecture, which can help countries think through their approaches to this challenge. If Ireland is able to launch a transparent, open and inclusive process with strong communications mechanisms, sufficient programmatic resources and creative proposals for strengthening community resilience, I believe this will go a long way in working to prevent terrorism before it starts.

### 4.6.3 Mental health & substance misuse post conflict Northern Ireland

While Anne Cadwallader addresses issues surrounding historical violence in Northern Ireland and Michael Ortiz outlines what needs to be done to prevent future outbreaks of violence, Senator Frances Black outlines some of the challenges that face society and policy makers regarding the legacy of violence on the generation who lived through the trouble and those born after.

#### Mental Health & Substance Misuse post conflict North of Ireland

Senator Frances Black – 30 May 2017

While the North of Ireland is emerging from a protracted period of political violence, research suggests that ongoing social, political and economic issues are impacting on the lives of its children and young people. A recent survey found that 28% of 16 year old respondents had serious mental health, emotional or personal problems in the past year, yet only a third received professional help. Young people still appear to be reluctant to access mental health services due to stigma.

Potentially 60% of the population (up to 127,800 adults) with mental health problems directly related to the Conflict have not received treatment. There are serious risks of these cycles contributing to new episodes of organised violence when, for example, there is a critical mass of people within the community who have unresolved loss and trauma related psychological difficulties.

Many of those who have been adversely affected by traumatic events in the north use alcohol and other drugs, leading to high rates of comorbid mental and substance use disorders. A disproportionate number of people who were exposed to the violence also experience economic deprivation.

The children of those affected by the years of violence in the North of Ireland are at increased risk of experiencing co-occurring early childhood adversities which may result in the accumulation of toxic stress. Children who experience toxic stress are, therefore, at increased risk of adverse general health outcomes in adulthood. These include cardiovascular disorders, cancers, asthma and autoimmune diseases as well as mental disorders. Conflict-related mental ill-health and substance disorders increase the risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviour.

Alcohol and drug misuse is evident within the toxicology profiles of individuals who have died by suicide. In many cases these substances will have been used as a means of coping with conflict-related psychological distress;

The consequences of the Troubles impact daily upon the lives of many people, their children and their children's children. Those at highest risk of having mental health difficulties and suicidal behaviour related to the conflict also endure multiple stressors, particularly economic deprivation.

In addition, it is recognised that policies in relation to alcohol, drugs and other legislation will impact upon the mental well-being on those affected by the conflict so these merit particular scrutiny. Research into ways of supporting families in communicating about the Troubles to future generations is required. In particular we need to examine ways of communicating about conflict-related bereavement, mental illness and physical injury.

Any public expenditure cuts will impact existing high levels of debt unemployment, poor mental health and suicide. It is essential that the work of supporting and empowering victims and survivors of the conflict continues to grow as individuals begin to address unresolved trauma.

Despite the formal end of the conflict in the north a substantial proportion of the adult population continue to suffer the adverse mental health effects of chronic trauma exposure. It is likely that the legacy of mental ill health associated with the conflict, if not adequately addressed , will endure for many years.

Policy makers should adopt a strategic, two-generation approach to interventions addressing the conflict's trans-generational legacy on mental health and well-being. There needs to be investment in parents in order to promote the well-being of children and young people; and

- Governmental policies should be examined to determine their relevance to addressing mental health priorities and amending where necessary. Further research on treatments for mental disorders and service evaluations are central to inform the evidence base and ensure the effective use of resources;
- Further research should also be undertaken into the trans-generational effects of social policies, the pathways of trauma transmission and the impact of policies aimed to halt trans-generational transmission;
- As policies and services develop to address the traumatic and trans-generational impact of the years of violence, health and social care and other governmental targets should promote and reflect the shift in focus in commissioning and service delivery towards the aims of addressing the long term trans-generational risks to individuals, families and communities.

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<sup>297</sup> Senator Frances Black, '*Mental Health & Substance Misuse post conflict North of Ireland*' (2017) Submission for this report.

## 4.7 British approach to unity

This contribution is from Kevin Meagher, an advisor to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Shaun Woodward 2007-09, and author of 'A United Ireland: Why Unification is Inevitable and How it Will Come About' published by Biteback (2016). In it he outlines his view on the position that the British Government should adopt towards the future of Northern Ireland.

### 4.7.1 'The end of the beginning': Reflections on Brexit, devolution and the prospects of Irish reunification

This short paper offers a personal account of British policy towards Northern Ireland and a series of reflections on some of the key current policy issues and drivers, including Brexit and the prospects of Irish reunification.

#### The British dilemma

This can be summarised thus: Shape the future or simply wait for it to become the present. In other words, the British state needs to come to a view about the long-term future of Northern Ireland. Does it accelerate the trends towards Irish unity or roll-back developments of the past two decades and copper-fasten its place in the Union? The logic of the Good Friday Agreement is that it eventually leads to Irish reunification. The imposition of a hard border arrangement would pull things in the opposite direction, potentially eroding the carefully constructed architecture of the Agreement and destabilising the peace process it is built upon. British ministers know this and have given repeated assurances that a hard border is not in prospect. Time will tell. (It is hard to overestimate the amount of confusion in British politics post-Brexit). British policy has long been to keep Northern Ireland in a holding pattern. The assumed public backlash of making the case for Irish unity overtly prohibits making the rational next move. The impacts of Brexit, however, are now forcing the pace.

As noted above, creating a single Irish state now represents an evidence-based choice. Northern Ireland is an economic basket-case, with a budget deficit of £10 billion per annum and an under-developed private sector. Already, plans are in place (pushed by former Democratic Unionist First Minister, Peter Robinson), to harmonise corporate tax rates with the Irish Republic in 2018 to make Northern Ireland more competitive in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI). This approach should be encouraged. Economic convergence and reducing the productivity gap between the two jurisdictions should be an explicit cornerstone of the Executive's economic and financial policy. This would serve two purposes. First, by 'shadowing' the southern economy, Northern Ireland would become more dynamic, creating more jobs and a stronger private sector. It would help to reduce the dependency on Westminster (welcome in and of itself). Secondly, it would start the necessary process of integrating the economies of both jurisdictions. This is an essential precondition for any a successful change in constitutional position.

Bluntly, Northern Ireland, with a population of just 1.8 million people, is of no strategic economic importance to Britain, representing just two per cent of the UK's GDP. Northern Ireland's best bet, economically, is to join with the South and align its economy to benefit from the Republic's strong record of attracting foreign direct investment. Theoretically, the benefits are clear: the Border is an artificial division and the respective populations are small enough and complementary enough to make uniting their economic efforts a common-sense solution. At present, Northern Ireland and the Republic are the only dinner guests positioned at opposite ends of a banqueting table.

We are clearly in a period of 'post-Union, pre-unity.' There is no intellectual defence of Northern Ireland's place in the UK, except for the current consent of a majority of its inhabitants to remain British. All the rational arguments now belong to those favouring Irish reunification. It makes no sense for two small states to exist on the island of Ireland, with a combined population of just 6.4 million. However, there is a deep reticence among British and Irish political

elites to fully engage with this issue and its long-term resolution. Yet as co-guarantors of the Good Friday Agreement, Britain and Ireland are signatories to a treaty that contains an explicit commitment to a referendum on a change of constitutional status. In the interests of their own political and financial risk management, it should be incumbent on both governments to plan for the eventual likelihood of that happening. More generally, there is a need for a more intensive public discussion on Irish reunification and to hear from a broader range of voices - across politics, business and civic life. Is this the beginning of the end for Northern Ireland? Not quite. But, to paraphrase Churchill, we are certainly at the end of the beginning, as the debate about Irish unity proceeds at an ever-faster rate.

## 4.8 British politicians approach to Brexit and Good Friday Agreement

The House of Commons on 8 February 2017 voted on an amendment to the European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Bill. Amendment 86 was designed to protect the free movement of people, goods and services on the island of Ireland; Citizens rights; Strand 2 and 3 of the Good Friday Agreement; Human Rights and Equality; principal of consent; and the status of the Irish Language. The Members of Parliament voted against inserting amendment 86 into the European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Bill by a margin of 340 to 33.

### **“Amendment 86, page 1, line 5, at end insert**

with the exception of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and section 2 of the Ireland Act 1949, and subject to—

- (a) the United Kingdom’s obligations under the Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Ireland of 10 April 1998, and
- (b) preserving acquired rights in Northern Ireland under European Union law.”

This amendment requires the power to notify withdrawal to be exercised with regard to the constitutional, institutional and rights provisions of the Belfast Agreement.

New clause 109—Provisions of the Good Friday Agreement—

“Before exercising the power under section 1, the Prime Minister shall commit to maintaining the provisions of the Good Friday Agreement and subsequent Agreements agreed between the United Kingdom and Ireland since 1998, including—

- (a) the free movement of people, goods and services on the island of Ireland;
- (b) citizenship rights;
- (c) the preservation of institutions set up relating to strands 2 and 3 of the Good Friday Agreement;
- (d) human rights and equality;
- (e) the principle of consent; and
- (f) the status of the Irish language.”

“Division 156, 8 February 2017 6.44 pm The Committee divided:

Ayes: 33 Noes: 340

Question accordingly negative.”<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> House of Commons Debate

## 4.9 German reunification: lesson learned

Professor Emeritus of the Humboldt University in Berlin Christian Tomuschat has written this submission for the Joint Committee for the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement in relation to the issues of German reunification 1989-1990.

### 4.9.1 German reunification in 1989/90

#### Summary Overview of the Key Elements

##### I. Basic Data

- 1) In the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) (“West Germany”), the German Democratic Republic (GDR) (“East Germany”) had consistently been considered a part of Germany under the roof of the still continuing “German Reich”. Under international law there were two States, the FRG and the GDR: both had been admitted separately to the United Nations in 1973. Internally, however, the situation was different: the GDR was not deemed to be a foreign State. In this regard, the Government of the FRG and the Federal Constitutional Court were in full agreement. Accordingly, it was assumed that a common German nationality still existed although the citizens of the GDR had a special status.
- 2) After the fall of the communist regime in the GDR as a consequence of the peaceful revolution in November 1989, it became clear very soon that the citizens in both parts of Germany were eager to attain reunification. In order to attain unchallengeable democratic support for that process, the first free elections ever were held in the GDR on 18 March 1990. Democratic parties (Christian Democratic Union and Social Democratic party) reached an overwhelming majority of more than 62%. That was a clear endorsement of German reunification.

## II. Procedure

- 1) The Basic Law of the FRG (BL) provided in Article 23 that “other parts of Germany” could unilaterally accede to the FRG, not requiring therefor any authorization or approval. The Peoples’s Chamber of the GDR decided in fact on 23 August 1990 to accede to the FRG (294 from 363 deputies voting “Yes”, 62 voting “No”). The accession was completed on 3 October 1990 after the Four Allied Powers had given their consent.
- 2) Obviously, many details remained to be settled in a specific manner. Two treaties were concluded between the two Germanys: First the Treaty on Monetary, Economic and Social Union (of 18 May 1990), which laid the concrete foundations for the unification process (entered into force on 1 July 1990). The great adventure for East Germans was the introduction of the German Mark West on 1 July 1990.
- 3) The second treaty contained comprehensive regulations primarily on domestic matters that required clarification (of 31 August 1990, entry into force 3 October 1990). The Länder (States) of the GDR became Länder of the United Germany within their existing boundaries.
- 4) In preparation for the finalization of the reunification process, the two Germanies concluded with the four Allied Powers, victors of World War II, the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany (12 September 1990). This treaty put an end to all the open issues (in particular: reparations for war damages).
- 5) As far as the European Economic Community (EEC) EEC Treaty was concerned, the Government of the United Germany took the view that no special treaty of accession was required. The identity of Germany had not changed. Changes in territorial size did not matter (principle of moving treaty frontiers). According to Article 227 of the EEC Treaty, that Treaty applied to the whole of the larger Germany. This viewpoint was shared by the European Commission against the opposition of some member States who held that the addition of the GDR to the FRG was such a dramatic event that some renegotiation of the EEC Treaty was

required. Such renegotiation could have been fatal for German unity, in particular because of Soviet reticence.

- 6) Obviously, some details had to be modified. In the long run at least, the number of seats in the European Parliament allocated to Germany could not remain the same since Germany as from 3 October 1990 was the most populous member State of the EEC.
- 7) In order to legitimize once again reunification, All-German elections were held in the united Germany on 2 December 1990. Again, the democratic parties (originally from the West) obtained an overwhelming majority (CDU: 38.3 %; Social Democratic Party: 35.2 %). This was the final democratic seal for the reunification process.

### **III. No problems**

- 1) The fact that the citizens from the former GDR could all of a sudden assert their rights as full-fledged German citizens caused no problems.
- 2) For those “new” citizens reunifications meant a tremendous gain of freedom. All of a sudden they had the right to travel to almost any country in the world while for decades they had been kept imprisoned in the GDR.
- 3) What would the legal system of the united Germany look like? The fact that the reunification process had been triggered by recourse to Article 23 BL meant that the constitution of the FRG was to be the constitution of the united country, with only minor modifications to take account of the changed circumstances. No review process took place. That perspective, provided for in Article 146 BL, was deliberately rejected, essentially out of fear that any delay might jeopardize the process. In particular, no additional “socialist” human rights were added to the catalogue established under the Basic Law, composed solely of traditional civil rights.
- 4) As far as ordinary laws were concerned, the decision was taken to extend the FRG legislation to the territories of the former GDR. This decision has been lamented many times. On the whole, however, it has proven useful to unify the

legal order of the united Germany according to the standards set in the west of the country.

#### **IV. Problems**

- 1) The major economic problem was the exchange rate between the German Mark West and the German Mark East. On the international markets, the German Mark East had almost no value. The exchange rate was set at 1 to 1 – certainly much too high, which put the East German industries into huge difficulties. This rate was also set for wages, salaries and pensions.
- 2) The fact that relations with the neighbouring socialist countries had to be re-ordered led to a loss of markets since the prices of produce of the GDR, invoiced in West German marks, became generally too high for the former eastern markets. Many manufacturing undertakings collapsed. Joblessness rose steeply.
- 3) The second large problem was the transformation of the East German industries. They were mainly State-owned. A process of privatization had to be launched. It lasted for many years and has not yet been totally completed. Many errors were committed. A great deal of the industrial assets were sold at excessively low prices to speculators who had no interest in continuing the production processes, closing down instead the factories as soon as possible and selling the attendant real estate values.
- 4) In this connection the question arose as to whether the confiscations effected in the former GDR should be reversed by restitution to the former owners. In this regard, the Government of the united Germany took an extremely cautious position, supported by the jurisprudence of the Federal Constitutional Court.
- 5) Another one of the major problems was the scope of NATO membership. Would the NATO Treaty also extend to the new territories in the former GDR? The Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany of 12 September 1990 established that the whole of Germany will fall under the protection of the NATO Treaty but that no nuclear weapons would be deployed there and that no foreign troops would be stationed there (Article 5).

## **V. Planning for Reunification**

1) For many decades, the FRG ran an All-German Ministry that undertook research work on the situation of the GDR. However, when in 1989 the GDR collapsed, a plan for how to proceed was lacking. The major determinations had to be made ad hoc, without the assistance of available blueprints. Very few pundits had predicted the end of the GDR. The opinion had prevailed in Western European circles that communism in Eastern Europe was there to stay.

Berlin, 2 March 2017

Christian Tomuschat

Professor Em., Humboldt University Berlin, Faculty of Law

President of the OSCE Court of Conciliation and Arbitration

## 4.10 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus



United Nations

S/2017/20

### Security Council

Distr.: General  
9 January 2017

Original: English

#### I. Introduction

1. The present report on the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) covers developments from 25 June 2016 to 15 December 2016 and brings up to date, since the issuance of my report dated 8 July 2016 ( [S/2016/598](#)), the record of activities carried out by UNFICYP pursuant to Security Council resolution [186 \(1964\)](#) and subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution [2300 \(2016\)](#).
2. As at 15 December 2016, the strength of the military component stood at 883 (56 women) for all ranks, and the strength of the police component stood at 67 (17 women) (see annex).

#### II. Significant political developments

3. During the reporting period, negotiations between the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mustafa Akıncı, continued in a sustained and results-oriented manner. The leaders maintained a regular and often intense schedule of meetings, while negotiators and experts also continued to meet regularly.
4. Through their intensive work in this leader-led process, Mr. Akıncı and Mr. Anastasiades succeeded in taking the talks further than they have ever been since 2008, achieving major progress in four of the six negotiation chapters: governance and power-sharing; property; the economy; and matters relating to the European Union. They also, for the first time, conducted negotiations on the issue of territory, held in Mont Pèlerin, Switzerland, which I opened on 7 November 2016.
5. Following two rounds of meetings in those negotiations, the leaders announced in a statement issued by the United Nations on 1 December that they would meet in Geneva from 9 to 11 January 2017. They also announced that a conference on Cyprus would be convened on 12 January in Geneva with the added participation of the guarantor Powers — Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. They further stated that other relevant parties would be invited as needed.



the period up to 30 September 2016, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

## VIII. Observations

39. Unprecedented progress has been made in the leader-led negotiation process over the past 19 months. I commend Mr. Akıncı and Mr. Anastasiades for their efforts. Through their vision, courage and leadership, they have advanced the talks in a definitive manner. At the same time, a number of delicate and important issues remain. The process has now reached a critical juncture, and I encourage the leaders to build on the momentum as they embark on the most crucial and perhaps most demanding part of their common journey. I also encourage all Cypriots to support the leaders as they move into the decisive weeks ahead, in pursuit of the common goal of reaching a comprehensive settlement as soon as possible. As the talks enter a pivotal stage, it is more important than ever that the guarantor Powers, Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and other relevant actors remain committed to supporting the ongoing and determined efforts of the leaders.

40. The growing efforts demonstrated by citizens' groups in Cyprus to build support for the settlement talks and reunification are also to be commended. As the leaders progress in their negotiations, I encourage them to fully engage civil society throughout Cyprus with a view to fostering broad grass-roots support for a solution. Women's groups have been an important part of civil society's efforts to support the talks, including their call for incorporating a gender dimension into the peace process in accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). I encourage the leaders to redouble their efforts to fully reflect the principles and aims of resolution 1325 on women and peace and security in their continuing deliberations.

41. The United Nations remains committed to supporting the vital humanitarian work being carried out on behalf of the families of victims through the Committee on Missing Persons. In the light of the advanced age of both relatives and witnesses, it is critical that the Committee be given the means and the information required to accelerate its work. In that respect, I am heartened to see that the resources of the Committee have been enhanced during this reporting period. This additional capacity is a particularly important effort in the light of the advanced age of many of the witnesses and relatives. The Committee's efforts to heal the wounds of the past not only are critical for those families directly affected by the tragedy of the missing, but also support the broader process of reconciliation between communities.

42. Progress relating to confidence-building measures will remain important in the period ahead. The opening of the two crossing points, in particular, will lead to major improvements in the lives of affected communities. While the progress made towards the safety of Cypriots via the clearance of five minefields in the north is welcome, much more remains to be done. The lack of action on the clearance of the minefield adjacent to the ceasefire line near Mammari, for example, continues to pose unnecessary risks. Minefields on the island have little military value, but pose a serious threat to life. I urge both sides to take advantage of the dedicated UNMAS demining capacity within UNFICYP in the coming months to rid Cyprus of

minefields across the island. Such clearance would greatly reduce the risk to civilians and allow increased freedom of movement in and around the buffer zone.

43. No serious incidents of violence between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots were reported during the November 2016 demonstrations. At the same time, I note the continued lack of information regarding the judicial processes pertaining to the events of November 2015. A clear resolution of those cases will serve to build confidence between the communities and signal that such acts will not be tolerated in Cyprus.

44. As a fundamental human right, there can be no doubt that freedom of worship across the island is important in and of itself. At the same time, it can also provide a context for enhanced interaction between the communities. I call for all restrictions on freedom of worship, including restrictions on access to religious sites, to be lifted.

45. I note joint efforts by the religious leaders continue to lend much-needed and broad-based support for freedom of worship and the peace. Sustained open dialogue combined with a commitment to freedom of worship by both sides can only serve to open doors for greater understanding and trust.

46. I continue to call upon both communities to exert efforts to create a climate conducive to achieving greater economic and social parity between the two sides and to widen and deepen economic, social, cultural, sporting or similar ties and contacts, including with a view to encouraging trade. Such contacts promote trust between the communities and help to address the Turkish Cypriots' concerns regarding isolation. I urge both leaders to persist in addressing those issues.

47. UNFICYP continues to play an important role in maintaining a calm and secure environment and helping to rebuild trust between the communities. Its ability to do so rests in large part on the commitment of the two sides to refrain from challenging the Force's authority. I urge the sides to formally accept the aide-memoire of 1989, without which there is repeated contestation of the United Nations delineation of the ceasefire lines. In the same vein, I call on both sides to support the Force's role in pre-empting and responding to civilian, law and order and military-related issues and in encouraging intercommunal activities to rebuild trust and cooperation.

