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Clashing views of the world and its' impact on conflicts

A study on identities and narratives on Northern Ireland



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Abstract

In the aftermath of Brexit, the clashing narratives and identities have once again flared up on Northern Ireland. When in doubt about the future, an exploration into the past might be of use in order to avoid a continued conflict. This study will thus aim to research the identities and narratives put forth by the republican and the unionist/loyalist sides during the conflict on Northern Ireland. The thesis will through four touchdowns into the conflict analyse the narratives in an attempt to understand the identity-making of the conflict's parties. Analysing speeches, interviews and publications from the leaders of both sides of the conflict, the presentation of Self, Other, victim, perpetrator and historical context is identified through the rhetoric. The use of these key concepts are components in shaping the intractability of the conflict.

Key words: Northern Ireland, identity, narratives, clashing narratives, conflict, narrative analysis

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1 Introduction

In the past decades, a growing interest for identity as a reason for conflict has become a frequent subject for research. In the aftermath of atrocities, such as in Rwanda and Bosnia, a further understanding of identity is of a continued academic interest (Strömbom 2014:168-169). In the understanding and creation of the dichotomy of us-and-them, in- or out-group, the Self or the Other, the narration and actual creation of the differentiating groups is of importance. This is in order to understand how a conflict based on identity is created, and in turn, how it remains defended amongst the warring parties. Furthermore, a deepened understanding of the importance of self, and the respect and acceptance of ones' identity is of high value. In the words of Daniel Bar-Tal and Nadim Rouhana, the association made between Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1970) and identity shows its critical connotation. The need for respect and acknowledgement of the lower part of the hierarchy, such as identity and security, is fundamental for the establishment of a durable peace in society. This is of value during peace processes, where the resolution of clashing narratives and identities are vital to attain a stable peace (Rouhana – Bar-Tal 1998:767).

This thesis will, thus, look closer at the intractable conflict on Northern Ireland, where identities and narratives have come to define the conflict at its core. The study will come to understand the connection between clashing narratives and identities in the conflict. Furthermore, it will seek to understand how the construction of identity have come to act as a fuel for the conflict and how the narratives of said identities have come to clash in the understanding of both the conflict and the circumstances surrounding it. The conflict has since come to an end (after *The Good Friday Agreement 1998*) but is still of academic interest since the century of repression, conflict, identity-making and construction of clashing narratives has left its mark, in the treaty as well as in the region as a whole. Furthermore, it is of academic value to deepen the understanding of narratives and identities as factors in conflict, both leading up to it, during and after. In the aftermath of the vote for the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland to leave the European Union, tensions have once again flared up and disputes over the Irish border have started anew. Hillary Clinton, former US Secretary of State and First Lady at the time of the agreement, wrote an opinion piece in *The Guardian* urging Brexit not to undermine the progress made by the peace agreement (Clinton 2018). It is, thus, of non-academic interest to study this in the face of a possible renewed tension. One might look back at the conflict and re-examine the identities and narratives at play, to understand how the animosity might be subdued and calmed down today in order to avoid any future conflict.

To fully understand how identities and narratives come to act in the conflict on Northern Ireland my **thesis question** will thus be: *How has identities and clashing*

narratives come to express themselves in the rhetoric used by the republican and unionist/loyalist sides related to the development of the conflict on Northern Ireland from 1968 to 1998?

The **purpose** of this thesis is to understand how clashing narratives and identities worked as factors in the conflict and helped make it intractable. Moreover, the essay aims to understand the transformation of the narratives that allowed a peace process and ultimately a peace agreement.

2 Theoretical framework

Below follows the theoretical framework, which is the foundation of this thesis. Firstly, a short summary of relevant previous research will be explained in order to place the thesis in a theoretical context. Secondly, the relevant theory will be presented and accompanying definitions will be made in the interest of simplifying the forthcoming study.

2.1 Previous research

The field of identities-creation is vast and disparate, e.g. individual identities (cf. Bauman 2004), gendered identities (cf. Butler 2004), professional identities (cf. Brante 2014) or national identities (cf. Wendt 1994; Bell 2003). It is therefore important to delimit the choice of previous research. As such, it is studies of identity-creation *in the field of peace and conflict studies* that will be reviewed here.

In this field, one encounters that identity can be applicable to all levels of society, not only on an individual level, thus, prompting state-based identity to be understood. This way the ruling top level of society is involved. The creation of a state-identity will inherently create an in-group (one's own state) and an out-group (other states). These national identities are grounded in self-interest within the global arena, and will inevitably come in to contact with other states, which have the same mentality. This clash could end in two ways. One is that *one's own state* sees the opposing state as the 'Other' in the sense that its own interests could be compromised. Secondly, 'one's own state' and 'the Other' could enter into an agreement where the self-interest is not compromised and the two states become part of the same in-group, with a shared interest and partly sharing an identity. These collective created identities can be bilateral, regional or global, all depending on the level of cooperation, identification and interests that are shared. This collective identity can be created through two gateways. The first is an increased inter-dependence between the states, thus prompting a rising level of communication. The second is the occurrence of a common Other, or a common enemy (whether concrete or abstract). Thus, even though the collective identity is created on the common ground of the parties involved, it is either based upon a common interest, or a common enemy (Wendt 1994:387-389).

The realm of identity research has come to encompass memory and mythology in relation to the creation of a national identity. This national identity is based on a collective memory (also known as collective remembrance) made up by individuals or several groups of individuals convening in order to share memories of historical occasions. The creation of a national identity based upon collective memories and

mythscape that differs from the primordialist view of the term. In this, a nation, and thereby the national identity, is based upon an appearance of sociobiological factors such as blood relations, a common language and cultural conventions (Bell 2003:64, 67). In comparison, the collective memory shared by most part of the community and nation, could be argued to be the aspect that constitutes a nation. As such, the sharing of values, ideas and understanding of factual historical events or age-old tales of a nation of glory, constitutes the nation and its identity. This sharing of memory reinforces the feeling of collectivity within the nation. This collectivity is strengthened by the shared history and is thus used as a framework in the understanding of who is a part of the collective nation and who is not (Bell 2003: 70).

Bringing the abstraction level down into the community and to an individual level, and combining this with conflict, one can find the creation of identity as a factor in conflicts, especially in ethno-national conflicts. Here 'societal beliefs' are found, whereby parts of society share ideas about matters of concern within said society. These matters help form a sense of community, which acts in accordance to the structure of society, their attributes and the development of said society. Moreover, the convictions of societal goals, norms, values and the idea of an out-group are incorporated into the societal beliefs. This societal framework is actively reinforced by institutions and thereby presents the social context to view a conflict by. This societal context becomes incorporated into the collective narrative (Bar-Tal – Rouhana 1998:765). This creation of societal beliefs, accompanied by a collective identity, gives the in-group a framework with which to understand and justify a conflict. The creation of such a collective identity regarding an equally strongly manifested, but opposing collective identity would spark tensions and even result in an eruption of conflict. This would make the conflict an intractable one, where the identities and narratives presented collide with one another (Bar-Tal – Rouhana 1998). It is, then, from here the theoretical framework of this thesis will commence.

A deeper understanding of the relationship between identity and conflict could be understood through *ontological (in)security*. Ontological security is the feeling of a secure sense of being, a certainty in the world and its intentions. When these feelings are not realised one could experience an insecurity in Self. This ontological insecurity increases when the balance of perceived power relations shifts, either in relation to the Self or the Other. When the ontological insecurity becomes heightened the in-group (or Self) tries to stabilise through the finding of one constant identity. This search for stability through a single identity comes with a reaffirming of an Other. The search for a single stable identity in response to a perceived sense of ontological insecurity is known as *securitised subjectivity*. This could, in a concrete manner, occur through a stronger nationalistic narrative or alternatively stronger religious discourses. Although, an increase of ontological security for an individual or group through nationalism or religion thereby implies an ontological insecurity for those not included in the group, thereby prompting the conflictual tensions to become heightened (Kinnvall 2004:746, 748, 749, 763).

