Intergenerational Memory of the Troubles North Belfast: Growing up in the Shadow of the Unresolved Past.

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Abstract

Intergenerational Memory of the Troubles in North Belfast; Growing up in the Shadow of the Unresolved Past

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Concordia University, 2024.

This thesis is a historical examination of the multi-layered processes of memory transmission in post-Troubles Northern Ireland. The focus is primarily Ardoyne, a working-class and traditionally Catholic Nationalist Republican enclave in North Belfast, segregated along sectarian lines from the Protestant Unionist Loyalist community of Woodvale. Ardoyne has historically experienced the divisions, sectarian violence, death, and displacement during the Troubles, and it has more recently experienced the ambivalent implications of "peace." To understand these enduring histories, this thesis centres on forty oral history interviews with members of the Ardoyne, Greater Shankill and also Rathcoole and Ballynafeigh communities to examine how we remember, how memory is communicated, and finally, how memory is transmitted to the ceasefire generations.

Building on the theoretical insights of historians, memory studies scholars and oral historians, this thesis analyses the specific contours of conflict memory by considering the voices of the "ceasefire generation" in conversation with the voices of older generations who directly experienced widespread violence. To hear these voices together illuminates the everyday mechanisms of memory transmission and the subsequent outcomes on issues of culture, belonging, and identity as they have transformed since the conflict.

Applying the methodology of oral history to examine and engage with emotions and senses in the process of remembering, this thesis pushes the boundaries of Troubles-related knowledge further by considering how fear, anxiety, and loss can shape the type of stories told, or not told. Through an examination of place, commemoration, private memories, cultural histories and identity, the connections between the past and present are illuminated in the go-along interviews. The shadow of the unresolved past casts itself over the present as living memory in the historical context of violence and division. The stories elicited from the oral history interviews highlight the normalisation of conflict and bring some of those stories to light. The thesis presents hopeful conclusions on the role of the ceasefire generation as political actors and the role they will continue to play in shaping the future of Northern Ireland through an engagement and consideration of the past whilst continuing to move forward as memory activists.

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I want to begin this acknowledgements by thanking the participants. Every story told, and every cup of tea shared has had such a profound impact on me. I carry and treasure each of the memories. I am so grateful for the time and generosity given to me by each participant and their family members. This is as much your thesis as it is mine.

During my Ph.D, I lost the most important person in my life, my Granny Mary. It was in her house, where Strathroy Park meets the Berwick Road, that I ever learnt about the Troubles. In her living room, she taught me Irish history and all about her greatest loves, James Connolly and Che Guevara, she taught me socialism and always encouraged me to stand with my union. She was the strongest, smartest woman I have ever known. I dedicate my thesis to her, as she dedicated her life to my mummy and her sisters, to my cousins and finally to my brother Fionntán and I. There is not a day that goes by that I don't miss her. When writing this thesis, I could hear her voice echoing in my head "hurry up and finish that so we can go for lunch." Never a patient woman, I am sorry this took so long Granny.

In 2022, I lost my father-in-law Dave Brodie, the kindest, gentlest man who always had a joke on hand. Dave had the rarest gift, he was always on the search to know more. He read countless books on Ireland, Irish History and the Troubles so that he "could understand me more." I truly cherish all those times I got to talk history with Dave, for those conversations kicked me out of ruts when I felt so uninspired, he always reminded me why I love history. Life is not the same without you Dave.

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Dedication

For Mary Lundy.

For raising me to be fearless and outspoken.

I hope I have done you proud.

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List of Acronyms

ABLHA- Ardoyne, Boyne, Ligoniel Heritage Association

ACP- Ardoyne Commemoration Project

CARA- Crumlin Ardoyne Residents Association

CNR- Catholic Nationalist Republican

CRUA- Concerned Residents Upper Ardoyne

CVS- Commission for Victims and Survivors

DUP- Democratic Unionist Party

EU HRC- European Union Human Rights Convention

FAI- Football Association of Ireland

GAA- Gaelic Athletic Association

GARC- Greater Ardoyne Residents Committee

GB- Great Britain

GFA- Good Friday Agreement

GOR- Garden of Remembrance

HCGS- Holy Cross Girls School

IFA- Irish Football Association

IPP- Irish Parliamentary Party

IRA- Irish Republican Army

NI- Northern Ireland

NIFL- Northern Ireland Football League

NIHRC- Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

NICRA- Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association

NIMDM- Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure

OIRA- Official Irish Republican Army

OO- Orange Order

PIRA- Provisional Irish Republican Army

POW- Prisoner of War

PSNI- Police Service of Northern Ireland

PTSD- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

PUL- Protestant Unionist Loyalist

RNU- Republican Network for Unity

ROI- Republic of Ireland

RUC- Royal Ulster Constabulary

SDLP- Social Democratic and Labour Party

SF- Sinn Féin

TUV- Traditional Unionist Voice

UN- United Nations

UUP- Ulster Unionist Party

UK- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

UVF- Ulster Volunteer Force

UDA- Ulster Defence Association

UFF- Ulster Freedom Fighter

Introduction

We are currently at a moment of great significance for the North of Ireland.[1] 2021 marked the centenary of Northern Ireland as a partitioned territory of Ireland within the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom. In 2023 the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement of 1998, that formally brought an end to 30 years of conflict (1969-1998) known colloquially as 'The Troubles," reached its 25th anniversary. Yet, the relative peace remains uncertain. The NI Executive's power-sharing assembly has faltered since its inception, collapsing on numerous occasions.[2] At the time of writing the assembly has failed to sit for over twenty months during which time NI weathered the uncertain Brexit negotiations, the global pandemic, and an ongoing cost-of-living crisis resulting in strikes across sectors. This tense juxtaposition of fragile peace and continuing crisis, past and present, forms the backdrop to this thesis's analysis of intergenerational memory of an unresolved past of political violence with enduring consequences. Two decades of post-conflict peace has been cautiously marked by talks and commemorative events, masking the on-the-ground reality that the history of conflict, which remains largely unresolved, continues to cast its shadow in a myriad of ways manifesting itself in politics and society.

[1] Reflecting its highly contested political status, there are many ways to refer to Northern Ireland, such as the North of Ireland, the North, Ulster, the six counties or the occupied six. For consistency, I will use Northern Ireland (NI) or the North throughout the thesis.

[2] Most notably in January 2017 when the Nationalist party, Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness resigned in protest over the Renewable Heat Incentive scandal sparking a snap election. Sinn Féin refused to nominate a Deputy First Minister making power sharing impossible and resulting in an absence of an executive for three years (until January 2020.) Most recently, the assembly collapsed again in May 2022 on this occasion the Unionist, Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) brought the assembly down in protest over the outworking of Brexit, in which checks on goods entering Northern Ireland from Great Britain were implemented following negotiations with the European Union (EU) to avoid a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The DUP claimed the checks undermined the region's constitutional position in the UK.

The principal focus of this research is the Ardoyne, a largely Catholic Nationalist Republican (CNR) community in North Belfast. In the interests of balance, consideration is given whenever possible to the neighbouring community, the Greater Shankill, a largely Protestant Unionist Loyalist (PUL) community.[3] Through the methodology of Oral History, the thesis examines different generational cohorts, those born before the Troubles began, those who grew up during the Troubles, and those born during the Peace Process and implementation of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement. Born during the 1990s, this cohort has become known as the ceasefire generation. The project uncovers personal and social memories of the Troubles drawn from the various generations, by examining three broad interrelated research questions to understand how individuals and groups remember, how memory is communicated, and how memories of a difficult and unresolved past are transmitted across generations.

The legacy of the unresolved past is at the core of this thesis and research. Post-conflict legacy issues which are rarely far from the surface have become particularly contentious in recent years. During the week of the 6th of April 2021, Loyalist youths in East Belfast, Carrickfergus, Ballymena, Newtownabbey, and Derry took to the streets engaging in clashes with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). Those as young as twelve were reported to have been involved in throwing petrol bombs and bricks. Naomi Long, the Justice Minister for Northern Ireland at that time, blamed a “toxic combination” of issues which have been “floating around” in communities.[4] The recent catalyst for violence arises out of Brexit

[3] This project in its original conception was cross-community and comparative. However, I was unable to do this because despite significant effort it was difficult to gain access to the required range of interviewees from the Protestant Unionist community. Therefore, this project and the focus of the thesis is the Ardoyne community, with consideration of the Protestant Unionist Community of the Greater Shankill where possible. These difficulties in gaining interviews is set out in full in the methodology section.

[4] Christopher Leebody, “Northern Ireland riots: Nine more police officers injured in Loyalist violence as Naomi Long says politicians ‘fanned flames’,” *The Belfast Telegraph* April, 6,

negotiations (the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union) which created an unforeseen constitutional crisis for Northern Ireland, given its border between NI and the Republic of Ireland, an EU member state. Attempts by the UK government under Boris Johnston to "get Brexit done" failed to appreciate the effect this would have on the communities in Northern Ireland, reigniting the division between Nationalists who generally wish to be reunited with the Republic of Ireland and Unionists who largely wish to remain part of the United Kingdom. The age of many engaged in the discord has generated conversations among and between politicians, community groups and media around the concept, endurance, and impact of intergenerational memory of the 1968-98 conflict in NI, on the peace generation and younger who have no direct experience of the conflict.[5]

The thesis explores in-depth oral history interviews conducted with community members in the very streets and neighborhoods impacted by the Troubles where robust commemorative traditions and occasional unrest persist. The interviews uncover site-specific memories and the intimate connection between memory and the built environment. It illuminates the voices of the various generations who directly experienced the Troubles and considers the impact – the losses and resilience. It also 'gives voice' to the ceasefire generation, those who did not live through the Troubles, whose voices appear absent from the historical narrative, highlighting their agency and role as memory activists' post-conflict. The research sheds much needed light furthering our understanding of intergenerational memory. Given the importance of the family in the transmission of memory between the generations, I

2021. https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/northern-ireland-riots-nine-more-police-officers-injured-during-Loyalist-violence-as-naomi-long-says-politicians-fanned-flames-40280524.html

[5] Intergenerational memory is the inheritance of memories through the generations. As this thesis argues the inheritance of memory comes in the form of stories, songs, participation in cultural activities, alongside the inheritance of memories reinforces through cultural memory found in murals etc. A fuller definition is set out further in this introduction.

had intended to conduct group interviews with multiple members of the same family (parents, adult children, spouses, etc.) or broader kinship networks (aunts, uncles, grandparents). However, for reasons outlined in the Methodology section, this type of interview was not possible.

The research adopts a blended approach combining theory and methodology with the aim of contributing to the historiography of the Troubles, providing reflections on the everyday nature of the conflict and a consideration of post-conflict life. It is also informed by my own lived experiences. I grew up in North Belfast, the first half of my life on the Cliftonville Road and the latter half I lived off the Antrim Road in a 'mixed' religion community. Both sets of my Grandparents were life-long Ardoyne residents. [6] Born in 1994 during the Peace Process and four years before the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, I can be described as a child of the ceasefire generation, whose voices are at the core of this project.

This thesis does not recount the history of the conflict; scholars such as David McKittrick, Richard English, Tim Pat Coogan, Eamonn McCann, and many others have expertly and critically traced the contours of the Troubles. My research furthers and contributes to the scholarship on memory of the Troubles examined in a range of multidisciplinary research carried out by scholars such as Bill Rolston, Máire Braniff and Sara McDowell, Anna Bryson, Peter Shirlow, Brendan Murtagh, Fearghus Roulston, and Sara Dybris McQuaid, as discussed in the next section.

Theoretical Orientation

[6] The Cliftonville Road is on the outskirts of Ardoyne, connected by the Alliance Avenue, and is predominantly a middle-class/lower-middle-class area. The upper Antrim Road where my parents live now ranges from middle to upper middle class and is Catholic/Nationalist and Protestant/ Unionist.

Northern Ireland offers an intriguing and challenging case study in which to examine mechanisms of memory. When considering intergenerational memory of the Troubles, the concepts of collective/ social and cultural memory are integral to how we conceptualize and understand the past. Memory studies' wide multidisciplinary approach to the study of memory has contributed significantly to our understanding of memory dynamics in the context of Northern Ireland. This thesis contributes to that scholarship by drawing on insights developed in Memory Studies, alongside work in Oral History, Sensory Studies, and the History of Emotions. Using oral history interviews to explore forms of orality and storytelling in segregated working-class communities offers insights into how emotions and senses shape and express how we remember.

To examine and illustrate the diverse facets of life in the North, I applied a range of theoretical approaches related to memory and social, cultural, and oral history.[7] Each chapter builds on these interdisciplinary approaches, drawing connections between memory and the sensory experience, or between sport, place, songs, and identity, all discussing various ways in which identity is formed and a sense of belonging is strengthened within older generations and transmitted to the next generation, expanding these existing bodies of knowledge.

Memory Studies

In general terms, memory studies illuminate how the past and present are intertwined, and how people and communities are shaped by the remembered past, whether consciously or unconsciously, both in public and in private. There are significant distinctions and tensions between what is regarded as the past (what happened), what is regarded as history (the small fraction of the past we recover and study) and memory (what we choose to remember).

[7] For this thesis, I rely on the foundational scholarship. I am aware of the recent debates in memory studies especially around social memory and vernacular histories, but I believe the concepts utilised in the thesis reflect my understandings of memory and provide a good framework in the context of Northern Ireland and the ceasefire generation.

Maurice Halbwachs' ground-breaking work on memory argues that collective memory, symbols and rituals belonging to a community or nation, has profound impacts on how history and past events are understood as a group.[8] Developing this further, Wickham and Fentress maintain that social memory is better suited for a conception of memory as it reinforces the agency of the individual and does not render them "a sort of automaton."[9] Memory of a common past has the capacity to bind members of a community together creating a sense of inter-group identity or, in many cases such as NI, can simultaneously facilitate polarisation between rival groups (Nationalist and Unionist communities in the NI case).[10] Building on these memory frameworks, Pierre Nora argues that cultural memory instils remembrance within spaces, images, and objects such as memorials and monuments.[11] In North Belfast, this is depicted in the form of tangible conflict architecture such as peace walls and enclave boundaries.