48. UNFICYP is devoting increasing resources to deterring unauthorized civilian incursions into the buffer zone. Continued reports of aggression by hunters in the buffer zone against UNFICYP personnel are also of concern. The news that charges have been filed against those involved in the recent firing of weapons in the direction of UNFICYP personnel is welcome. I urge the authorities to ensure legal redress against the perpetrators.

49. As argued in previous reports, closed-circuit television cameras can confer a military advantage and constitute a violation of the status quo if unaccompanied by a reduction in military personnel. At the same time, closed-circuit television can help to monitor illegal activity in the buffer zone and thus contribute to improved security in the area. I therefore encourage steps towards a permanent reduction in the military presence and posture along the ceasefire line, starting in those positions

that have been enhanced with closed-circuit television cameras, particularly in the militarized area, within the Venetian walls of the old town of Nicosia.

50. I welcome the initial steps taken by the sides to engage with UNFICYP and my good offices mission on transition planning, pursuant to Security Council resolution [2300 \(2016\)](#). The establishment of a dedicated working group under the auspices of UNFICYP to enhance this work, together with inputs from the sides, is timely. Such planning will depend on further progress in the negotiations and on the deliberations of the sides regarding a United Nations support role in a reunified Cyprus. I underline the importance of UNFICYP, and any follow-on mission, being ready to respond to challenges both in the lead-up to and following the referendums. I hope to report back to the Council in due course on further developments on this matter.

51. I recommend that the mandate of the mission be extended for a period of six months, until 31 July 2017. I once again express my gratitude to the 36 countries that have contributed, since 1964, either troops, police or both to the mission. I pay tribute to the 186 peacekeepers who lost their lives over that period in support of peace in Cyprus. It is incumbent upon all parties to work in a determined manner towards a comprehensive settlement, to which all Cypriots aspire and which would obviate, in due course, the continuing need for a United Nations presence.

52. I would like to express my appreciation to Elizabeth Spehar, who began her assignment with UNFICYP on 10 June, for her service as my Special Representative in Cyprus and Head of Mission. As Deputy Special Adviser, Ms. Spehar has been directly supporting the talks in addition to leading the Force's support to my good offices mission during this crucial period.

53. I welcome UNFICYP Force Commander, Major General Mohammad Humayun Kabir of Bangladesh, who succeeded Major General Kristin Lund in November.

54. I would also like to express my deep appreciation to my Special Adviser, Espen Barth Eide, for his determined efforts to facilitate the talks between the sides.

55. Finally, I extend my thanks to all the men and women serving in UNFICYP for the efficiency and commitment with which they are discharging the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council.

This full UN Report is included in the online appendix of the section.

#### **4.11 German reunification: lesson learned**

The Washington Post newspaper in 2014 published an article on the four simple lessons learned from German Unification. They were:

**1.A divided country needs a joint mission**

**2.It only takes one generation to change attitudes and prejudices**

**3. Integrating foreigners is important (and eastern Germany would be better off if it had)**

#### 4.11.1 4 simple lessons the world could learn from German reunification

## The Washington Post

One day after the fall of the Berlin Wall, on Nov. 9, 1989, former West German chancellor Willy Brandt said: "Now what belongs together will grow together." With the opening of the border, communism in East Germany was doomed. But has Germany grown together, as Brandt predicted? Last week, WorldViews explained how eastern and western Germany are still divided in some ways. But there are also lessons to be learned from Germany unification. Here are four -- proposed by Germans from both sides of the now-destroyed Berlin Wall.

### **A divided country needs a joint mission**

The environment has always been a crucial issue in German politics. When the Ukrainian nuclear power plant Chernobyl caused fear and panic throughout Europe after its meltdown in 1986, the Berlin Wall was still standing. Soon after, a united Germany evolved as a world leader both in climate politics as well as in the development of technological solutions.

After the 2011 nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Japan, German Chancellor Angela Merkel -- who grew up in the east -- reversed her previous stance and announced a surprising and possibly groundbreaking goal: Germany would strive to become the first industrialized country to abolish both coal and nuclear power as energy sources. Renewable energy sources are to fill the void. Succeeding would likely be impossible if reunification had not happened. The east -- highly dependent on coal in communist times -- now produces 30 percent of its electricity using renewable energy, one-third more than western Germany does.

Wolfgang Gründinger, born in Germany's southern state of Bavaria, is the spokesperson for the Foundation for the Rights of Future Generations. This year, Germany for the first time generated more energy from renewables than any other source, including coal and nuclear power plants. The project is expensive, which has increased electricity prices, particularly in the east. Despite that, Gründinger considers the rise of renewable energy projects the country's first successful joint east-west project:

No matter whether one is east or west German, the overwhelming majority of us share the opinion that we need to transform our energy supplies from fossil and nuclear to renewable and sustainable sources to stop climate change and prevent a nuclear catastrophe.

In East Germany, renewable energies not only created jobs and economic perspectives in otherwise underdeveloped regions, but – and probably more important – restored the tarnished self-confidence of the east Germans.

### **It only takes one generation to change attitudes and prejudices**

Some argue that Germany's success in renewable energy is tightly connected to a new generation that does not care about the east-west prejudices of their parents anymore. Mike Goller was 16 years old when the Berlin Wall came down -- and before, he had never really thought about East Germany. The neighboring country seemed too distant. One month after the wall fell, he crossed the border to the GDR (the official abbreviation for East Germany) for the first time.

I do not ask myself whether German reunification was a success. It had to happen, and opening the borders of an imprisoned society is a success in itself.

Furthermore, we should not always ask the question: What went wrong? German reunification could have gone so much worse. Traditional and economic changes are slow, but if you look at the new generation you will see much less of a divide. Some differences prevail, but they matter much less to those who grew up in a united Germany.

Goller recently worked on a multimedia project called "Germany 25" that features 25 young Germans and what they think about their country. The majority of them consider the country's north and south to be further apart than east and west, according to another, more representative study. Their parents, however, are much less progressive: Many of them would not agree with their children, according to sociologist Andreas Zick, who has studied the different attitudes for years.

**Integrating foreigners is important (and eastern Germany would be better off if it had)**

Karamba Diaby is worried about another aspect: the conversation around the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. He arrived in then-East Germany in 1985 as an immigrant from Senegal. Back then, he knew little about the communist country that would cease to exist only four years later.

Today, he represents his home state, Saxony Anhalt, as a member of Germany's national parliament. When he was elected last year, his success made national headlines: Diaby is the country's first black member of parliament ever.

One aspect has been largely ignored in Germany: the lives of immigrants in the east. Many people came here from other communist countries such as Angola, Algeria, Cuba -- but their fate has largely been forgotten. Some of them returned; others stayed here. Their immigration, however, still needs to be facilitated. Many rural eastern German areas would hugely benefit economically if more foreigners lived there.

To Diaby, there can only be one solution: "Bring people in touch with each other," he says. This might seem an obvious idea, but it's not to many eastern Germans. Only 36 percent of eastern Germans said in a recent survey that they were interacting with foreigners in their daily lives, compared to 75 percent in western Germany.

### **Unification can lead to prosperity**

Manouchehr Shamsrizi, a 26-year-old Yale Global Justice Fellow, is among the most publicly prominent voices of Germany's younger generation as an adviser to the World Economic Forum's Global Shapers Community. According to him, German reunification bears many similarities with the emergence of the European Union.

Those of my friends who traveled a lot and visited other parts of the world really believe that a united Germany must logically aim for becoming part of the "United States of Europe" -- something one can be proud of as a progressive and value-based democratic union, rather than an estranged technocratic government somewhere in Brussels. Europe and other parts of the world could learn a lot from Germany.

East Germany is still lagging behind, but there has been lots of progress -- not only economically -- if you consider that in some German cities, about 96 percent of industrial jobs disappeared within only half a year after Germany unified. The cost of unification was high in the short run, but even if you solely look at it economically, the benefits will largely outweigh the disadvantages in the future. Already today, many cities in east Germany, like Leipzig or Berlin, are seen as international hotspots for entrepreneurship.

Could the reunification of Germany be a role model for Europe, economically as well as politically? Yes, I think so.

## 4.12 South Korea: unification process

Dr Marcus Noland is considered the expert on the issue of Korean Unification, he has written the authoritative book on the topic entitled 'Avoiding the Apocalypse: The Future of the Two Koreas' (2000). The future of the peninsula is explored in his book under three alternative scenarios: successful reform in North Korea, collapse and absorption (as happened in Germany), and "muddling through", in which North Korea, supported by foreign powers, makes ad hoc, regime-preserving reforms that fall short of fundamental transformation. Dr Noland was previously a Senior Economist at the Council of Economic Advisers in the Executive Office of the President of the United States.

Dr Noland's contribution to the Committee's report is available in full in the online appendix of this section, the entire conclusion of his submission is reprinted here. In it he outlines what the South Korean government has done to attempt to achieve its aim of unification. Professor Nolan noted:

### **4.12.1 Marcus Noland of the Peterson Institute for International Economics, Author of the Future of the 2 Koreas Korean Preparation for National Unification**

'From the standpoint of Ireland, the two cases appear radically different, and it is questionable how much from the Korean experience is applicable. Nevertheless, some Korean approaches may be worth examining'

The last ten years have seen an increase in inter-Korean military tensions and a marked decrease in cooperation. There are also no clear signs that the North Korean government is on the brink of collapse despite regular speculation along these lines. Formal unification activities in South Korea have clearly shifted from engagement to preparation for more abrupt unification scenarios.

More changes could be on the horizon. The South Korean president, Park Geun-hye, is in the process of being impeached and may not serve her full term in

office. Regardless, the country will hold elections within a year, and the leading declared candidates all lean towards less conditional, less reciprocal engagement policies toward the North. The pendulum could well swing back toward the more pro-engagement policies of the Kim Dae-jung/Roh Moo-hyun era. But a simple turning back of the clock is unlikely: North Korea has pursued nuclear weapons and long-range missile programs at an accelerating rate, is subject to tighter and more pervasive international economic sanctions under the auspices of the United Nations; and the issue of human rights has risen in prominence—all in distinction to the Sunshine years.

From the standpoint of Ireland, the two cases appear radically different, and it is questionable how much from the Korean experience is applicable. Nevertheless, some Korean approaches may be worth examining. They mainly involve actions that a country's political leadership can undertake autonomously to promote national reconciliation having regard to the eventual possibility that a majority of the population in Northern Ireland might someday favor unification.

First, with the creation of the Ministry of Unification, the South Koreans established a cabinet-level department tasked with a multiplicity of unification-related responsibilities. The ministry acts as a diplomatic interlocutor; administers a variety of programs relating to unification, including the Inter-Korean Cooperation Fund and refugee intake; and maintains a think tank that focuses on unification-related research. The latter function could be relevant to the Irish case insofar as the prospect of Brexit may significantly change economic conditions in Northern Ireland, as well as the Republic of Ireland's economic relations with the United Kingdom as a whole. In South Korea, the sorts of economic modeling that one would want to conduct in anticipation of these developments, as well as public discussion and dissemination, are supported by government-affiliated think tanks as well as bodies such as PCUP. The specifics obviously differ enormously—North Korea lacks the basic institutions of a market economy, and the cross-border flow of goods, capital, and people is highly restricted—all in contrast to the Irish case. Nevertheless, cross-border exchange across Northern Ireland and the Republic is subject to currency

risk, and with Brexit, EU transfers to Northern Ireland will disappear, and additional distortions are likely to be introduced. It is not hard to see the desirability of doing analysis similar or parallel to what the South Koreans conduct today.

Second, under the governments of Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye, there has been a renewed emphasis on educating the South Korean public, which is frankly unprepared for what could transpire in the medium to long run. These efforts have involved not only Lee and Park using the “bully pulpit” of the presidency to shine light on the unification issue but also a revitalization of the NUAC and the formation of the PCUP. Again, contemplating Brexit, one can grasp the desirability of public bodies in Ireland convening similar groups of experts and politically active citizens to enhance both the analytical quality and public awareness of contingency planning.

In sum, the Korean and Irish cases differ enormously. But that is not to say that there is nothing to be learned from South Korean preparations for eventual national unification. Some of the approaches, suitably altered and adapted, could make a positive contribution as Ireland contemplates its future.



#### 4.13 Future for Northern Ireland: where to from here

In this section the report looks at the various road maps for the future of Northern Ireland outlined by High Court Justice Humphreys which would be compatible with the mechanism of the Good Friday Agreement. Others which Humphreys outlines would be clearly a breach of this international agreement.

High Court Justice Humphrey in his book 'Countdown to Unity' states that

“There is no one single pathway to unity – rather there are alternative, but perhaps related roadmaps to reunification. Examination and analysis of these roadmaps is in the view of this author, a timely exercise in determining future actions towards achieving the majority aspiration to reunification.”<sup>299</sup>

“The project of unity will pose a considerable challenge to the partitionist mentality that pervades much of the southern political landscape. The examination of possible roadmaps to reunification presents a striking opportunity not simply to vindicate the right of self determination of the Irish people but also a unique opportunity to address the causes of conflict on the island and to promote lasting reconciliation between the different strands that constitute the national identities of the peoples that share these islands.”<sup>300</sup>

The roadmap outlined by Humphreys in his analysis of the future of this island are compiled in the remainder of this section.

Unitary State

Federal/ Confederal State

United Ireland with continuation of Northern Assembly under the Good Friday Agreement

Joint Authority

Joint Sovereignty

Independent Northern Ireland

Repartition

Repatriation

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<sup>299</sup> Richard Humphreys, Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.205.

<sup>300</sup> Richard Humphreys, Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.206

#### 4.13.1 Unitary state- united Ireland

“A unitary state would embrace the island of Ireland governed as a single unit under one government and one parliament elected by all the people of the island. It would seek to unite in agreement the two major identities and traditions in Ireland.”

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“The particular form of unity which the Forum [New Ireland Forum] would wish to see established was a unitary state, a perhaps surprisingly hard-line preference and one which was to fade in the intervening decades, to the extent that the SDLP at least is now committed to a policy of two jurisdictions within a united Ireland”<sup>302</sup> Sinn Féin in its discussion document ‘Towards a United Ireland’ has also state ‘all of us who wish to see a united Ireland need to be open to considering transitional arrangements’. Included among these Continued develoution to Stormont and a power- sharing executive in the north within an all-Ireland structure, A federal or confederal arrangement, A Unitary State, Other Arrangements.<sup>303</sup>

“The Forum [New Ireland Forum] stated that a unitary state would require a new, non- denominational constitution, to be formulated at an all-round constitutional conference convened not only by the Irish Government but also, perhaps surprisingly, by the British Government

“The European Convention on Human Rights and fundamental freedoms would be incorporated in the constitution and there would be built in protections for the unionist minority, for example the need for a weighted majority in parliament on certain issues, or a blocking power for the Seanad.

“As regards citizenship, the Forum envisaged that unionists would automatically acquire Irish Citizenship, but without prejudice to that, those who at present held British citizenship would continue to enjoy it

<sup>301</sup> New Ireland Forum, Reports and Studies and Reports on Specific Matters, Vol 1. P.31

<sup>302</sup> Richard Humphreys, Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.52.

<sup>303</sup> Sinn Fein Discussion Document “Towards a United Ireland, 2016. P.8

and could pass it on to their children.

“Further recognition of the unionist identity would come through an Irish-British council with both intergovernmental and inter-parliamentary structure, which would acknowledge the unique relationship between Ireland and Britain and provide expression of the long established connection which unionist have with Britain.”<sup>304</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.52

#### 4.13.2 Federal/ confederal state

The concept of a Federal or Confederal State was outlined by the New Ireland Forum in its final report, as High Court Justice Humphreys outlines in 'Countdown to Unity':

"The Forum also discussed a second option of a federal or confederal state. This option would have involved an elaborate institutional structure; separate parliaments and executives north and south, a federal parliament (possibly bicameral), a federal government and head of state and a federal or confederal supreme court to interpret the constitution and adjudicate on any conflicts of jurisdiction between the federal and state governments.

"The advantages of this system were extra protections for unionist and 'the retention within the North and South of many laws and practices reflecting the developments of both areas over the past 60 years'.

"The particular arrangements discussed by the Forum might be thought to be extremely elaborate, involving not one but three parliaments and governments in a united Ireland.

"The 'two parliament' solution does not seem to have been considered and in a way that is somewhat surprising given that it is the approach signalled by the 1937 constitution provision for devolved parliaments, as well as the fact that the two parliament approach is that which is currently in existence in Northern Ireland, albeit that the second parliament is in Westminster rather than Dublin."<sup>305</sup>

"Since the union with Scotland in 1707 there has been not parliament of England nor is there any need or demand for one and on the same basis there would be little demand for a 26 county parliament following a united Ireland. The new Ireland Forum as well as outlining the make-up of the structure of federal or confederal state set out many innovative proposals included the election of head of state. The functions of Head of State could be carried out by a President, the office alternating between persons representative of the Northern and Southern states."

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<sup>305</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009) p.35.

<sup>306</sup> New Ireland Forum, <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/politics/nifr.htm>

### 4.13.3 United Ireland with continuation of the Northern Assembly under the Good Friday Agreement

The SDLP has published a set of proposals in relation to unity which pin their colours firmly to the mast of the Good Friday Agreement. This document, 'A United Ireland and the Agreement', was published on 21 March 2005, although an earlier version had appeared in November 2003. The key message of the document is that:

“In the United Ireland to which we are committed all the agreements principals and protections would endure.”

The SDLP have proposed that the Stormont Assembly would continue

“as a regional parliament of a united Ireland”.<sup>307</sup>

The Executive would also continue, as would the Agreement's equality and Human Rights guarantees, and the right to identify oneself as British or Irish or both, and to hold passports accordingly. Going somewhat beyond the letter of the Agreement, however, the SDLP proposed corresponding protections for unionism to those currently in existence for nationalism.

East-West Cooperation would continue. In particular, just as the Irish Government has a say in the North, now the British Government would have a say in the North in a United Ireland.

Just as there is Northern representation in the Seanad at present, those in the North who want it should have representation in the House of Lords in a united Ireland.

The arguments in favour of such protections were trenchantly made: “unity must not be about the entrapment of a new minority ...in a united Ireland we will still need to find a way of sharing our society as equals every bit as much as we do today”.<sup>308</sup>

There was a pragmatic argument for maintaining the Good Friday Agreement institutions – it would provide certainty and stability and thereby assist in making the case for a united Ireland.

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<sup>307</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009) p.117.

<sup>308</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009) p.117.

#### 4.13.4 Joint authority

The third option considered by the New Ireland Forum was joint authority between the London and Dublin governments, subject to the devolution of major powers to a locally elected assembly and executive. Such an approach would also involve joint citizenship to be imposed automatically on all persons in Northern Ireland as well as a comprehensive Bill of Rights<sup>309</sup>

The report of The New Ireland Forum did not touch on all the nuances of the joint authority approach, in particular the question of whether a role for the Irish Government might be akin to joint authority without compromising the ultimate sovereignty of the United Kingdom parliament over Northern Ireland ie joint authority predicated on a continuation of Northern Ireland's formal position as part of the United Kingdom.<sup>310</sup>

Chapter 8 of the New Ireland Forum outlines what Joint Authority would be its opening paragraph states:

“Under joint authority, the London and Dublin governments would have equal responsibility for all aspects of the government of Northern Ireland. This arrangement would accord equal validity to the two traditions in Northern Ireland and would reflect the current reality that the people of the North are divided in their allegiances. The two governments, building on existing links and in consultation with nationalist and unionist opinion, would establish joint authority designed to ensure a stable and secure system of government.”

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<sup>309</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009) p.53.

<sup>310</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009) p.54

<sup>311</sup> New Ireland Forum, <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/politics/nifr.htm>

On the Anglo Irish Agreement of 1985, former Taoiseach Garrett Fitzgerald comments that:

“From a nationalist point of view a balanced solution to this medium-term problem would have been joint government by Britain and Ireland within the context of continuing British sovereignty, until such time as a majority in Northern Ireland sought a transfer of sovereignty over Northern Ireland to a new all-Ireland State. But the concept of a forum of joint authority that would leave British sovereignty unaffected was an exercise in subtlety which the British Government was not prepared to contemplate and such a system, it was also argued, would have a propensity for deadlock which could be highly dangerous.”<sup>312</sup>

New Ireland Forum was credited as being the first of many steps on the road to the Anglo Irish Agreement and eventually the Good Friday Agreement.

The issue of Joint Authority was raised a recently as January 2017 when SDLP Leader Colum Eastwood said:

“If post election an executive cannot be formed, the only acceptable position for the nationalist community is joint authority between the Irish and British governments. We cannot allow a DUP-run government to be solely replaced by British direct rule ministers.”

#### **4.13.5 British government response to joint authority**

British Prime Minister Thatcher in her ‘Out. Out, Out’ speech made after a British-Irish summit dismissed the proposal of the Irish Government of ‘Joint Authority’ saying it would be a “derogation from sovereignty”.