2.2 Theory

The theoretical perspective of this thesis is based upon the theories of identity and narratives in conflicts by Ella Ben Hagai, Philip L. Hammack, Andrew Pilecki and Carissa Aresta; Yiannis Papadakis and Susanne Buckley-Zistel. These theories concern ethno-national identity-conflicts as well as the “Other” and the “Self” in relation to conflicts.

In ethno-national identity-conflicts, a collective group of the conflicting parties create narratives that help them explain the conflict and its underlying factors. Thus, the narrative of the conflict is created and will help frame the understanding of the “Other” and the “Self” (also known as in- and out-groups) for the group members. Furthermore, the narratives created during or leading up to a conflict describes and establishes the Other in relation to Self as a part of their collective mentality and identity. As individuals identify themselves with the collective identity it makes way for the accepting of the narrative put forth by the group. With the acceptance of the narrative and identity, the commencing or continuing of conflict is made possible. In recognition of that, the collective identity and narrative leads to the cementation of the Self and the Other. Thus, the historical stories and narratives of victimhood, violence towards the Self and crimes committed by the Other becomes an integrated part of the narrative and the identity of the in-group (Ben Hagai et al. 2013:295-296; Papadakis 2004:15-16). The creation of collective identity in relation to the Other and a “chosen trauma” i.e. a historical event afflicted by the Other made part of the very core of the collective identity, acts as a unifying component of the collective identity. If widely accepted in the narrative, the chosen trauma accompanied with the division of Self and Other, the identities and narratives becomes apparent and acts as a driving force for the conflict (Buckley-Zistel 2006:8)

Accordingly, this study will categorise different statements in correspondence with their underlying expression. To concretise the diffuse terminology of identity- and narrative-research the study will categorise statements according to what the key components emphasise. They will thus be divided into different boxes: if they express the Self/ Other, or the victim or the perpetrator and lastly if there is a specific historical context.

In order to research the subjective and diffuse terms of identities and narratives they will be understood as expressing themselves through the Self and the Other. Through simple statements such as ‘us’ and ‘them’, expressions of a collective in-group or remarks with a negative connotation aimed at another group, shows how the inherent conflictual identity is portrayed. In other words, a statement will be classified accordingly if they describe their own in-group or a rival group. When this is conveyed the statement will be categorised as a characteristic of the Self or the Other.

Furthermore, the narratives and identities can be found in statements of the victim and perpetrator and the relationship between them. For instance, it can be found in statements that concerns justice, justness and unjustness in relation to crimes committed against the Self. When the crime is described with a clear culprit

the statement will be categorised as part of a perpetrator. Moreover, when the crime is described as a showing of the offences committed towards the collective group with the focal point being the suffering endured by the group, the statement will be categorised as part of a victim. Moreover, when a specific historical event is described, as a part of a chosen trauma for the in-group, it will be categorised as a historical context. Note that these categories intertwine and are thus difficult to distinguish. With that in mind, it is not my ambition to unequivocally separate them, but to use them as categories to concretise identity-construction.

Drawing on the understanding of identities and narratives this thesis will discern how these have come to clash in the conflict on Northern Ireland and thereby made the conflict, in its core, a question of clashing views of the world. Furthermore, understanding identity and clashing narratives as working as a key component in making the conflict intractable, the conflict on Northern Ireland is of interest. Knowing that it has successfully secured a lasting peace agreement, the understanding of the changing and transforming of narratives and identities is of relevance for this study.

2.3 Definitions

Working with subjective understandings and definitions has its difficulties. Trying to find a clear cut, unquestionable definition of terms such as identity and narratives is impossible. This thesis will thus try to define and make clear the terms in the context of this work. It does not presume to make assumptions of understanding or define the terms beyond the constraints of this study.

The concept of *identity* is, in social psychology, described as a part of the cognitive scheme that represents and understands the Self in relation to the Other. It is seen as unpredictable as it exists in the differentiation between the Self and the Other, through the discourses used and the values that those discourses stress. The understanding of things is made possible through what it is not, hence identity is understood through the separation and difference from the Self in relation to the Other. The Self is realised when one sees what one is not. The relationship between the Self and the Other can be constructed through more than the Other being the anti-self. The Other as seen as the lesser is a way of creating ones' Self. The Other is therefore based on the assumption of it being a lesser being or having lesser principals, morals and values than the Self. Moreover, the distinction of Self and Other can be temporal in the sense of past/present ways. The Other can be understood as one who lives in the Self's past and the Self has thus moved on to the present and is more evolved. In the study of identity, the construction of inclusive or exclusive identities becomes apparent. The inclusive identities are marked as ones constructed by a construction of dichotomies based on conceived characteristics and values such as liberal or socialist. Exclusive identities are based on deep-rooted characteristics such as being religious, i.e. Christian, Islamic, etc. The discourses put forth by the inclusive or exclusive identities are different in how they portray the Other. In the Other being the anti-self the possibility for the

relationship to change is near minimal. If, however the Other is perceived as a lesser Self there is the prospect of the Other to grow and become incorporated in the Self through the inclusion of values. Having left a negative and conflict-prone definition of identity does not imply that a positive connotation of identity is impossible. The Other can be seen as a familiar and comparable to the Self. Moreover, the existence of the Other does not per se equal a threat to the Self. Thus, a conflict, such as an argument with the Other, or the act of war, might not be a necessary step to secure the Self (Rumelili 2004:29, 33, 34, 37; Rumelili 2015:56; Wendt 1994:185).

Narratives in an ethno-national conflict are created by groups in order to explain their understanding of the conflict. The narratives are created, with the possibility for the individuals that are part of the in-group, to construct their own understanding of the conflict. The understanding and interpretation of the conflict is bestowed on the agent's intent, motivations and actions taken within different scenarios (Ben Hagai et. al 2013:296).

Clashing narratives will be understood and defined as two (or more) parts of society in the conflict where the understanding of the conflict and the reasons for it utterly collides. Furthermore, there is a deep discrepancy in the memories of history and the formation and understanding of 'in'- and 'out'-groups in the different stages of the conflict. The clashing narratives involves all parts of society: names, languages, actors, underlying causes and responsibility in the conflict. The narratives themselves bring a set of goals for the group, interests and norms and values that are incompatible with the other group (Bar-Tal - Rouhana 1998:763).

Traditionally *conflict* is defined as an armed act of violence with a state's government acting as one of the main agents with at least one other aggressor. The conflict ought to stem from discontent with the governing and/or a territorial dispute. Moreover, the conflict should yield a minimum of 25 deaths per year, as a direct result of the conflict (UDPCR 2018). Defining the conflict on Northern Ireland is not unproblematic. When defining a conflict, the first thing you encounter is whether the defining part is state-based or not, if a government is involved or not. In the case of Northern Ireland, the instance of the British Army and their involvement, accompanied by the death of at least 25 people per year, signified the start of an armed intra-state conflict (UDPCR 2018). With that said, the stance of the republican side of the conflict would contest that statement, since they reject the British as a legitimate agent in the conflict and see them as an occupying force, i.e. they see the conflict as a war between two states, Britain and Ireland. This study will, however, define the conflict as an armed intra-state conflict, in accordance with the UCDP definition. The rationale is that Northern Ireland formally was, and still is, part of Great Britain (albeit *not* part of the United Kingdom).