Intergenerational memory or memory mechanisms in general in NI cannot be understood without recognizing the role of social and cultural memory, as they are central to many aspects of life such as storytelling, commemorations, the physical layout of communities (murals, flags, plaques, gardens of reflection), all impacting the transmission of memory and

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[8] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*. Translated by Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[9] Chris Wickham and James Fentress, *Social memory; New Perspectives on the Past* (Oxford: Blackwell Publication, 1992), ix.

[10] Maurice Halbwachs, *On collective memory*. Translated by Lewis A. Coser (University of Chicago Press, 1992).; Chris Weedon, and Glenn Jordan, "Collective memory: theory and politics." *Social Semiotics* 22, no. 2 (2012): 143-153.; Anna Green, "Individual remembering and 'collective memory': Theoretical presuppositions and contemporary debates," *Oral History* 32, no. 2 (2004): 35-44.; Qi Wang, "On the cultural constitution of collective memory," *Memory* 16, no. 3 (2008): 305-317.

[11] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de mémoire," *Representations* 26 (1989): 9.

identity to the subsequent generations. The particular relation to a parental past described, evoked, and analyzed within the field of memory studies has been termed previously as "absent memory" (Ellen Fine), "inherited memory," "belated memory," or "prosthetic memory" (Celia Lury, Alison Landsberg), "vicarious witnessing" (Froma Zeitlin), "received history" (James Young), "haunting legacy" (Gabriele Schwab); and "postmemory" (Hirsch).[12] These terms, in different ways, attempt to describe how descendants can connect deeply to the previous generation's memories of the past. Perhaps, the most heavily used term within this genre is "Postmemory" coined by Hirsch; the term derived from a need to describe the quality of her own relationship to her Jewish parent's daily stories of danger and survival during the Second World War in Romanian Cernauti and how these accounts dominated her postwar childhood.[13] As Hirsch states:

> Postmemory describes the relationship that the generation after bears to the personal, collective and cultural trauma of those who came before- experiences they 'remember' only by means of the stories, images and behaviours among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right. Postmemory's connection to the past is thus actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection and creation…these events happened in the past, but their effects continue into the present.[14]

Postmemory provides a useful tool for understanding inherited trauma and memory, but it does not fit this case study particularly well. While Hirsch discusses how she acquired a 'memory' of a place she never personally knew, my interviewees – residents of the Ardoyne and Greater Shankill enclaves, one or two generations removed from the Troubles – all grew up within the same space that so deeply affected the preceding generations in their

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[12] Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory,* 3. Hirsch predominantly uses parental past, however, my scope is wider and includes grandparental past.

[13] Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 4.

[14] Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 5.

community. The memory landscape of the Troubles became their own, handed down through stories and superimposed on their own day-to-day experiences navigating those same streets.

A central mechanism of memory transmission within families and communities, is storytelling. Paul Connerton suggests stories are "acts of transfer" which transform history into memory and enable memories to be shared between individuals and across generations.[15] As Hoffman explains, we can understand how stories received during childhood can embed themselves within the mind. She writes, "our own internal imagery is powerful" linked both to the particular experiences communicated by our parents (or grandparents), and to the way these experiences come down to us as "emanations" in a "chaos of emotions." Eva Hoffmann develops the idea of memory transmission among groups referring to a "living connection" between proximate generations and accounts for the complex lines of transmission encompassed in the intergenerational umbrella term "memory."[16] The work of Janna Thompson was and continues to be incredibly influential. In a 2009 article, she discusses the role of citizenship and political solidarity that encompasses the ethics of memory, highlighting how citizens should remember the deeds of their predecessors, especially around historical injustices. In this, she sets out what she means by intergenerational memory,

> Accounts of past events or people that are passed on from one generation to the next in a family, nation or some other intergenerational community by means of stories told by parents, teachers or community elders. What is important about these memories is their continuing significance for memories of a community- a significance that in some cases endures for many generations. These memories can be crucial to a group's identity…They are defining features of a communal identity, a heritage that unites people in space and through time.[17]

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[15] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[16] Eva Hoffman, *After Such Knowledge, memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust,* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 193.

[17] Janna Thompson, "Apology, historical obligations and the ethics of memory," *Memory Studies,* 2, no.2 (2009): 195-196.

This definition by Thompson provides a framework to build upon when discussing intergenerational transmission of memory in NI, particularly when considering the central role, the Troubles memory plays in specific community identity, especially for Ardoyne, the primary focus of this research project. This definition also allows for a consideration of the role of emotions and senses in how we remember, to unpack the role of place, commemoration, sport, music in the communication of memories and solidification of identity.

To fully unravel the legacy of the conflict in NI, my research relied upon the role of storytelling within families as a central mechanism in how different generations learn about the past and are socialised into cultural norms and values. Jan Assmann's emphasis on the role of everyday communication in transmitting memory was integral to my conceptualisation of everyday memory. He states that through communication, each individual composes a socially mediated memory that relates to a group and that each individual memory constitutes itself in communication with others who conceive their unity through a common image of their past.[18] The importance of storytelling and informal communication methods together with the role of cultural memory in the inheritance of identity should not be underestimated, particularly in working-class communities in the North of Ireland. Sociologist Maurice Halbwachs and Cultural theorist Aby Warburg argue that a person's character derives from belonging to a distinct society and culture, which maintains itself for generations due to socialisation and customs.[19] Most of us belong to numerous social groupings with various collective self-images and memories, such as families, neighbourhoods, political parties. In NI this includes religious groups, soccer supporters' clubs, sports teams, music groups and

[18] Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* no.65, (1995): 127.

[19] Assmann and Czaplicka, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," 125.

marching bands. Assmann stresses the reflexivity of cultural memory, how it reflects the image of the group through a preoccupation with its own social system. He argues that the concept of cultural memory comprises the body of reusable images and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose “cultivation” serves to stabilise and convey that society's self-image.[20] The influence of sport, fan bases and associated symbols is a powerful, and potentially inescapable, element in creating a sense of belonging and in reaffirming cultural identity, particularly identification with the nation-state and local community identity, as considered in chapter four.

By building on these frameworks, this thesis will highlight how intergenerational memory within the context of the Troubles is inescapable, a visceral and deeply felt reality for the people of Ardoyne. Memory, generally, is a complex concept, affected by personal and societal interpretations of the past, even more so up when viewed through the post-conflict prism. As Portelli encourages, it is not enough to make the voices heard but to investigate *why* certain voices and memories have been suppressed and excluded from the existing historical record.[21] In NI, it is well documented that some communities believe their experiences of the conflict from their perspective have not been told or acknowledged.[22] In the absence of an overarching state-led mechanism to deal comprehensively with legacy issues, including remembrance of victims, as examined in the thesis, civil society groups and memory activists have taken the lead in finding ways to preserve their memories, commemorate the dead and express their voice in public spaces.

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[20] Assmann and Czaplicka, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” 134.

[21] Portelli, *The death of Luigi Trastulli and other stories,* 56.

[22] Claire Hackett and Bill Rolston, “The burden of memory: Victims, storytelling and resistance in Northern Ireland,” *Memory Studies* 2 no.3 (2009): 355-376.; Sara McDowell and Máire Braniff, *Commemoration as conflict: Space, memory and identity in peace processes* (London: Springer, 2014).

The themes that emerged from the oral history interviews acted as catalysts for memory recovery, such as emotions, the senses, sports, and music, and provided an alternative avenue for a different form of storytelling. Uncovering narratives in unconventional ways that historians had not generally utilised in a formal context allowed a deeper exploration of the nuances of lived experiences of the Troubles and its aftermath. This thesis examines the role of emotions in the recovery of challenging memories of the Troubles, its significance in memory transmission, and how the legacy of the past continues to shape the future.

Emotions

This thesis posits the critical importance of including emotions in the examination of *how we remember.* To gain a fuller understanding of history or the past, it is vital to consider testimony from a broad range of sources, one such source being the critical role played by emotions. History focuses on understanding the human past in which "emotions have been an important diachronic component both at the individual and relational levels."[23] An aim of this project is to examine the interrelation of emotions to memories and to what extent the interconnectedness of these factors will have an impact on present and future generations.

The History of Emotions or Emotions Studies is developing alongside the field of memory studies and oral history disciplines. Emotions Studies explore how people express, experience, and practice emotions in their daily lives and how emotion shapes our engagements with the past.[24] Stearns notes, "emotion itself has a cognitive element, combining raw feeling—the 'elementary subjective experience'—with judgment and

[23] Boddice, "The History of Emotions," 11.

[24] Katie Barclay, Sharon Crozier-De Rosa and Peter N. Stearns, *Sources for the History of Emotions* (London: Routledge), 26.

perception, through which an individual evaluates, labels, and controls his [or her] feelings."[25] Carol and Peter Stearns' work in the 1980s was highly influential in theorizing emotion as historically and culturally contingent and as a sociological process.[26] They developed a new analytical category, "emotionology," to capture the rules and standards that govern emotional life at a given time and in a given society or social group. Stearns and Stearns viewed mapping out the emotionological context as a prerequisite to understanding how people could make sense of their emotional lives and what motivated them to act in certain ways. As discussed in the Methodology section below, asking specific questions about emotions by drawing from the recorded interviews and my detailed observations notes, enabled me to critically examine how memories resonate, what the important triggers are and the ways in which they continue to impact on the present.

In *The Navigation of Feeling*, William Reddy sought to bridge the conceptual divide between our inner feelings and outer expression.[27] He found that emotional gestures like crying are not merely descriptive they are also performative and self-reflective, because they affect both the interlocutor and the speaker. Reddy describes these emotional gestures as "emotives". Collectively, emotives form "emotional regimes" or the set of emotional norms in a given political setting.[28] Reddy's sophisticated framework for historicizing emotions informs the direction of this thesis in terms of the role of emotions in oral history interviews and the influence of emotions on the socialisation process of younger generations.[29]

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[25] Peter Stearns and Carol Stearns, "Emotionology: clarifying the history of emotions and emotional standards," *American Historical Review* 90, no.4 (1985): 834.
[26] Stearns and Stearns, "Emotionology," 813-36.

[27] William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 96–137.

[28] Barclay, Crozier-De Rosa and Stearns, *Sources for the History of Emotions*, 20.

[29] Barclay, Crozier-De Rosa and Stearns, *Sources for the History of Emotions*, 20. I acknowledge the work conducted by psychologists and biologists on the 'nature versus

Kristine Alexander, Stephanie Olsen and Karen Vallgårda further develop the concept of "emotional regimes" by extending it to "emotional formations" or "emotional frontiers."[30] The former highlights spaces where children are socialised into particular emotional norms, and the latter describes locations where people, especially children, encounter different emotional cultures and learn to navigate between both. These ideas illuminate the multi-layered dimensions of emotional experience as it is practiced and produced in relation to culture, society, economy, and political life.[31] Analysing the case study of NI, the emotional frontiers are the home, specific communities, youth clubs, sports teams, fan bases, and schools. Most of the spaces referred to by the participants remain segregated, along a Protestant/Unionist and Catholic/Nationalist community dichotomy. The emotional frontiers concept reinforces emotional norms around anger, anxiety, fear, and loss, as discussed in Chapter Two. The application of these conceptual and theoretical frameworks enabled me to consider the vehicle of emotional experience, as articulated by participants who lived through the Troubles, and any enduring impact through transference on subsequent generations, as discussed in Chapter Two.

Sensory Memory

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nurture' debate and the biological aspects of emotions, however, it is beyond the parameters of this thesis to engage with these discussions. For my argument, the foundations are that emotions are learned during the socialisation process within the first few years of a child's life. Although I am sure with further engagement in these discussions there may be a biological element to emotions such as fear, sadness, or happiness.

[30] Karen Vallgårda, Kristine Alexander and Stephanie Olsen, "Emotions and the Global Politics of Childhood," in *Childhood, Youth and Emotions in Modern History: National, Colonial and Global Perspectives,* ed. Stephanie Olsten (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 12.

[31] Vallgårda, Alexander and Olsen, "Emotions and the Global Politics of Childhood," 20, 22.

Our senses mediate the relationship between self and society, mind and body, idea and object. Thus, sensation is fundamental to our experience of reality.[32] Sensory studies developed around the same time as Emotions studies, by prominent scholars such as David Howes and Constance Classen. Our senses and emotions are intertwined, senses providing us with information about the world that shapes our emotions, which in turn influence how we perceive and experience the world through our senses in a complex and continuously evolving relationship. Sensory studies considers not only the history of the senses but their social and cultural construction and role in texturing the past.[33] Sensory studies look at touch, smell, sight, sound, and taste, stressing their roles in shaping one' experience of the past, how the world is understood and why.[34] I am not interested in the actual smell of the past but more in the extent to which the sensory experience of smell, taste, and sound are embedded within memory and how these sensations initiate memory. Marcel Proust's seminal novel *Remembrance of Things Past* informed my understanding of sensory memory. Proust recounts how the taste of a madeleine cake brings the main character back to his childhood, remembering the sights, smells, colours, and feelings, with a significant emphasis on what was awakened in him, the joy of the memory. Proust distinguished two types of memory: voluntary and involuntary.[35] Voluntary is grounded by the individual's will whereas involuntary memory operates independently of personal will, possessing an aesthetic quality. Proust's utilisation of the full sensory spectrum provides an insightful lens in which to

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[32] Michael Bull, Paul Gilroy, David Howes, and Douglas Kahn, "Introducing Sensory Studies," *The Senses and Society* 1, no.1 (2006): 5, DOI: 10.2752/174589206778055655

[33] Mark M. Smith, "Producing Sense, Consuming Sense, Making Sense: Perils and Prospects for Sensory History," *Journal of Social History* 40(4) (2007): 842.

[34] Smith, "Producing Sense, Consuming Sense, Making Sense," 842.

[35] Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*. Translated by C.K. Scott Moncrieff, 1 (Wordsworth Editions, 2006).

consider the effect of the interwoven nature of sensory perception in memory recovery together with involuntarily evoked memories. Developing this further, Caro Verbeek and Cretien van Campen define sensory memories as an intensive reliving of events from the past through sensory stimuli.[36]

When the senses are ignored or studied in isolation, all the interplay of sensory meaning - the associations between touch and taste or hearing and smell - and all the ways sensory relations express social relations, are lost.[37] Jackson's theory on the body insists on the unity of the "body-mind-habitus," emphasising the autonomy of verbal and nonverbal or sensual modes of thought and communication.[38] However, while a participant may only discuss one sense, we should not forget that such experiences do not occur in a vacuum; our senses are uniquely tied to our emotions and emotional experience. Therefore, it is important to attend to the full range of sensory experiences and expressions as cultures differ in their emphasis on different senses and the meanings they give to different sensory acts.[39] Similar to emotion, culture shapes perception, and society regulates how and what we sense.[40] The socially constructed and historically grounded nature of senses in NI, with specific particularity to each community or postcode, will be developed in Chapter Two.