At the press conference in Downing Street after the British-Irish summit, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher also dismissed all of the New Ireland Fourm’s proposals:

“I have made it quite clear ... that a unified Ireland was one solution that is out. A second solution was confederation of two states. That is out. A

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<sup>312</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.55,56.

third solution was joint authority. That is out. That is a derogation from sovereignty. We made that quite clear when the Report was published. Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom. She is part of the United Kingdom because that is the wish of the majority of her citizens. The majority wish to stay part of the United Kingdom.”

The Unionist response to the New Ireland Forum was ‘The Way Forward’. Lord Kilbrandon produced an unofficial report attempting to reconcile elements of the New Ireland Forum report and ‘The Way Forward’. This report informed the British government's view leading up to the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985.

#### 4.13.6 Joint sovereignty

Examples of current arrangements of Joint Sovereignty internationally are rare.

Justice Humphreys points out the distinction between Joint Sovereignty and Joint Authority as proposed by the New Ireland Forum.

“Joint Sovereignty should be distinguished from joint authority in the sense that joint authority could involve both governments taking responsibility for non-devolved issues, without infringing the status of Northern Ireland as part of the UK. Joint Sovereignty would only exist if Northern Ireland were part of both states, or administered by both but part of neither. Bearing such a distinction in mind, while joint authority could form a transitional stage between the current position and ultimate unity, the main and possibly fatal disadvantage of joint sovereignty, by contrast, considered in terms of a transitional mechanism to unity, is that there is no natural exit point from it where upon sovereignty would shift exclusively to the Irish side. If sovereignty does not shift on the basis of 50 per cent + 1 support for unity, why should it shift on the basis of 52.5 per cent or 55 per cent support? In the final analysis the 50 percent + 1 rule is the only mechanism for determining sovereignty which is based on a logical principal, and in any event is legally enshrined in the agreement, but rather than provided for 100 per cent transfer of control of Northern Ireland to the Irish side on the basis of a 50 per cent + 1 vote, a lengthy transitional period of joint authority – initially within the UK and subsequently with in Irish jurisdiction – might provide a simpler and , in the end, more flexible

transitional mechanism to avoid the abrupt discontinuities of the 50 per cent + 1 approach of the Good Friday Agreement.”<sup>313</sup>

In terms of joint sovereignty, an interesting feature of proposals for such a form of government internationally, is that they are awfully thin on the ground. Joint Sovereignty has been suggested in relation to highly contentious areas such as Gibraltar, Jerusalem and Kashmir. But actual examples of joint sovereignty working satisfactorily or at all are hard to find.<sup>314</sup> An Oireachtas Library and Research paper on Joint Sovereignty has been included in full in the online appendix of this section.

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<sup>313</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009) p.109.

<sup>314</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009) p.113

#### **4.13.7 Independent Northern Ireland, repatriation & repartition would be a breach of Good Friday Agreement**

High Court Justice Humphreys discusses how it would be a breach of the Good Friday Agreement if there was any move for an Independent Northern Ireland or any attempt to repartition the island:

The Good Friday Agreement at its most fundamental level rule out exotic alternative 'solutions' to the problem of the constitutional status of Northern Ireland such as joint sovereignty, independence, repartition or any other alternative including in particular the idea of joint consent ie that a majority of both communities would have to consent before a united Ireland could come into existence. That notion is wholly without legal or logical basis. The clear and unambiguous language of the Good Friday Agreement firmly rejects all of these alternative proposals which would have the effect of undermining the will of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland as expressed in a referendum. The only legally permissible way in which any such alternative solution could be advanced would be by way of further international agreement between the two sovereign governments, a project which holds little attraction.

Repartition would be wholly unjust and unequal outcome given that nationalist have been asked to live with in the six counties entity on the basis of a particular test – the majority wish of the entity- so it would be historically absurd and inherently unjust to change the test just as the answer is moving in a direction that does not suit the unionist position. In any event repartition would be a breach of international law, in the absence of any agreement by the Irish government to such a course. Such agreement seems to be extremely unlikely in present circumstances.

The importance of the status of the Good Friday Agreement as an indefinite feature of the institutional landscape, premised on the principal that a majority will decide on a united Ireland versus a United Kingdom, combined with a protection for the minority of participation in a power sharing executive, rest in the likelihood that as a majority for a united Ireland draws closer, efforts will be made to unravel the guarantees contained in the Good Friday Agreement that a united Ireland will be given effect to should a majority wish. It seems likely that all of the exotic alternatives to the simple right of self-determination referred to

in the agreement will be trotted out in the years to come as the prospect of a nationalist majority in Northern Ireland becomes more likely. For the present purposes, it is sufficient to note that not only have the Northern Ireland parties solemnly committed themselves to give effect to the wish of a majority for a united Ireland, should that be the case, but the two governments have solemnly committed themselves to the same principal as a matter of binding international law.

#### 4.13.8 Independent Northern Ireland

It is stated by Justice Humphreys that:

“One could envisage that in the dying days of a Unionist majority, if all unionist parties threw their weight behind a campaign for independence, a bare majority might be forthcoming for such a proposition within the six counties as a last means of staving off unification.

“In this scenario from a unionist point of view an independent Northern Ireland with a continuing, albeit diminishing, Unionist majority would be free in practice to abolish the Good Friday Institutions and restore old fashioned Stormont majority rule, with all of the prospects and possibility for oppression of the nationalists/republican section of the community that would be left behind by the British Government within an independent Northern Ireland, whether of six counties or of some smaller number. Under this system, mechanism would be devised to put off the evil day of a nationalist/ republican majority. Such mechanisms could include creating Nationalists Bantustans within the six counties, being notionally self-governing but in fact under Stormont rule or expelling overwhelming nationalist areas from the six counties altogether, leaving them no practical alternative but to be governed from Dublin, while a dismembered Northern Ireland thereby would bolster its Unionist majority- through “Unionism” in the context of an Independent Northern Ireland would take on a somewhat theological character. No doubt such an old style Stormont could devise ways in which unionist identity and affinity with Britain could be maintained not with standing the formal separation in terms of sovereignty. For instance, assuming that her majesty was

prepared to agree, there would be nothing stopping an independent Northern Ireland from retaining the queen as head of state, thereby providing a basis for contending that the union was still a reality at some level. The likely economic instability if not outright bankruptcy ('at current level of spending') of an independent Northern Ireland might not be sufficient to dissuade a bare unionist majority from trying such a last throw of the dice. The Good Friday Agreement firmly rules out the possibility of an Independent Northern Ireland quite deliberately, the only two constitutional options proffered in the agreement are a continued United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and a united Ireland."<sup>315</sup>

"Even if a majority in the six counties expressed a desire for independence, the British government would be obliged as a matter of international law by the Good Friday Agreement to decline to give effect to such a wish – even though formally a request so expressed would be a wish by a majority in Northern Ireland for a change in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland."<sup>316</sup>

#### 4.13.9 Repartition

Humphreys argues that "the most logical strategy of constitutional opposition to an emerging majority in Northern Ireland in favour of a united Ireland would be to seek repartition."<sup>317</sup> It is here again that the ill-fated boundary commission of 1924-25, which at the time was considered a success for unionism in that it formulated the border and the status quo, now comes back on the horizon.

One of the ironies of the failure of the Boundary commission is that, had it 'succeeded' in transferring the predominantly nationalist part of Northern Ireland into the new dominion south of the border, the effect might really have been to rule out Irish unification by consent in perpetuity.<sup>318</sup>

Logically Humphreys states that it was only because the 6 county 'statelet' remained at that size that there is a possibility of a majority emerging in favour of Irish unity

<sup>315</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.151,152.

<sup>316</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.151,152.

<sup>317</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.148.

<sup>318</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.148.

exists.

It would be surprising indeed if some attempt were not made to propose such a scheme as the two sections of the community draw closer in numerical strength

For unionists the prospect of an impending majority in favour of unity would certainly conjure up a scenario where repartition was seen as the last throw of the dice to preserve the union, at least for that part of Northern Ireland east of the Bann.<sup>319</sup>

As Humphreys states, it is however a central and fundamental feature of the Good Friday Agreement that the two governments and all of the subscribing parties, including the unionist parties participating in the Stormont talks, as well as majorities North and South, accepted the principal that the right to self-determination of the Irish Nation is to be exercised by reference to the political jurisdictions of the island of Ireland as they currently exist and not as they might artificially be gerrymandered at some future point.

The Good Friday Agreement is clearly and unambiguously predicated on the premise that any decision on a possible united Ireland is to be taken by the people of the twenty six counties and the people of the six counties acting jointly and that majorities in favour of unity are to be assessed on a twenty-six-county and a six-county-basis only, and not on the basis of any other calculation or division of the Irish people.

In simple terms Humphreys argues the option of repartition would simple not be lawful in terms of the Good Friday Agreement as a matter of international law.<sup>320</sup>

#### 4.13.10 Repatriation

In his book 'A United Ireland: Why Unification is Inevitable and How it Will Come About' Kevin Meagher, an advisor to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Shaun Woodward 2007-09, quoted a story from the Belfast Telegraph of 2013.

“During a late night conversation in 1995 at Chequers the British Prime Minister suggested to Sir David Goodall who was a senior diplomat negotiating the land mark Anglo Irish Agreement that Catholics living in Northern Ireland could be moved to live in Southern Ireland instead.

She said ‘If the northern [Catholic] population want to be in the south,

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<sup>319</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.148.

<sup>320</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009 ) p.148.

well why don't they move there? After all, there was a big movement of population in Ireland, wasn't there?'

Nobody could think what it was. So finally I said, 'Are you talking about Cromwell, Prime Minister?' She said, 'That's right, Cromwell.'<sup>321</sup>

The evidence of Sir David Goodall regarding the Repatriation concept espoused by former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is needless to state disturbing.

#### 4.14 Road map: New Ireland Forum 2

In his book 'Countdown to Unity' High Court Justice Humphreys states:

"over all what emerges from this study is that there is no one single pathway to unity – rather there are alternative, but perhaps related roadmaps to reunification. Examination and analysis of these roadmaps is, in the view of this author, a timely exercise in determining future actions towards achieving the majority aspiration to reunification."<sup>322</sup>

It does no favours to those of a unionist persuasion to pretend that the nationalist aspiration does not exist, and it seems better and more open to acknowledge its existence clearly in a spirit of fraternity.<sup>323</sup> The Good Friday Agreement again provides a clear road map towards overcoming the challenge that would be posed by unconstitutional unionist violence.<sup>324</sup> The project of unity will pose a considerable challenge to the partitionist mentality that pervades much of the southern political landscape. The examination of possible roadmaps to reunification presents a striking opportunity not simply to vindicate the right of self determination of the Irish people but also a unique opportunity to address the causes of conflict on the island and to promote lasting reconciliation between the different strands that constitute the national identities of the peoples that share these islands.<sup>325</sup> The

<sup>321</sup> Kevin Meagher, 'The end of the beginning': Reflections on Brexit, devolution and the prospects of Irish reunification, (2016)

<sup>322</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009) p. 205.

<sup>323</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009) p.206.205.

<sup>324</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009) p.155..

<sup>325</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009) p.206.

New Ireland Forum of 1984 was seen as a way forward.

As Justice Humphreys in his book 'Countdown to Unity' says Garrett Fitzgerald suggested, a united nationalist analysis is the only real mechanism for political progress, as unionism is frozen by its own 'historical dilemma'.<sup>326</sup>

Justice Humphreys in his final analysis gives rise to the idea of a body like the New Ireland Forum

"Developing a broad consensus on the way forward and proposing measures to promote both inclusion of the British Identity and nationalist goals in parallel could be a task to be teased out by the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation or some other appropriate body."<sup>327</sup>

The Anglo-Irish Agreement signed in November 1985 by the Taoiseach Garrett Fitzgerald and the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, in the words of Justice Humphreys:

"drew heavily on the analysis contained in the (New Ireland) forum report and to that extent the report's urging on the British Government to drastically change its approach and to address the fundamentals of the causes of the conflict was outstandingly successful".<sup>328</sup>

Humphreys goes on to point out that:

"Overall, however, the Forum report was vital in breaking the political log jam in Northern Ireland and set the scene for the negotiation and conclusion of the Anglo- Irish Agreement"<sup>329</sup> There would be a great deal of merit in nationalist Ireland negotiating and agreeing, so far as possible, the kind of unity that would be put to the people in such a referendum. Even if unionism did not take up an invitation to participate in such a negotiation, an agreed or consensus position, or even a majority position from the nationalist side, would add a great deal of clarity and reassurance to what would otherwise be a fraught and

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<sup>326</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009) p.206.

<sup>327</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009) p.206.

<sup>328</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009) p.54.

<sup>329</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009), p.54.

The road map to achieve the constitutional aspiration of the peaceful reunification of Ireland and its peoples under the Good Friday Agreement could begin in the same way as the original New Ireland Forum. We recommend the establishment of A New Ireland Forum 2 which would be the mechanism whereby the status quo logjam and long term consequence of Brexit for the people of this Island could be addressed.

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<sup>330</sup> Richard Humphreys, *Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin 2009) p.112.





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PennState

UNESCO Chair in Community,  
Leadership, and Youth Development,  
The Pennsylvania State University

# Northern Ireland

# Returning to Violence

as a

**Result of a Hard Border due to Brexit**

or a

**Rushed Border Poll:  
Risks for Youth**

Research by

**Senator Mark Daly**

&

**UNESCO Chairs**

**Professor Pat Dolan & Professor Mark Brennan**

Based on the recommendation of the report

'Brexit & the Future of Ireland Uniting Ireland & Its People In Peace & Prosperity'

Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement



## FOREWORD

In 2017 I was honoured to be appointed Rapporteur for the first report in the history of the state by a Dail or Senate committee on achieving a united Ireland. The 1,232 page report 'Brexit & the Future of Ireland: Uniting Ireland & It's People in Peace & Prosperity' was adopted unanimously by the All Party Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

One of the key recommendations agreed by the all committee members was to:

**'Establish an international task force with experts in security so that plans to meet any risks may be devised and implemented.'**

I began working with global experts on the issue of counter terrorism and the prevention of radicalization. Those I asked to help carry out this research were initially asked to assist in carrying out research on maintaining the peace in Northern Ireland in advance of a border poll.

The remit of the research expanded as the issue of a border poll was raised by the British Prime Minister in May 2018 due to the realisation that there could be a return of a Hard Border on the Island because of Brexit. The genuine fear is that as a consequence of a return to a hard border there will be a return to violence in Northern Ireland.

Those who helped me compile this report on a return to violence in the event of a hard border or preventing violence in advance of a premature border poll on a united Ireland are experts in the area of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and Counter Terrorism.

I am grateful to the experts who have contributed to this report including Michael Ortiz, Professor Pat Dolan and Professor Mark Brennan.

Michael Ortiz was appointed by Secretary of State John Kerry to serve as the first US diplomat focused on countering violent extremism (CVE) policy at the Department of State. As Deputy Counterterrorism Coordinator, Ortiz led diplomatic efforts to persuade foreign governments and the UN to implement CVE policies and programmes. Previously, he served as Senior Advisor to the National Security Advisor at the White House, was the Director for Legislative Affairs at the National Security Council, and worked in the White House Office of Legislative Affairs. Earlier in his career, he worked in the offices of Senators Obama and Reid.

Professor Pat Dolan is Director of the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre at the National University of Ireland, Galway and holds the prestigious UNESCO Chair in Children, Youth and Civic Engagement, the first to be awarded in the Republic of Ireland. Prof Dolan and his team deliver a comprehensive research and education programme of work towards the objective of promoting civic engagement and leadership skills among children and youth, including resiliency building and empathy education. He has worked with and for families as a practitioner, service manager, and academic. Prof Dolan has completed an extensive body of research on family issues including Family Support and Prevention, a longitudinal research on adolescents, their perceived mental health, resilience and social support. He is joint founder of the 'Youth as

Researchers' international programme and has published vastly in a wide range of academic publications. He has acted as child youth and family policy and practice advisor to national and international NGOs and Governments around the world.

Professor Mark Brennan is the UNESCO Chair for Community, Leadership, and Youth Development and Professor of Leadership and Community Development at the Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Brennan's teaching, research, writing, and program development concentrate on the role of civic engagement, leadership, agency, and empathy in peacebuilding, youth and community development process. His work has also increasingly focused on the role of youth as active contributors to peace building, social justice, and functioning societies. Dr. Brennan has over 25 years of experience in designing, conducting, and analysing social science research related to community and youth development. This work has involved extensive comparative research throughout Ireland, the United States, Europe, Africa, Asia and Central/South America.

Professors Brennan and Dolan are co-founders of the *Global Network of UNESCO Chairs on Children, Youth, and Community*, which includes the UNESCO Chair programme at the University of Ulster, and UNESCO Chairs in Uganda, Brazil, Korea, USA, and Mexico. Through this network and their related work, they have been at the forefront of UNESCO research, programming, and policy in the area of Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE).

The UNESCO Chairs praise the great work that is being done and has been done in Northern Ireland that has help transform many parts of the society. However they do point out that some in the 'Agreement Generation' particularly those youths living in the most deprived communities are suffering from a 'Loss of memory of harm'. They were born in the decade before and period since the Good Friday Agreement. Thankfully they have no first-hand memory of the destruction and devastation of the troubles.

The challenge for us all is to make sure the peace process is not jeopardised by a return to a hard border due to Brexit or a premature border poll. That peace won by previous generations must not be jeopardised by the current generations and that peace must be passed on intact for generations to come.

## PREFACE

There will be a return to violence in Northern Ireland in the event of the installation of infrastructure, custom checks and security on the Irish border as a result of Brexit. This is the clear findings of the research and the analysis of the current situation in Northern Ireland by UNESCO Chairs on Children, Youth, and Community, Professors Pat Dolan and Professor Mark Brennan. They reach the same conclusion as did the Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report and leading social and political experts.

Therefore there is a real need to prevent a return to the 'Hard Border' of the past in order to protect the Good Friday Agreement & the peace process in Ireland. Those who compiled this report were requested by Senator Mark Daly initially to assist in carrying out research on maintain the peace process in advance of a referendum on Irish Unity. This was based on the recommendation of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Implementation of Good Friday Agreement.

In 2017 the All Party Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement unanimously adopted the first ever report by a Dail or Senate Committee on Irish Unity.

This report which Senator Daly compiled on behalf of the committee is entitled 'Brexit & the Future of Ireland: Uniting Ireland & It's People in Peace & Prosperity'. One of the key recommendations agree by the all committee members was to: **'Establish an international task force with experts in security so that plans to meet any risks may be devised and implemented.'**

Initially research was solely focused on fulfilling the recommendations of committee; Senator Daly began working with global experts on the issue of Countering Violent Extremism, Counter Terrorism and the prevention of radicalization specifically in advance of a referendum on a United Ireland.

However since starting work on the research in the Spring of 2018 the scope broadened because of the real threat of a return of a Hard Border on the Island because of Brexit.

Those who also helped conduct the analysis of the issue of preventing radicalisation and mobilisation in advance of a referendum on a united Ireland included Michael Ortiz. He has given of his experience and suggested a way forward for Northern Ireland in advance of any border poll. This research has already been included in the 2017 Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement report on Irish Unity and we have included his recommendations here.

***"Ireland and Northern Ireland have long struggled with terrorism, but have made tremendous progress in security in recent years. As leaders across the island grapple with the concept of a united Ireland, it is important to consider the ways in which future violence could be prevented, including by strengthening counterterrorism and law enforcement efforts, supporting civil society organizations, and religious and educational institutions, and providing citizens with the tools they need to intervene during the radicalization process."***

***I would recommend the following steps:***

***First, the government should launch a national-level task force or coordinating mechanism with national and local officials, law enforcement, civil society and other local leaders to examine potential threats, better understand the drivers of violent extremism (even if politically sensitive) and evaluate current resources. This would help everyone have a baseline understanding of what the challenge is and what needs to be done.***

***Second, this task force or coordinating mechanism should develop a national strategy for CVE. I would recommend following the guidance on the development of national action plans in the UN's Plan of Action. It is absolutely critical that a wide range of voices, including government officials, law enforcement, civil society and educators, among others, be involved in the creation of this strategy.***

***Third, identify an individual or body to execute the strategy. Some countries designate a CVE coordinator and others create or designate a government agency with a CVE mandate. There must also be clear metrics for progress in strategy execution and communications mechanisms to regularly engage with local communities. In most cases, these are very local issues that must be resolved at the local level.***

***Unfortunately, there is not an easy fix to violent extremism. However, given U.S. leadership and international efforts on this issue for a number of years, there is a now a global support architecture, which can help countries think through their approaches to this challenge. If Ireland is able to launch a transparent, open and inclusive process with strong communications mechanisms, sufficient programmatic resources and creative proposals for strengthening community resilience, I believe this will go a long way in working to prevent terrorism before it starts."***

Similarly, Professor Dolan and Brennan have studied the issue of extremism world-wide and have advised governments globally on solutions to the issue facing them.

Their research highlights the issue of the 'loss of memory of harm' in the 'Agreement Generation'. The young people born just before and since the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 who have no first-hand knowledge of the horror of the Trouble's or the devastating consequences of violence. Some of the 'Agreement Generation' have been given a romanticised account of the conflict.