3 Methodology

This study will implement a single case study, that through a narrative analysis and literary studies will try to understand the narratives put forth by each side of the conflict in the chosen case. Furthermore, the study will gather a deepened understanding of the conflict and the differentiating narratives and identities at play. To achieve the aims, the essay will through a narrative analysis study several speeches, interviews and statements made by each side of the conflict, and thus, try to understand how the identities are created through the narratives. Extensive literary studies will be done, accompanied by a narrative analysis, in which normative and subjective terms such as identity and narratives will be studied. These will in turn will be understood and analysed in relation to the conflict on Northern Ireland.

3.1 Method

This thesis will implement an abductive qualitative single case study with the conflict of Northern Ireland acting as the empirical study. The qualitative study will gain depth through the usage of a narrative analysis and will thus come to understand the identities and narratives. The choice of studying a single case and thus exposing oneself to the dilemma of generalisability and the use of ones' findings on other cases and additionally posing the dilemma of selective bias, does warrant a discussion and motivation (Denscombe 2014:100-101,104; Alvesson – Sköldberg 2017:13-14). With the choice of a single case study in the realm of identity and narrative, the subjectivity embedded in the concepts entails that the findings are difficult to recreate with other empirical examples due to the changing nature of them. Choosing a single case study and thereby restricting the reliability of the thesis might be compensated by the high level of internal validity that comes with an in-depth and extensive single case study (Denscombe 2014:92). Through meticulous literary studies and analysing discourses put forth by the conflicting parties, one might hope to justly identify the narratives and identities at play. The internal validity will thus be based on the correctness in the execution of the methods and continuous critical examination of the materials used (Halperin – Heath 2017:344).

3.2 Narrative analysis

This thesis will apply a narrative analysis on discourses put forth by the two warring sides of the conflict. The aim of the narrative analysis is to understand the narrative- and identity-creation by the parties and how they have come to change, through the study of speeches, interviews and publications. Four sets of discourses per side of the conflict with an interval of approximately ten years will be analysed. In other words, the analysis will dive into the conflict during the years 1971/1972, 1977, 1985/1986 and finally 1998. This in order to understand the narratives put forth during different stages of the conflict. By understanding the narratives and their analytic components of the motives and the histories being told, the thematic scheme and underlying narratives and identities can be understood. Through the use of narrative analysis on speeches, interviews and publications the aim of the essay is to uncover the underlying tensions and meanings of the statements. In the choice of specific narrative analysis, I will apply a categorical content framework¹ whereby I will categorise the discourse into different compartments. This compartmentalisation will be portrayal of the Self and the Other, the description of the victim and the perpetrator and lastly different historical events that the group deems deeply important in the construction of their identity and narratives, i.e. a chosen trauma. Through a careful deconstruction of the speeches I hope to understand how the narratives has come to express themselves and the exact situations in which the narratives of the opposing sides come to clash (Robertson 2012:228-237; Descombe 2014:402-403). When analysing the publications, speeches and interviews I will divide the statements that I deem represent one of the four categories. Subsequently, I will re-read the statement and then determine how the narrative and identity is portrayed to then contextualise it in relation to both the conflict and later to the opposing party. As mentioned previously the statements are not clear-cut in the different categories and will most likely be suitable in several of them. Furthermore, the categorisation is my interpretation of the statements and is thus my analysis of the situation. Having said that, the analysis will continuously be transparent.

Using a narrative analysis to deconstruct statements in an attempt to find the identity-creating narratives could be faced with criticism. The use of this analytic tool inherits a difficulty of reconstructing the analysis on different cases. But, I would argue that in the case of the contextual terms of identities and narratives, recreation is not the aim of the analysis. Identities and narratives are something that are subjective and contextual to each individual conflict and should not aim to be reproduced. With that being said, the process of finding the narratives and the findings in question will be shown in the utter most transparent way to avoid misleading or misdirecting the findings (Robertson 2012:254-255).

¹ Translated from Swedish "kategorisk innehållsmässig analys".

3.3 Case study and limitations

This thesis will study the conflict on Northern Ireland and focus on the understanding of identity-making and clashing narratives, and their agency in the making and fuelling of the conflict. The conflict will be studied from the outbreak of conflict in 1968 until the ratification of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. The time period will thus be thirty years. The conflict can be traced back to the sixteenth century and the religious and ethnic tensions created by the conversion to Protestantism. The tensions heightened, however, with the independence of Ireland. The following decades saw an increase of religious, ethnic and identity clashes that culminated in the formation of the Irish Republic Army (henceforth IRA) who was said to represent the catholic/republican interests and the police force *Royal Ulster Constabulary* (henceforth RUC) who were protestant/loyalist and fought with the interest of continuing being a part of Britain (UCDP 2018). The case of Northern Ireland is of special interest in the study of identity and clashing narratives, since the presence of both are expected and apparent at first glance of the conflict. A thing as trivial as the name of the territory is contested (cf. Dawson 2005). Furthermore, the conflict has been said to be intractable as a result of the vast differences in identity, the conflict transformation, and ultimately the peace agreement. This gives the impression of a transformation of narratives as well as the conflict that is of academic interest. This thesis will study the two opposing sides of the conflict on Northern Ireland. The republican/catholic side where the IRA and the political party Sinn Feín are used and studied for the narrative analysis. The political parties UUP, DUP and the Orange loyalist's Song Book, will be used in the narrative analysis for the unionist/protestant side. The choice of studying political parties as well as a para-military group is one of a broad understanding of the conflict. With different types of organisations, the narratives found and how they come to express themselves are diverse and can thus speak for a bigger part of the communities.

To limit the conflict and this study in order to make it manageable in scope for a bachelor thesis, I will focus on the time period of 1968-1998 and not the leading up to the conflict nor the aftermath of the peace agreement's ratification. Furthermore, the thesis will focus on certain group narratives and identities, and does not presume to go beyond that. As such, the focus will lie in the research of narratives and identity and no other factors that contributed to the conflict, such as socioeconomic motives or the IRA acting as a terror organisation.

3.4 Materials

The types of materials used in this study will be manifold and varied. The thesis will throughout use reliable primary sources to show a just picture of the findings. In the narrative analysis, and thus the basis for the thesis analysis, I will use reliable first-hand materials to give the findings an authentic result and not misdirect the

analysis or narratives found. Interviews and speeches that will be analysed are found on the website www.youtube.com, and act as a basis for the analysis. The speeches clearly show the persons speaking and can thus be presumed to showcase their message. Moreover, the interviews, although found on Youtube, come from respectable news-outlets. The source for the Green Book and the Song Book are, despite being two different websites, deemed reliable in their intentions. The source for the Green Book is CAIN which is a website founded by Ulster University and acts as a database for the conflict of Northern Ireland. I thus deem it a reliable source for the Green Book as well as the conflict's history. The website used for the Song Book is not as established as CAIN but is in my view a reliable source as well in its intention of showing a broad spectra of protestant folklore. Further sources used in the study are several academic articles and books. These have been chosen with care in relation to their intention. Similarly, to the primary sources the intentions of publications, whether academic or not, can come into question in a case such as the one of Northern Ireland. Although an element of bias is expected in the search for narratives the historical background will be based upon sources that strive for an unbiased account of the history so not to distort the findings. It is thus my intention to carefully choose the materials to avoid biased views (Descombe 2014:326).

4 Analysing the conflict on Northern Ireland

The following section will focus on the conflict on Northern Ireland, beginning with a historical background acting as the context for the conflict, in which the history of Northern Ireland and circumstances leading up to the conflict's outbreak are discussed. Furthermore, four different periods of the conflict will be examined and analysed, where the narratives of the different warring sides will be described and analysed. Prior to the analysis of the speeches, interviews or publications, an accompanying short conflictual context will be provided in order to fully understand the context of the specific statement. Finally, a comparative analysis will be presented in which the clashing of narratives is studied.