Raymond Murray Schafer, an environmentalist, developed the term "soundscape" to describe the sounds specific to a particular place and time, and it was developed as a tool of

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[36] Caro Verbeek and Cretien van Campen, Inhaling Memories; Smell and Taste Memories in Art, Science and Practice," *The Senses and Society* 8(2) (2013): 135. DOI: 10.2752/174589313X13589681980696p

[37] David Howes, *Sensual Relations, Engaging the Senses in Cultural and Social Theory* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2010), 17.

[38] Howes, *Sensual Relations*, 32-33.

[39] Howes and Classen, *Ways of Sensing*, 4.

[40] Howes and Classen, *Ways of Sensing*, 5.

heritage.[41] Historians have adapted the concept to refer to past acoustic environments, in this instance as the conflict soundscape of war; bombs, gunbattles, the rattling of bin-lids alongside the sounds of industry and children playing in the streets.[42] It has been joined by smellscapes, tastescapes which illustrate smell and taste vocabularies in a given historical culture. As set out in Chapter Two, sounds and smells have culturally specific meanings which are perceived in different ways both at community and individual levels. For example, while the sound of British helicopters tended to signal fear or concern in Nationalist communities, for Unionists they were a reassuring sound associated with protection. The simple smell of vinegar triggered conflicting memories for some of the older participants in my study, of both comforting Friday night take away food and the widespread use of vinegar to combat the effects of CS gas. The multisensory experience of participants in navigating the extraordinary conflict related events of gun battles alongside the smells of CS gas, juxtaposed with the sounds and smells associated with daily working-class life, alongside food and music, all of which illicit voluntary and perhaps, more insightfully, involuntary memories. The importance of sensory memory should not be overlooked or underestimated in creating an historical account.

<u>Place</u>

Given the divided and segregated nature of society in NI, place and space are vitally important topics of enquiry in the social memory of the Troubles. Definitions of place are contested across disciplines including history, memory studies, and geography. Here, I will loosely define place as a specific site imbued with some form of meaning, and space to be a

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[41] Raymond Murray Schafer, The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World (Vermont: Destiny Books, 1994). Cited in William Tullett, "*State of the Field: Sensory History*," History 106, no.373 (2021): 804-820.

[42] Ari Y. Kelman, "Rethinking the soundscapes critical genealogy of a key term in sound studies," *The Senses and Society* 5, no.2 (2010): 212–34.; William Tullett, "State of the field: sensory history," *History* 107, no.373 (2021): 804-820.

more generalised area (place is specific, a site of remembrance of a plaque or Garden of reflection, whereas space is open and fluid). McDowell and Braniff posit that place (within space) is both material and symbolic, as in the way, for example, that built environments gives material form to the intangible memory. For example, a plaque erected to commemorate those who died during the Troubles, the plaque represents and provides a material representation of the loss and grief of the family and respect of the community, the plaque is in a specific place/site which can be visited and may be the site where the person lost their life. My understandings also develop from Harvey and Massey, who argue that space and place are never neutral – they are socially constructed and will always embody political power, values, and symbols, that will necessarily be contested between different voices.[43] As McDowell and Braniff set out, the past is not purely owned by the individuals but by communities that draw a unifying force from that past, therefore the ownership of memory, especially political memory, in post-conflict spaces further complicates the political power of sites and the socially constructed nature of place based memory and memorialisation.[44]

My understandings of place, centres around memorialisation and commemoration, the markings of 'place' referring to sites of memorials, informal (graffiti) or formal (plaques, murals, Gardens of Remembrance). McDowell and Braniff state that markings of 'place' (in terms of memorialisation) feature in almost every setting where violence, tragedy, or conflict has occurred. They are locations with which people connect, either physically or emotionally, and are bound up in notions of belonging (or not belonging) and identity, for example the Garden of Reflection in Ardoyne which commemorates those from the community who died during the conflict.[45] Chapter Three explores the role of place within individual, private

[43] McDowell and Braniff, *Commemoration as conflict*, 16.

[44] McDowell and Braniff, *Commemoration as conflict*, 17.

[45] Tim Creswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 8.

memory and public or social memory of the Troubles, alongside shared cultural traditions of murals and flags which reinforce boundaries and segregation.

From Halbwachs' expansion of memory as a social activity and binding force for group identity, Pierre Nora developed his concept of 'lieux de mémoire' ('sites of memory') which gives attention to the various ways in which memory is spatially constituted.[46] For Nora, memory is attached to "sites" that are material and physical (Garden of Remembrance) that embody tangible notions of the past as well as 'sites' that are non-material that provide an aura of the past (in the context of NI, commemorations and parades).[47] Nora argued that societies have and need 'lieux de mémoire' because there are no longer 'milieux de mémoire', the real environments of memory. For Nora, "the Lieux de mémoire originates with the sense that there is no spontaneous memory, that we must deliberately create archives, maintain anniversaries, organize celebrations… because such activities no longer occur naturally."[48] However, in the context of the North of Ireland, there continues to be forms of 'milieux de mémoire' given the living, social and cultural memory of the Troubles, and how the memory of the past can be reinterpreted for present political means. Chapter three of this thesis illuminates both the milieux and the lieux de mémoire in Ardoyne, as Nora states it is produced in the push and pull, the moments of history that are torn away from the movement

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[46] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26, (1989): 7-24.; Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Conflicts and Divisions* (New York: Columbia University, 1996).

[47] Raphael Samuel criticised Nora for focusing on official memory rather than on popular memory, and failing to view the local within the national or acknowledge the anchoring of memory in the community. Stephen Legg "Contesting and Surviving Memory: space, nation and nostalgia in Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 23 (2005): 493.

[48] Nora, "Between memory and History," 12.

of history, then returned.[49] The assumption that community-led commemorative symbols such as plaques, murals, monuments and conflict-related sites have the capacity to carry meaning is central to this thesis. Braniff and McDowell found that the need for place-based meaning is especially acute in the aftermath of conflict; in the same vein, Troubles memorials have the power to bind communities, societies, and nations in the present, yet they can also operate as sites of resistance or points of contestation.[50] Per Lefebvre, all space as inherently political.[51]

This thesis demonstrates that in the NI context, space and specific places are treated as socially constructed and inherently political, where personal and group identity are reinforced or contested. For the context of NI's landscape, I rely on Edward Said's description of imaginative geography, which involves the setting up of boundaries in our own minds, "designating… a familiar space which is 'ours' and an unfamiliar space … which is 'theirs.'" Graham Dawson and other memory scholars focusing on NI found the local cultural landscapes constitute the familiar territory of belonging, where particular memories have soaked into the land and the everyday material world.[52] This view is particularly poignant when considering the memorial landscape of Ardoyne, the emotions of fear and safety that are associated with symbols and boundaries. Identities in North Belfast are imagined around territoriality and work to replicate Nationalist or Unionist ideologies depending on the area. This sense of place "serves as a peg on which people hang memories," construct meanings from events, and establish ritual and religious arenas of action.[53] Considering the temporal

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[49] Nora, "Between Memory and History," 12.
[50] Braniff and McDowell, *Commemoration as conflict*, 14.

[51] Stuart Elden, "There is a Politics of Space because Space is Political: Henri Lefebvre and the Production of Space, *Radical Philosophy Review* 10, no.2 (2007): 107.

[52] Graham Dawson, *Making Peace With The Past?: Memory, Trauma and the Irish Troubles* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 27.

[53] Stewart and Strathern, *Landscape, Memory and History*, 3.

element of memory, Doreen Massey argues that places are always "already hybrid" and open to a multiplicity of readings. Places are always constructed out of articulations of social relations, which are internal to that locale.[54] Massey introduces the concept "envelope of space-time" to deepen our understanding of how memories in space and place are not static but fluid.[55] Memories are layered; they exist for a moment until that space is re-purposed for a different memory. Thus, the identity of a place is always in a process of formation between past, present, and future.[56] We see this with intangible personal memories, sites that are historic sites of struggle such as the intersection of Ardoyne Road and Alliance Avenue in Ardoyne, which was a site of riots and clashes with the British Army during the Troubles, where the Holy Cross Girls School Dispute took place in 2001, and has been a place of territorialised graffiti.

Monuments, memorials, and museums have proven to be fertile grounds for investigating social and cultural memory. Alongside the material form, bodily repetition of performance (such as parades) and cultural displays within place (flags, painted curbstones, murals etc.) reinforce memory and group identity.[57] These themes of place, where memory is located, will be discussed and interwoven throughout the thesis, providing the lens through which I discuss memory, identities, and traditions.

Community

Along with sensory and emotional phenomena, and the concepts of place, space and materiality, this research also necessarily engages with the role that community plays in

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[54] Massey, "Places and their pasts," 183.

[55] Massey, "Places and their pasts," 188.

[56] Massey, "Places and their pasts," 185.

[57] Hoelscher and Alderman, "Memory and place," 350.

intergenerational memory of the Troubles. A basic definition of community considers locational proximity or togetherness, as this is the basis of community structures, but which also includes Emilie Durkheim's theory of social integration. Durkheim's theory posits that society exerts a powerful force on individuals through social norms, beliefs and values, which constitute the collective consciousness or shared way of understanding the world and creates social integration. When discussing 'communities' Karl Mannheim suggests that concrete groups are the union of several individuals through naturally developed or consciously willed ties, emphasising class position as a common aspect held in relation to community feeling.[58] Understandings and the felt reality of community in Belfast have changed over time, from preindustrial society to the city's 19th century industrialisation; its postwar industrial decline, the Troubles and the post-conflict period. The Ardoyne Commemoration Project (ACP) raised important questions about the nature of community and the role of social memory within it. They state that boundaries of communities do not exist primarily due to lines on maps; they exist in how people live their lives, share their experiences and self-identify, emphasising the role of collective solidarity during the conflict. To be from Ardoyne usually means "to have been born and grown up in certain streets. It is, in other words, to share a certain sense of place and belonging and to live that out in the contacts, actions and institutions that make up everyday life…the boundaries of Ardoyne are, to some degree, defined by the political divisions, sectarian geography, and history of conflict that has shaped North Belfast."[59] This sense of shared experiences and identity is vital to Ardoyne's tight-knit and strong community sentiment. It also exists within the Protestant Unionist Loyalist (PUL)

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[58] Kurt H. Wolff, Volker Meja, and David Kettler, *From Karl Mannheim* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 364.

[59] Ardoyne Commemoration Project, *Ardoyne: The Untold Truth* (Belfast: Beyond the Pale Publications, 2002), 7.

community of the Shankill, albeit with their own cultural signifiers and history to commemorate, which is passed down through the generations. This point is revisited in Chapter One.

Oral History

The final theoretical framework this thesis utilizes draws from Oral History studies, particularly the concepts of subjectivity, positionality, and history from below. According to Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson, oral history is the practice of present-day interviewing of eye-witness participants on past events for the purposes of historical reconstruction.[60] The distinctive contribution of Oral History has been to include the experiences and perspectives of people and communities who are largely absent in the dominant historical discourse.[61] This methodology is historically grounded within the subjective, focusing on emotions, memories, and what they can tell us about the participant's life story and the historical events and sociopolitical circumstances they experienced and participated in. Oral history provides a crucial platform to explore various dimensions of conflict, providing opportunities to document difficult issues, and affording a space for the contradictory and sometimes imperfect nature of individual experiences of violence and turbulence.[62] My understandings of oral history have developed through the foundational and seminal text 'Women's Words' edited by Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, which highlighted feminist oral history practices in the 1980s and early 1990s.[63] In 2018 this edited collection was developed by Katrina Srigley, Stacey Zembrzycki and Franca Iacovetta, in 'Beyond Women's Words,'

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[60] Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson, "Introduction," in *Oral History Reader*, ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), ix.

[61] Perks and Thompson, "Introduction," ix.

[62] Ritchie, *The Oxford handbook of Oral History*, 84.

[63] Sherna Berger Gluck, Daphne Patai, *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

which addresses the contributions and challenges of feminist oral history by artists, scholars and community activists. These scholars reflect on how the telling of stories, alongside the processes by which they are generated, reordered, and the different contexts in which they are shared and interpreted all matter. They argue that a fundamental principle of oral history is to privilege "understanding through relationships."[64] A practice which I tried to uphold throughout the interview process. A continuity through each collection is the rejection of "any pretense at objectivity" and the centring of empathy and an egalitarian interview process.[65] When conducting research in divided societies, or difficult contexts empathy and an egalitarian process is important. However, this can itself be difficult, this is set out in the work of Erin Jesse in her research context of Rwanda and for Kathleen Blee in her research where she interviewed women members of the KKK, in these situations' empathy can be difficult and more complex.[66]

Thompson and Perks state that there is no one right and perfect way to conduct oral history, experiences are diverse, and our techniques must reflect that. They highlight the complexity of the oral history relationship, the richness of testimony and the variety of ways to interpret the past.[67] These central principles are reflected in Off the Record, an edited collection by Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki, which discusses the ethical, political and personal struggles and negotiations between interviewer and interviewee. They argue that oral

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[64] Katrina Sringley, Stacey Zembrzycki and Franca Iacovetta, *Beyond Women's Words* (London: Routledge, 2018), 7.

[65] Sringley, Zembrzycki and Iacovetta, *Beyond Women's Worlds*, 12.

[66] Erin Jesse, "The Limits of Oral History: Ethics and Methodology Amid Highly Politicised Research Settings," *Oral History Review* 38, no. 2 (2011): 287- 307.; Kathleen M. Blee, "Evidence, Empathy, and Ethics: Lessons From Oral Histories of the Klan," in *The Oral History Reader,* ed Robert Perks and Alister Thomson, 3rd edition, (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 424-433.