The research by the two UNESCO Chairs importantly highlights the serious problems facing some of that agreement generation who live in the most disadvantaged loyalist and republican areas. However they also offered solutions based on extensive research in Northern Ireland and globally, in countries who face similar challenges.

The importance of integration of society particularly the integration of young people at home, at school and in communities is examined in this report, as is the importance integration in non-formal education settings particularly through the medium of the arts, sports, music, and other important cultural traditions.

Professor Dolan and Brennan outline the importance of giving a sense of belonging and a stakeholding in society, particularly to the marginalised and disadvantaged youth of both traditions. Also they outline the dividend from the investment in teaching empathy in education as a vital way of preventing youth violent extremism.

The professors explain that apart from maintaining the peace and keeping people safe, investment in empathy education yields positive outcomes for society in terms of cost benefit analysis and social return on investment. There is also the social benefit in terms of increased wellbeing. The impact of a return to violence in terms of increased security costs, damage to property, increased prison numbers and loss of life is clear as is the consequent need for more expenditure on health and mental health service.

A critical part of preventing violent extremism is to be found at community level

leadership which can counteract the emergence of extremism by providing a space for interaction between those of different traditions. **However in some areas in northern Ireland those community leaders are the ones who are involved in the radicalisation of the youth, an issue that has to be tackled as a matter of urgency.**

Empowering young people to shape the society in which they live and the future which they will inherit is vital and this report outlines what can be done through social networks and cross community contact which would help develop functioning communities.

Professors Dolan and Brennan acknowledge the positive work done in Northern Ireland by many individual, groups, schools and civil society's organisation. They argue for the need to build a common understanding of community in peace building, they point out that it is the day to day interaction with local people that shape lives. Therefore the emergence of a new sense of community in Northern Ireland could be a process for bringing people together.

The concluding element of the research report by the UNESCO Chairs makes a series of recommendations including the warning that the choice is clear between a road to conflict or the building of a stable, civil society. From the latter can be built a more equitable and inclusive society.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fortunately, youth living in Northern Ireland have not had to endure the violence that previous generations experienced. However, they do still live in a post-conflict environment with residual issues such as levels of deprivation, covert on-going paramilitary activity, and sporadic violence. Young people are also coming to terms with the present and future implications of Brexit, which could lead to the introduction of a hard border between Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland, leaving young people to consider what this means for their opportunity to work, travel and study. Conversely, a very possible referendum on the unification of the island of Ireland has major implications for all young people but notably for the unionist youth community. This paper explores the implications for youth including probabilities, as well possibilities, of a return to violent extremism among young people. ***Without direct efforts to engage citizens of all backgrounds, there will be a return to violence in the event of a hard border or rushed unification referendum on the island of Ireland, and this will involve youth. The only question will be the scale of the violence.***

This policy paper focuses on youth in the context of Northern Ireland society, Brexit, and the fragile environment which would be thrown into chaos should a hard border be put in place and/or a rushed and ill-timed referendum for unification be called. Without careful consideration and deliberate interventions designed to bring citizens of all backgrounds together, youth and others could be quickly drawn into the conflict and escalating violent extremism. Apart from the potential of 'history empathy' education as a key tool to help understanding and healing in school contexts, the role of the arts including music and music technology, drama visual arts and creative writing are highlighted as having specific potential in supporting youth towards peace building in Northern Ireland.

Included in the paper are thoughtful considerations of the contexts and concerns of the various traditions and communities in Northern Ireland. Not least the issue of loss of memory of harm not being transferred across generations leaves youth unaware of the human experiences of horror and death that went before, and at risk of false romanticisation of the past. The paper also seeks to provide a path forward to avoid the emergence of conflict and navigate a continually changing Northern Ireland society. To do so, detailed discussions of youth development research, civic engagement, community development, global citizenship education, empathy education, local capacity building efforts are all

provided. While the authors recognise the excellent work being done for youth in Northern Ireland across and between communities, this urgently needs to be scaled up. These serve as a foundation for peacebuilding and cross community coordination to thwart extremism and violence. They also serve as critical precursors that must be in place long, long before people begin to talk about what Northern Ireland might look like in the future, let alone begin serious discussions of referendums. The paper concludes with a series of detailed considerations and recommendations. Overarching recommendations are presented below and more detailed descriptions of these in the main document:

## **Conclusions, Critical Considerations, and Recommendations**

### ***Extensive Engagement of Youth from All Backgrounds***

- Youth need to be asked about and actively engaged in framing the Northern Ireland of the future.
- Extensive on the ground research with marginalized youth of all backgrounds needs to be conducted to understand the challenges, motivations, and conditions that lead toward and away from violence.
- Youth driven anti-extremism and anti-violence media campaigns are needed to proactively prevent the emergence of violence both in a Brexit and possible referendum environment.
- Global citizenship education should be utilized in all school settings. Such education does not focus on a particular tradition, religion, or background. It focuses on a shared humanity and well-being.
- Empathy education programs would be particularly relevant for adoption in this setting. Such programs are shown to decrease extremism, violence, and antisocial/self-destructive behaviours, while at the same time increasing educational attainment, social support, and positive civic engagement.
- Expand the use and promotion of applied youth leadership programs designed to give youth the skills necessary to more effectively lead their local societies in more stable and civil directions.
- Empower Youth as Activists for Peace through Social Media. To compliment and advance the UNESCO *Youth as Researchers* efforts, structures and programs must be developed for youth researchers to immediately translate their findings into counter-extremism narratives and calls to action.

- Research into forming online networks that facilitate cross cultural communication and indeed involve actual facilitators working virtually; research on, and trials of formats that build cross-cultural communication in marginalized youth who turn to the internet for companionship, self-identification, and self-assertion.
- Comprehensive community capacity building programs are needed to firmly engage youth, provide them with ownership of local decisions that impact them, and identify an expanded role for them in current and future decision making. They are the generation that will most directly face the consequences of Brexit, future referendums, and as members of a potential new Ireland.

### ***Building Stable, Civil Communities and a New Northern Ireland***

- Make interaction take place among diverse local resident populations, and particularly youth. Creating and using common venues for interaction (music, sports, festivals, educational, holiday events) can be a nonconfrontational setting where people can encounter each other, establish communication channels, and recognize common needs.
- Better facilitate cross-community communication and interaction between these segregated localities. These efforts can also be further supported by facilitating understanding of each other's common needs and concerns through media, internet-based methods, television, and other outreach means.
- Seek both age cohort, but also intergenerational dialogue, for building and maintaining a sense of a common, basic identity of a new Northern Ireland. Use this to create a narrative where cultural identities are still important and relevant, but a basic common image is agreed upon for what Northern Ireland's identity is (ex, a vibrant diverse local society that bridges Irishness and Britishness, and connects these to a broader EU/European connection).
- Promote and facilitate substantive interaction with people of all backgrounds to explore the legacy of the Troubles. In particular, communication and honest discussions between youth and older individuals (ideally cross-community) to understand what life was really like during the conflict.
- In anticipation of a potential future referendum on unification and /or a new Ireland, regardless of when this emerges, program and policy makers need to establish a basis for cross-society interaction, integrated schooling, and integrated existences (housing, work, and other settings).

## **CONCLUSION**

Northern Ireland, long facing social and political challenges following the Troubles, faces a new unforeseen external challenge to its well-being. These challenges are not the result of age-old differences, divisions, or debates, but external geopolitical disputes. For example, the chaos brought on by Brexit and a changing world will not distinguish between Nationalists and Unionists. Nor will it distinguish between Republican, Loyalist, or all shades of ideology in between. Now, perhaps more than ever, all segments of Northern Ireland society have a common, general need to address. In this setting, the coordinated collective action of all communities and citizen groups will be essential to charting a way forward. Youth will need to be at the forefront of this movement.

The focus of this policy paper on youth civic engagement, education, and community-based capacity building does not propose a utopia that sets aside centuries old grievances and divisions. That said, through the processes outlined we can agree on common courses of action that benefit all. Acting together to facilitate peace and stability, does not take away or diminish any tradition, culture, belief or background. This only helps to create something new that is more dynamic, adaptive, inclusive far removed from politics, ideology, and the baggage of history.



## **Northern Ireland Returning to Violence**

**as a**

**Result of a Hard Border due to Brexit**

**or a**

**Rushed Border Poll:**

**Risks for Youth**

**Prof Pat Dolan and Prof Mark Brennan**

## Introduction

Young people living across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland do so in a time reflecting rapid change which includes personal and societal challenges. Fortunately for youth living in Northern Ireland, they have not had to endure the violence that previous generations experienced directly and or witnessed. However, that said they do still live in a post-conflict environment with residual issues such as levels of deprivation that are concerning and often covert on-going paramilitary activity. Young people are also coming to terms with the present and future implications of Brexit, which could lead to the introduction of a hard border between Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland, leaving young people to consider what this means for their opportunity to work, travel and study. Just as a border between the two jurisdictions has major implications particularly for nationalist youth, conversely, a very possible referendum on the unification of the island of Ireland has major implications for all young people but notably for the unionist youth community. In relation to the latter in particular this paper explores the implications for young people including probabilities as well possibilities of a return to violent extremism among young people. ***All indications are that without direct efforts to engage citizens of all backgrounds, there will be a return to violence in the event of a hard border or rushed unification referendum on the island of Ireland. The only question will be the scale of the violence.***

Here, and at the outset, two caveats must be emphasised. Firstly, the vast majority of youth across all of Northern Ireland are lawful and civically responsible and will remain so regardless of the Border Brexit or United Ireland referendum scenario. Secondly what is explored in this paper is tentative in nature and should not be read as a 'fait a complit'. That said the past evidence utilised here including the important work of Dr James Wilson (and others) in respect of the flags protest by youth is noteworthy and a signpost of what is likely.

The need for civic engagement and community building activities is essential in our current environment. Northern Ireland, long facing social and political challenges following the Troubles, faces a new unforeseen external challenge to its well-being. These challenges are not the result of age-old differences, divisions, or debates, but external geopolitical disputes. For example, the chaos brought on by Brexit and a changing world will not distinguish between Nationalists and Unionists. Nor will it distinguish between Republican, Loyalist, or all shades of ideology in between. Now, perhaps more than ever, all segments of Northern Ireland society have a common, general need to address. In this setting, 'community' or the coordinated collective action of all citizen groups will be essential to charting a way forward. The external influence of various governments has done little to ensure social, economic, or

other security over the past two decades. It is now that citizens from all backgrounds can come together as a community to chart a positive way forward.

Together they can decide: How can they attain well-being in an environment where relationships and funding from the EU may be eliminated? How can they address the extra local decisions that remove traditional industry, jobs, and economic stability? How can they act to create structures where their children, friends, or themselves are not forced to leave home out of economic necessity? How can they, together, navigate a new Ireland that is respectfully owned and ideologically acceptable to all traditions?

These are all needs that cut across all citizens regardless of background. We cannot stress enough that this focus on community does not propose a utopia that sets aside centuries old grievances and divisions. That said through this process we can agree on common courses of action that benefit all. That is a start of a long process, but one devoid of conflict and a return to violence. Addressing these, and acting together to facilitate stability, does not take away or diminish any tradition, culture, belief or background. These only helps to create something new that is more dynamic, adaptive, inclusive far removed from politics, ideology, and the baggage of history. A new Ireland.

Establishing these social connections is absolutely essential should a referendum ever be called. Whether this occurs at an accelerated pace due to Brexit (within the next 5-10 year), takes place in the more distant future (15 years+), or if a referendum is never called, now is the time to start building social connectedness and cross community dialogue. In all conceivable scenarios, a referendum will be viewed by all sides with uncertainty, fear, and suspicion. In the setting, it would be impossible to begin honest, open, and constructive negotiations between polarized and suspicious groups. The building of trust, interactions, familiarity, dialogue and understanding that will be essential to navigating a pre-and post-referendum world will take years of deliberate effort to develop. Is absolutely critical that this process begins immediately. This will serve the people of Northern Ireland well regardless whether a referendum is ever called. This connectedness will provide a basis for the building of a positive local society, increased well-being, peace.

Yet, despite these considerable challenges and potential reasons for anxiety about their futures, young people across the island of Ireland have arguably greater access to certain opportunities than any generation that went before them – never has the world been so easy to travel around and work through, nor has there ever been such access to global attitudes and information about different domestic political issues via social media platforms and other content online.

Given the complex range of challenges young people in Northern Ireland may well face as indicated in the newly published British Council appointed the Institute for Conflict Research (ICR) Next Generation Study (2019). This was to be an independent review, which would complement work carried out elsewhere as part of British Council's global research programme – that had explored young people's attitudes and aspirations in other locations around the world, with the objective of providing young people a platform to comment on a number of sensitive and important issues.

This paper outlines risks and mitigations in relation to the extent of the likelihood of youth resorting to violent extremism in the light of the announcement and introduction of referendum on a United Ireland/ or conversely the return of a 'hard border' and either subsequently taking place. This paper follows from the recommendation of the Good Friday Agreement and links to the work and leadership of Senator Mark Daly Fianna Fail and associated work of Martin Ortiz (Former Security Advisor to the former US President Barack Obama). This paper is also contextualised in that it is written at a time very real and tangible uncertainty in Northern Ireland, not least in the context of Brexit and the possibility of a reconstruction of border between Northern Ireland and the Republic Ireland. It should be emphasised that the paper is authored by a UNESCO Chair for Children Youth and Civic Engagement who has complete fidelity to the principles of UNESCO in relation to its humanitarian and global mission for peace building and particularly so among youth living in actual or potential conflict states.

### **Caveats to this Paper**

Like any such technical paper there are limitations which apply and need a brief mention at the outset. Firstly, this paper does not represent a full systematic historical or policy literature review in relation to the topic matter. Nor does it reflect a formal risk assessment and multiple scenario development of security experts. Rather it is based on the experience knowledge and recent research of the two authors. Furthermore, given the nature of the content matter it is important to state that not alone do the authors wish to declare that other than reinforcing the peacekeeping mission of UNESCO (as UNESCO Chairs) and in the interest of all youth in Northern Ireland, there is no other agenda at play here.

Second, Northern Ireland is a multifaceted, diverse, and complicated society made up of many segments. This report focuses only on the youth segment of Northern Ireland (ages 25 or younger), estimated to be 40% of the population in 2017 by the NI Statistics and Research Agency. Other segments of the population are certainly important in

understanding the dynamics and conditions at place in this setting. The focus on these groups is for another study. Nonetheless, this youth population is of critical focus as they will be the main audience facing the challenges and opportunities for a stable, civil society in the coming decades.

Third, this paper is written not from an historical expertise or knowledge of the policies of Northern Ireland but through the lens of the field of interests of the authors i.e. positive youth development, empowering youth through self-driven social research, empathy education, prevention of youth violent extremism and more widely community development. In the course of completing this paper it has become very apparent that a further and more in-depth critical analysis of the issues raised here is both warranted and worthwhile.

Finally, the authors would like to acknowledge the advice they received from their two esteemed fellow UNESCO Chairs in the authors' considerations for this report, namely, Prof Alan Smith<sup>1</sup> and Prof Joanne Hughes<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Professor Alan Smith holds the UNESCO Chair in Education for Pluralism, Human Rights and Democracy at Ulster University.

<sup>2</sup>Prof. Joanne Hughes holds the UNESCO Chair in Shared Education, Queen's University Belfast

## Context and Overview

It is abundantly clear from the issues uncovered by Dr. Wilson's research, that both urgent and long-term work has to be done now by leaders on all sides to prevent a return to violence in the run up to the referendum on a United Ireland and or the reintroduction of a border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (Wilson 2014). The Technical Paper currently at draft stage from Prof. Dolan and colleagues will incorporate learning from the Wilson Report coupled with new studies in relation to youth in Northern Ireland including one just published from the <sup>3</sup>British Council of Ireland (British Council of Ireland, 2018). In addition, and more positively, the paper will utilise the learning and importance of integrated youth civic engagement in formal and non-formal settings as well as social empathy education as a key peace 'maintainer and builder' for Northern Ireland.

There is a real and justifiable fear, and in some cases a belief among the Unionist community that there will be a return to violence as a result of a referendum on a United Ireland. And now more recently in the light of the very tumultuous political environment surrounding the negotiations on Brexit a similar concern of a return to violence by dissident republicans should the border between the North of Ireland and the Republic of Ireland re-emerge. From the point of view of risk of youth violence among the Unionist community alone and importantly, Dr. James Wilson's earlier research on the 2012/13 Flags Protests and the violence and motivations of those involved, demonstrates how swiftly one incident alone, can singularly swell to violent action, and is symptomatic of this threat. If the Flags Protests singularly led to youth extremist violence, think candidly what could or would a referendum on a United Ireland (without adequate preparation) literally 'enflame'. In post-conflict situations that over time become intergenerational, there is the risk of 'loss of memory of harm' (which is considered later in this paper). This is where an older generation have not shared enough with youth their exposure to and experiences of violence, as is likely the case in Northern Ireland. This leads to an unforeseen risk in that youth falsely bias and romanticize past local history and minimize the human harm sorrow and grief that violence has caused to their fellow beings and neighbours. A key question, which the paper will aim to address, is how to envelop Northern Ireland's past for the youth of today in a way that is humanitarian, truthful and respectful.

Currently, and apart from this specific paper, Senator Mark Daly is working with Michael Ortiz<sup>4</sup>, utilizing his expertise as advisor on counter terrorism to the National Security Council

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<sup>4</sup> Mr. Ortiz was the first US diplomat appointed by the State Department on the issue of countering violent extremism and Mr. Ortiz's submission can be read at the end of this research.

during President Obama's administration. In addition, and supplementary to the development of this publication, Senator Daly is collaborating members of the former Irish Defense Forces to devise a plan to maintain the peace before and after a referendum. This is based on the recommendations in "Uniting Ireland and its people in peace and prosperity", adopted by the Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. This paper will incorporate learning from the Wilson Report coupled with new studies in relation to youth in Northern Ireland including one just published from the<sup>5</sup> British Council of Ireland. In addition, and more positively, the paper will utilise the learning and importance of integrated youth civic engagement in formal and non-formal settings as well as social empathy education as a key peace 'maintainer and builder' for Northern Ireland.

### **Border or Referendum – Risk to the Creation of Youth Violent Extremism**

The UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights Philip Ashton, last December (2018) highlighted one of the many risks which may accrue from Brexit he stated "The United Kingdom's impending exit from the European Union poses particular risks for people in poverty, but the Government appears to be treating this as an afterthought," However, more real and closer to home human risk is the likelihood that Brexit could lead to other more violent consequences and could engage youth, which is receiving little to no direct attention (Ashton 2018).

### **Lessons from the Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report (no.5)**

#### **– Community Relations Council**

According to the recent (October 2018) Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report (Gray et al, 2018) the risk of a return to violence in the event of a return to a physical border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland is very real. In the report they cite the view of former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern as follows (p.54):

***The re-imposition of any physical infrastructure at the border is likely to be the focus of public protest and direct action. Bertie Ahern, former Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) and an architect of the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement, was clear about his opinion of any new infrastructure at the border: 'There is not going to be a physical border across Ireland because if you tried to put it there you wouldn't have to wait for terrorism to take it down, people would just physically pull it down - the ordinary people' (BBC News, 10 April 2018).***

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Furthermore, Gray et al (2018) cite an important study by Garry and colleagues from The Queen's University of Belfast (May 2018) which attests to the risk of the likelihood of violence albeit that as suggested by the authors here (Dolan and Brennan) the issue may not be whether there is a return to violence but what scale would it be and over what length of time. Gray cites the Garry et al study as follows:

***The research found that, 'there is substantial and intense opposition to possible North-South border checks between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and to East-West border checks between Northern Ireland and Great Britain', and it also found, 'strong expectations that protests against either North-South or East-West border checks would quickly deteriorate into violence' (Garry, et al., Report, May 2018) The research presented respondents with a range of possible border checks and asked how they would respond to each. Figure 25 gives a breakdown of the percentage of respondents indicating that particular checks would be 'almost impossible to accept'. Respondents were asked follow-up questions related to support for various forms of protest at the border. There was a high level of support (60%) among all respondents for peaceful protests and petitions, but this dropped to 15 per cent when the protest involved blocking traffic and was only 5 per cent when it involved vandalising border technology (Garry, et al., 2018:6).***

Specifically, then for nationalist youth and in particular those young people who are marginalised and more susceptible to being groomed into violent activity by dissident republicans including the 'New IRA' the deconstruction of a border swiftly after its creation could become the absolute *raison d'être* for youth becoming engaged in violence. Conversely, but similarly should a poll on a referendum for a United Ireland be announced for youth from a loyalist background again who for whatever reason are marginalised (economically or socially) they may be recruited by dissident loyalist paramilitaries to engage in violent protest. It is without doubt very clear from Dr. Wilson's research, that an intervention by leaders on all sides to prevent a return to violence is urgently required. While the argument might be made that in the main the vast majority of youth in Northern Ireland are peaceful by nature, two conditions to that belief need to be considered.