4.1 Conflictual context

The conflictual tensions on Northern Ireland (as well as Ireland) can be traced back to the 16th century when king Henry VIII chose to convert to Protestantism and thus creating the Church of England and thereby making it the official religion in the country. Sporadic uprisings on the Irish island occurred during the coming centuries, all with religious repression as a part of the response to the dissatisfaction. Come the First World War, the Irish took the opportunity when Britain was occupied on the continent to start an uprising. During the Easter Week 1916, Irish nationalists took to arms in order to try to defeat the colonial power of Britain and proclaim an independent republic state of Ireland. After a week of fighting, the uprising was defeated by the British troops and control of the Irish territory was once again in British hands. Although having been defeated, the thought of an independent Ireland was still in the hearts of the Irish people, and thus the nationalistic political party Sinn Féin was created. The party, in turn, created a national assembly, Daíl Eireann with 27 seats. This assembly was rejected as illegal and invalid by the British government but came to be seen as an important administrative establishment on the island. After the declaration from Sinn Féin to strive for an independent republic of Ireland, an armed branch was created: Irish Republican Army (Henceforth IRA). The IRA started targeting the British troops and establishments around the island. After a few years of tactical attacks and continued strives for independence the British parliament conceded and decided to create a continued British protestant part and a catholic self-governing part of the island. In 1921 Ireland was awarded self-governing capacity, but came to govern under the British Commonwealth. Northern Ireland was, however, under continued British control with the province of Ulster acting as its' base. Northern Ireland had a high percentage of protestants with approximately one fourth of the population

being catholic, and this religious minority came to be marginalised both religiously, socially and economically. In 1949, after a few years of self-governing, Ireland voted to completely break free from the Commonwealth, and thereby created the Republic of Ireland as an independent state. With the independence of Ireland, Britain did, however, maintain Northern Ireland (the province of Ulster) as part of their governing capacity. The region was given a limited self-control but the primary power continued being the UK parliament in London. The *Ireland Act* from 1949 stated that Northern Ireland was to continue being a part of the United Kingdom until such time that a majority of the region voted for independence (MSB 2013:1-2; McGrattan 2010:3).

After a few decades of relative calmness, the civil rights movement of the 1960s spread to the Northern Irish region. The republicans of the region created mass meetings and engaged in peaceful protest marches. The tipping point of the conflict came with the Royal Ulster Constabulary's (RUC) attack on a civil rights march in Derry/Londonderry in the autumn of 1968, and the attack of loyalists against another protest the subsequent year. These acts of violence have come to mark the beginning of the *The Troubles* (McGrattan 2010:5-6).

4.1.1 1971 and 1972

During the first years of the conflict the IRA branched out and the Provisional IRA (PIRA, but henceforth called simply the IRA) was created as a more violent branch of the organisation. Likewise, on the unionist side the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) was created as a para-military organisation. The first years of the conflict were defined by the republicans as the phase of civil rights marches, through which they aimed to gain independence from Britain. However, when British troops were deployed in response to the marches, and several protests ended with police or military interference, the breaking point came after a protest on the 30th of January 1972 in which the British Army fatally shot 14 protesters and injured several others. The event has come to be known as *The Bloody Sunday* and is singled out as a key event in the conflict. The Bloody Sunday sparked an escalation of violence and led to an increase of members to both the IRA and the UVF. In 1971 the government of Stormont² decided to implement a policy of internment where the police could arrest and hold people on the grounds of suspected involvement in illegal para-military groups. This could be done without the suspect going to trial. The government in London accepted the policy in the hopes of subduing the rising violence in the region. Internment of suspects continued until 1975 and the police arrested almost 2000 people, of which almost all were catholic and thought to be connected to the IRA. The operation that hoped to put a stop to the IRA and their violence led to an increase of members and heightened violence as a response to the unjust policy. An example of the increased violence *The Bloody Friday* stands out as one of the more violent episodes of the conflict. The IRA planted 22 bombs and set them off during a 75-minute period, killing several people. Acknowledging

² The parliament on Northern Ireland

the rising level of violence, the British government made two important decisions in relation to the conflict. Firstly, they deployed new battalions to the island. In the end of 1972 there were almost 21 000 British soldiers in the region. But more importantly, the British government dissolved the self-governing organ of Stormont and put Northern Ireland under direct control of London and Westminster (MSB 2013:3; Melaugh – McKenna 2018; Melaugh:a 2018; Melaugh:b 2018).

The narratives put forth by the republican side during the first stage of the conflict are ones of righteousness, where the British Army is seen as the main oppressor and perpetrator.

“The deaths of the British soldiers. I would say that the death of British troops in Ireland for the first time in 50 years would be a definite advantage for the IRA” (MacStiofain 1972).³

As seen in quote by Sean MacStiofain, leader of the IRA, the British and their presence constitutes the main Other and any attack or advantage gained upon them is deemed legitimate. The threat posed to the IRA was thus mainly the British Army and it was therefore the British that the Self was created against. Having the British as the anti-self, set the standard of Them as a hostile power that lacked legitimacy. With that as a backdrop, the creation of the Self became one of clear righteousness, where in this case the IRA, had complete legitimacy against the Other. Backing up the dichotomy of Self/Other was the use of history where the repression and imperialism imposed by the British shows the attack and killing of their soldiers as something positive, as taking a stand against their repressors.

The narrative portrayed by the unionist/loyalist side is a different one. The Orange loyalist order, through their Song Book, dehumanised the Other by comparing them to vermin and monsters. Furthermore, the Self is portrayed through unity, bonds and their Protestantism. The strong bonds of religion are shown throughout the song, as well as the historical unjustness and the victimisation of the Self.

“The protestants of Ulster together must unite to beat these rebel cowards who murder in the night. We’ll sent them back where they belong to crawl back to their den and Loyalists shall all rejoice, and Ulster’s free again” (The Orange Order 1971).

During this first stage of the conflict the narrative presented was, as stated, predominantly focused on the demonisation of the Other. Depicting them as monsters, crawling back to their den and murdering innocent Ulster boys during the night, equals them with rodents and animals not suitable for civilised society. The depiction of the Other as animals and monsters gives the impression of allowing the Self to exterminate them by any means necessary. The Other becomes stripped of their humanity and with that the possibility of negotiation disintegrates.

³ The citations presented represents the interview/speech/publication. If interested, transcriptions of the statements made representing the Self, Other, victim, perpetrator and historical context can be found in the appendix.

Furthermore, the depiction of Self as exclusively protestant equivalent the Other as the catholic community and thus makes the division of Self/Other a clear one, as it is simply a matter of what faith you adhere to. Narratives such as this shows the same wording as used to describe someone under siege. The struggle is one of exterminating the Other in order to free the land. Noteworthy is the rhetoric used is against ‘Northern Irelanders’ and not foreign occupying forces. The goal is nonetheless mobilisation in order to fight off the unwanted Other.

4.1.2 1977

One of the key moments of The Troubles was the IRA truce of 1975-1976. The aim of the truce was to implement a complete ceasefire on the IRA’s part and for Sinn Féin to commence talks with the British government. The ceasefire was marked by suspicion from both parts. The truce was brought about with a hope for withdrawal of British troops. On the British side the ceasefire was an opportunity to regroup and plan new and more successful attacks on the IRA. Consequently, the ceasefire was unsuccessful and resulted in fragmentations within the IRA between advocates for the ceasefire and those who were suspicious. Furthermore, the loyalist part of the region did not appreciate talks between the British and republicans and the possibility of the troops being withdrawn. Thus, an increase of loyalist para-military attacks on Catholics occurred during the end of 1975, and the lack of IRA response became increasingly troubling for the organisation. The failure of the truce led the IRA to change perspective on the conflict from one of hope for a fast result to preparing for a long war. The strategy of the organisation changed and a bigger political involvement was realised. Thus, Sinn Féin became more prominent (Lynn 2018).