[67] Robert Perks and Alister Thompson, *The Oral History Reader,* 3rd edition, (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), xv.

history is messy, but we can learn from people's candid stories about interviewing, their mistakes, it is part of the process.[68] The seminal texts of oral history such as Donald Ritchie, Perks and Thompson provide us with the foundations of knowledge, but Women's Words, Beyond Women's Words and Off the Record, really helped me to find my place within oral history, to wade through the messiness and to not only accept that but to find meaning in it.

There is a growing body of oral history research on the Troubles.[69] In the context of peacetime NI, and in the absence of any overarching mechanism to deal comprehensively with the legacy of the past, many existing oral history projects have set out to "amplify unheard voices," providing a counterbalance to official narratives and some offer forms of redress for victims and survivors, underscoring advocacy and community action.[70] However, it should be noted that the "Belfast Project" conducted at Boston College and directed by writer and journalist Ed Moloney has caused considerable controversy and may have given rise to reticence within the field of oral history in NI. The project included recordings of discussions with Republican and Loyalist ex-paramilitaries outlining their role in the conflict, including attacks and murders. The PSNI launched an international court battle to force Boston College to hand over the material for use in future criminal investigations and

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[68] Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki, Oral History Off the Record: Towards an Ethnography of Practice (New York: Palgrave, 2013).

[69] WAVE trauma centre, Falls Community Council Dúchas Project; Victims and Dealing with the Past, "Oral History Archive," Queens University Belfast, https://victimsandthepast.org/dealing-with-the-past/oral-history-archive/; White, *Out of the ashes: An oral history of the provisional Irish Republican movement* (Kildare: Merrion Press, 2017).; Theresa O'Keefe, "'Mother Ireland, Get Off Our Backs': Republican Feminist Resistance in the North of Ireland," in *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, ed. Lorenzo Bosi and Gianluca Fazio (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 165-184.; Marie Smyth and Marie-Therese Fay, eds. *Personal accounts from Northern Ireland's Troubles: Public Conflict, Private Loss* (London: Pluto Press, 2000).; Ronnie Munck and Bill Rolston. "Oral history and social conflict: Belfast in the 1930s," *The Oral History Review* 13, no. 1 (1985): 1-21.

[70] Ritchie, *The Oxford handbook of Oral History*, 84.

prosecutions. This case raised issues for oral historians and researchers, such as data ownership, data security, storage and distribution, together with the range of ethical and moral dilemmas which arise relating to truth recovery for victims and their families. The Belfast Project forces future researchers and oral historians to reflect on the adequacy of collection processes when dealing with contentious subject matter such as the legacy of the Troubles.

Given the dynamic process of remembering and 'forgetting' and the political implications of each, oral history creates a platform for varied interpretations of how the past is remembered and understood. As demonstrated above and throughout the thesis, memory is a complex concept affected by individual and societal interpretations of the past, varying between generations or socio-economic positions, and embodied in the retelling of stories from below.

As Alessandro Portelli contends, memory is not a passive depository of facts but an active process of creation of meaning.[71] Through this lens, we understand memory and remembering as an active process in which individuals exercise agency. Oral historians such as Ritchie argue that long-term memory is remarkably robust and durable because we make and remake memory through storytelling.[72] Though, as time passes, memory can also be unreliable, and details or timelines of events can be forgotten. However, prompts such as photographs, smells, and songs can illuminate fading memories. Emotions, sensory studies, and oral history provide the prism through which I examine, understand and discuss memory and intergenerational memory throughout this thesis. The subsequent chapters will uncover how we remember, looking at emotions and sensory memories, developing them into chapters

[71] Alessandro Portelli, "What makes oral history different,' in *The Death of Luigi Trastulli: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991), 52.

[72] Donald A. Ritchie, The Oxford Handbook of Oral History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 86, 91.

focussing on how we communicate memory which thematically deconstructs memory and its inheritance through place and space, sports, music, and culture, finally concluding with a chapter centering on the intergenerational nature of post-Troubles memory. The theory and methodology advanced in this section provide the foundations for the arguments put forward in the body of this thesis, with the aim of contributing to wider, ongoing conversations around memory and oral history.

Methodology

This thesis is based on extensive oral history interviews and archival research. I conducted thirty interviews between May 2022 and April 2023 with people in the following Belfast communities: the North Belfast community of Ardoyne, the West Belfast communities (which border North Belfast) of Woodvale and the Shankill, Newtownabbey community of Rathcoole, and the South Belfast Ballynafeigh community. Participants included community workers, youth workers, community activists, ex-Prisoners and other members of the communities. I also used nine interviews that I conducted for my master's research in 2016-2017, for a total of thirty-nine interviews. [73]

Overall, I conducted thirty-nine one-to-one interviews and two go-along interviews. Thirty-two participants were from a Catholic Nationalist/Republican background, all having grown up in Ardoyne, with the majority continuing to live there. Five interviewees left Ardoyne but continued to live in North Belfast. And only one – Ethna, a woman in her 60s – had left Belfast entirely, settling in England since the early 1980s. Seven participants came from PUL communities, one from Woodvale, three from the Greater Shankill, two from Ballynafeigh and one from Rathcoole. In terms of the age breakdown of participants

[73] In those consent forms from my Masters research I had stipulated that the transcriptions would be used for future research and publications and am therefore adhering to research guidelines.

(Nationalists and Unionists combined), fourteen participants fell into the age range of 18-30; eight were between 31-60 years old; and seventeen were 60 or older. The interview settings were as follows: Fifteen interviews were conducted in participants' homes; one was conducted in my parent's home; three took place in the participant's office; nine took place in a local youth club (Ardoyne, Marrowbone, John Paul II, R City, Rathcoole); three took place in cafes in North Belfast (two in Costa at City Side Retail Park and one in the Yellow Fin on the Antrim Road); five took place on Zoom; two were go-along interviews around Ardoyne; and the final interview took place in an Apprentice Boys Hall. Nine interviews came from my Masters degree (MA) (2017/2018) on intergenerational memory focusing on the 2001 Holy Cross School dispute cohort, which made up nine of the 18-30 age range. Per the terms of my project consent form, participants are all anonymised. I have given the participants community and culturally appropriate pseudonyms. To further protect their identities and privacy, any personal information that could possibly identify them has been removed from transcripts and not included in the thesis.

For this project, I utilised two oral history techniques: the one-to-one interview and the go-along interview.[74] The one-to-one interviews were a mix of life story narratives, where the participants were aware of what my project was about and what I was interested in. I recruited using a purposeful sample, the participants reflected the characteristics of the communities that I was interested in, which will be discussed later in the chapter.[75] I began by asking the

[74] Walking interviews is the traditional term used for this type of interview, however, at the Irish Conference of Geographers, Dr Ronan Foley brought to my attention the ableist language of this term and has encouraged me to use the phrase 'go-along interviews' instead. I want to thank him for this, as access was an issue for many of my participants and should be mentioned.

[75] A purposeful sample refers to a qualitative research technique in selecting a specific group or individuals for analysis.I was interested in different generations of participants from Ardoyne and the Greater Shankill area, with a gender balance.

participants if they could tell me where they grew up, and given their prior knowledge of my project, they shaped the re-telling of their lives accordingly. Most of the interviews fell into the rhythm of a conversation, where they would tell me stories, and I would ask follow-up questions, offering similarities in my own life if appropriate. I was able to shift the narrative slightly but never far from their point. Some participants had a narrative or a story they clearly wanted to share, to be heard or recognised, this was often the case with those who had reached out to me. I did ask three or four more direct questions about commemorations, memorials, and legacy, and I asked everyone the question "Do you think there is intergenerational memory in this community?" These differ slightly from the structure of the MA interviews, which followed a more question and answer format, but the themes covered were mostly the same. When discussing memory in Ardoyne, most participants in both sets of interviews reflect on murals, violence, parades, stories, sectarianism, sports, music, and the young people in my MA cohort had discussed the issues of their role within communities.

The second technique I employed was go-along interviews, a relatively self-explanatory process, as the interviewer and participant walk around either a predetermined or more impulsive route set out by either person whilst conducting the interview. This technique encourages an engagement with the built environment. Toby Butler remarks on the ability of one's senses to "anchor memories" to places which can be stimulated by visiting them. Through this process, the senses are constantly interacting with the environment.[76] Similarly, Steven High contends that the "mobilities paradigm" encourages scholars to engage with the materiality of the built and natural environment, with the environment acting as a visual and

[76] Toby Butler, "The Historical Hearing Aid: Located Oral History from the Listener's Perspective," in *Place, Writing and Voice in Oral History,* ed. Shelley Trower (New York: Springer, 2011): 208-209.

auditory prompt to the stories being told.[77] This, he suggests, highlights the oral historian's increasing willingness to harness the power of place, which is exactly the hoped-for outcome by employing this technique.[78] For research such as mine, that focuses on the intergenerational nature of memory and the important link between memory and place, go-along and site-specific interviews are critical tools for uncovering the place embedded nature of memory and the ways it is anchored, transmitted, stimulated, and engaged with in everyday life by interactions with social spaces and sites. Unfortunately, this was a much more difficult interview approach in which to obtain participant's consent. The reasons for this are not clear, perhaps it was due to anonymity, with participants being uneasy about being seen in public or being recorded. However, even when go-along interviews were possible, logistical, and other problems arose. For example, during my first attempt, an interview with Aoife, a 30-year-old woman from Ardoyne, the microphone muffler I had purchased was not effective enough to cut the sound of the wind and half of the interview recording was inaudible. However, the second go-along interview with Michael, a 63-year-old from Ardoyne, was successful.

This interview technique it utilised by many scholars in particular oral historians such as Toby Butler, Steven High, Simon Bradley and the Mott Haven Oral History Project, and cultural Geographers such as Riley and Holton.[79] The significance of this interview practice

[77] Steven High cited Jane Ricketts Hein, James Evans, and Phil Jones, "Mobile Methodologies: Theory, Technology and Practice," *Geography Compass* 2, no.5 (2008), 1266–85, in "Mapping Memories of Displacement Oral History, Memoryscapes, and Mobile Methodologies," ed. Shelley Trower, *Place, Writing and Voice in Oral History*, (Springer 2011): 217- 218.

[78] High, "Mapping Memories of Displacement Oral History," 218.

[79] Simon Bradley, "History to go: Oral History, audiowalks and mobile media," *Oral History* 40, no.1 (2012): 99-110.; Amy Starecheski, "South Bronx soundwalks as embodied archiving practice," *Oral History* 48, no.2 (2020): 102-112.; Mark Riley and Mark Holton, "Place-Based Interviewing: Creating and Conducting Walking Interviews." In *Sage Research Methods Cases Part 1*. (London: SAGE Publications, 2022).; Steven High, "Mapping Memories of Displacement Oral History, Memoryscapes, and Mobile Methodologies," ed. Shelley Trower, *Place, Writing and Voice in Oral History*, (Springer 2011): 217- 218.

allowed the participant to feel in control of the process, they were leading the way, they decided what was discussed. Riley and Holton argue this type of technique de-centres the interview, as it becomes a process of sharing the landscape and a move beyond just a singular narrative.[80] As we walked around the parameters of Ardoyne, through the streets I got a sense of both the larger events and micro histories of the Troubles within this community and the legacy that they have left both physically in the form of peace walls and visible division but also personally. The go-along interviews allow for sites, street corners, murals, flags, graffiti to act as prompts to stories aiding the process of remembering. During this process site-specific stories connect to one another, and deeper place-experiences are illuminated, and it is a more personal process as you walk with the participant, a narrative in the moment, they tell you their life story through the streets they grew up in, the past layers with the present in sites. Riley and Holton note how go-along interviews allows for a visual appreciation of places, but also how they are navigated can give insights into participants connection to them.[81] As Casey states, there is no place without self, and no self without place.[82]

As noted earlier, given that the multi-vocal nature of memory, both within and between different generations, is intrinsic to Troubles' memory as both directly experienced and inherited, my intention was to conduct group interviews with multiple members of the same family (parents, adult children, spouses, etc.) or broader kinship networks (aunts, uncles, grandparents). However, I was unable to get anyone to agree to this interview type. When I

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[80] Mark Riley and Mark Holton, "Place-Based Interviewing: Creating and Conducting Walking Interviews." In *Sage Research Methods Cases Part 1*. (London: SAGE Publications, 2022).

[81] K Heatherington, Expressions of identity: Space, performance, politics. (London: SAGE, 1998).; Mark Holton and Mark Riley, "Taking on the move: Place-based interviewing with undergraduate students," *Area* 46 (2014): 59-65.

[82] E. S. Casey, "Between Geography and Philosophy: What does it mean to be in the place-world?" *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 91 (2001): 684.

mentioned it to participants in their interviews I was usually met with, “I’m not sure about that” or “I will get back to you,” and when I followed up with them after the interview, they would dodge the question or say that their grandchildren were busy. This inability to get group interviews could be due to hesitation to talk formally about the Troubles in front of their children or grand-children, or current social boundaries that exist. It could be about the time required, logistics involved in getting family members together and perceived investment in the research. In the interview with Róisín, her friend popped in for ten minutes and informally chatted with us, but when I asked her whether she would like to be included as another participant, she declined. A similar thing happened with Conor, whose daughter dropped into his house and chatted informally. I asked her the same question and she declined. They were both happy to talk when it was informal, but as soon as I made it more ‘official,’ they backed away. I do think issues remain regarding talking to researchers, stemming from issues of forced silence by paramilitary groups and due to the repercussions of the Boston College incident. I was able to interview two members of a community group, a male in his 40s and a young woman in her early 20s, who had a very strong bond, and she explained that he acted as a father figure for her in many ways. I also interviewed two siblings in their 60s, unbeknownst to each other. However, I do feel that the project could have benefited immensely from this technique.

Utilising more ethnographic approaches I attended several commemorations in 2023; I attended Easter Commemoration parades in Ardoyne and on the Falls Road in West Belfast (which I discuss in Chapter Three). I also attended the 12th July parade at Ardoyne shops, then I travelled by car to watch it at Carlisle Circus (where the Crumlin Road meets the Antrim Road on the way to the city centre at a historic Orange Lodge).