Firstly, at the height of the Troubles in Northern Ireland most young people were not involved and were peaceful by nature. Secondly the human harm and damage that can be done by a small population of dissident youth from either or both communities can lead massive harm to people up to and including tragic death. So, this is not a simple matter of scale. There is a new of youth in Northern Ireland and constitutes the 'Agreement Generation,' all born just

before or after the Good Friday Agreement. From a recent British Council of Ireland study this population includes very articulate young people many of whom are responsive to others from a different religion and with no intent towards harm (British Council of Ireland, 2018).

The study also found that in the main this population of youth wanted to travel and had high expectations for themselves (rightfully) but were frustrated at the lack of leadership among politicians in the North across all parties and viewed the continued impasse in the non-restoration of the Assembly in the North as adults failing youth. However competent youth in the North are overall, there is of course a set of young people who are struggling in school, on low income living in poverty and typically only in communities of one tradition or religion. For this population of youth in particular, they live in danger of being exploited by paramilitary leaders. Similarly, and within this context under the guise of a political cause there is criminality within disadvantaged communities (Community Relations Report 2017). So, what ostensibly may be presented as fighting for a nationalist or loyalist cause may in fact stem from more criminal motivations including youth gang behaviours.

### **Understanding Normative Youth Development**

However, rather than this paper assumes too much at this point some wider considerations may be timely here. Although it may seem obvious or assumed but, in any discussion, exploring youth actual or potential behaviours some brief overview of adolescent development should be considered. Essentially undesirable behaviours by youth including their engaging in youth violence or extremism is over reported and over-assumed by many. Generally speaking youth are good and positive civically engaged responsible citizens who engage positively in their family school community and wider civic society (Dolan and Brennan, 2016). In fact, although early writing on adolescence suggested that many youth face difficulties in life (Hall, 1904), universally 80% to 85% of young people pass through their adolescence through normative adjustment and with little to no major problems in their life (Coleman and Hendry, 1999).

Furthermore, for many young people who experience adversity and demonstrate behaviours that include those which are disruptive or even harmful to others, thankfully the majority simply 'age out' or their problems, or receive assistance that prevents their situation from deteriorating (Frydenberg, 1997). So, despite perceptions political marginalisation or community threats or even wider familial pressures, many youth (just like adults) do not automatically engage in violent behaviours.

Essentially adolescence is a time of change where over a young person transitions from childhood to adulthood. Generally, it is constructed across three zones early middle and late adolescence ranging from 13 to 21 years of age. These transitions are typified by rapid bursts in physical growth emotional and cognitive development and social movement away from parents and family towards friendship and wider community contacts and contexts. The importance of leisure sports music and arts engagement of youth as well as their social and civic involvement with others is well recognised as part of their maturation (Santrock 2004).

However, and crucial to this paper unfortunately for some youth their adolescent years can be tumultuous, and particularly so where they experience hardship and adversity either at family, school or community levels, and this can leave them more vulnerable to engagement in violence, and for a variety of sometime very different reasons (Thom et al 2007).

Whereas later in the paper the importance of social empathy education for all young people in both formal and non-formal educative settings is explored it is worth mentioning here the positive message for most youth which relates to their care reasoning development and accompanying family socialisation in later life. Robust evidence by Pratt and colleagues (Pratt et al 2004) show that over decades of research care reasoning has been increasingly recognised as an important aspect of moral development. Skoe has developed an interview measure of levels of care reasoning about the needs of self and other in relationships, the Ethic of Care Interview or ECI. In their study the authors investigated developmental changes and family reasoning about care issues in a family study of 32 adolescents (aged 16 and then 20 years). For these adolescents, there was a significant increase in scores over time. Care reasoning levels at age 20 were significant predictors of self-reported community involvement. This indicates a connection to positive community belonging. So positive community belonging is a desirable outcome in youth development. Additionally, as young people do not live in isolation but within a family school and community and even societal context how they reciprocally interact across these environments is key to their development. Known as the social ecological model (Bronfennbrenner, 1979), ensuring that youth develop into a society that is fair positively engaging coupled with robust relationships across family and school life and community engagement is key to them.

### **Youth protest and civic engagement – not necessarily a bad thing**

Whereas the term ‘youth radicalisation’ has been perceived particularly in the media as a negative term it should be differentiated more clearly from the term ‘youth violent extremism’ which has a very different meaning (Brennan et al, 2015). Youth protest including taking a radical perspective for social justice is not necessarily a bad thing and should actually be

encouraged assuming it is peaceful and non-discriminatory in its nature. Throughout history internationally there have many cases where youth have used useful protest through civically responsible behaviours in order to benefit their own plight or that of others. For example, in Canada youth in a High School (David Shepherd and Travis Price) protested by wearing pink -shirts in class as solidarity with a fellow pupil who was bullied; this has led to a well-known positive youth movement. This led to better awareness by the school on the need to protect students from bullying. In 2017 the UNESCO MGIEP issued a major report entitled 'Youth Waging Peace' (Nash and Nesterova, 2017) and one of the authors of this paper here (Prof Dolan) acted as advisor to the project. Written in the context of current concerns on the drifting of youth into violent extremism, it provided a range of messages for education systems and policymakers as well as teachers. Notably the messages coming from youth themselves in relation to how to prevent were clear and we believe very relevant to this paper. Youth Waging Peace contains a useful set of 'push and pull' factors that can accelerate or negate youth becoming violent extremists. The push factors described here can estrange young people from their society and community and make them willing agents in the hands of violent extremism. The pull factors show what such extremist groups allegedly offer to young people to counterbalance the failures of some societies (p91/92.)

Push factors	Pull factors
Failure to achieve change among organized civil or political groups.	Prospect of empowerment, heroism, and leadership.
Geopolitical injustice (inequality, loss of life, land, or opportunity due to war or conflict, instability caused by foreign intervention)	Opportunity for revenge.
Repression and violation of human rights by the government.	
Corruption and elite impunity.	
Boredom; seeking excitement in life.	Lure of glory, fame, and an adventure.
Personal tragedy.	Personal relationships and an appeal of a particular leader.

Similarly, messages in relation to what was termed the Arab Spring protests have resonance in the context of Northern Ireland today. Apart from the fact that social media was over-emphasised in terms of youth organising to commence and attend protests, many youth were peaceful in their protest, some enabled elders to get their shopping in others supported in the diverting of traffic, but the ones reported in the media were the fewer throwing stones. There were also a cadre of youth who were clear that their desire was for peaceful protest and they worked to ensure that other youth protesters did so in a peaceful way.

## **Loss of Memory of Harm**

It is not unusual that in post conflict situations such as Northern Ireland the immediate generation find it very difficult to discuss with the following generation (and in particular their offspring) the horrors of war and what happened to loved ones and, in this case, what is termed the 'period of the troubles'. For some it is still too fresh to discuss and many are probably still suffering with personal trauma from the many horrific acts of violence they witnessed that are still strong in their memory.

However, this lack of capacity to discuss in real ways what happened can unintentionally act in favour of those who would prefer to give youth (and particularly vulnerable and impressionable young people) a false almost romantic retrospection of the past up to and including a very sectarian analysis. This can take the form of only seeing harm as occurring from one side and caused by enemies. This in itself and alone is a very real legacy risk from the Troubles.

Apart from the non-sharing of personal memory, murals and tours may depict a jaundiced version of history that is not fair or objective and again for vulnerable youth this creates a serious risk in terms of their turning to violence towards those who are of a different religion or living in a different community.

while there may be a significant population who for understandable reasons are not sharing with youth the human horror they experienced, conversely there may also be those for whom what happened is unfinished and they in turn potentially could incite youth. This lack of sharing of the impact of violence on one hand and risk of incitement on the other is real. Having said this while there is some evidence on this factor the scale of these factors is unknown and more research is needed. One important recent opinion piece (January 19<sup>th</sup> 2019) in the Times – Irish edition from Prof. Pol O Dochartaigh now a colleague and Registrar at the National University of Ireland, Galway highlighted the personal effect that living during the Troubles had on him. In his very insightful piece he said whereas his family escaped fatalities, the loss of friend's parents and family members has stayed with him to this day. He is very adamant about the consequences of a return to a border and violence that may accrue he states "if the barriers go up again and peace is destroyed, the ideologues who abdicate their responsibility by adopting cavalier attitudes to the hard-won peace agreement of 1998 will never be forgiven". In considering the future welfare of youth living in Northern Ireland these words are surely strong food for thought.

## **Post-Conflict or Pre-Conflict?**

So, one could argue that there is something of an irony afoot in relation to how older and younger populations who are seriously concerned about the risk of violence in Northern Ireland either as a result of a 'Brexit Border' or a 'Border Poll'. For the older generation it may be a case that they view the situation with hindsight and as an issue of **post-conflict** with a potential throwback to bad and violent times of the past. For youth who thankfully did not have to endure that past this may be an issue for their immediate future and for those who are concerned it is an issue of **pre-conflict**. In this regard it should also be remembered that at the time of the commencement of the Troubles and part of the civil rights campaign in the North what commenced as isolated incidents involving a small population unfortunately swelled to a serious on-going conflict that impacted on many.

## **Factor of Perception of History and how it is taught in Schools**

How history is learned by youth is also very related to issues of loss of memory of harm. History in a Northern Irish context is notoriously fraught and contentious and has left in its wake a highly charged legacy involving issues of identity, territory, responsibility, victimization and justice. 'Green' and 'orange' versions of history were regularly invoked by both sides to the conflict during the Troubles and history, particularly as it relates to commemoration, continues to provoke strong responses across the political and religious divide. As in the case of other conflict and post-conflict societies, the teaching of curricular history in Northern Irish schools has been considered as being of particular relevance to the post-conflict reconciliation agenda. Therefore, the question is, can the teaching of history be used to help dissipate or heal historical political divisions? Can history, in other words, be used against itself?

The teaching of history in Northern Ireland presents a unique challenge since the often-stark divergences between unionist and nationalist historiographies do not allow for a unified 'national' history (Terra, 2013). In 1991 the *Northern Ireland Curriculum: Education for Mutual Understanding and Cultural Traditions* was introduced to all Controlled and Maintained schools, including a history curriculum that would be acceptable to schools from both traditions (Barton and McCully, 2005). The approach to school history in Northern Ireland has been characterised by two impulses: firstly, a concern to undermine partisan 'mythologies' with objective historical evidence, and secondly, inspired by reconciliation, a concern to validate conflicting perspectives on controversial events in the past. School history textbooks are even-handed and non-judgemental (Terra, 2014) and the curriculum encourages multiple perspectives on the past.

However, despite its many merits, scholars have questioned whether history teaching that emphasises an enquiry-based, multi-perspective, analytical approach is a sufficient response to the demands of reconciliation (Kitson, 2007; Barton & McCully, 2010; McCully, 2012). The question presents itself as to whether an emphasis on reason and objectivity is sufficient to arrive at a deep understanding of the past or whether, as Illingworth (2000: 20) has noted, 'pupils should feel as well as think their way through history lessons'. This is particularly relevant where the discrete aim of learning local history is one where the desire is to 'know it from the perspective of others.

### **Historical Empathy**

This also points to the emergent area of historical empathy, which offers a potential method of approaching contentious issues from the past, including the recent past. Historical empathy is defined as a 'student's cognitive and affective engagement with historical figures to better understand and contextualise their lived experiences, decisions, or actions' (Endacott & Brooks, 2013: 41). It requires students to understand the wider historical context but along with this to engage with the thoughts, feelings, motivations and actions of actors in the past. Barton & Levstik (2004) though they use the terms 'perspective taking' and 'caring', rather than 'cognitive empathy' and 'affective empathy', argue that through caring about those in the past we arrive at the potential to change beliefs and behaviours in the present. As McCully (2012: 153) notes, this approach 'becomes especially important when presented with the stories of those from a different background to yourself who have suffered through conflict in the recent past'. Ironically it may be the case from both traditions in Northern Ireland whether 'Green or Orange' may well find that each other's family's past sufferings and experiences although deemed as being caused (to some extent) by each other have had the same human impact on each other. Research on historical empathy has shown a positive impact. Its implementation in schools presents a unique challenge to educators and students, involving innovative methodologies, which in turn requires necessary training for teachers.

### **Integration Issues for Youth – Home, School and Community**

Undoubtedly one of the outstanding risks to youth sectarianism and violence in Northern Ireland does not specifically lie in the consequences of a referendum on a united Ireland, or the re-introduction of a hard border, but rather stems from a longer-term lack of integration of youth throughout the North. This applies broadly at a societal level from segregated living environments, noticeably separated catholic and protestant housing estates in cities, but is even more noticeable within the education system. Whereas Hughes et al (2013) convincingly demonstrates the complexities in education systems in Northern Ireland and

outlines the rationale for the case for shared education, the reality remains unfortunately that young people are (with noteworthy exceptions) not educated together. This lack of a full integrated education system is one of most serious issues facing civic society in the North and has been strongly recognised as a problem over ten years ago in relation not just to the integration of Catholic and Protestant youth but also young people who had migrated to Northern Ireland from other countries inside and outside the EU (see Centre for Cross Border Studies 2008). It is fair to echo the recommendation from the recent Institute for Conflict Research (Belfast, Northern Ireland) 'Next Generation Report Ireland – Northern Ireland' December 2018 Report authored by Sturgeon and Lucas when they succinctly recommended in relation to the matter of shared education and integrated education that (p.9):

***“In Northern Ireland, the Department of Education should continue to show leadership and ambition in delivering on its shared education obligations and actively work to encourage, facilitate and promote integrated education”.***

Put even more simply if youth don't mix enough with young people their own age who are perceived as 'others' different to them or worse 'the enemy' this leads to increased tension and a lack empathic understanding. This can become heightened for example if loyalist youth see themselves as under siege from the nationalist community with a United Ireland coming at them with speed. Or nationalist youth see their annexation from the south through the construction of the border as real and sudden. The benefits to civic society of integration of youth in terms of respect, reduced violence and hate speech, racial profiling is well established (Dolan and Brennan, 2016). One way of testing the integration of youth in Northern Ireland is through use of Berry's acculturation model (Berry, 2006). The model can be used to rate integration for youth across all key aspects and contexts of their lives including extended family school community and leisure engagement and involvement in positive political activities. The model rates on continuum from full integration and inclusion (desirable) to complete segregation and marginalisation (undesirable).

### **Non-formal Education Settings and Role of the Arts**

Apart from the potential of history empathy as a key tool to help understanding and healing in school contexts, the role of the arts including music and music technology, drama visual arts and creative writing has specific potential in supporting youth towards peace building in Northern Ireland. It is noteworthy of course that there have been a number of cross

community arts initiatives with solid success to date. But the challenge apart from their efficacy and need for comprehensive evaluation on benefits and impact is the more basic factor that firstly the need to be scaled up as a universal form of youth service and secondly and probably more particularly that they successfully reach the target population of dis-engaged youth most likely to be encouraged in bigotry and more likely to turn to violence.

The benefits are worth consideration and in the case of the arts including music, drama, music technology and cultural expression, the benefit to youth of being engaged is well known in particular in terms of their gaining skills mastery and a capacity for expression. However, less has been highlighted in relation to the more hidden values of their engagement with the arts through youth community work programmes in particular. For example, through a young person's involvement in music, apart from learning an instrument he she may join a band and record and may well access new friendships. Recently and importantly there is evidence that engagement with the arts particularly in non-school informal youth work settings may lead a young person to acquire better belonging to others and a great sense of social empathy (Silke et al 2018).

At a most basic level for youth who are experience difficulties in a school setting both academically and in terms of personal relationships, being engaged on a community youth programme that involves music drama or technology affords him or her three core opportunities. In respect of music and bands, which has particular traditional strengths and meaning in Northern Ireland, a focus on unification of youth from both traditions through the learning together and from each other of music has particular resonance.

Despite positive progress with the implementation of Shared Education as a policy, that children and youth from both Catholic and Protestant traditions remain educated through segregation in schools is and will continue to be a major problem Gallagher and Smith (2000). The full introduction of an integrated education system into the future is essential to sowing peace understanding and community cohesion among children and youth. It is vital that children are schooled together in order to learn to live together in peace and harmony and is key to the future of the North.

The good work done in relation to youth sharing their education needs to be acknowledged here as well. Indeed, all schools have shown great development following the peace agreement. Joint learning by youth on how democracy and power sharing functions coupled with learning about human rights values respect for difference has been vital. Similarly, youth initiatives like "Where's is my Public Servant" (WIMPS) led by Paul Smyth and colleagues have enabled tremendous cross community civic education in both formal and non-formal settings. However, there is a missed opportunity in not giving citizenship

education a dedicated curriculum space – and having no set curriculum are both good and bad. It is good as it is not pining youth down to a set menu of discourse, but is bad as it is not ensuring youth are taught about ways of ‘political literacy’ (Gallagher and Smith 2000). Similarly, initiatives such as the use of Museum based education may have limitation and discrete learning within the Apprentice Boys history is key and need to be ensured that they become cross community.

### **Empathy in Youth Messages from the Republic of Ireland**

A new study on youth and empathy from the Republic of Ireland by the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre team at NUI Galway has resonance for this paper. Silke et al. (2019) carried out one of the first national studies investigating the expression of empathy, social values and civic behaviours among young people (e.g. 12-16 years) in the Republic of Ireland. Over 700 youths (12-16 years), from each of the four Irish provinces, participated in this mixed-methods research. Although the young people in this study evidenced high levels of empathy and social responsibility values, youths were not found to actively engage in any form of civic behaviour, suggesting a disconnect between youths’ empathic ‘attitudes’ and their pro social ‘behaviours’. However, in a series of follow-up focus group discussions, with 29 young people, youth were found to distinguish between ‘feeling’ and ‘showing’ empathy.

Specifically, within the qualitative element youth emphasised the importance of engaging in active, empathic responding (“*empathy is like a step up from sympathy ... you’re realising that instead of just saying you feel sorry for someone, you can actually take action to help them, so empathy is not just, it’s not like standing back and going, Oh, I feel sorry for you, and then moving on with your life*” - Young person, Age 15) and shared their beliefs about how empathy promotes both individual and societal well-being (“*empathy could make a problem easier to solve because you can see things from the other person’s perspective, not just your own*” – Young person, Age 14; “*a lot of the people would start caring and appreciating each other*” – Young Person, Age 14; “*it just helps you have a better relationship with the person*” – Young Person, Age 14). Nonetheless, youth were also found to believe that it is easier to feel empathy for some people, than others. In particular, youth discussed how it is difficult to help or empathise with people who are ‘different’, ‘unknown’ or ‘unliked’ (“*sometimes people, like, don’t feel empathy for people with different views than them, because they can’t relate to them or they just don’t want to*” – Young Person, Age 17).

Importantly, this Silke et al. (2019) study was also among the first pieces of research to confirm that a variety of socialisation processes play an important role in influencing the level of empathy, social responsibility, and/or civic behaviour expressed by young people in Ireland. Findings from structural equation analyses confirmed that Irish youths’ empathic

attitudes, social values and civic behaviours are shaped by their experiences and relationships within their parental, peer, school, and community contexts. Specifically, parental modelling and encouragement of pro social values/behaviour, friends' pro social values, connectedness with one's community, civic education in school and open, democratic classroom environments were all found to significantly impact youths' empathy and civic values or behaviour. In addition, findings from the qualitative research suggested that young people themselves also believe that one's ability to empathise with others is strongly shaped by their contextual experiences, with youth emphasising the important role that parents, friends and schools play in cultivating and promoting empathy among young people.

However, findings from the qualitative research suggested that societal or cultural norms may also play a significant role in influencing youths' empathic and prosocial responding. Youth noted that modern society does not appear to value empathy, and believed that societal norms, which encourage young people to engage in acts of 'narcissism' and 'individualism', rather than empathy, are prevalent (*"looking better than someone else matters more than caring for them"* – Young Person, Age 15; *"Many people want to portray a strong image even if it is at the expense of others... putting ourselves first, even though they are aware that other people need our assistance, stops people from showing empathy"* – Young Person, Age 16).

### **Belonging and Empathy Education as a Preventer of Youth Violent Extremism**

So apart from messages from the study outlined above why is empathy education important? There is now a strong body of evidence which indicates that empathy education (including the factors of understanding and identifying with the plight and lives of others who are deemed 'different') not alone reduces the likelihood of hate speech and violence, but enables integration and actually leads to better education outcomes (Segal 2011). Empathy education which is both inter and cross community enables youth to move from passive empathy (understanding others) to active empathy (acting positively towards and on behalf of others). This also goes beyond wellbeing to social responsibilities and prosocial behaviours. In this regard, the authors, UNESCO Chairs in the Republic of Ireland (Prof Dolan) and the US (Prof Brennan) are leading on a global initiative to enable the introduction of empathy education which is peer taught in schools and youth work community setting (for example see [childandfamilyresearch.ie](http://childandfamilyresearch.ie) and [foroige.ie](http://foroige.ie)).