The second stage of the conflict was one where the republican side amped up their narratives, the Self is described both as the strong, legitimate and just in their convictions and actions. The Other is described as the evil that must be defeated and utterly illegitimate. Excerpts from the Green Book shows the narratives of the group.

“[...] differences between the Brits and the I.R.A. volunteer, apart from the fact that the Brit is an uninvited armed foreigner who has no moral or historical justification for being here in the first place, are those of support, motivation and freedom of personal initiative” (IRA 1977).

As shown by the quote, the justness of the Self and the Other as a hostile enemy is more strongly evident. The intensity of the conflict continued and the violence escalated further. Accompanying the increasingly violent conflict the narratives were amped up in their rhetoric. The Self is continuously described as legitimate, right, and just in their convictions. The escalation of violence in the conflict led to a strong militarisation and description of it as a war as opposed to civil-rights movement in the narrative. The use of “foreign occupation forces” to describe the Other continues to reinforce the Self as in the right to take up arms and as the

legitimate party in the conflict. This is shown in talk of “army” and similarities and guidelines to a soldier being caught in the citation by The Green Book:

“The most important thing to bear in mind when arrested is that you are a volunteer of a revolutionary Army, that you have been captured by an enemy force, that your cause is a just one, that you are right and that the enemy is wrong [...]” (IRA 1977).

Furthermore, the use of imperialism in describing the British is strategic in regard to the global context. Around the world different colonies were rising up and rejecting the British rule. Hence, it is possible to understand the republicans’ use of the derogative and loaded term of imperialism as a strategy for receiving international sympathy as well as legitimacy in the process (IRA 1977). The narrative put forth emphasises the historical right to the land and is thus a key component in the justification and creation of Self. With the association of the constant struggle and attack they have had to endure the victimisation becomes apparent. The main theme of perpetrator in the narrative is still the British Army. The historical unjustness is mainly their doing, thus the association with it makes their evilness stronger and more deeply rooted.

On the unionist/loyalist side of the conflict the narrative revolves around the continued resilience of the Ulster men. Pastor Ian Paisley, the leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) shows the strength of their conviction.

“There are men in Ulster that will never surrender. There are men in Ulster who will die rather than pull down the flag. There are men in Ulster who will stand ’til the last man in defense of their heritage” (Paisley 1977).

The point being made in the speech is in part one of strengthening and unifying the unionist/loyalist movement by adhering to their unwavering convictions and traditions. The Self is portrayed as threatened and in need of defence. Moreover, the speech has a dual component as many other loyalist/unionist statements. Describing the region as ‘Ulster’ and not Northern Ireland, is common within the unionist movement. It acts as a statement against republicans, as the underlying meaning of the term ‘Ulster’ is that the six provinces making up Northern Ireland are still part of the province of Ulster, i.e. part of Britain. This distinction sets the tone for the dichotomy of Self/Other merely by how you name the territory. Simply by calling the region Ulster, the exclusion of the Other and their narrative comes with the statement. These unsaid remarks help strengthen the dichotomy between the Self and the Other as the need for constant powerful wording is not necessary to exclude and delegitimise the Other. Moreover, the unwavering of the Self is being made into a core value of the identity of being an ‘Ulster boy’ and is thus a demarcation between the convictions of the Self and those who seek to undermine them.

4.1.3 1985 and 1986

In 1985 the governments of Britain and Ireland signed the *Anglo-Irish Agreement*, an agreement that involved the situation of Northern Ireland. The governments agreed that Northern Ireland would remain under British governing and would not become independent or integrated into the Republic of Ireland. In case of a referendum where a majority of the votes called for independence, the region could become independent or a part of the Republic of Ireland. In the agreement, the government of Ireland gained a limited administrative role in Northern Ireland for the first time. The response to the agreement was disappointment on both sides of the conflict. The unionists saw it as a betrayal by the British by allowing Ireland a hand in the governing of the region. The republicans opposed the agreement and said it did not live up to their demands of British withdrawal (Morton 2018).

The narrative used by the republican side during the third stage of the conflict is one of further righteousness. The Self continues to be described as legitimate and strong. As seen in Ruari O Bradaigh's speech:

“We have not been wrong for 65 years, we have not been wrong for those 70 years. We have been right. And we should continue to be right” (Bradaigh 1986).

Continuing on the same track, the Self is grounded in the long struggle they have had to endure. With the reminder of a repression, victimisation and conflict for seventy years the battle remains part of the identity, part of who the Self is. Here the Self is prominently presented as legitimate and in the right. Breaking away from the past and thus letting go of the horrors endured, becomes more difficult when put in the historical context. Furthermore, past events, crimes and horrors committed by the Other is used as tools to mobilise and justify the path taken by the party. As seen in Bradaigh's statement:

“The firing-squads, the prison cells, the internment camps, the hunger strikes, the lot. And weren't able to break this movement. That they can come and say, at last we have them towing the line. It took us 65 years but they have come in from the cold and the wilderness and we have them now. Never! That is what I say to you! Never!” (Bradaigh 1986).

If the perpetrator has acted thus for seventy years the inherent resentment becomes hard to part with, something that the Self incorporates to justify the continuation of the conflict and the narrative. During this stage of the conflict the division within the republican side can be seen. The narrative here depicts working with the Other as losing the war, thus advocating a continuing of the conflict and the abstention. Moreover, with the republican side divided, the narrative analysed here is one of an uncompromising narrative strongly based on historical unjustness. The other republican narrative spoke of a softer approach that opened up for a narrowing of narratives. With this division, the Self becomes divided from within. As seen in Bradaigh's (1986) speech:

“Their candidates will take their seats in the Dail, he calls it, it will be legitimising their actors and as a direct and inescapable consequence of that, the illegitimacy of any force other than the army, the free state army, coming to wage war on behalf of the Irish people” (Bradaigh 1986).

Here a shift in the Other can be found. From previously exclusively consisting of the British and loyalist/unionists, the part of the republican movement that favours taking up seats in the Daíl⁴ have moved towards the Other side of the spectra. They would thus become the Other in the sense of them not having as high of ideals as the ‘proper’ Self. With this distinction of the Self the ‘other Self’ is inescapable taking a stance with them who sought to delegitimise their army, the righteous one according to Bradaigh.

The Unionist/loyalist side of the conflict has come to broaden the Other. Through the inclusion of Dublin, the expansion of the Other comes to involve them as the perpetrator of the unjustness. As seen in Ian Paisley’s speech the rightness of the Self and the cruelty of the Other is emphasised:

“We will not have Dublin rule; we choose the Union. We will not have tyranny, we choose democracy” (Paisley 1985).

Continuing on the conflictual timeline the unionist/loyalist narrative of the Self/Other dichotomy continues to describe the Other as the complete adverse of the Self. Here the Other is prescribed the characteristics of the anti-self. With statements like this, the Other is described in terms that are the opposite of democratic and thus indicates the indirect association with the Other as illegitimate. The Self is depicted as democratic and thus legitimate in the eyes of both supporters as well as the international community. Unconsciously the Other is the complete opposite of that, and is as stated a tyrannical force. With the opposite of democracy being described the mind conjures up the image of dictatorships, repression and unjustness. The praxis of cooperating with evil tyrannical actors being not to do so, the de-legitimation, loss of confidence on the political arena and the rejection of their agency builds up to a continuation of exclusion of their narrative and potential for reconciliation. With the good/evil dichotomy being clearly stated, the perpetrator of the conflict is clear, and reinforces the alienation of the Other. With an illegitimate perpetrator who constitutes the anti-self the justification of continuing the conflict is made through the unacceptance of giving in to such evil.