Recruitment and Challenges

No oral history project runs seamlessly. To recruit participants, I began reaching out on Facebook groups, such as the Old Ardoyne Memories community group, calling for participants in the project. The post was successful, and I had over thirty responses. However, when I reached out separately to individuals, many never responded or declined to participate; those who did participate were mainly men aged 60 plus. I still lacked women participants. I put an additional call out and asked friends and family members to make inquiries on my behalf, and through this, I gained a better gender balance in the project as well as a wider age range. Interestingly, I found that many women hesitated to talk, and it was unclear to me why. During the interviews with women, I asked why women in general appeared reluctant to be interviewed. From this a gender issue became apparent: articulated by Rose, a woman in her 60s from Ardoyne, "women may feel like they have nothing to share, it was mostly men who went out and fought, who rioted, who took up arms, what do you want to know their experience for, of being at home?"

Another set of issues arose when I tried to access participants from the Protestant Unionist Loyalist (PUL) community of Woodvale. I reached out to different community groups, housing executive organisations, and the Orange Order, but the conversation would only get so far; unfortunately no one was prepared to be interviewed or to assist in identifying potential participants. I decided to expand the project's parameters by looking to the Shankill area, again reaching out to community groups, youth groups, and the Orange Order organisations, continuing to meet some difficulty. I asked family members to call in favours; my dad is currently working as a plasterer and, at that time, was working in a house in North Belfast, and the homeowner was originally from Woodvale. The latter very kindly agreed to participate. My uncle works for a housing organisation conducting cross-community work with the shared housing initiative, albeit outside North Belfast. He was able to secure participants in the Ballynafeigh (South Belfast) and Rathcoole (Newtownabbey, just outside

the city limits of North Belfast) areas. Although both were outside the parameters of the project that I had originally stipulated, given the difficulties I was facing in recruiting participants I was keen to include them to increase the representation from the PUL community. Through my uncle, I was thus able to interview a member of the Orange Order and a member of a Unionist band that marches on the 12th of July. I even called in a favor with my brother, whose university friend Ben was from the Shankill community; and he kindly agreed to participate. Moreover, Ben asked if I wanted to interview his grandparents, an opportunity I jumped at as it would expand the multi-generational viewpoint. He wanted to be there to introduce me to them, so we only had a small window of opportunity over Christmas 2022. Unfortunately, when the day came, and I was getting ready to drive over to his grandparent's house, I received a message from Ben that his mother was uncomfortable with the grandparents participating, so she took the grandparents out for the day. Ben was frustrated and very apologetic, but we agreed that if his mother was uncomfortable, we wouldn't proceed. This process emphasised my outsider status and the role often played by gatekeepers within families (and even within communities) to control access to interview participants in multi-generational contexts, especially when sensitive and divisive subjects like conflict and politics are involved.

I would like to stress that at no point during the interviews did I ever feel in danger or nervous. All of the participants, in all communities treated me with respect and kindness, welcoming me into their homes and places of work, sharing their lives, memories and their stories and even going so far as to help me find additional interviewees. I am immensely grateful for their hospitality and help, as well as the life stories and insights they generously contributed to this project and the trust that they invested in me as a researcher. This project would not have been possible without them.

Given the sensitive nature of the research, this project adheres to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and Concordia University's ethical review process. These standards include: the ethical principles of informed consent, the mitigation of harm, right of withdrawal, respect for persons and concern for welfare and justice. All participants are over 18 years of age. Due to the subject matter, care and sensitivity were taken, and the participant's welfare took priority. I provided information on mental health services in NI and followed up with the participants, when possible, to ensure their wellbeing.

The key issues of access that I encountered conducting my research and the necessity of anonymising participants are reflective of the challenges of conducting oral history in divided spaces, especially in post-Troubles NI. Patricia Lundy and Mark McGovern described their experiences of conducting Participant Action Research within the Ardoyne Commemoration Project (A.C.P.) 1998-2001 in Belfast.[83] They detail the extent of distrust within communities in NI, reflecting on previous work by John Brewer and Alan Feldman, who discuss the culture of "political surveillance" and "conflict generated suspicion," which made outsider ethnographic research in both communities in Northern Ireland "all but impossible." This results in "a culture of secrecy and a deep-seated distrust of outsiders."[84] I experienced this distrust of outsiders (as a member of the 'other' community in NI) reflected directly in my difficulty in securing interviews in the PUL, while my positionality could not but have affected the dynamic and trust level within PUL interviews I did secure. On the other hand, I was regarded as an 'insider' in Ardoyne. As the following quote indicates, in the NI context, insider status is often a requirement and a measure of trust – one that 'opens doors':

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[83] Patricia Lundy and Mark McGovern, "Participation, Truth and Partiality: Participatory Action Research, Community-based Truth-telling and Post-conflict Transition in Northern Ireland," *Sociology* 40, no.1 (2006): 71- 88.

[84] Lundy and McGovern, "Participation, Truth and Partiality," 78.

"I didn't know Mary [A.C.P. interviewer] particularly well [but] I knew she was somebody from my own community. I knew right away there were things I wouldn't have to explain that she would understand some of the things I was saying, so I felt more comfortable... I wouldn't have to explain to her what the issues were."[85] This illustrates the importance of insider status in a post-conflict research space and the significance of trust. Of course, the converse also applies, in that people may self-censor and prefer to talk to an outsider.

This positionality became more important during the interviews than I had initially realised. My outsider status was influencing who decided to participate and what they decided to divulge to me. The ethnographer and oral historian Christine J Walley, born and raised in Chicago, whose father worked in the industrial industry, has interesting insights on the implications of having insider status. Through her book *Exit 0*, an auto-ethnography of life in deindustrialised Chicago, Walley wrestles with her positionality as an insider within this community.[86] She poses her contrasting identities, one of a professor and researcher at a prestigious university, and the other of a Chicagoan from a working-class background. Identity is something she comes to terms with, understanding that moving away, taking up residency in another state for several years, and obtaining a university education, Ph.D., and university employment pushes her into a more privileged socio-economic category than those within her hometown community. She is still an insider, but somehow at a distance. This resonates with Stacey Zembrzycki's experience, who, though she grew up within Ukrainian communities in Sudbury, Northern Ontario, found it challenging to gain re-entry and attract participants to her project. She found her position as both a "community insider and an

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[85] Lundy and McGovern, "Participation, Truth and Partiality," 79.

[86] Christine J. Walley, *Exit zero: Family and Class in Post-Industrial Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

outsider, maintaining …only a subjective connection to it through Baba."[87] Our position as researchers shifts and is renegotiated with each participant. When reaching out on a Facebook group, I positioned myself as Paul and Rosie's daughter, the granddaughter of Mary and Hugh Lundy, and of Nell and Ottavio Rosato, the niece of Patricia Lundy. Trust is a major issue in NI; everyone must be placed, and if you cannot be placed within that specific community or local community, you can often be met with suspicion or avoidance. Scholar Frank Burton named the performance "Tellings," the indications of what community you are from; this could be found in your name, in the bars you go to, the sports team you support, in the clothes you wear, your speech idioms, how you pronounce certain letters, and other minutia. This represents a form of communication aimed at knowing the other's ethnic allegiance and trying to determine if this person is safe or is potentially a danger, all of which can be traced to the distrust stemming from the conflict. During my interviews, in Ardoyne each participant worked out who in my family they knew (my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins) even by referring to the houses my grandparents lived in. Once I was positioned as trustworthy, the interviews in Ardoyne could progress. Interestingly this occurred even with interviews with the younger generations, especially with the men.

I am an 'insider' in parts of North Belfast. I grew up in these streets and have the emotional knowledge of the histories, identities, and language. However, I also grew up on the Cliftonville Road, then the Antrim Road.[88] I spent most of my days with my Granny Mary in Ardoyne, but I still did not live there. My parents then moved out of the Cliftonville area and in 2013, at nineteen I moved to England for my undergraduate degree and Masters

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[87] Stacey Zembrycki, *According to Baba: A Collaborative Oral History of Sudbury's Ukrainian Community* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2014), 10.

[88] The Cliftonville Road is on the outskirts of Ardoyne, connected by the Alliance Avenue, and is predominantly a middle-class/lower-middle-class area. The upper Antrim Road where my parents live now ranges from middle to upper middle class.

degree, then to Canada in 2018, each move distancing me further and positioning me as more of an outsider within the tight parameters of Ardoyne, I became an insider/outsider within my own community. But within the Unionist community, I am a clear outsider. In his study of coal miners in Harlan County, Kentucky, Alessandro Portelli notes that his outsider status and identity as an Italian academic, was actually beneficial to the research, making him self-reflective about the inherent realities of difference and positionality even as he gained participants' trust. Portelli reflects on an interview with Mrs. Cowan in 1983, whose husband was a union activist. Given racial inequalities within the US, Mrs. Cowan stated, "I don't trust you…So I was raised; my grandmother always told us, 'I don't care what nobody say, I don't care how good they look, how good they talk, you gon' always be black. There's gonna always be a line.'"[89] Not to conflate racial injustice with sectarian divisions in Northern Ireland, but this excerpt provides an example of these concrete lines based on power and inequality that are always drawn. Being an insider to North Belfast, having grown up there, born and raised in the Catholic Nationalist Republican community and my family lineage firmly in Ardoyne, I could easily gain trust in that setting.

However, the aspects of my identity that deemed me trustworthy in Ardoyne had the opposite effect in the Unionist community, 'there's gonna always be a line.' When I spoke with a community worker from the Shankill, I explained that I was experiencing difficulty getting people from the area to speak to me. His laughter reflected the potential lack of trust and need for a gatekeeper. Like Stacey Zembrzycki who required assistance from her Baba, who provided an olive branch and acted as a gatekeeper, I too required assistance to gain certain levels of trust or even to gain participants. I realise now just how reliant I was up on my family members to assist me in gaining interviews. Simply put, this project would not

[89] Alessandro Portelli, *They Say in Harlan County: An Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 8.

have been what it is without my dad, my uncle, or my brother. I am very grateful to them for their willingness to use their relationships both social and work-based to assist my research efforts. At the same time, lacking that kind of insider access in the PUL community, I was unable to gain access to enough Unionist community interviewees to make this project the equal 50:50 community ratio which would have been ideal for the comparative project that I had initially imagined. Ultimately, with thirty interviews from the Catholic Nationalist Republican community of Ardoyne and only seven interviews from the Protestant Unionist community, I can no longer call this project a comparative one. Nevertheless, I succeeded in collecting enough interviews from the PUL communities to offer insights into that community's distinctive experience and memory of the Troubles and post-Troubles periods, and to allow me to draw some comparisons with the more abundant evidence that I gathered in the Catholic Nationalist community's experiences and modes and mechanisms of memory transfer. Overall, this thesis and project focuses on Ardoyne, and includes perspectives from the PUL community where possible.

I believe this is important to acknowledge the challenges we face when conducting research, particularly in Northern Ireland. Research does not always go smoothly. I kept the PUL community in this thesis even though I could not reach parity of community representation because I believe it is important to acknowledge those who dedicated their time to this project and the continued contribution their stories make to addressing the questions of how we remember, how we communicate memory and how we inherit that memory.

Throughout each interview, I tried to ensure the practice of shared authority, a concept coined by Michael Frisch. Shared authority acknowledges the inherent power hierarchies within the interview setting by suggesting that historians have an authority and subsequently

have a responsibility to share it.[90] The process of shared authority democratises the interview process by removing - or trying to remove - the hierarchy between researcher and participants, moving away from top-down historical approaches to more collaborative oral history methods. Therefore, Frisch's concept of sharing authority centres around the interviewer and the interviewee, scholar, and community working together to understand the past.[91] High suggests that sharing authority requires the cultivation of trust, the development of collaborative relationships which need not end when the audio or video is turned off, but that it is an ongoing process of dialogue and sharing."[92] Having full shared authority takes years to develop; as a graduate student, I, unfortunately, did not have such time, but by embedding rigorous ethics protocols in my consent forms, which among other safeguards ensured full anonymity, and providing the transcripts to the participants for their comments/approval, I have tried to ensure that this thesis is based on only the interview content that my participants were comfortable sharing with me, and fully respects the terms to which they gave their informed consent.

As mentioned previously, the interviews for this project were taken four to five years apart; during this time, my cultural habitus changed. I moved to Canada and started my Ph.D., I have read more widely and spoken at conferences and workshops on oral history and methodology, and I have grown both as an oral historian and person. I was twenty-three in the original interviews, quite unprepared for the emotions that would come up and the emotional toll that they would take on me. I have spoken many times at conferences about the emotional toll of interviewing, especially interviewing peers and understanding their wounds, because

[90] Michael Frisch, *A shared authority: Essays on the craft and meaning of oral and public history* (Albany: Suny Press, 1990).

[91] Frisch, *A shared authority.*

[92] Steven High, "Sharing Authority: An Introduction," Journal of *Canadian Studies* 43, no.1 (Winter 2009): 13.

they often match one's own. I still carry the stories shared with me, particularly Gráinne, a young woman from Ardoyne who is the same age as me (23 at the time of the interview). We talked about the Holy Cross incident, and she told me of her experiences growing up, "when you're walking up the road and people are shouting 'fenian bastard' and calling you everything … you mummy has your hood up round your ears she might be telling you it's okay, but it's not and you know it's not." During this reflection, Gráinne got upset, her voice broke, and her eyes filled with tears while discussing her mother protecting her from abuse while still protesting her daughter's right to an education and right to attend school.[93] I asked her if they talk about Holy Cross much,

> Because I don't really talk to anyone about this, it's the elephant in the room sometimes, we wouldn't necessarily bring it up so you're not really used to dealing with the emotions of it. Really reflecting on it, it's funny going back on it and having to remember and recall different things I went through. I didn't think. I said to my parents I was going to do it, and you never realise how it's going to make you feel until you are here.