Although it receives less attention, civic engagement can be seen as a means of creating a more caring, empathic, and supportive environment in the lives of young people, particularly those who are vulnerable. Whereas the positive youth development discourse applies to all young people, the care factor is of particular relevance to young people who experience challenges, such as poverty, damages in family structures, incarceration, health issues, disability, and exploitation but also those youth. Traditional youth services would often emphasise addressing a young person's problems, such as poor academic performance or social isolation, before they are deemed ready to take on leadership roles or engage collectively with others to bring about social change. Pittman et al. (2011) argue that the assumption that young people need to be 'fixed' before they can be developed runs counter to what is known about human motivation and adolescent development. They believe that all youth need to be challenged as well as cared for and there is a need to weave together opportunities to develop and engage. Likewise, Dolan (2012) and Brennan et al, (2015) argues that civic engagement should be seen as a means by which the needs and rights of vulnerable young people can be simultaneously addressed within a peaceful social justice model.

Civic engagement acknowledges the rights of young people to democratic participation and in doing so, their resilience and social support can be enhanced. The study of resilience focuses on how some individuals, in spite of exposure to a series of adverse experiences, manage to escape any serious harm (Rutter, 2012). Longitudinal studies of risk and resilience have shown that many young people, despite being exposed to serious risks during childhood, cope well and demonstrate positive outcomes in adulthood. These studies have attributed this resilience to the presence of protective factors that help to mitigate against the effects of early disadvantage (Masten, 2011). The implications of this for providing a pathway out of extremism and a mechanism for re-entering and contributing to stable, civil societies is massive.

A critical aspect of preventing violent extremism is found at the community level. Strong communities can thwart the emergence of extremism by providing a setting for engagement and interaction among diverse community members (diverse in religion, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status). Through their interactions community members share ideas and beliefs, local resources are mobilized, and capacity for positive action and increased well-being emerge. Alternately, communities that lack such interaction and lack diversity of people can be ripe for the development of extremist ideas and behaviours. To counter youth violent extremism, it is essential that structures are in place for polarized or homogenous communities to facilitate interaction among their differing members. In these interactions,

empathy, the identification of common general needs, and plans for peaceful coexistence emerge.

### **UNESCO Global Citizenship Education**

Although UNESCO recognises that the world has become more global and with increasing pace, leading to greater interconnectness between people of all ages and communities, this interconnection in itself is not a guarantee of peace. Unfortunately, issues such as human rights violations, discrimination, racial and religious profiling, hate speech, inequality and poverty still threaten peace and sustainability all around the world and similarly so in Northern Ireland. Importantly, Global Citizenship Education (GCED) is UNESCO's response to addressing these challenges. Core to its function GCED brings success by empowering learners including youth to understand that the issues they face are also common globally (albeit perhaps in a differing context, location or from a differing history). They are not just local issues but are 'overall global' and in this light of commonality UNESCO encourages youth to utilise education to become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable societies (Smith 2009). Overall, GCED can be seen as a strategic function of UNESCO's Education Sector programme and builds strongly on Peace and Human Rights Education. It aims to enable learners to have and use the values, attitudes and behaviours that support responsible global citizenship: creativity, innovation, and commitment to peace, human rights and sustainable development. In the context of Northern Ireland Global Citizenship Education has the potential to minimise sectarianism, and maximise better understanding of those whom in the past were deemed as youth from the 'other' side. Empathy education for youth as part of GCED has particular promise in this regard.

### **Apart from Maintaining Peace and Keep People Safe: The Return on Investment**

Apart from the pure human argument, empathy education yields positive outcomes for society in terms of cost benefit analysis (CBA) and a social return on investment (SROI). Whereas in all island context the exact values need estimation, savings for example in terms of less damage to property, reduced need for health and mental health services, less unemployment would all seem logical if not even assumed by many. There are also social benefits in terms of increased wellbeing and better self-efficacy and sense of belonging among youth. Bluntly the impact of violence in terms of increased need for mental health services and social services and their supports on one end is also accelerated on the other extreme by the increase in security costs and up to incarceration costs for prison services. So even from a purely monetary perspective if nothing else, the investment in preventing youth engaging in violent disorder is money well spent indeed.

## **Community, Local Connectedness, and Attachment**

A critical aspect of preventing violent extremism is found at the community level. Strong communities can thwart the emergence of extremism by providing a setting for engagement and interaction among diverse community members (diverse in religion, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status). Through their interactions community members share ideas and beliefs, local resources are mobilized, and capacity for positive action and increased well-being emerge. Alternately, communities that lack such interaction and lack diversity of people can be ripe for the development of extremist ideas and behaviours. To counter youth violent extremism, it is essential that structures are in place for polarized or homogenous communities to facilitate interaction among their differing members. In these interactions, empathy, the identification of common general needs, and plans for peaceful coexistence emerge.

Civic engagement by diverse community members, and particularly youth, is critical to local social stability and well-being. It also results in significant personal development that benefits the individual, while simultaneously contributing to local connectedness, dialogue, and other conditions that contribute to a peaceful coexistence among these diverse, and often opposing, groups. Against the backdrop of what is viewed as an increasingly individualistic and disconnected world, we propose a discourse which presents civic engagement as a means to forge a sense of belonging among young people to something wider than their individual selves. This interest stems from a desire to create stronger connections for youth towards others in the places they live and the spaces they interact in. Such engagement and interaction help carve out a clearly identified place for youth in local society, as well as their sense of self and identity.

Attachment to community/place and its residents has been shown to be related to social participation and community action. Such attachment is part of the development of community and the relationships between its residents. This attachment transcends the simple sharing of space by local inhabitants, and provides a social and psychological bond that serves as the basis for purposive social interaction. Attachment represents and is an indicator of the extent to which individuals have become integrated into the community. This connection is vital in both positive and negative setting.

Awan (2015) has stressed this as an important step toward stability and positive societal development, stating that “this search for identity and belonging is an intrinsic part of adolescence and early adulthood, and occurs universally in young people everywhere. This process appears to take on an urgency and prominence in these individuals that belies its ubiquitous, and often mundane, nature. Identity crises inspired by alienation, racism, dislocation, globalisation, changing value-systems, anomie and a host of other issues,

present a heightened state of vulnerability and might compel individuals to seek solace in beguiling narratives that offer a safe and welcoming community of like-minded 'outcast' individuals."

This is true of youth, adults and older residents. We need look no further than the Brexit referendum, and the extreme political swings that have emerged in the US and Europe and elsewhere in recent years. In these settings people, sensing a real or perceived loss of identity, culture, future, and control over decisions impacting their own well-being, chose extreme paths. In many cases these have been quickly followed by violence, hate, intolerance, and conflict. In the context of Northern Ireland this is vitally important. As local areas have become more segregated and homogenized over the last 40 years, there is increased likelihood of environments emerging where intolerance is reinforced and increased. Creating venues for interaction and communication with diverse local people, particularly among the young who have been isolated from others, is essential.

The good news is that we know from research and practice, that these feelings of alienation and disenfranchisement diminish as people become engaged in their communities, interact with diverse other types of people, and establish channels of communication that facilitate the addressing of concerns and avenues for collectively addressing these.

We stress the importance of attachment here as research has shown that residents' level of attachment influenced the level of involvement they exhibited in the community. In Northern Ireland seeking new forms of 'common attachment' for youth is key. Research has shown that such attachment is a greater predictor of agency than was local satisfaction. Other research has shown that social bonds and participation in the local community shaped local peoples' willingness to contribute to the local economy and community. An individual's attachment to community is related to his/her attitudes and feelings toward fellow residents and more importantly the community as a whole. So, where that sense of community is one of being integrated and respecting self and difference with others is key.

### **Youth Shaping Civil Society through Cross Community Contact and Social Networks**

The active engagement of youth directly shapes the development of functioning local communities as well. As young people share a common territory with others, they interact with one another on a routine and substantive basis. Here, social ties and social networks are essential to fostering and sustaining civic engagement. Such ties are integral parts of one's sense of community, directly related to attachment, and influence the willingness of youth to act on behalf of the community.

Community ties take different forms (strong and weak; formal and informal; through organizational involvement or casual interaction), each of which shape the conditions for youth civic engagement and community development in different ways. Strong ties, such as those among family and close friends, are intense, frequent, and developed over long periods of interaction. Alternately, casual friends, acquaintances, and co-workers, with whom we do not have intimate relations, also serve a vital function of connecting us with the wider society. These 'weak ties' represent an important resource. Through increased social networks and exposure to weak ties, youth become aware of issues that need action, as well as opportunities to participate in direct actions to address these. Both types of connections are important to peace building. Strong ties are necessary for continued interaction and communication within primary groups. Such ties represent connections between families and close friends. Weak ties were also important in that they provided a linkage and interconnection between social fields. Weak ties reflect interactions with acquaintances. The perception and distinction of social ties are particularly important when considering their impact on community action.

Strong ties, while important, can limit the vision of local residents and consequently lead them to focus their attention only on immediate needs, the minutia of local life, historical grudges and injustices. As a result, individuals fail to see the wider breath of community needs and opportunities. While actions in response to group or neighbourhood specific needs are important, they do not contribute to the overall well-being of the community. Weak ties among people can create opportunities for a broader representation of community needs, greater opportunities for interacting with a wider group of people, and facilitate broader levels of community.

It is critical to note, especially in the context of conflict and fragile settings, that these social ties, networks, and interactions, facilitate a basis for diverse groups coming together to address common, general needs...in this case peace or the absence of political violence. It does not suggest or imply that diverse groups give up their own identity, history, biases, or even grievances. It does however suggest that these groups can work together to overcome issues and problems that affect both equally (local infrastructure, education quality, health services).

### **Acknowledging the Positive Work being Done in Northern Ireland**

It is crucial to remember that there are many individuals (youth and adults), community groups, NGOs, schools and civic society organisations who are very actively working for

peace retention and integration throughout Northern Ireland, and with notable success. Their work should not be undermined or undervalued and kept to the forefront of our minds in considering the issue of potential youth violence in the North. Furthermore, evidence globally shows that most youth are positively civic actors and are proactive as natural peace builders in their own right (Dolan and Brennan, 2016). That said however, factors and potential risks that pertain in the North need to be given serious consideration in order to prevent the very real risk of escalation of violence by youth from the differing religious and across communities.

More positively, where there have been cross community internal youth work initiatives (for example the Foróige Youth Leadership Programme (see Redmond and Dolan 2014) in East and West Belfast there have been positive outcomes in terms of youth from different religious and communities sharing time together and coming to a common understanding of each other. However, whereas this like the numerous other youth initiative which are cross community in Northern Ireland or North South are obviously good and desirable it is has not been scaled up quickly enough in that more such initiatives are required Not enough is known as to whether all groups working with youth are quality assured and fully intent of progressing peace. There is a concern that under the guise of youth and community work extremists could possibly in fact be recruiting youth into violence activation. This is further complicated by the lack of interrogation of biased narratives in home, school and communities where distorted information stays unchallenged.

One of the key ways to counteract this risk may be found through the introduction of Youth as Researchers programmes (Kennan and Dolan 2017), or youth taught and led Empathy Education delivered through community youth work programmes as well as in formal education classroom settings (Silke et al, 2018). This hold particular promise in enabling better human understanding, active compassion, reducing hate speech and ensuring peaceful responses among young people and communities.

### **Social Disadvantage and Cross Community Factors**

Whereas it could be argued easily that issues of youth unemployment, living in socially disadvantaged communities, lack of youth voice, and basic poverty are contributing factors for both Catholic and Protestant youth, this may be an oversimplification. Whereas there are many communities who operate as insulated from each other, positive community development initiatives that are well supported morally and financially may be key to future solutions. There are many young people and adults who face these same challenges on a daily basis but most do not choose to become violent in any way. That said, the

issue of social justice for certain communities is a factor that needs to be addressed and the increase in positive cross community initiatives is a key prevention tool (Smith et al 2003). This is very urgent in that evidence from research by Roulston et al (2016) indicates that many young people living in the North never even go to nearby other districts where the religion of the residents differs from theirs.

### **The Need for a Common Understanding of Community in Peace building**

The elusive search for peace and stable, civil societies take place at many levels ranging from the individual to the national/political realms. While national conditions, international events and the pace of modern life impact us, it is the day-to-day interactions with local people that shape our lives. Such routine interaction and the social ties they foster, are the single most important factors in our efforts to develop community (Bridger, et a., 2011; Olson and Brennan, 2018). From these, the basis for peace building emerges. It is at the local community level that most of our lives take place, our behaviours are shaped, and our actions framed.

The importance of community is often referenced by citizens and politicians alike. It is inherently important to us in many ways that we often do not closely consider. The attention given to community is important and provides insight into what we inherently believe to be important in our lives (Bhattacharyya, 1995; Brennan, Bridger, and Alter, 2013). In many ways, our deep convictions and passions about the community we hold dear are at the core of our capacity for conflict and also peace. If harnessed, this passion can be used to advance local life in a way conducive to well-being for all.

To impact our programmes and best serve our citizens, a need exists for local government, citizens groups, and other policy-makers to clearly understand what constitutes “community”. We need to have the same (or at least similar) images of community in mind when we plan, implement, and evaluate programs designed to enhance well-being and peace.

Throughout the research and programme literature, most definitions of community have one or more of the following components: 1) A geographic or territorial dimension, most often referring to a place or locality (a place); 2) A human life dimension containing a local society highlighted by social organization and institutions that satisfy their basic needs (service providers, local government, health and safety) (an organizational process); and 3) A process of locally-based actions by residents of a place to address their common interests and needs (local people and their interconnections).

## **Towards a New Meaning for Community for Youth living in Northern Ireland**

A more accurate definition of community views locality as a place where people live and meet their common daily needs together. Rather than a geographic boundary, such places can be seen as a comprehensive network of individual interdependent relationships that express common interests and work together to meet their common, general needs (Bhattacharyya, 1995; Bridger, et. al, 2011). However, it is necessary to recognize that not all relationships serve to create the sense of connection that characterizes community.

It is true that place and locality is an important component to community. However, community is much more than a geographic location. It is a social and psychological entity that represents a place, its people, and the relationships that exist there. We can all point to locations where neighbours would be hard pressed to identify each other. While sharing a place, they do not share a community and have nearly no ability to act together over things important to the place. They have little ability to come together, organize, and pursue actions that achieve a greater good outside of their individual interests. Routine interaction among diverse local people serves to provide a basis for such conscious locality wide efforts aimed at improving social well-being, peace, and stability....and ultimately the emergence of a 'community' (Bridger et al., 2009; Brennan et al, 2013)

This interactional perspective is particularly useful in explaining the process leading to civic engagement in the context of peace building. All localities are composed of numerous distinct special interest groups whose members act to achieve various individual interests and goals. These groups are defined by their unique history, culture, behaviours, traditions, and social networks. They are distinctly different from other groups sharing the same locality, and can sometimes be at odds. Connecting these individual groups is the "community" which serves to coordinate and unite individual groups into purposive locality wide efforts (Olson and Brennan, 2018). Community, and the common recognition of needs, cuts across class lines, political affiliations, organized groups, and other entities within a local population. The key component to this process is found in the creation and maintenance of linkages, interaction, and channels of communication among group that otherwise are antagonistic, directed toward more limited interests, or largely disconnected (Bridger et al., 2011; Olson and Brennan, 2018).

Interaction and integration are a pervasive and constant feature of local life that provides substance to its ecological, cultural, organizational, and social psychological aspects. Without such interaction, community could not exist. Interacting with others gives direction to processes of collective action and social participation, and is a source of common identity (Brennan et al., 2013). As residents and groups interact over issues

important to all of them, what has come to be known as community agency, or ways for local action and resiliency to emerge. Agency reflects the building of local relationships that increase the human capacity of local people. It can therefore be seen as the capacity of people to manage, utilize, and enhance those resources available to them in addressing locality wide issues. The application of agency can be seen in civic engagement at all levels.

The emergence of a new sense of community in Northern Ireland could become a dynamic process of bringing people together (for example of similar initiatives see Bhattacharyya, 1995; Olson and Brennan, 2018). This focus does not imply that governments, outside influences, social structures or systems are unimportant. The local economy, socio-demographic characteristics of the population, local organizations, history, resources, and institutions are vital to the composition of the locality and its residents. However, these factors serve as the backdrop for local life and the relationships among residents. It is interaction in various settings that links people together and facilitates the communication of local needs to the broader society. Such interaction serves to empower community residents and provide a mechanism for maintaining social networks and channels of communication that cut across social divides (Bridger, et al., 2011; Brennan, et al., 2013). By increasing venues for interaction, partnering with diverse community groups, and bringing together a wide spectrum of local residents, we can lay the basis for community action and development.

The new definition of community presented here is not meant to present a romantic or an immediate idealized notion of local harmony and solidarity in the North where there are many daily struggles such as basic poverty that citizens from both communities face, but they have these issues in common. This definition is far from that, and particularly relevant in the context of peace building. Our localities are often dominated by self-interest, outside development, distrust, conflict, and other negative conditions. This however does not mean that community cannot exist. Community emerges out of common and coordinated interaction between diverse social groups, often with clashing or at least distinctly different points of view. This interaction facilitates the coming together of such groups to assess their common needs and increase awareness of issues facing all residents.

When working with, and planning for our communities, we need to look beyond government and other structures that are in place. While these are of course important, we need to focus first on the local people and in particular on local youth and even more particularly on those youth most vulnerable to engage in riotous behaviours. We need to focus on how they interact and perceive each other, how attached they are to the locality, and how they can contribute to local well-being. We need to look at the process of how and why they

participate in their communities. By focusing on these characteristics, we can create programs specifically designed to meet the particular social and economic needs of the locality. In the context of peace building and conflict mitigation using this community framework can provide a basis for diffusing conflict, and coordinating across groups, while at the same time gradually understanding differences and divisions. We have seen many of these types of coordination since the establishment of the Peace Process in Northern Ireland. These need to be viewed as a consistent basis for pathway forward, instead of one-off or below scale anomalies.

## **The Case for Monitoring of Violations Against Youth**

### **-Including Incitement of Youth to Become Violent**

Finally apart from the set of recommendations below, should the worst come to the worst and there is a return to violent disruption in Northern Ireland either as a result of the restoration of the border or an untimely poll for a united Ireland, we argue that where children (and youth) are being supported by adults to willingly or unwillingly become involved in acts of violence in the North, that this is a violation of their human rights under the United Nations. Such instances could and should be referred to the UN Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on child and Armed Conflict. Specifically, the MRM reports on “six grave violations” against human rights and we would argue that violation two “recruitment of use of children by armed forces and groups” has specific applicability to the current situation in Northern Ireland.

## **Conclusions, Critical Considerations, and Recommendations**

Based on expansive research, program and practice experience, comparisons to other international pre/post conflict settings, and successful policy initiatives, we propose the following critical considerations and recommendations. To peacefully navigate Brexit and the post Brexit world, program and policy makers at all levels in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and the United Kingdom would do well to focus their efforts in the following ways:

### ***Extensive Engagement of Youth from All Backgrounds***

- Expand the use and promotion of applied youth leadership programs designed to give youth the skills necessary to more effectively lead their local societies in more stable and civil directions.
- Encourage youth voice, protest and youth driven challenging of inequalities. Youth have always been at the forefront of social justice initiatives and present unique insight to our world. It is critical their voices be heard. They should be encouraged to present their case for what a future Northern Ireland will look like (through the Youth as Researchers program for example) and act to achieve this (through applied empathy, global citizenship education, and cross-community building programmes).
- Empower Youth as Activists for Peace through Social Media. To compliment and advance the *Youth as Researchers* efforts, structures and programs must be developed for youth researchers to immediately translate their findings into counter-extremism narratives and calls to action.
- Youth need to be asked and heavily engaged in what the Northern Ireland of the future
- Comprehensive community capacity building programs are needed to firmly engage youth, provide them with ownership of local decisions that impact them, and identify an expanded role for them in current and future decision making. They are the generation that will most directly face the consequences of Brexit, future referendums, and as members of a potential new Ireland.
- Research into forming online networks that facilitate cross cultural communication and indeed involve actual facilitators working virtually; research on, and trials of formats that build cross-cultural communication in marginalized youth who turn to the internet for companionship, self-identification, and self-assertion.

- Youth driven anti-extremism and anti-violence media campaigns are needed to proactively prevent the emergence of both in a Brexit hard border and possible referendum environment.
- Integrated education is critical if children and youth of different backgrounds are to overcome the divides that separate them. It is only through interacting across shared education and learning that social connectedness will emerge. This is an essential foundation of peacebuilding and establishing a stable, civil society.
- Global citizenship education is also vital to the creation of positive social identities. This education on the fostering of positive social participation and civic engagement is free of the cultural, religious, and other traditional baggage. It is designed to facilitate positive citizenship and engagement locally and internationally. Such positive behaviours transcend all aspects of our lives and contribute to better societies.
- Empathy education programs would be particularly relevant for adoption in this setting. Such programs are shown to decrease extremism, violence, and antisocial/self-destructive behaviours, while at the same time increasing educational attainment, social support, and positive civic engagement. In addition, empathy education partnered with related modules that focus on empathy through music, arts, sport, food, and other cultural attributes would be particularly relevant in fostering empathy, while at the same time facilitating interaction that shares and celebrates various things held dear by diverse local populations.