4.1.4 1998

In the 1990s several attempts at a peace process were started. The starting point could be traced back to 1994 when the IRA announced an immediate ceasefire and an end to all military actions. This came to an abrupt halt in 1996 with the bombings

⁴ The parliament in Northern Ireland

in Canary Wharf in London. Although the IRA halted the peace talks, Gerry Adams the President of Sinn Féin, held continuous talks with John Hume, the leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party. The talks between the leaders of different parties' lead to *The Good Friday Agreement* being formulated and later ratified. Unionist/loyalist leaders, John Hume and David Trimble, were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1998 for their efforts in striving for peace in Northern Ireland. Two separate referenda in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland came out in favour of the agreement (Melaugh:c 2018; Nobel Foundation 2018).

On the 15th of August 1998, a bomb was set off in Omagh in which 29 people lost their lives and hundreds were injured. Responsible for the bomb was the RIRA (Real IRA), a breakaway group from the IRA, who were discontent with the political lead that Sinn Féin were taking. The bomb came to act as an incentive in the acceptance of *The Good Friday Agreement*. Several republican para-military organisations vowed to stop all military actions in the aftermath of the bombings and called for complete ceasefires (Melaugh:d 2018).

The republican narrative during the final stages of the conflict shows signs of the peace agreement. The narrative is one of a stronger unionism between the Self and the Other. Gerry Adams, leader of Sinn Féin and key actor during the peace process, talks of a greater understanding of the Other, a humanisation of Them:

“There is a common need: to recognise the integrity of the other; to be at peace with each other; to understand the way we have hurt one another; to listen to one another; to be patient with one another; to find our common ground; to celebrate our difference as diversity. And as equals” (Adams 1998).

A remarkably changed narrative is presented. It shows a transformed narrative where an opening up of the Self is made towards the unionist/loyalists. Here with an attempt at reconciliation, he shows the Other with traits of humanity and acknowledges them, their perceptions and feelings to thereby legitimise their narratives. Furthermore, there is a softened narrative of the British, even though the position of Britain is still seen as a hostile force, evil and true perpetrator in the conflict. But, contrary to previous narratives the British is now laced with a positive connotation in regard to their role as an actor in the peace process:

“But the British government can play a positive role before leaving by trying to redress some of its wrongs and by helping to create the conditions for a peaceful transition to a just settlement” (Adams 1998).

Withdrawing from the conflict and redressing the republican narrative regarding them might help bring about peace. The theme of peace is seeping into the speech and the Self is asserted as in the forefront of the peace process. The Self is narrated as the true fighters for peace and their long commitment to the process is traced back several years. Equally, the Other is presented as having drawn the short straw in the process. Their political monopoly has been broken and thus paved the way

for a strong republican political force. In the same line the Self narrated as a military force has changed and is now presented as a political force to obtain true legitimacy.

The last period of the conflict shows a slight shift in the unionist/loyalist narrative. The Self emphasises the RUC and their legitimacy in the aftermath of the Good Friday Agreement. The Other here is the IRA and a cooperation with them is seen as impossible since they are still the enemy. David Trimble, party leader of UUP expresses the police force's strength.

“Finally, there will be no reduction in the RUC's strength so long as the threat from Republican terrorist groups continues” (Trimble 1998).

Even with the peace agreement the threat from the republicans, i.e. the Other, is imminent and threatening the Self. The historical unjustness and prolonged description of the Other as the constant perpetrator shines through the speech, even in the time of the peace process. Furthermore, referring to the Other as terrorist-groups has a dual outcome. Firstly, it acts as delegitimising towards the strive for a legitimate political career for the republican party Sinn Féin. Secondly, it limits the opposition to one of simple terrorists, and one does not negotiate with terrorists. Thus, keeping them from reintegrating into society. This leads on the next statement from Trimble:

“The RUC will remain a 'unitary force' with delegation of authority and responsibility remaining, ultimately, with the Chief Constable. Paramilitaries will not be recruited to the police or any reserve or auxiliary” (Trimble 1998).

With this statement, the fighting forces of the republican side is deprived of their agency, and their potential place in a post-conflictual society. Furthermore, the statement being made is one of victory over the Other. The way Trimble puts it the Self claims true legitimacy and power in the political arena, with the support of the police. Without the opportunity for ex-combatants to join the police force continues being dominated by loyalists/unionists and thus the alienation of the Other continues.

4.2 Clashing narratives?

In the beginning of the conflict the narrative of the Other was as expected, laced with strong resentment, accusations and illegitimacy. The interesting part of the narratives of the Other in this conflict is the illegitimacy of the Other, and is based upon them being a hostile party putting the Self under siege. The proclamation of the Self being under siege, attacked by hostile foreigners resonates through both parties' rhetoric. Through the defeat of the Other the Self will become free and a free society will be able to be created. With the creation of Self in response to the Other, the Self was here created with the backdrop of a complete illegitimate Other. The Self is, thus, narrated as unconditionally right and just in both convictions and

actions. As in this case, when both parties have the same reasoning of Self in relation to the Other there is a complete clash when confronted. With the clashing of narratives, the escalation of violence is inevitable, since both parties justify the violence as fighting oppression.

The second stage of the conflict saw increased strengthening of the Self from both camps. In accordance with the intensifying of the conflict the Self is continuously described as the strong and justified agent in the struggle. With the deepened establishing of the Other as the anti-self the clashing of the narratives becomes increasingly tangible. The strengthening of the Self comes with the price of distancing the situation from a managing of the conflict and thus the possibility for negotiation. Interestingly, both parties continuously use rhetorical techniques in order to undermine the Other without using colourful descriptions. The republican method of conceiving the Other as imperialistic and thus an illegitimate agent in the region. The unionist/loyalists use the same technique by referring to Ulster as opposed to Northern Ireland and thus excluding the republicans and their narrative.

During the third phase of the conflict the division of the republican Self is traceable. With this split and the following confusing dichotomy of Self/Other signified the outset of the broadening of the Self. With this division and confusion, the foundations for the peace process were established in the sense of Sinn Féin's quest for legitimate political power. The softening of Self was however not found in the unionist/loyalist Self and Other. Their narrative was continuously marked with strengthening the Self and the Other depicted as horrendous and evil. The clashing of narratives as described by the unionist/loyalist party entails a clash of views of the world, incompatible and the division of good and evil. With the differentiating representations of Self, the one thing consistent was the description of the Other. The Other was described by both parties as the true perpetrator in the conflict, one of completely different views and convictions, thus making the perceptions clash.

In regard to Adams' lenient narrative regarding the Other, was it a necessity to gain legitimacy in the peace process and the aftermath? Sinn Féin has continuously been an underdog in the asymmetric conflict, especially in the political sphere where the unionist/loyalist politicians dominated and held the highest legitimacy and positions. The transformation of their narrative to one of inclusion, forgiveness and reconciliation, could be explained as an attempt to strive for legitimisation in the aftermath of the conflict. In the asymmetrical conflict they, as the weaker party, would need a narrative that speaks of inclusion and forgiveness in order to gain enough legitimacy in the political sphere to join in a transitional government. In contrast, the unionist/loyalist side could afford to keep their Self closed since they had a history of the majority of political power. Furthermore, they account for a majority in the region and had the support of Britain, a strong ally. Their lack of humanisation of the Other speaks of their perceived thought of having the high ground and leverage. The remainder of Self as simply unionist/loyalist and not opening up for a greater Northern Irish-Self shows their unwillingness to completely adjust in a transitional society. The continuation of Self as simply them, there is still a trace of the thought of them winning in the long haul. Consequently, the different attitudes toward the Other and the Self in the context of the peace

agreement could have its base in the asymmetrical power relations between the parties of the conflict. The changed outlook on the Other, the transformation of the Other as the anti-self towards the Other with different values and norms but without hostility and danger defining them. One could say that the clashing of narratives softened and thus the reconciliation and peace agreement could be implemented.