The interview with Gráinne was my first experience of emotion like this in an interview setting, and I was unsure of what to do. I asked her if she wanted to stop, and she said no, I asked her if I could make her a cup of tea even though we were in her house, to which she laughed and said she would be okay in a minute. I was quite thankful she had shielded her face, as I was barely holding back tears myself. At that moment, I was embarrassed that I had gotten so upset, and for years I believed that it was bad practice to cry in an interview or to show strong emotions. But as I entered this new set of interviews in 2022-2023, I was more open to the idea of showing emotions because I have come to believe in the role that empathy has in facilitating a more meaningful dialogue in oral history. I am not suggesting that empathy only shows itself through tearful emotional reactions; this is just an example of how it appeared within my research and how research affects the researcher. The participants of

[93] During the interview I noted her reaction and the time on the recorder.

my research have all experienced conflict-related trauma, either from growing up during the Troubles or growing up post-GFA where they continue to experience segregated life, sectarianism, cyclical riots, threats of violence, and paramilitarism. Their emotions are often raw and can easily come to the surface, as did my own as a fellow member of the ceasefire generation. Through this, I have learned to accept my own place within the research, which simply cannot be ignored in the name of objectivity. I cannot pretend that, along with my scholarly training and reading, I did not equally come to this project and research with my own emotional baggage, assumptions, and viewpoint. In reality, interviews do not happen in a vacuum, between people devoid of emotions. As Bornat points out, "feelings continue to play a part in remembering."[94] Reflecting back on the interview with Gráinne, across from me sat a girl my age; in her, I saw my friends who lived through Holy Cross, my family, and myself. Holmes found that only by attending to how she felt could she identify with how her participants felt.[95] It is difficult to understand the emotions felt and expressed during the interview, but we can only do our best to attempt to understand them with the tools and empathy that we have. As researchers who have a familiarity or closeness to the research, we have to find ways to step back for a moment to see ourselves as reflected within the project and ourselves as the researcher.

As Katie Holmes notes, we need to be able to sit with uncomfortable emotions, both of our own and those of the participants, and attend to their effects on us.[96] I hope by acknowledging their impact, I can bring an additional layer of analysis and understanding to

[94] Joanna Bornat, "Remembering and reworking emotions: The reanalysis of emotion in an interview," *Oral History* 38, no.2 (2010): 49.

[95] Katie Holmes, "Does it matter if she cried? Recording emotion and the Australian Generations Oral History project," *The Oral History Review* 44, no.1 (2017): 74.

[96] Holmes, "Does it matter if she cried," 75.

this research and my life outside of it. The act of self-reflexivity is essential; according to Lynn Abrams, the historian or ethnographer's self-reflexivity or awareness of their own position is the starting point in exploring subjectivity.[97] This involves being reflexive about oneself as a researcher, being actively aware of and reflecting upon one's presence in the research process, and acknowledging the absence of neutrality.[98] For me, this became central in understanding my insider/outsider status. Self-reflexivity also encourages the interviewer to consider their positionality, as differences or affinities across gender, class, race, sexuality, and ethnicity may impact or inform the relationship with the interviewee. In *Touch and Go*, Studs Terkel wrote, "what I bring to the interview is respect. The person recognises that you respect them because you're listening. Because you're listening, they feel good about talking to you."[99] This is what I hope that I have lived up to.

Oral history interviews were supplemented by historical research in the following local newspapers: the *Irish News, North Belfast News, Republican News, News Letter,* and *Belfast Telegraph*, all accessed from the Belfast Central Library's Newspaper collection. Newspaper sources were utilised to uncover the language around certain significant historical events and moments for participants. They were also used to document the location and details of riots or acts of sectarian violence in North Belfast during moments of political upheaval between 1968 and 1998. This may help to understand how collective memories of these events were formed. Photographs shared to the Facebook group 'Old Ardoyne Memories' were an additional, valuable source, along with the stories and comments from

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[97] Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 2nd ed (London: Routledge, 2010): online.

[98] Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, online.

[99] Studs Terkel, *Touch and Go: A Memoir* (New York, London: The New Press, 2008), 176.

users that accompanied them.[100] The information gleaned from this site was used to provide further texture to the analysis of these events. Kate Barclay referred to historians as magpies in exploring the broad diversity of the past, and I very much felt this way as I was conducting the research.[101]

Building on the already established literature surrounding social and cultural memory, commemoration, sports and attachments to national and community identity, scholarship and historiography, alongside the oral history and archival methods, this thesis draws together the various memory studies theories in examining the inheritance of memory and identity in the ceasefire generation in Northern Ireland, who grew up in the shadow of the unresolved past of the 1968-98 Troubles. In four chapters, this thesis considers three overarching themes: how we remember, how memory is communicated, and the inheritance of memory.

The first chapter provides a historical contextualisation. I briefly trace the history of Ireland, reflecting on the revolutionary period of 1916-1921, which led to the partition of the island and the violence which ensued during the 1920s in Belfast. In this chapter I also set out the history of industry particularly in North Belfast, as this contributed to shaping the segregated landscape. By tracing the history of Ireland from the Easter Rising 1916, through the periods of industrial boom, the violence of partition in the 1920s, the Troubles and the peace years, it provides a longitudinal understanding of Ireland's violent history and sets the scene to fully grasp the impacts of the mechanisms of memory transmission.

Chapter Two focuses on *how we remember* vis-a-vis our emotions, developing from the oral history interviews and unpacking the influence of our emotions and senses on how we remember and interpret the past. Fear, Anxiety, Hate, Anger, Loss and Humour were central

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[100] "Old Ardoyne Memories," Facebook, November, 12, 2023. https://www.facebook.com/groups/451119028268212

[101] Barclay, *Sources for the history of emotions*, 28.

emotions discussed and displayed within the oral history interviews; what participants remember feeling alongside how those feelings resonate now, through verbal and non-verbal indicators. The senses provide a multimodal approach to memory that provides a more textured understanding of the how memories and storytelling are elicited. Emotions and senses provide an alternative or complementary approach to storytelling; by analysing emotions and senses in tandem, such as fear and smell, we can begin to understand the daily lives and experiences of those who grew up during the conflict and how their memories are shaped and transmitted.

Chapters Three, Four and Five focus on *how memories are communicated.* With Chapter Three discussing place and the built environment, Chapter Four on the role of sport, and Chapter Five on the role of music in the communication of memory. These chapters develop from the theory and discussions of memory, emotions and senses set out in the previous chapters. Chapter Three centres on the social and cultural memory found in the built environment, the physical, tangible aspects of place-based memory, such as commemorations, plaques, memorial gardens, interfaces, peace walls and murals, alongside the intangible sites of personal private memories. The tangible and intangible aspects shape how people interact and navigate place in a divided city. Place is political and acts as an arena of memory transmission, both consciously and subconsciously. Chapter Four further develops identity formation, social bonds and a sense of belonging through the support of soccer teams or the GAA. Sport plays a role in the inheritance of identity, considering both the national and local teams in solidifying community and national identities and the potential inherited sectarianism, which furthers divisions within society. Chapter Five, reflects how songs and music are a popular issue within the NI media and political parties in recent years there has been a focus on the Wolfe Tones and the Celtic Symphony played at a cultural festival in

West Belfast.[102] Through the interviews and in examining the lyrics, Chapter Five will discuss legacy, identity and a sense of belonging encouraged by music, building on some of the discussions around emotions in Chapter Two.

Finally, Chapter Six draws the previous chapters together in an examination of the inheritance of Troubles-related memory. It is broken down into two parts. Part one focuses on *how we inherit memory* by considering the role of storytelling and the need to remember, alongside understanding local and national histories and sectarianism. Part two explores the impacts of this, such as mental health issues, ongoing violence and the ceasefire generation's own agency. This chapter brings together many aspects of the thesis but gives a focus to the structural issues affecting the ceasefire generation growing up in the shadow of the Troubles amidst an imperfect peace process.

[102] Songs and music have always been contentious issues within NI, but as the Feile an Phobail has become more popular and the Wolfe Tones concerts have got bigger each year, Unionist politicans have used it as a political point scoring. Each year in the summer months, Republican/ Nationalist songs become a debate in the media.

Chapter One:

The Historical and Geographical Context: Ethno-Sectarian Spatial Divisions in Belfast

Ireland has a long history of political violence connected to England/Britain's centuries-long colonisation projects and subsequent popular resistance and struggles for Ireland's independence during the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. The history of the North of Ireland is embedded within this history of violence, gaining renewed prominence in the twentieth century when the Northern Irish state was born out of a brutal Revolutionary period 1916-1921 and the violent partition of the island.

In a thesis on memory and the Troubles with particular reference to spatial division, it is important to contextualise both historically and geographically. The impact of the Industrial Revolution contributed to Belfast's rapid growth from 1841-1901. By the mid-nineteenth century, it was on the way to becoming the world's leading centre for mechanised linen production, and by the beginning of the twentieth century, the rapid growth of Belfast's port facilitated the emergence of the world-renowned shipping industry.[103] The city's population increased from 19,000 in 1800 to 386,000 in 1911.[104] Belfast's workforce in the period 1871-1911 was 74% industrial and mainly engaged in factory production. Figure 1.0, a map of factories indicates the extent of the industrial presence within the city, the skyline of North Belfast comprised of dozens of factories and smoke stacks.[105] Prominent factories developed along the Crumlin Road (see figure 1.0), which led to an increase in migration of workers into

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[103] A.C. Hepburn, "Work, Class and Religion in Belfast, 1871-1911," *Irish Economic and Social History*, 10, no.1 (1983): 33.; Owen Purdue, "Surviving the Industrial City: the Female Poor and the Workhouse in Late Nineteenth-century Belfast," *Urban History*, 44, no.1 (2017): 71.

[104] A.C. Hepburn, "Work, Class and Religion in Belfast, 1871-1911," *Irish Economic and Social History*, 10, no.1 (1983): 34.

[105] A.C. Hepburn, "Work, Class and Religion in Belfast, 1871-1911," *Irish Economic and Social History*, 10, no.1 (1983): 34.

the neighbouring communities and the construction of Victorian redbrick houses purpose-built for working-class families.[106] Urbanisation eradicated many material differences between working-class communities, with both Protestant and Catholic workers living in very similar housing, under similar conditions. Yet deep sectarian divisions remained which were sharpened overtime by riots and unrest. Historian Emrys Jones notes the frequent occurrence of intercommunal riots, particularly in 1857 and 1886, which reinforced residential segregation between Catholics and Protestants.[107] Intercommunal violence continued throughout the 19th century into the 20th century. In 1920-22 Northern Ireland was partitioned from the rest of the island accompanied by a dramatic explosion of violence. As Jones, Boal, and McAtackney note, such periods of intercommunal violence reinforced community boundaries and segregated settlements, which are important when considering the current divisions.[108]

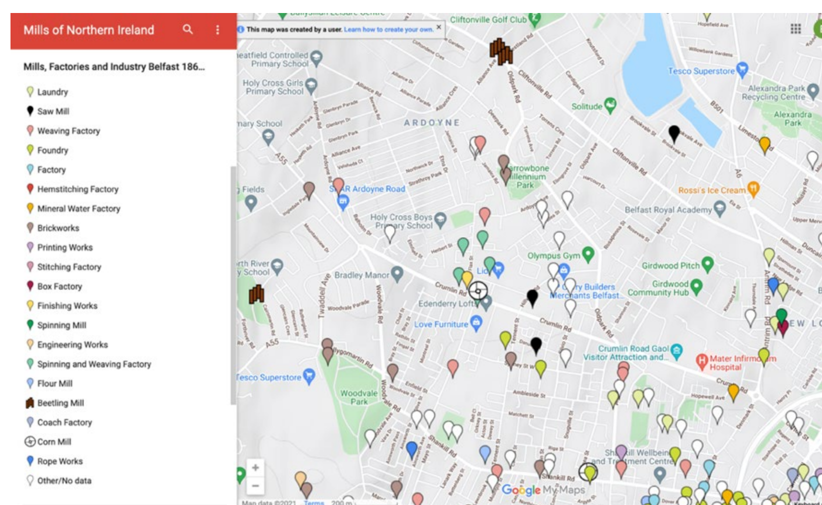

Figure 1.0, map of Mills, Factories, and industry in Belfast 1860-1926,
Source: 'Mills of Northern Ireland' http://www.millsofnorthernireland.com/belfast---an-industrial-city.html

[106] The Crumlin Road is now the main road separating CNR Ardoyne and PUL Woodvale.

[107] Emrys Jones, *Social Geography of Belfast* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960).

[108] Laura McAtackney, "Memorials and Marching: Archaeological Insights into Segregation in Contemporary Northern Ireland," *Historical Archaeology* 49, no.3 (2015): 114.; F.W. Boal, "Belfast: Walls Within," *Political Geography* 21 (2002): 689.; Jones, *Social Geography of Belfast.*

Ireland's Revolutionary period marked the beginning of the end of British rule in the 26 counties which now make up the Republic of Ireland. Revolutionary violence began with the 1916 Easter Rising and became more sustained during the IRA's War of Independence 1919-1921. The latter conflict ended in a truce with Great Britain, followed by negotiations and the implementation of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, which set up the 26-county southern Irish state as a dominion in the British Commonwealth. The subsequent Irish Civil War 1922-23 was fought mostly within the territory of the 26-county southern state between rival Nationalist supporters and opponents of the Treaty settlement. However, before the Treaty had even been negotiated, the devolved statelet of Northern Ireland had been partitioned from the rest of the island. The six counties of Ulster that contained a Protestant majority were provided with their own government and parliament while otherwise remaining part of the United Kingdom. The passing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty a year later and the victory of the pro-treaty or Free State forces in the south of Ireland further reinforced partition of the island, as did Unionist domination. Northern Ireland's subsequent refusal to cooperate with the Treaty Boundary Commission's provision to review the partition settlement was inevitable.

During the period of 1920-22, when the NI state came into existence and the new border was fortified, Belfast, in particular, became engulfed in violence. Cunningham has called this the "forgotten conflict," as it is often eclipsed by attention to the War of Independence and Civil War.[109] As Robert Lynch states, the brutal violence of 1920-22 conflict was a reaction to partition and drew on the recent violence dynamics of the Irish Revolution. The shipyard expulsions of July 1920 signaled the beginning of this unprecedented period of mass sectarian violence that would continue in various levels of intensity for the next two years. Alongside continued Republican paramilitarism, the largely

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[109] Niall Cunningham, "'The Doctrine of Vicarious Punishment': Space, Religion and the Belfast Troubles of 1920-22," *Journal of Historical Geography*, (2013): 52.

Unionist police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), supplemented by the Ulster Special Constabulary was formed recruiting heavily from Protestant male civilians – many of whom were formerly members of the sectarian militia known as the Ulster Volunteer Force – added to the sectarian character of violence. Intercommunity fighting increased with whole streets burned down, creating thousands of Catholic and Protestant refugees. Loyalist mobs attacked Catholic areas. The IRA alternately carried out shootings and other attacks that provoked retaliation, and provided feeble defense for outnumbered Catholic communities.[110] Over 500 people died during this two-year period, mainly in Belfast with the Catholic minority suffering the highest causality rates, a concentrated explosion of violence that was unparalleled until the post-1968 Troubles.[111] Critically, this phase of violence exacerbated residential segregation in Belfast, strengthening and reinforcing the boundaries between Catholics and Protestant enclaves more deeply than previous bouts of violence.[112] The reinforcement of segregated boundaries and the movement of people from mixed areas into ethnic enclaves due to violence and intimidation helped create modern-day demographics.