### ***Building Stable, Civil Communities and a New Northern Ireland***

- Program and policy makers should seek to make interaction take place among diverse local resident populations, and particularly youth. Creating and using common venues for interaction (music, sports, festivals, educational, holiday events) can be a nonconfrontational setting where people can encounter each other, establish communication channels, and recognize common needs.
- Youth today in Northern Ireland are more ethnically isolated than in their parents' generation. They also live in more segregated localities, with less diversity. They have less communication, interaction, or exposure to other types of people (race, religion, age). This environment is ripe for fostering extreme beliefs, actions, and violence. Program and policy makers need to better facilitate cross-community communication and interaction between these segregated localities. These efforts can also be further supported by facilitating understanding of each other's common needs and concerns through media, internet-based methods, television, and other outreach means.

- Promote activities that increase a sense of belonging among youth. This belonging is not linked to a specific tradition, religion, or background. It is a sense of belonging to the wider Northern Ireland society. This place is unique and special. Common aspects of pride, culture, and other unique aspects need to be instilled in all children and youth through their formative years to stress their commonalities and uniqueness as residents of Northern Ireland.
- Extensive and in-depth research should be conducted with marginalized youth and their communities. If we are to navigate a pre and post Brexit environment and all the consequences that come with it, we will need the most accurate information possible to make quick decisions that have lasting impacts. Research with youth and other marginalized populations will be critical to shaping responses to their needs and to facilitating well-being in all sectors of Northern Ireland society.
- Interaction is needed among not only the traditional Protestant/Catholic divide, but also with other groups such as immigrants, refugees, and others. All have similar common general needs. It is also the case that Northern Ireland society will need all types of ideas, experiences, and skills to navigate Brexit, a failed Brexit, or a post-Brexit environment.
- Seek both age cohort, but also intergenerational dialogue, for building and maintaining a sense of a common, basic identity of a new Northern Ireland. Use this to create a narrative where cultural identities are still important and relevant, but a basic common image is agreed upon for what Northern Ireland's identity is (ex, a vibrant diverse local society that bridges Irishness and Britishness, and connects these to a broader EU/European connection).
- Promote and facilitate substantive interaction with people of all backgrounds to explore the legacy of the Troubles. In particular, communication and honest discussions between youth and older individuals (ideally cross-community) to understand what life was really like during the conflict. Now a generation removed, young people have little direct understanding of what life was like living under violence, disaster, imprisonment, a culture of fear, and the near constant loss of life. More worrisome, youth might, as a result of segregated communities, the passing of time, and other conditions, be tempted to view the Troubles from a romanticized lens. Routine and casual conversations about why a return to violence would be catastrophic is needed.
- In anticipation of a future referendum on unification and a new Ireland, regardless of when this emerges, program and policy makers need to establish a basis for cross-society interaction, integrated schooling, and integrated existences (housing, work, and other settings). It is only through this sort of interaction, communication, and experience sharing that all sides realize common, general needs as well as the fact that they have nothing to fear from the 'other' side.

## **Final Comments**

Finally, in the context of Northern Ireland, many residents have witnessed first-hand the tragic consequences of polarized neighbourhoods, the elimination of communication and contact with the 'other side', and the breakdown of interaction among various populations. Young people today may not be as aware of the consequences of such conditions or seen them first-hand, but those born at least twenty-five years ago most certainly are. We are at a point in history where the road diverges in one direction to conflict and to the other a more stable, civil society. From the latter, we can then build a more inclusive, peaceful, and equitable society. It is this path that we must go down, for the sake of ourselves, our children, and a new Ireland.

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## **Preventing Violent Extremism and Terrorism in Northern Ireland and Around the World by Michael Ortiz**

For 8 years, I served in the Obama Administration at the White House, National Security Council and Department of State. For most of my tenure, I worked on some of the most critical foreign policy and national security challenges facing the United States, including the battle against ISIL, the opening to Cuba, the Iran nuclear deal and counterterrorism. Most recently, I served as the first senior U.S. counterterrorism diplomat focused on a relatively new component of counterterrorism policy: countering violent extremism (CVE).

During my time as a diplomat, I was charged with developing and executing our CVE policy, and learning as much as I could about what triggers and spreads violent extremism. This was no easy task: the radicalization process is complex, and experts around the world are working to better understand it. International research cites many potential factors that lead to radicalization, including segregation, a lack of career and educational opportunities, discrimination, government decisions, among others — all of which are exploited by recruiters from terrorist organizations. As we know all too well, recruiters also exploit the Internet and social media platforms to convince young people to join terrorist organizations in order to leave behind perceived wrongs in their home societies or to fight these wrongs at home. I saw these same scenarios play out across Europe, Africa and the Middle East, and I think some of the lessons I learned from my experience could be useful in the context of a united Ireland.

### **U.S. Approach to CVE**

Since 2015, the United States has made it a priority to figuring out what it takes to prevent individuals around the world from becoming terrorists in the first place. In fact, when I was at the National Security Council, President Obama launched this policy effort by hosting a White House Summit on CVE. We needed to better understand the factors leading people to violent extremism — no two neighborhoods or individuals are the same — through enhanced research efforts.

After identifying these unique local factors, we needed to develop programs that could help communities, including parents, teachers, local leaders, law enforcement and civil society groups, prevent radicalization in the first instance or intervene if an individual was already going down that terrible path.

Of course, these programs were different in each location. In Kenya, I visited a program run by a civil society organization that helped young men and women who had begun the radicalization process, but wanted to reintegrate into society before it was too late. This organization provided counseling services for jobs and education. In exchange for this assistance, the individuals were required to renounce violence and be accountable to officials.

In Germany, a country with a long history of right-wing violent extremism, a civil society organization established a counseling hotline for families to contact if they suspected a loved one was being radicalized and needed help. This gave families an alternative to immediately notifying law enforcement, which they were often reluctant to contact since it could result in arrest even if a crime had not been committed.

In a number of European cities, local police improved their relationships with the communities they served by better understanding cultural norms and building trust with the citizens. In a German city, which had a particularly high number of individuals traveling to Iraq and Syria, one young man formed a partnership with police, so his community could better understand the police and the police could better understand them. The entire purpose of this young man's effort was to build trust. In each case, collaboration between government, civil society and citizens was critical – a whole-of-community approach to rooting out radicalization to violence.

Violent extremism is a unique foreign policy challenge because it often begins as a community-level problem and cannot be addressed easily through traditional diplomatic channels. As a result, a significant component of the U.S. CVE diplomatic strategy has been to convince other national governments and the UN to prioritize this threat internally. In 2016, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon presented his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. Later that year, the General Assembly blessed the plan and, with U.S. leadership, countries are now focused on developing national action plans for preventing violent extremism.

Additionally, the U.S. has helped establish and support initiatives that foster partnerships between state and local governments and civil society organizations in order to share best practices and better understand violent extremism. Some of these initiatives include: the Strong Cities Network, the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, and the Global Counterterrorism Forum's (GCTF) Initiative to Address the Life Cycle of Radicalization to Violence. The GCTF's initiative also includes a unique toolkit, which provides communities with the resources they might need to tackle these challenges. The United States has also supported the Hedayah Center of Excellence for CVE in Abu Dhabi and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) CVE Center of Excellence and Counter-Messaging Hub in Djibouti. Given the local nature of CVE, we need diverse international partners more than ever.

## **Way Forward**

Ireland and Northern Ireland have long struggled with terrorism, but have made tremendous progress in security in recent years. As leaders across the island grapple with the concept of a united Ireland, it is important to consider the ways in which future violence could be prevented, including by strengthening counterterrorism and law enforcement efforts, supporting civil society organizations, and religious and educational institutions, and providing citizens with the tools they need to intervene during the radicalization process.

I would recommend the following steps: First, the government should launch a national-level task force or coordinating mechanism with national and local officials, law enforcement, civil society and other local leaders to examine potential threats, better understand the drivers of violent extremism (even if politically sensitive) and evaluate current resources. This would help everyone have a baseline understanding of what the challenge is and what needs to be done. Second, this task force or coordinating mechanism should develop a national strategy for CVE. I would recommend following the guidance on the development of national action plans in the UN's Plan of Action. It is absolutely critical that a wide range of voices, including government officials, law enforcement, civil society and educators, among others, be involved in the creation of this strategy. Third, identify an individual or body to execute the strategy. Some countries designate a CVE coordinator and others create or designate a government agency with a CVE mandate. There must also be clear metrics for progress in strategy execution and communications mechanisms to regularly engage with local communities. In most cases, these are very local issues that must be resolved at the local level.

Unfortunately, there is not an easy fix to violent extremism. However, given U.S. leadership and international efforts on this issue for a number of years, there is now a global support architecture, which can help countries think through their approaches to this challenge. If Ireland is able to launch a transparent, open and inclusive process with strong communications mechanisms, sufficient programmatic resources and creative proposals for strengthening community resilience, I believe this will go a long way in working to prevent terrorism before it starts.





# National Risk Assessment 2019

## Void due to Omission of Possible/Probable Referendum

on a

### New Agreed Ireland

Submission by

## Deputy Sean Fleming TD\*

&

## Senator Mark Daly\*\*

#### Appendices

Responses to Parliamentary Questions by Deputy Sean Fleming TD: March 12, 2019

Correspondence with Taoiseach, Ministers, Department Secretary Generals, and Chairs of Audit & Risk Committees

2018 National Risk Assessment, Overview of Strategic Risks

Northern Ireland's Income & Expenditure in a Reunification Scenario: Research by Gunther Thumann, Senior Economist at the German Desk for the International Monetary Fund During German reunification, and Senator Mark Daly

Congressional Research Service Report supplied by Congressman Brendan Boyle for Senator Mark Daly: Northern Ireland Budgetary Issues

Dr. Kurt Hubner of British Columbia University:  
Modeling Irish Unification, Executive Summary

\*Deputy Sean Fleming, TD for Laois-Offaly (1997-Present), Chair of the Public Accounts Committee

\*\* Rapporteur of the 1st report on Irish unity by a Dáil and Senate Committee

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## Executive Summary

A key element of the state's future planning is the annual National Risk Assessment. To quote the Taoiseach in his own words in the 2018 National Risk Assessment: Overview of Strategic Risks, the risk assessment *"aims to counteract 'group think' and to ensure all parts are heard by Government."*<sup>1</sup>

Since the first National Risk Assessment report was published in 2014, these assessments have called attention to a number of risks that subsequently became major issues for society including Brexit, risks to EU stability, international terrorism, global warming, and risks around cyber security and housing supply. There is no mention by the government of the issues of a referendum on uniting Ireland in the 2018 National Risk Assessment signed by the Taoiseach or the 2019 Draft National Risk Assessment.

In a reply to a parliamentary question by Sean Fleming TD on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2019 as to why the issue of a referendum on a new agreed Ireland was not in the National Risk Assessment produced by the Taoiseach's Department the Taoiseach replied *"Although a border poll would not be regarded as a risk, and the very important and sensitive policy issue related to it would not be dealt with in the Risk Assessment process"*.

While the topic of the possibility of a referendum on Scottish independence is mentioned in the section of the National Risk Assessment report titled 'Instability in Northern Ireland', the possibility of a referendum on a New Agreed Ireland is not mentioned. This is concerning given that the Taoiseach spoke about his desire to achieve a New Agreed Ireland on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 2018 as reported by CNN. *"In terms of a United Ireland, our constitution is clear on this....Our constitution aspires to there being a united Ireland. I share that aspiration."*<sup>2</sup>

In a reply to another parliamentary question from Sean Fleming TD, the Tánaiste stated, *"In the event of a future referendum within the consent provisions of the Good Friday Agreement, the Government would make all necessary preparations in accordance with the terms of the Constitution and the principles and procedures of the Agreement."* One lesson we have learned from Brexit is that you do not hold a referendum without the necessary preparation.

An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar set himself a challenge of engaging with everyone about the future of the whole island at his address to the 20th anniversary of The Good Friday Agreement, in the U.S. Library of Congress.

*"There is now a particular onus on those of us who currently hold the responsibility of political leadership. We are a new generation. It is time for us to step forward and play our part. That is why we must engage young people in the future of our island. In the months and years ahead, I for one want to engage with the next generation –*

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<sup>1</sup> 2018 National Risk Assessment Overview of Strategic Risks, P.4 <https://assets.gov.ie/2405/261018155017-8828303ace924307816fda25dde8811c.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/01/02/europe/varadkar-united-ireland-intl/index.html>

*the Agreement Generation – to build on those achievements...Our mission now is to imagine the next twenty years. Not only to imagine it, but then to build it."*<sup>3</sup>

Senator Mark Daly wrote to the Taoiseach, the Tánaiste, all Ministers, Secretary Generals of all government departments, and the chairs of their Audit Committees and their Risk Committees to ask that they address the issue of a New Agreed Ireland in the National Risk Assessment and send copies of any policy plans. He received two responses addressing the request and thirteen acknowledgements of receipt of his correspondence. None of the responses included any discussion of having a New Agreed Ireland in the National Risk Assessment.

The Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Simon Coveney TD has also said, *"I would like to see a united Ireland in my lifetime. If possible, in my political lifetime."*<sup>4</sup> However, when asked in a parliamentary question by Sean Fleming TD on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2019 why the issue of a referendum on a New Agreed Ireland was not on his department's risk register or if his department risk committee had examined the issue the Minister could only say *"In the event of a referendum within the consent provisions of the Good Friday Agreement, the government would make all necessary preparations in accordance with the terms of the constitution and the principal and procedures of the Agreement"*.<sup>5</sup> The full questions and replies can be found in the appendix.

The Brexit referendum has taught us an important lesson: you do not hold a referendum until there is debate and discussion with all sides and all necessary preparations are made. It is widely known that policy neglect seldom goes unpunished and this is very true of the lack of policy preparation for a New Agreed Ireland by the Government.

Voices as diverse as those of the British Prime Minister; former Speaker of the US House of Representatives, Congressman Paul Ryan; DUP leader Arlene Foster; and Lady Sylvia Herman, MP for North Down, have all spoken about the issue of a Referendum on a New Agreed Ireland or a New Agreed Ireland.

There would be economic consequences due to the lack of policy planning by the Government around a New Agreed Ireland. Research by economists John FitzGerald of Trinity College Dublin and Edgar Morgenroth of Dublin City University shows that continued government inaction in relation to Irish reunification could come at a high price for the Republic, reducing income and living standards by as much as 15 percent.<sup>6</sup>

Gunther Thumann, a senior economist at the Germany desk for the IMF during German reunification, issued a report on the true income and expenditure of Northern Ireland in a reunification scenario. His assessment shows that the current

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<sup>3</sup> [https://merrionstreet.ie/en/News-Room/Speeches/Speech\\_by\\_An\\_Taoiseach\\_Leo\\_Varadkar\\_T\\_D\\_at\\_the\\_Good\\_Friday\\_Agreement\\_20th\\_Anniversary\\_event\\_Capitol\\_Hill\\_Washington\\_DC\\_13\\_March\\_2018.html](https://merrionstreet.ie/en/News-Room/Speeches/Speech_by_An_Taoiseach_Leo_Varadkar_T_D_at_the_Good_Friday_Agreement_20th_Anniversary_event_Capitol_Hill_Washington_DC_13_March_2018.html)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/joint\\_committee\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_the\\_good\\_friday\\_agreement/2017-11-23/2/](https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/joint_committee_on_the_implementation_of_the_good_friday_agreement/2017-11-23/2/)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2019-03-12/section/76/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/economy/united-ireland-would-see-living-standards-in-republic-fall-by-15-1.3629748>

reported budget deficit in Northern Ireland could come close to balanced in a reunification scenario. Other research such as 'Modelling Irish Unification' was compiled by Dr Kurt Hubner of the University of British Columbia. It states that 'political and economic unification of the North and South would likely result in a sizable boost in economic output and incomes in the North and a smaller boost in the ROI.'<sup>7</sup> However, this research and analysis was published in 2015 before Brexit. In 2018 Dr Kurt Hubner collaborated with Dr Renger Van Nieuwkoop to publish research entitled 'The Cost of Non-Unification: Brexit and the Unification of Ireland' which showed that over seven years, the unification of Ireland could benefit the country by €23.5 billion. The Irish Government should carry out its own cost benefit analysis in relation to the status quo and reunification.

The challenge facing the Irish Government or any economist trying to predict the financial benefits and costs of reunification is best explained by Gunther Thumann when he outlines all the information available. Germany is still not able to say definitively the cost of unification.

*"Perhaps more surprisingly estimates of the costs of unification continue to differ significantly even years after the event. For instance, data published by the IFO Dresden, the University of Halle and Klaus Schroeder FU Berlin 25 years after Re-Unification put net transfers per annum (over the period 1991-2014) at EUR68 billion (IFO), EUR54 billion (Halle) and EUR83 billion (FU), respectively."<sup>8</sup>*

In 2017 the Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement published its report entitled 'Brexit & the Future of Ireland: Uniting Ireland & Its People in Peace & Prosperity'. That report is the first report by a Dáil or Senate Committee on the steps required to achieve a United Ireland as stated in articles 2 & 3 of the constitution and as provided for in the Good Friday Agreement. The recommendations of the report should now be implemented by the government as a matter of extreme urgency.

Despite the unanimous adoption of these recommendations in July 2017 by the Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, none of these key recommendations have been carried out by the government to date.

We would recommend that the issue of the economic impact of a referendum on a new agreed Ireland would be included as part of the 2019 National Risk Assessment.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://prcg.com/modeling-irish-unification/report.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://senatormarkdaly.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/research-on-northern-ireland-income-and-expenditure-1.pdf>

## Overview of the National Risk Assessment Process

The National Risk Assessment provides an opportunity to identify and debate strategic risks facing Ireland over the short, medium and long term. Since the first report in 2014, these publications have highlighted several risks that went on to become major problems for society, including Brexit, risks to EU stability, international terrorism, global warming, and risks around cyber security and housing supply.

The foreword by the Taoiseach to the 2018 National Risk Assessment report states, *“the National Risk Assessment: Overview of Strategic Risks, first published five years ago, aims to counteract ‘group think’ and to ensure all voices are heard by Government. It seeks to prevent a repeat of the mistakes of the past, when dissenting voices were not heeded, leading to catastrophic consequences for the country. It has helped stimulate a national conversation about risk that takes place at every level from private citizens to civil society groups, industry and public bodies.”*<sup>9</sup>

The 2019 Draft National Risk Assessment in its overview process asks 2 key questions, one of which asks, *“Have the correct strategic risks been identified or are there other significant risks that should be included?”*, we believe the possible and some would say probability of a referendum on a new agreed Ireland should be included.

The report also states, *“It is vital to learn from the mistakes of the past, and this exercise was introduced to ensure that we, as a Government and as a wider society, encourage and participate in these necessary horizon-scanning discussions to ensure that we identify risks early and can robustly prepare for them.”*<sup>10</sup>

In a response to a parliamentary question to Sean Fleming TD, remarkably the Taoiseach stated *“Although a border poll would not be regarded as a risk, and the very important and sensitive policy issues related to it would not be dealt with in the Risk Assessment process, the question of relationships on the island of Ireland, and between the two islands, are always considered as part of the annual National Risk Assessment.”*

The Tánaiste, also replying to a parliamentary question to Sean Fleming TD, stated *“In the event of a future referendum within the consent provisions of the Good Friday Agreement, the Government would make all necessary preparations in accordance with the terms of the Constitution and the principles and procedures of the Agreement.”* If we learn only one lesson from Brexit, it is that you do not hold a referendum without the necessary long-term preparation.