5 Conclusion

This section will contain a concluding discussion around the narratives and identities presented in the previous chapter. The conclusion will end with a recommendation on future research. This final section will answer the thesis question asked: *How has identities and clashing narratives come to express themselves in the rhetoric used by the republican and unionist/loyalist sides related to the development of the conflict on Northern Ireland from 1968 to 1998?*

As expected from a drawn-out intractable conflict, the narratives and identities at play transformed during the different stages of intensity of the conflict. The hostile description of the Other as the anti-self was the predominant description of the Other from both camps of the conflict. Likewise, the description of Self was one of strength, legitimacy and justness and was described as such by both sides. Interestingly, the conflicting parties' description of Self and Other are similar although being in direct opposition of each other. This dichotomy became a contributing factor in the intractability of the conflict, due to the maintenance of the glorified Self and the demonization of the Other. The narratives presented in this thesis were manifold and contrasting in several remarks. What stood out in my mind was the presentation of Other in 1998. Gerry Adams, long advocate for peace in the region, presented a softer description of the Other, even reaching out to the British. On the other hand, David Trimble, a Nobel laureate, presented a more hostile description of the Other. He even perceived the republicans as a persistent threat and stated a continued strength within the RUC. This continuation of a perceived threat could speak for a continued restlessness in the region. The narratives of the Other and Self is continuously described as the in- and out-groups of society and thereby opens up for a flare up of violence if the Self is under threat, whether militarily, societally, politically or economically.

Further research in the sphere of identity and narratives on Northern Ireland would advantageously research the narratives and creation of identity within the different societal groups after the ratification of the Good Friday Agreement. Likewise, research into the potential creation of a unified identity in Northern Ireland is of interest in the pursuit of a unitary society.

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7 Appendix

Sean MacStiofain, IRA leader 1972

“What was your reaction this week to the reaction of the death of a second British soldier?”
(Interviewer: 0.00)

“Well, the, my reaction as a member of the IRA would be another casualty of the armed forces, a certain amount of satisfaction on the personal level. Ofcourse we realise that this is a terrible personal tragedy for some family. That this is possibly some young woman, being left a widow, possibly children being left without a father, somebody son has been killed. And this is the whole tragedy of the situation. British troops are not wanted, and while they are forced to remain here the will of many of them I’m sure tragedies like this are going to continue”
(MacStiofain: 0.12)

“Were these deaths an advantage or a disadvantage to the IRA?” (Interviewer: 0.59)

“The deaths of the British soldiers. I would say that the death of British troops in Ireland for the first time in 50 years would be a definite advantage for the IRA.” (MacStiofain: 1.07)

“Why is that?” (Interviewer: 1.18)

“Well, it has without any doubt done more than anything over the past 50 years to bring it home to the British public that unless their troops are withdrawn from Ireland and unless the just demands of the Irish people are met, these tragedies are going to increase.” (MacStiofain: 1.21)

“So that you see a political advantage in British troops being killed?” (Interviewer: 1.36)

“Yes.” (MacStiofain: 1.41)

IRA, The Green Book 1977

“The Irish Republican Army, as the legal representatives of the Irish people, are morally justified in carrying out a campaign of resistance against foreign occupation forces and domestic collaborators. All volunteers are and must feel morally justified in carrying out the dictates of the legal government; they as the Army are the legal and lawful Army of the Irish Republic which has been forced underground by overwhelming forces.”

“The nationhood of all Ireland has been an accepted fact for more than 1,000 years and has been recognised internationally as a fact. Professor Edmund Curtis, writing of Ireland in 800 AD says that 'she was the first nation North of the Alps to produce a whole body of literature in her own speech', and he is told how the Danes were driven out or assimilated by a people 'whose civilisation was a shining light throughout Europe', prior to the Norman invasion of 1169 with which there 'commenced more than 8 centuries of RELENTLESS AND UNREMITTING WARFARE that has lasted down to this very day'.”

“The milestones, the battle honours won, the bloodstained trail of sacrifice, imprisonment, hunger strikes, executions, yet with telling blows delivered to the enemy, often in the heart of British imperialism itself, commanding the open admiration of freedom-loving peoples around the world.”

“The enemy, generally speaking, are all those opposed to our short-term or long-term objectives. [...] We have enemies through ignorance, through our own fault or default and of course the main enemy is the establishment.”

“[...] differences between the Brits and the I.R.A. volunteer, apart from the fact that the Brit is an uninvited armed foreigner who has no moral or historical justification for being here in the first place, are those of support, motivation and freedom of personal initiative”

IRA, The Green Book II

“The most important thing to bear in mind when arrested is that you are a volunteer of a revolutionary Army, that you have been captured by an enemy force, that your cause is a just one, that you are right and that the enemy is wrong [...]”

“The best protection while being interrogated is LOYALTY to the Movement. This implies LOYALTY to all YOUR COMRADES and PROTECTION of all members of the Movement, a deep and unmoving POLITICAL COMMITMENT to the ideas of the Socialist Republic, CONSTANT AWARENESS that you are a REVOLUTIONARY with a sound POLITICAL base, NOBLE and JUSTIFIABLE CAUSE, and a deep and firm belief that those holding you and interrogating you are MORALLY WRONG, that you are SUPERIOR in all respects, because your cause is RIGHT and JUSTIFIED”

Ruairi ó Bradaigh, Sinn Fein leader 1986

“The discussion is totally out of order. If this constitution of Sinn Fein means anything, it says there that no person who approves or supports candidates going in to Leinster House or Westminster shall be admitted membership or be allowed membership. And yet on this floor we have plenty of resolutions proposing going in to Leinster house and some of them proposing going in to Westminster and Stormont aswell. They want abstention ended all together.” (1.25)

“The allegiance of Irish men and Irish women is to the severing Irish republic of 1916. Doesn't say we are going to Leinster House or Stormont or Westminster. The fundamental principle. There goes to say there is no principles only to get there. That everything is a tactic. But standing on this document it says, the fore mentions principle, and secondly that the sovereignty and unity of the republic are inarerable and unduricable. In other words, they can't be given away and are not a matter of reconsideration. They are absolutes. (2.45)

“The courts have been mentioned. The courts were always a tactic in capital charges, in test cases and when permitted, when the military movement to do so. It was never in regard to council, Sinn Fein has always always been in the councils. And that is as near to the system, to the enemy system that we are to go.” (5.30)

“Sitting in Leinster House is revolutionary activity. Once you go in there, once you sign the roll of the House and accept the institutions of state, once you accept the cancordings rulings. You will not be able to do according to your rules, you'll have to go according to their rules. They can stand up and gang up on you and put you outside on the street and keep you outside in the street.” (5.50)

“Their candidates will take their seats in the Dahl, he calls it, it will be legitimize their actors and as a direct and inescapable consequence of that, the illegitimacy of any force other than the army, the free state army, coming to wage war on behalf of the Irish people.” (6.30)

“We have not been wrong for 65 years, we have not been wrong for those 70 years. We have been right. And we should continue to be right.” (8.45)

“And those in Leinster House, whom have done everything. The firing-squads, the prison cells, the internment camps, the hunger strikes, the lot. And weren't able to break this movement. That they can come and say, at last we have them towing the line. It took us 65 years but they

have come in from the cold and the wilderness and we have them now. Never! That is what I say to you! Never!” (9.19)

Gerry Adams, President Sinn Fein 1998

“Two hundred years ago the United Irish Movement rose against British occupation of our country. We stand today before the slogan which inspired that Movement. Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. We can draw inspiration and example from the men and women of 1798. The United Irish Movement, whose bicentennial we celebrate this year was unique. It also had an equality agenda. Its aims were to create a socially progressive, tolerant and just society in Ireland. Its founders were mainly Protestants who embraced the concept of uniting Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter. They demanded independence from Britain and promised equality. They swore to maintain the right and prerogative of Ireland as an independent people. We also must fashion such a unique movement which is open to all as the United Irish Movement was: ‘who know liberty, who love it, who wish to have it and who will have it’.”