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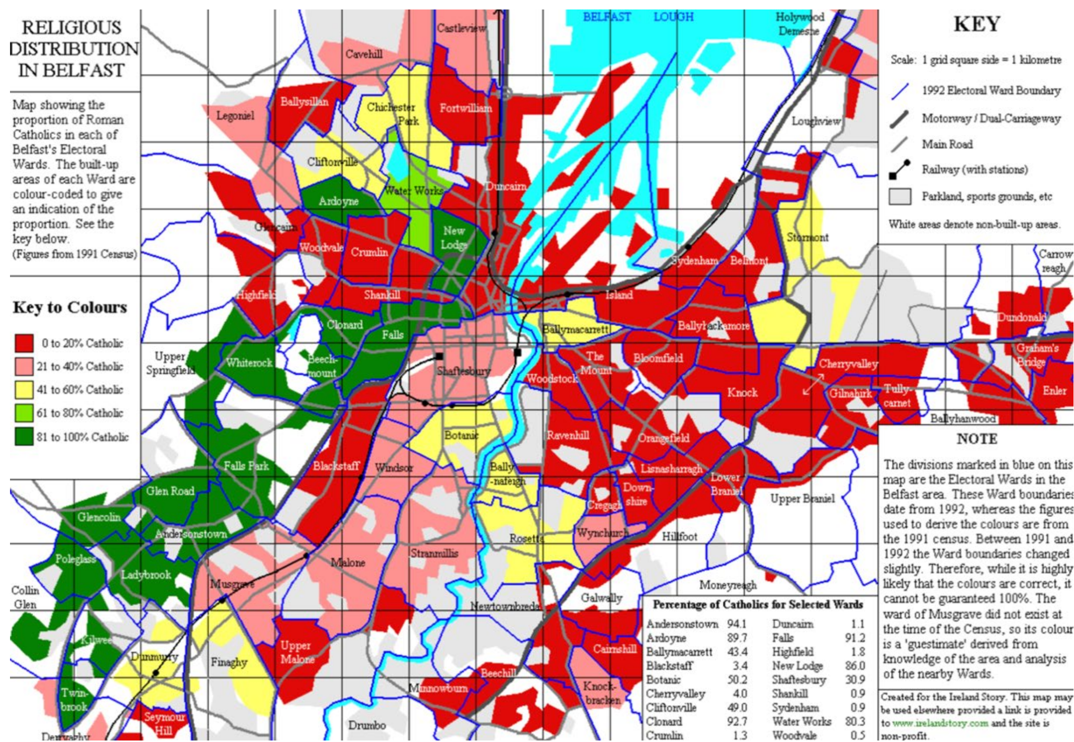
[110] Lynch, "The People's Protectors?," 380-381.

[111] Niall Cunningham, "'The Doctrine of Vicarious Punishment': Space, Religion and the Belfast Troubles of 1920-22," *Journal of Historical Geography* 40, (2013): 65.

[112] F.W. Boal, "Exclusion and inclusion: segregation and deprivation in Belfast," in *Urban Segregation and the Welfare State: Inequality and Exclusion in Western Cities*, eds. S. Musterd and W. Ostendorf (London, 1998), 100.

The landscape of modern Belfast remains divided at its very core: to this day, West Belfast is a predominantly Catholic area and East Belfast a predominantly Protestant one. North and South Belfast are both a mix of Catholic and Protestant areas. However, the south side of the city has a higher socio-economic status than the North. North Belfast comprises neighbouring, patchwork ethnic enclaves, as illuminated by the map in figure 1.1, where in the top left corner we see the green patch of Ardoyne surrounded by the red or yellow patches of Protestant (red) or mixed religion (yellow) communities.



Percentage of Catholics for Selected Wards

Ward	%	Ward	%
Andersonstown	94.1	Duncairn	1.1
Ardoyne	89.7	Falls	91.2
Ballymacarrett	43.4	Highfield	1.8
Blackstaff	3.4	New Lodge	86.0
Botanic	50.2	Shaftesbury	30.9
Cherryvalley	4.0	Shankill	0.9
Cliftonville	49.0	Sydenham	0.9
Clonard	92.7	Water Works	80.3
Crumlin	1.3	Woodvale	0.5

Figure 1.1: Map of religious distribution in Belfast from 1991 Census,
Source: Wesley Johnston.com
https://www.wesleyjohnston.com/users/ireland/maps/towns/belfast_religion.gif

Overall, the current geographical and spatial boundaries and identities of Belfast can be traced to longer-term configurations formed during industrialisation, which were further shaped during times of conflict such as the 1920-22 period and again in 1969-1998. The ceasefire generation (born after or around 1998) continue to feel the ramifications of the conflict through the interwoven strands of boundary reinforcement, the transmission of

memories connected to place and space, and socially through commemorative practices often taking place at sites of violence in their communities, as this thesis examines.

The Troubles must also be appreciated as the most recent installment of this long history of colonial and anti-colonial violence in Ireland.[113] A violent ethnonational conflict lasting from 1969 to 1998, was waged between three opposing factions: Irish Republicans and other Nationalists (the majority sentiment in the Catholic community) who believed that the north should (re)join independent Ireland; Protestant British Unionists or Loyalists who insist that Northern Ireland remain part of the United Kingdom and British Empire (though some elements occasionally flirt with regional independence for Ulster when frustrated by British policies during the conflict); and lastly, the British State, which holds claim to Northern Ireland and desires the continuation of the Union.[114] During the thirty-year conflict, more than 3,600 people were killed, and over 40,000 injured, with many more intimidated, displaced, traumatised, and otherwise negatively impacted in less quantifiable ways.[115] Most, though not all, casualties took place within the small territory of the six counties. As Fargas-Malet and Dillenburger highlight, with a population of only 1.6 million it would be difficult to avoid the conflict inside NI's relatively small territory.[116] The conflict's impact was geographically uneven as nearly half the total number of deaths during the conflict occurred in Belfast, with three-quarters of these in North and West Belfast. Dawson highlights the close correlation

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[113] Or so argued by Republican socialist organisations and groups.

[114] The government of Ireland maintained an irredentist claim over the northern six counties, but this was more rhetorical than real for most of the history of partition.

[115] K. Bloomfield, We Will Remember Them: Report of the Northern Ireland Victims Commissioner Sir Kenneth Bloomfield KCB. (Belfast, Northern Ireland: The Stationery Office Northern Ireland, 1998), 12.

[116] According to NISRA the population size of NI in 2020 was 1.8million, comparing to the 26 counties of the Republic of Ireland whose population is 4.9 million. https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/MYE20-Bulletin.pdf

between the geography of fatalities from political violence and the geography of poverty and economic deprivation.[117] From its formation in 1921, Catholics were a disadvantaged and distrusted minority within NI (roughly one-third of the population at the time of partition), as the one-party Unionist state (in concert with Protestant-dominated business and civil society) discriminated against them across employment, education, housing to policing and criminal justice, alongside other resources and services. The positioning of the Catholic community as "inferior" during the 17th century, as Jones states, created social and economic inequalities which became entrenched in NI from its inception until the outbreak of the Catholic Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.[118] In 1967, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA), an anti-violence organisation, was formed out of a collection of earlier efforts and groups to protest discrimination, defend basic freedoms, and protect the rights of the Catholic minority community. Numerous Civil Rights marches were held in 1968, characterised by non-sectarian civil rights demands, including an end to gerrymandering and housing discrimination and the right to universal adult suffrage. The RUC frequently stopped these protests with the crowds being violently dispersed. Images of police brutality were broadcast across the world, fueling the civil rights campaign's momentum and generating widespread support for NI reforms from the Republic, from sections of British society and politics, and from the Irish Diaspora, among other quarters.

Violence continued and swelled with the 'The Battle of the Bogside,' in Derry which became a pivotal moment as it symbolised a point of no return and the birthplace of the Troubles, as violence sparked in other parts of NI, such as Belfast and 'no go' zones were

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[117] Graham Dawson, *Making Peace with the Past? Memory Trauma and the Irish Troubles* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007): 9.

[118] Emrys Jones, "The distribution and segregation of Roman Catholics in Belfast," *Sociological Review* iv, no.2 (1956): 168.

established.[119] From that point forward, the civil rights era gave way to increased militarization and deadly violence as the IRA remobilised and clashed with repressive state forces. Mass internment was introduced in 1971 by the British Government, which became increasingly embroiled in the Troubles as the sectarian Unionist government failed to deliver reforms while securing the peace. Throughout the 1970s-1990s civilians, soldiers and paramilitaries were killed or injured in shootings or bombings, totaling 3,500 deaths and over 40,000 injuries. These events are still a living memory within NI, and the subject of competing commemorations and contested political narratives by political parties and other groups.

Given the sectarian, political, and class divisions that make up Belfast's geography, the research for this thesis is necessarily has a spatial focus. Specifically, the interviews and field work conducted focus on North and the bordering West Belfast, the part of the city that is arguably home to some of the most intricate territorial divisions and geographies of division within the city. North and West Belfast lies between the shadow of Cavehill mountain, with its distinctive Napoleon's-nose-skyline, and the docklands of Harland & Wolff, with their iconic Samson and Goliath cranes (although they were not built until 1969 and 1974, respectively).[120] Within the Belfast area the focus was narrowed further to the neighboring enclaves of Ardoyne and the Greater Shankill. Both arose from the growing need for working-class housing during the periods of industrialisation. Both have long been and remain socially and economically deprived areas. However, there are stark differences between them. Ardoyne is a historically Catholic, Nationalist, Republican (CNR) neighbourhood, whereas the Shankill is a Protestant, Loyalist, and Unionist (PUL)

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[119] Catholic/Republican only spaces, with no police or Unionists welcome under threat of violence and death.

[120] Susan McKay, *Northern Protestants; An Unsettled People* (Belfast, The Blackstaff Press 2000), 53.

neighbourhood. Violence between the two communities has occurred since the 1920s, with cyclical tensions and violence recurring every year during Loyalists' 12th of July commemoration. This history of intercommunal violence has had profound consequences on how the space is understood and inhabited by residents.

The Ardoyne electoral ward is made up of around 6,000 people according to the 2011 census.[121] As figure 2 shows, Ardoyne is a green (i.e. CNR) island, in a sea of PUL neighbourhoods denoted by the red color on the map. In fact, Ardoyne is bordered on three sides by the historically hostile PUL communities of Legoniel, Glencairn, Woodvale and Crumlin Wards, which lead onto the Unionist Shankill ward (a major epicenter of Troubles violence and home to infamous Loyalist paramilitaries). On the fourth side it is bordered by a religiously mixed community, the Cliftonville ward that leads onto the PUL Ballysillan ward. Parts of Ardoyne, such as greater Ardoyne in the north of the enclave, were at one time mixed (that is, housing both Catholic and Protestant families). But during the 1969-1971 outbreak of the modern Troubles, period there was a substantial movement of people into and out of the district for safety, amidst a hardening of boundaries and homogenisation of communities. Given their geographical positioning and their increasingly hostile neighbours, the CNR community of Ardoyne often felt trapped, with the Crumlin Road representing one of the only main roads out of the enclave into the city centre. They are, to quote Seamus Heaney, 'besieged within a siege.' Unsurprisingly then, during the Troubles, Ardoyne was home to branches and members of both the Official and the Provisional IRA (OIRA and PIRA).

[121] Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, "NINIS Redirect," last modified January 25, 2024, https://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/AreaProfileReportViewer.aspx?FromAPAddressMulipleRecords=Ardoyne@Contains%20Output%20Area:%20@Contains%20Output%20Area:%20%2095Gg020001@4?

The history of Ulster Unionism derives from the history of the Ulster plantation of 1609 and the economic and industrial prosperity of Ulster. Patrick Buckland, in *Ulster Unionism and the Origins of Northern Ireland 1886-1922*, provides a political history of Ulster Unionism, reflecting on the close ties of the Ulster Unionists to Britain and the economic development- the flourishing linen, shipbuilding and engineering industries. He argues that Ulster Unionism was an alliance of disparate social, economic and religious groups who found coherence in opposition to Irish nationalism and Catholicism.[122] According to Buckland, Ulster Unionists felt like an embattled community under siege from the "forces of evil," a feeling which continued through the history of Ulster Unionism and was renewed by IRA campaigns against NI.[123]

David Miller reflects on the peculiarity of the Ulster situation, where the Ulster Unionists loyalty to the monarch is defined by a social contract, where both ruler and ruled undertake certain obligations to each other, we see this actively play out in the Solemn League and Covenant of 1912. The contractual oath bound nature of this community is also found in the secretive structure of the masonic organisation, the Orange Order. Miller reflects upon the Solemn League and Covenant, as Carson states was a "contract between Ulstermen, and Ulstermen were not in the habit of breaking their contracts."[124] Miller discusses how Orangeism provides for many the foundations of their Ulster Unionist identity. Alvin Jackson found the Orange Order was inclusive of all classes and may be regarded as the apogee of the

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[122] Patrick Buckland, "A Protestant state: Unionists in government, 1921-39," in *Defenders of the Union: A Survey of British and Irish Unionism Since 1801*, ed. D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day (London: Routledge, 2002), 211-226.

[123] Patrick Buckland, *Ulster unionism and the origins of Northern Ireland, 1886-1922* (Dublin, 1973).

[124] David W. Miller, *Queen's Rebels: Ulster Loyalism in Historical Perspective* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1979), 97.