As mentioned above, one of the original impetuses behind the National Risk Assessment process was to avoid the possibility of 'group think' when identifying strategic risks to the country. According to the Government, the 2019 Draft National Risk Assessment *“provides an opportunity for the identification, discussion and consideration of risks facing Ireland over the short, medium and long term. Since the*

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<sup>9</sup> <https://assets.gov.ie/2405/261018155017-8828303ace924307816fda25dde8811c.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://assets.gov.ie/9294/d5b7898a4d8e47d1a7ff1d9efc6e1e53.pdf>

*National Risk Assessment was first published in 2014, the annual Report has served as an important indicator of national-level risks and has called attention to a number of risks that subsequently became major issues for Irish society, including Brexit, and risks around housing supply, and cybersecurity.” All government departments feed into this process.<sup>11</sup>*

There have been five National Risk Assessment reports published to date. In the most recent 2018 National Risk Assessment, a review of the previous four years was included because, *“an analysis of the process and the risks identified in each of these years, including how they have changed and evolved is now timely. In particular this may be of interest in terms of how these changes may reflect the evolution of the risk landscape more generally, and how successful the NRA has been to date in tracking this, as well as in providing useful insights into emerging risks and trends pertinent to Ireland.”<sup>12</sup>*

In the final paragraph of his foreword to the 2018 National Risk assessment, the Taoiseach commented:

*“This year, while the discussion continues about ever-present risks like climate change and risks to Ireland’s biodiversity, food safety, anti-microbial resistance, and terrorist incidents, we have added two new risks: Overheating in the Economy and the Impact of Social Media on Public Debate. We have also dedicated risks under both the Geopolitical and Economic sections of the Report to the many implications of Brexit. While the risks are separated into categories, the Report aims to reflect the interconnected nature of risks and, as such, cross-cutting issues like Brexit are acknowledged and discussed throughout the Report.... This annual, evolving national conversation around risk can help ensure that we are constantly vigilant in planning for the future. It is an essential step in managing the potential impacts of these risks on our economy, our societal well-being, our environment, and our country.”<sup>13</sup>*

Leo Varadkar, T.D. Taoiseach

The Government’s focus on only the effects of a hard or no deal Brexit is also a concern, as we believe any form of Brexit to be a risk that must be prepared for. There is, however, no mention of the issue of a Referendum on a New Agreed Ireland or unity in the 2014-2018 National Risk Assessment reports or the 2019 Draft National Risk Assessment.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://assets.gov.ie/9294/d5b7898a4d8e47d1a7ff1d9efc6e1e53.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <https://assets.gov.ie/2405/261018155017-8828303ace924307816fda25dde8811c.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <https://assets.gov.ie/2405/261018155017-8828303ace924307816fda25dde8811c.pdf>

## 2019 Draft National Risk Assessment: Instability in Northern Ireland

In the section concerning Northern Ireland in the 2019 Draft National Risk Assessment there is a reference to the issue of Scottish independence and the status of Scotland continuing as part of the United Kingdom. There is, however, no mention of a referendum on a New Agreed Ireland. In the 2019 Draft National Risk Assessment under the section on Northern Ireland it states the following:

*“Brexit has also played significantly into the debate in Scotland about its future within the UK, raising questions in relation to the devolution settlement and the possibility of a further independence referendum. Disagreements have arisen between the Scottish and UK Governments in relation to the operation of current devolution arrangements, and in particular the handling post-Brexit of matters of EU competence that were not reserved to Westminster under the terms of Scottish devolution settlement. The status of Scotland in the United Kingdom is an internal matter for the people of Scotland and the people of the United Kingdom, and therefore a matter on which the Irish Government does not and will not engage. Questions have been raised regarding the applicability to Scotland of any arrangements made to address the challenges posed by Brexit for Northern Ireland and for the island of Ireland. However, the situation in Northern Ireland is unique and not directly comparable to, that in Scotland in particular, any other region, given the nature of the political and constitutional settlement of the Good Friday Agreement.”<sup>14</sup>*

As stated earlier there is no mention of a Referendum on a New Agreed Ireland or unity in the 2014-2018 National Risk Assessment reports.

In a reply to a parliamentary question by Sean Fleming TD on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2019 as to why the issue of a referendum on a new agreed Ireland was not in the National Risk Assessment produced by the Taoiseach’s Department, the Taoiseach stated *“Although a border poll would not be regarded as a risk, and the very important and sensitive policy issues related to it would not be dealt with in the Risk Assessment process”*.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> <https://assets.gov.ie/9294/d5b7898a4d8e47d1a7ff1d9efc6e1e53.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2019-03-12/section/76/>

There is one mention of the possibility of a United Ireland in the appendix to the 2018 National Risk Assessment, but this was not by the Government or any of the ‘civil society groups, industry and public bodies’ the Taoiseach refers to in his foreword which helped shape that final report. That reference was by a member of the public and was included in the appendix of the report. The reference by this individual refers to the potential cost of a united Ireland, this issue was not included in or dealt with in the section on Northern Ireland in the 2018 National Risk Assessment.

### **Annex 5. NRA 2018 Public Consultation – risks highlighted by respondents**

The following table contains a summary of the risks highlighted by respondents during the public consultation phase of the National Risk Assessment 2018, *“in addition to how, where appropriate, these are reflected in the final Report. A number of submissions raise points not directly addressed in the table, including risks already explicitly identified, drafting points and other comments on specific policy issues, as well as points on mitigating risks which, as mentioned previously, does not come under the remit of this exercise.”*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Individual Risk</b>	<b>How reflected in NRA 2018</b>
<b>Geopolitical</b>	Instability in Northern Ireland, including the potential cost of a united Ireland	Risks around Northern Ireland are discussed under the Northern Ireland risk.
	Dissident activity and terrorism	This is discussed under the Northern Ireland risk.

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Senator Mark Daly wrote to the Taoiseach, the Tánaiste, all Ministers, Secretary Generals of all government departments, and the chairs of their Audit Committees and their Risk Committees to ask that they address the issue of a New Agreed Ireland in the National Risk Assessment and send copies of any policy plans. He received two responses addressing the request and thirteen acknowledgements of reception, which can be found attached as an appendix. None of the responses included any discussion of having a New Agreed Ireland in the National Risk Assessment.

<sup>16</sup> <https://assets.gov.ie/2405/261018155017-8828303ace924307816fda25dde8811c.pdf>

## National & International Discussion of United Ireland (New Agreed Ireland)

At the MacGill Summer School in Glenties, Co Donegal on Tuesday the 19<sup>th</sup> of July 2016, less than a month after the Brexit referendum in the UK, the front page of the Irish Independent newspaper banner headline quoted the Taoiseach Enda Kenny saying, 'Get Ready for a United Ireland'. Yet mention of the issue of a United Ireland did not appear in any of the National Risk Assessments while Enda Kenny was Taoiseach.

Despite it not being in the 2018 National Risk Assessment that he and his department signed off on, the current Taoiseach has spoken about his desire to achieve a United Ireland. On the 2<sup>ND</sup> of January 2018, CNN quoted him as saying *"Our constitution aspires to there being a united Ireland. I share that aspiration."*<sup>17</sup>

An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar at his address to the 20th anniversary of The Good Friday Agreement, in the U.S. Library of Congress, said:

*"There is now a particular onus on those of us who currently hold the responsibility of political leadership. We are a new generation. It is time for us to step forward and play our part. That is why we must engage young people in the future of our island. In the months and years ahead, I for one want to engage with the next generation – the Agreement Generation – to build on those achievements. Our mission now is to imagine the next twenty years. Not only to imagine it, but then to build it."*<sup>18</sup>

The Tánaiste Simon Coveney TD has also said, *"I would like to see a united Ireland in my lifetime. If possible, in my political lifetime."*<sup>19</sup>

Former Speaker of the House of Representatives Paul Ryan said, *"the only government job I would aspire to is to be the ambassador to Ireland. I think one day unification will occur."*

The Times of London Newspaper on Monday the 15<sup>TH</sup> of May 2018 reported the British Prime Minister Theresa May as having said she is not confident of certain victory in a Referendum on a New Agreed Ireland. She is reported to have said in a confrontation with Jacob Rees-Mogg, *"I would not be as confident as you. That's not a risk I'm prepared to take. We cannot be confident on the politics of that situation, on how it plays out."*<sup>20</sup>

We are all aware that many others, including those in the Unionist community, believe that there will be or is likely to be a referendum on Irish reunification as provided for under the

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<sup>17</sup> <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/01/02/europe/varadkar-united-ireland-intl/index.html>

<sup>18</sup> [https://merrionstreet.ie/en/News-](https://merrionstreet.ie/en/News-Room/Speeches/Speech_by_An_Taoiseach_Leo_Varadkar_T_D_at_the_Good_Friday_Agreement_20th_Anniversary_event_Capitol_Hill_Washington_DC_13_March_2018.html)

[Room/Speeches/Speech\\_by\\_An\\_Taoiseach\\_Leo\\_Varadkar\\_T\\_D\\_at\\_the\\_Good\\_Friday\\_Agreement\\_20th\\_Anniversary\\_event\\_Capitol\\_Hill\\_Washington\\_DC\\_13\\_March\\_2018.html](https://merrionstreet.ie/en/News-Room/Speeches/Speech_by_An_Taoiseach_Leo_Varadkar_T_D_at_the_Good_Friday_Agreement_20th_Anniversary_event_Capitol_Hill_Washington_DC_13_March_2018.html)

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/joint\\_committee\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_the\\_good\\_friday\\_agreement/2017-11-23/2/](https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/joint_committee_on_the_implementation_of_the_good_friday_agreement/2017-11-23/2/)

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/may-and-rees-mogg-clash-over-brexit-deal-vg9ml05fz>

Good Friday Agreement in the coming years. In fact, Lady Sylvia Hermon, the Independent Unionist MP for North Down, has said, "*I am worried about the consequences of Brexit. In my lifetime I never thought that I would see a Border poll and I am now convinced that I probably will see a Border poll.*"<sup>21</sup> She is right when she said in the same interview that, "*Brexit has and will change everything.*"

In a BBC Radio Ulster debate between Sammy Wilson the DUP MP and Sophie Long the former communications officer of the PUP, the political wing of the UVF, Ms Long said "*we must prepare for the possibility of a united Ireland*".<sup>22</sup>

Former Northern Ireland First Minister Peter Robinson believes Northern Ireland should prepare for the possibility of a New Agreed Ireland. In 2018, speaking at the MacGill Summer School in Glenties, Co Donegal, Former Northern Ireland First Minister Peter Robinson said he does not think Northern Ireland will want to leave the UK, but that is no reason it shouldn't prepare for the eventuality. "*I don't expect my own house to burn down but I still insure it because it could happen,*" he said. In response to a question from the audience, the former leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) said he would accept the results of a border poll which led to Northern Ireland joining the Republic. "*As soon as that decision is taken every democrat will have to accept that decision.*" Significantly, he said moving towards that scenario without preparation is madness and compared it to the decision to leave the EU. "*I don't believe Northern Ireland will want to leave the United Kingdom, but if it does happen we would be in a terrible fix because we would be in the same situation as leaving the EU where nothing was negotiated or decided about what was going to happen after.*" Mr Robinson said he believed the Unionist community in general would also accept the results of a border poll on unification but would want some "protections", similar to those the nationalist community currently enjoys in the North.<sup>23</sup>

And while the current and the former Taoiseach have both spoken about a New Agreed Ireland and the desire to see it happen, the issue has never been addressed in the National Risk Assessment issued by the Department of the Taoiseach.

Obviously significantly increased clarity and transparency, and most of all, a policy is required from both governments. This is vital to avoid political instability and potential court challenges surrounding any referendum. One can easily visualise the potential chaos that could ensue if a Referendum on a New Agreed Ireland is triggered as a result of a hard border/hard Brexit or as a result of a court challenge or ruling due to the lack of policy preparation and all-party engagement.

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<sup>21</sup> Gareth Gordon, 'Unionist MP Lady Sylvia Hermon expects to see border poll', (2018) < <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-43995962>> accessed 1 May 2019.

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04zw8hy>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/north-should-prepare-for-united-ireland-possibility-ex-dup-leader-1.3578620>

## The Economics of a New Agreed Ireland

One of the recommendations of the report adopted unanimously in 2017 by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement entitled 'Brexit & the Future of Ireland Uniting Ireland & Its People in Peace & Prosperity' was to ascertain the true level of the income and expenditure for Northern Ireland.

The core lesson for the Irish State in its pursuit of reunification, lies in the Brexit referendum in the UK, in that an issue which would have an economic impact should be preceded by policy planning and implementation. As economist John Bradley in his paper 'Towards an All Island Economy' presented at Queens University Belfast pointed out

*"The extreme importance of strategic economic planning.....policy errors or policy neglect seldom goes unpunished".* <sup>24</sup>

A New Agreed Ireland could come at a high price for the Republic due to the current course of inaction by the government, reducing income and living standards by as much as 15 per cent, a study by economists John FitzGerald of Trinity College Dublin and Edgar Morgenroth of Dublin City University has claimed.<sup>25</sup>

There are few economists in the world with first-hand knowledge and experience of reunification. Gunther Thumann is one such individual; he worked as a senior economist at the German desk of the International Monetary Fund at the time of German reunification. This provided him with the analytical understanding of the complex economic developments as they happened. In the second half of the 1990s, he had several opportunities to talk privately with Chancellor Helmut Kohl about his assessment of the politics of German reunification.

On the 14th of June 2018, Senator Mark Daly proposed to a meeting of the Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement that he and Gunther Thumann compile a report on the true income and expenditure of Northern Ireland in a reunification situation. Senator Mark Daly worked with Gunther Thumann and together they have examined the information available. This information shows that the current reported budget deficit for Northern Ireland could come close to balanced in a re-unification scenario.

The challenge facing the Irish Government or any economist trying to predict the financial benefits and costs of reunification is best explained by Gunther Thumann. He outlines that despite all the information available, Germany is still not able to say definitively the cost of unification.

*"Perhaps more surprisingly estimates of the costs of unification continue to differ significantly even years after the event. For instance, data published by the IFO Dresden, the University of Halle and Klaus Schroeder FU Berlin 25 years after Re-*

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<sup>24</sup> [http://www.irish-association.org/papers/john\\_bradley.asp](http://www.irish-association.org/papers/john_bradley.asp)

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/economy/united-ireland-would-see-living-standards-in-republic-fall-by-15-1.3629748>

*Unification put net transfers per annum (over the period 1991-2014) at EUR68 billion (IFO), EUR54 billion (Halle) and EUR83 billion (FU), respectively.”*<sup>26</sup>

“Northern Ireland’s Income and Expenditure in a Reunification Scenario”, with research by Gunther Thumann and Senator Mark Daly, is attached to this report as an appendix.

Today, people take German unification for granted but, as Thumann observes, in 1989/90, the result of the fall of the Berlin Wall was far from certain:

*“I am amazed how many Germans these days seem to take Re-Unification for granted. We should not forget that the developments that started in 1989 could have turned out very differently.....The fact that people take Re-Unification for granted reflects its success.”*<sup>27</sup>

For the purpose of his research, Thumann gave a brief outline on the timeline of events in German reunification which has been included in full as appendix of this report. The outline includes what could have happened and his conclusions and lessons for Ireland in its unification process.

For the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement report ‘Brexit & the Future of Ireland Uniting Ireland & Its People in Peace & Prosperity’ Senator Daly requested Congressman Brendan Boyle to commission the United States Congressional Research Service (CRS) to look at the income and expenditure for Northern Ireland. CRS produced a report entitled ‘Northern Ireland Budgetary Issues’. The CRS document is attached as an appendix to this report.<sup>28</sup>

The United States Congressional Research Service’s report breaks down Northern Ireland’s expenditures into: identifiable expenditure, non-identifiable expenditure and accounting adjustment. Thumann and Daly looked at the CRS report and make the point that included in ‘identifiable expenditure’ in Northern Ireland’s 2012-13 Social Protection budget are pensions accounting for £2.8 billion. These would initially be the responsibility of the British Government as the pension liability was accrued while Northern Ireland was part of the United Kingdom.

Congressman Boyle’s report explains that non-identifiable expenditure of £2.9 billion includes Defence Expenditure and UK Debt Interest. These would not be a liability of a new agreed Ireland. Thumann explains that not all the accounting adjustments figure of £1.1 billion would be applicable in a reunification scenario. Also, the convergence of the public service numbers between the North and the South could bring a savings of £1.7 billion per annum in the current budget expenditure of Northern Ireland.

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<sup>26</sup> <https://senatormarkdaly.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/research-on-northern-ireland-income-and-expenditure-1.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> <https://senatormarkdaly.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/research-on-northern-ireland-income-and-expenditure-1.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> <https://senatormarkdaly.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/congressional-research-service-report.pdf>

Taking the above adjustments and savings into account, the cumulative figure is £8.5 billion. With the reported deficit for Northern Ireland at £9.2 billion, the current income and expenditure figure for Northern Ireland comes near a balanced budget in a reunification scenario. This is, of course, before taking into account the likely potential for growth in Northern Ireland following unification as happened in East Germany following its reunification and to Eastern European countries upon their accession to the EU.

'Modeling Irish Unification' was compiled by Dr Kurt Hubner of British Columbia University. The executive summary is included as an appendix of this report. It states, "*The current political and economic separation of Northern Ireland from the Republic of Ireland (ROI) has opened up an economic gap between the two regions of the Island. Political and economic unification of the North and South would likely result in a sizable boost in economic output and incomes in the North and a smaller boost in the ROI.*"<sup>29</sup> However, this research and analysis was published in 2015 before Brexit.

In 2018 Dr Kurt Hubner and Dr Renger van Nieuwkoop published research entitled, 'The Cost of Non-Unification: Brexit and the Unification of Ireland' which shows that over seven years, the unification of Ireland could benefit the country by €23.5 billion. Conversely, a hard Brexit could cost the island €42.5 billion. It also stated that in the event of a hard Brexit where the United Kingdom leaves the customs union as well as the single market of the European Union, Northern Ireland would suffer a loss of €10.1 billion.

In relation to the research by John Fitzgerald, Edgar Morgenroth in 2018, Dr Kurt Hubner and Dr Renger van Nieuwkoop 2018 report and Hubner report in 2015 and the varying results means further research is required

As Gunther Thumann explains in the conclusion to his report that "*while these adjustments are of a mainly statistical nature they suffice to show that the £9.2 billion Northern Ireland deficit figure is not a meaningful measure of the Northern Ireland fiscal situation under unification. A lot of research is necessary to come up with a meaningful measure for the Northern Ireland fiscal balance under a unification scenario.-Depending on the specific assumptions made however, the pension adjustment could reduce Northern Ireland's fiscal balance under a reunification scenario to close to a balanced budget.*"<sup>30</sup>

The Irish Government should carry out its own cost benefit analysis in relation to the status quo and reunification.

The National Risk Assessment was set up as a consequence of the financial crash, any referendum could have serious and significant financial consequences if not properly planned for and that is why it is imperative it is included in the final 2019 National Risk Assessment.

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<sup>29</sup> <https://prcg.com/modeling-irish-unification/report.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> <https://senatormarkdaly.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/research-on-northern-ireland-income-and-expenditure-1.pdf>

Category		2013-2014 (£ billions)
Total Managed Expenditure		<b>24.1</b>
<b><u>Of which: Identifiable</u></b>		
<i>Deduct Reduction in Public Sector</i>		1.7
		<b>22.4</b>
<b>Deduct</b> Pension liabilities assumed by Britain		2.8
		<b>19.6</b>
<b><u>Of which: Non-identifiable</u></b>		
<i>Deduct Defence Expenditure, Debt Interest, international services &amp; EU transactions</i>		2.9
		<b>16.7</b>
<b><u>Accounting Adjustments</u></b>		
<i>Deduction: Items not related to Northern Ireland</i>		1.1
Total Adjusted Expenditure		<b>15.6</b>
Estimated Revenue attributed to Northern Ireland		<b>14.9</b>
Deficit		<b>0.7</b>

**'Northern Ireland's Adjusted Fiscal Balance as published in 'Northern Ireland's Income & Expenditure in a Reunification Scenario' by Gunther Thumann and Senator Mark Daly<sup>31</sup>**

<sup>31</sup> <https://senatormarkdaly.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/research-on-northern-ireland-income-and-expenditure-1.pdf>

## Conclusions

All key elements that could and will have an impact on the future of this state should be included in the annual Risk Assessment. To quote the Taoiseach in his own words in the 2018 National Risk Assessment: Overview of Strategic Risks, the Risk Assessment *“aims to counteract ‘group think’ and to ensure all voices are heard by Government.”*

It is of concern that there is no mention by the Taoiseach and the government of the issues of a New Agreed Ireland or a referendum on a New Agreed Ireland in their National Risk Assessment

The Taoiseach has mentioned his desire to achieve a United Ireland, saying, *“Our constitution aspires to there being a united Ireland. I share that aspiration.”*

Diverse voices from the British Prime Minister, the former Speaker of the US House of Representatives, the DUP leader Arlene Foster, Lady Sylvia Herman’ independent Unionist MP for North Down and former DUP leader Peter Robinson have also spoken about the issue of a Referendum on a New Agreed Ireland or a united Ireland.

The voices and research quoted and referred to in this report and in other reports should be listed to. Those of Gunther Thumann Senior economist at the Germany desk for the IMF during German reunification on the true running cost of a Northern Ireland in a reunification scenario. Economists John FitzGerald of Trinity College, Edgar Morgenroth, Dr Kurt Hubner and Dr Renger van Nieuwkoop on the potential impact of unification.

We should listen a new to the advice of the man voted in 2016 by the people of Ireland ‘Irishman of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century’, T. K. Whitaker. Written to the Taoiseach Jack Lynch in a ‘Note on North-South Border Policy’ on the 11th of November 1968 on the eve of ‘The Troubles’. In it Whitaker foresaw the long term nature of achieving a New Agreed Ireland, that it required the best of ourselves and a collective understanding.

*“We were, therefore, left with only one choice, a policy of seeking unity in Ireland between Irishmen. Of its nature this is a long-term policy, requiring patience, understanding and forbearance and resolute resistance to emotionalism and opportunism. It is not the less patriotic for that”.*

*T K Whitaker*

## Recommendations

Policy neglect seldom goes unpunished and this is very true of the lack of preparation by the Government for a new agreed Ireland.

We would strongly recommend that the government immediately act upon the recommendations of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, from their report entitled 'Brexit & the Future of Ireland: Uniting Ireland & Its People in Peace & Prosperity'.

The Taoiseach and the government must include policy preparation for a possible/ probable referendum on a New Agreed Ireland in the National Risk Assessment 2019.