“I outlined our view that British policy in Ireland has manifestly failed, that partition has failed, and that the days of unionist rule are gone forever. I made it clear that there can be no going back to the failed policies and structures of the past, to the domination of a one-party unionist state supported by the British government.”

“For now, I want to encourage you all to give your views in an open, frank and comradely way about where you think we are, where our struggle is, how last week's developments fit into this and how we move from this point forward towards our goal of unity and independence.”

“In the last 30 years the struggle so far has come through a series of phases from the civil rights days and the mass and popular uprising of the early seventies through periods of intense armed conflict and the prison struggles including the hunger strikes into electoralism and the Sinn Fein peace strategy. That struggle goes on but it could be moving once more into another defined phase because whatever else the Good Friday document does, it has the potential to redefine the relationship between these islands, thus concluding one phase of our struggle and opening up another one.”

“The background to the Agreement was the IRA cessation of August 1994. The republican objective was to genuinely explore the possibilities of a just settlement. The IRA initiative was abused by those politicians resisting change and by seurocrats who cannot accept the fact that the IRA is intact, strong and undefeatable. Nor could they contemplate a resurgent nationalist community asserting its rights, because the existence of the northern state was founded, first, on the denial of the right of the Irish people to independence and, second, on the denial of

fundamental civil, national and democratic rights to Irish nationalists in the North. Their obstructionist approach led to the breakdown of the first IRA cessation.”

“The talks process has not settled centuries of British interference in Ireland. Major issues remain unresolved. As Irish republicans we believe that Britain's involvement in our country has been disastrous for us and for them also. We were bequeathed conflict and death, we were bequeathed division. Britain has never had any right to be in Ireland. Britain will never have any right to be in Ireland. But the British government can play a positive role before leaving by trying to redress some of its wrongs and by helping to create the conditions for a peaceful transition to a just settlement.”

“So while the Agreement is not a settlement, it is a basis for advancement. It heralds a change in the status quo. And it could become a transitional stage towards reunification but only if all those who express an interest in that objective, especially the powerful and influential, move beyond rhetoric to build a real, dynamic for national democratic change.”

“But they must move beyond rhetoric. It was never and it will never be enough to say the nationalist nightmare has ended. And we, who are in the vanguard of this struggle, those risen people throughout this island and abroad are the guarantors of that.”

“We will not be caged in, psyched out, intimidated, cajoled, patronised or bought off. We have our eye on the prize. The prize of freedom.”

“[...] I want to pay tribute to our friends from abroad. We regularly pay tribute to our friends in the USA and to President Clinton. The international dimension of this struggle has been an expanding one. On Thursday, I received a call from the United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, and we had a brief discussion about the situation here. We also received a wide range of greetings from throughout the world and if I may single out one person who has been a stalwart ally I want to pay tribute to President Nelson Mandela.”

“There is a common need: to recognise the integrity of the other; to be at peace with each other; to understand the way we have hurt one another; to listen to one another; to be patient with one another; to find our common ground; to celebrate our difference as diversity. And as equals.”

“Irish republicans have demonstrated time and time again our capacity to overcome adversity and advance our struggle for freedom and justice against enormous odds.”

“It is not enough to sloganise. We are not verbalised republicans or rhetorical revolutionaries. We are deadly serious about turning the division of 1798 and 1916 into a reality. I believe this generation of Irish republicans will do just that.”

Unionist/loyalist interviews, speeches and publications

The Orange Order, The Song Book - Enemies of Ulster 1971

”The souls of those they’ve murdered, proud from heaven above but the enemies of Ulster don’t know the word called love.”

”They shoot and kill then runaway and crawl back to their den these monsters are not human, they are not even men.”

”[...] for they’ll be cut down like the mad dogs they are by the men of the UDA.”

”[...] three boys just barely in their teens went out to have some fun. But these evil men who have no god, to these boys laid their claim and left them laying murdered in a lonely country lane.”

”The protestants of Ulster together must unite to beat these rebel cowards who murder in the night. We’ll send them back where they belong to crawl back to their den and Loyalists shall all rejoice, and Ulster’s free again.”

Ian Paisley, leader Democratic Unionist Party 1977

”Our political leaders have entered into a deal with the Irish Republican Army. And Ulster is expendable as long as there is no IRA activity on the main land of Britain. And if there is one person that they have sought more than any other to utterly discredit and to totally inialate, it is this preacher that is standing before you tonight.” 2.33

”This is a serious conflict. The people in England, especially the politicians. They don’t know anything about the faith that make Ulster protestants tick. They don’t know anything about the deep convictions from the protestant people. They think they are a people that they can buy and sell.” 3.53

”There are men in Ulster that will never surrender. There are men in Ulster who will die rather than pull down the flag. There are men in Ulster who will stand ’til the last man in defense of their heritage.” 4.22

Ian Paisley, leader Democratic Unionist Party 1985

”Our parliamentary parties have agreed as a first step to withdraw all support and cooperation from the present Government. We will neither offer to advise, or enter into communication with those ministers who are in harness with Dublin, to rule over us.”

”True Unionists will not collaborate in Ulster’s destruction. Anyone who collaborates with them can expect to be expelled from the Parties immediately.”

”We will not have Dublin rule; we choose the Union. We will not have tyranny, we choose democracy.”

”[Alliance leader] John Cushnahan is the modern Chamberlain. The paper he received is as valueless as the Munich Agreement. We tear it up as a mark of our disgust and revulsion.”

David Trimble, leader Ulster Unionist Party and First Minister of Northern Ireland 1998

”I, and the UUP, have kept all those promises. The new Agreement reached at Castle Buildings is a disaster for Sinn Fein/IRA. Violent republicanism has failed to ‘smash the Union’; in fact it has failed in all its stated objectives.”

”The question Sinn Fein/IRA and its supporters need to ask themselves is this: did their ‘Volunteers’ serve long prison sentences for a North-South Ministerial Council, subject to a Unionist veto and accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly, to discuss teacher qualifications?”

”The RUC will remain a ‘unitary force’ with delegation of authority and responsibility remaining, ultimately, with the Chief Constable. Paramilitaries will not be recruited to the police or any reserve or auxiliary.”

”Finally, there will be no reduction in the RUC’s strength so long as the threat from Republican terrorist groups continues.”

”[...] any attempt to ease into office paramilitaries who have not proved a commitment to peaceful means by decommissioning or other equally effective means, will precipitate a crisis in the Assembly. We will not serve alongside such persons.”

”The Agreement is absolutely clear. All co-operation is subject to the authority of the Assembly and accountable to it. There will never be a meeting without a Unionist present and meetings must be unanimous.”

”The Britishness of the Unionist community in Northern Ireland, which lies at the heart of the matter, has been recognised by all of constitutional nationalism. It is for the people of Northern Ireland to determine the constitutional future of Northern Ireland.”