Unionist movement, least as far as it successfully maintained its central objective and sustained a form of organisational unity.[125] Jackson noted that the membership of the Orange Order in 1820s drew from all levels of the social hierarchy, attracting many Conservative landowners, labourers and even came to enjoy royal patronage, but it never completely sheds its original, flawed reputation. These sentiments can be said of the Orange Order in 2023. The Order was a potential asset to the Tory government (or to particular ultra-Tories) in the 1800s, but it was also a continual threat to political stability.[126]

For this thesis, the histories of Unionism in the post- partition years are key to understanding the relationship between the Shankill and Ardoyne, or between Nationalists and Unionists post- Good Friday Agreement. The history of the Shankill is not too dissimilar to that of Ardoyne, developed out of the need for industrial housing. The Shankill is a working-class community, with a population of 6,445.[127] The Shankill area comprises of the lower Shankill which begins at Peter's Hill known as the Hammer, the Middle and Upper Shankill, which begins around Agnes Street, this area includes the Peace Wall and interface area of Lanark Way. The Greater Shankill encompasses the Highfield, Woodvale and Glencairn areas. Protestant Unionist Loyalist communities dominate the Greater Shankill area, which has a strong Unionist identity, and long-established traditions of Orangeism as reflected in a local Orange Order, 12th of July marches, and bonfires. With the IRA embedded

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[125] Alvin Jackon, "Irish Unionism, 1870-1922," in *Defenders of the Union*; *A Survey of British and Irish Unionism Since 1801,* ed. by D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day (London: Routledge, 2002), 115- 136.

[126] Alvin Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998 War, Peace and Beyond*, 2nd ed (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 62.

[127] Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), "Census 2021 main statistics demography tables- age and sex," NISRA, last modified September 22, 2022. https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/census-2021-main-statistics-demography-tables-age-and-sex

in the adjacent neighborhood, the greater Shankill was home to the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), the paramilitary expressions of Loyalism. Their political interests are mostly supported by the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV).

The creation of the Northern Irish state in 1921 was a Protestant state for a Protestant people, where the Unionists ruling classes had majority of the political and economic control of the state.[128] As previously mentioned, Ulster Unionists, (now referred to in this thesis as the PUL community) are historically tied and connected to Britain and their British identity. In the formation of their 'national identity' 1916 is a formative year, the Somme and its memory has shaped the tradition.[129] From the formation of the state of NI, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) according to Peter Taylor, reflected the allegiance majority of the population which at the time was PUL. The RUC, the police force was aided by an armed force of special constables known as the Ulster Special Constabulary (USC), set up in 1920, most effective arm was the B Specials, a group of 16,000 men who volunteered their services one night a week. Many volunteers were former members of the Ulster Volunteers and members of the PUL community, unpaid and armed by the state.[130]

Similarly to Ardoyne and other working-class communities in NI, the Shankill faced major issues in housing and poor living conditions, especially pre-1960s. As a way to combat

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[128] This infamous phrase is actually a misquote from James Craig, Unionist leader. Citing Northern Ireland House of Commons records, Patrick Buckland says that Craig was making a comparison between the north and the south. Craig is recorded as saying that southerners had boasted and '. . . still boast of Southern Ireland being a Catholic State. All I boast of is that we are a Protestant Parliament and a Protestant State.' https://www.historyireland.com/a-Protestant-parliament-for-a-Protestant-people/

[129] Peter Taylor, *Loyalists* (London, New Delhi, New York, Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2014), 23 online version.

[130] Taylor, *Loyalists,* 25 online; The B Speicals were deployed in 1969 to support the RUC but were disbanded in 1970.

these issues, the Northern Ireland Housing Trust (NIHT) in the 1960s developed schemes which included subsides geared towards clearance of these areas, alongside the creation of a six-lane motorway. The Shankill residents then faced major displacement issues due to the NIHT which was the main agent of slum clearance in Belfast.[131] However housing groups and activists used direct action tactics such as squatting and interruption of council meetings in March 1968 alongside groups such as Save the Shankill, to utilise community power to prevent the demolition of their community. A central aspect to life in both the Shankill and Ardoyne is the tight knit nature of the communities. Shops, grocery stores, pubs, social clubs, butchers could all be located along the Shankill road, no need to go any further. This sense of tight-knit community has lasted, Ben a 23-year-old from the Shankill noted, "you live on the Shankill, you work on the Shankill, you go out on the Shankill, some people genuinely never leave, and they don't want to." Another participants Thomas, a man in his 40s from the Shankill, discussed the close nature of the area,

> What happens is when you're from the Shankill, when you're asked 'where are you from?' you go 'ah I'm from the Shankill, I'm a Shankill road man' then when you're in the Shankill or when your with people from the greater Shankill area and you are asked 'where your from?' you break it down, so I'm a Highfield man, I'm a Woodvale man, I'm a lower Shankill, I'm Glencairn. Bit like Ardoyne and the Bone. Outside the Shankill we all stick together, but when it comes to being in the Shankill that's when you actually separate, that's how I feel anyway. But you were born into it so you didn't know any different. When I was young my aspiration was to get a job on the Shankill, live on the Shankill, why would I ever want to leave the Shankill it was my whole world, it was everything to me. People would still be like that, but I think it is good to get young people to see the world outside of the Shankill a bit more. Saying that I still live on the Shankill and have done my whole life, my family are all here and so are my wives. You couldn't go down to the shop without seeing like five people you know.

During the Troubles, the Shankill area experienced some of the worst atrocities, including multiple bar bombs, such the Mountainview Tavern in May 1971 where multiple

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[131] Liam O'Dowd, Bill Rolston and Mike Tomlinson, *Northern Ireland Between Civil Rights and Civil War* (London: CSE Books, 1980), 128.; discussed in Ron Wiener, *The Rape and Plunder of the Shankill: Community Action: the Belfast Experience* (Belfast: Farset Co-operative Press., Ltd, 1980).

people were injured, the Four Step Inn in September 1971, where two people died, and the Bayardo bar bombing which killed five people in 1975. The Balmoral Furnishing Company was bombed in 1971 where four people died including two infants. But the worst atrocity was the Shankill Road bombing of October 23, 1993, where a bomb exploded in Frizzell's Fish Shop, and nine people were killed and multiple other casualties. Interestingly in the interviews, none of the participants from the PUL communities discussed the atrocities which occurred in their communities, focusing more on their cultural traditions of parading. This thesis does predominantly focus on and examines the memories from Ardoyne, but I try to include voices and experiences from the PUL participants when possible.

The Shankill area is the centre of PUL community in West Belfast and is where the UVF formed in 1966. According to recent news reports from the BBC and from participants, the Shankill is still predominantly controlled by paramilitary organisations such as the UVF, this will be explored further in Chapter Six. With paramilitary bodies in both communities, the Ardoyne/Shankill areas of Belfast saw significant violence during the Troubles. A small CNR community surrounded by PUL, Ardoyne was at the heart of much conflict and trauma, with attacks and fatalities in the community in every phase of the conflict. [132] While bare statistics cannot tell the true story of loss, they provide a useful outline. Ninety-nine men, women and children from the Ardoyne community were killed during the conflict, from Sammy McLarnon and Michael Lynch, who were shot by the RUC on the night of the 14/15 August 1969, to Brian Service who was killed by Loyalists on Halloween 1998.[133] While the Ardoyne community's experience is well documented, including by its own community

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[132] Brian McKee, *Ardoyne '69: Stories of Struggle and Hope* (Red Stripe Press, 2020) [accessed through Google Books].

[133] Ardoyne Commemoration Project, *Ardoyne: The Untold Truth* (Belfast: Beyond the Pale Publications, 2002), introduction, online (accessed through CAIN).

members, the same cannot be said for the Greater Shankill. Fortunately, oral testimonies already exist for Ardoyne due to the Ardoyne Commemoration Project and its publication, *Ardoyne: The Untold Truth*, which sought to provide victims' families with the space to tell their truth.[134]

This thesis does not aim to provide a general history of the Troubles beyond the contextualizing section above. Rather, through oral history interviews with the residents of Ardoyne and a sample from the greater Shankill area, it offers a micro-historical perspective and a vehicle to tell local experiences in North and West Belfast. While general histories of the Troubles predictably focus on major events and 'turning points' such as the Battle of the Bogside, the introduction of the British Army onto the streets, the burning of Bombay Street in west Belfast, Bloody Sunday, Bloody Friday, McGurks Bar, Shankill Road Bombing, and so on, the chronology of the Troubles was experienced differently at the local level of the neighborhood. In Ardoyne, for example, key flash points that dominated memory of the conflict included the burning of the houses in 1969, the introduction of internment without trial in 1971, Larry Marley's funeral, and many other micro-events of everyday violence that are not included in most history books but which defined the conflict for local residents. These local issues and the events recounted are important to the history of Ardoyne and to memories inherited through the generations and are therefore crucial to set out in this chapter. To detail these events, I rely on a mix of oral accounts and testimonies from *Ardoyne the Untold Truth*, alongside secondary sources.

The burning of the houses on the 14th of August 1969 (the aftermath of which is illustrated in figure 1.2), for many was the beginning of the Troubles in Ardoyne. Ethna, a woman in her 60s from Ardoyne recalled,

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[134] Ardoyne Commemoration Project, *Ardoyne: The Untold Truth* (Belfast: Beyond the Pale Publications, 2002), introduction, online (accessed through CAIN).

> As an 8-year-old it was like, getting dragged out of your bed, because we had gone to bed and the next thing was 'come on we've to get out' sort of thing, they are bombing and everything. I remember that night, actually I remember quite vividly because the sky was red from flames and the men just had planks of wood and hammering it into with nails, that's all they were defending Ardoyne with, and the 'B' Specials were there and the Black and Tans, I think they were called, they were just murderous people, murderous people, just horrible and they had guns and everything and men of Ardoyne had planks and pieces of wood with 6 inch nails in them… or hurley sticks and that's what Ardoyne was getting defended by.[135]

For Orlaith, a 50 year old woman from Ardoyne, her memories of that night are taken from her mother's recollections, "mummy says that night she remembers there was Protestants from the other side of the road all dressed in white shirts and black arm bands and had came into the streets, but the police were letting them in, so they were coming in and then they were attacking houses, they actually set fire till a house up at the top of Herbert Street, and my daddy had went out, and there was a line of men with buckets of water trying to put the fire out, then when they went back to the house then things were getting a wee bit worse." That night Sammy McLarnon and Michael Lynch were killed, and there has been no formal inquest to date into these deaths; moreover, the families have never received an apology nor an acknowledgment of their loss.[136] What is interesting is this event was mentioned in the interviews by members of the ceasefire generation, John, a young man in his 20s from Ardoyne said, "I know the story of the streets burning so well it was as if I was there." This statement from John is reminiscent of Hirsch's concept of postmemory, a memory inherited which constitutes a memory within its own right. I too have always known this as the first event of the Troubles in Ardoyne, a precursor for the violence and destruction that was to come for Ardoyne.

[135] Ethna's use of Black and Tans, says much about the longevity of historical memory, given that they were prominent in the Irish Revolutionary period and were officially disbanded in 1922.

[136] Their entries in *Ardoyne: the Untold Truth* can be found from p.31-37.

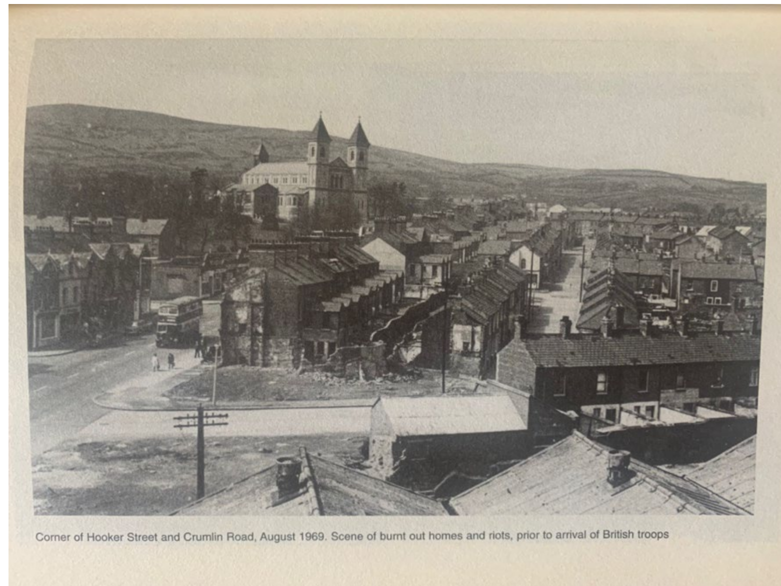
Corner of Hooker Street and Crumlin Road, August 1969. Scene of burnt out homes and riots, prior to arrival of British troops

Figure 1.2: Picture of the houses burnt in 1969
Source: Old Ardoyne Memories, Facebook Group.

The second major event discussed by the Ardoyne participants was the introduction of internment without trial on 9/10th of August 1971, or what the British Army called Operation Demetrius. During internment without trial, men across Northern Ireland who were ‘under suspicion for being in the IRA’ were arrested and removed to Girdwood, Ballykinler or Magilligan holding center. There they were questioned, identified, and often subjected to abusive interrogation techniques before being either released or moved to Crumlin Road prison or to the HMS Maidstone prison ship.[137] A participant, who will remain nameless, was interned in 1971 said,

> See when we were interned you didn’t know when you were getting out and you knew you were a political hostage that the Brits would release you when they thought it was appropriate and we knew that the only way it could become appropriate is if the IRA applied enough pressure and that’s what happened in 1975 there was a ceasefire called. It was a debacle like, but it gave the Brits an excuse to release us and internment lasted four years. But you were a political hostage, but we knew, and we accepted the only ones getting us out of here is the IRA, the same with the lads who were released after the GFA, that was the IRA one of their main things, we need to get our prisoners out.

[137] Details of internment are found in the Report of the enquiry into allegations against the Security Forces of physical brutality in Northern Ireland arising out of events on the 9th August 1971, https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/hmso/compton.htm

Internment also deeply affected the families of those swept up in the arrests and held indefinitely. Margaret, a woman in her 60s originally from Ardoyne, could remember as a child, “daddy getting pulled out of the house at internment.”

The Hunger Strikes of 1981 marked another pivotal event both in the broader history of the Troubles and in the local experience of Ardoyne residents, when Republican prisoners escalated their protest against the government’s criminalization by mounting a carefully staged, drawn out hunger strike that ultimately claimed ten lives. Project participants like Róisín, another woman in her 60s, recalled what happened afterwards in Ardoyne.

> So during the Hunger Strikes, when Bobby Sands died we couldn’t go to school for a week because our street was where the riots were happening because it’s where the Brits were based. I can remember the morning Bobby Sands died, obviously, we weren’t sent to school, no one was sent to school from our area, and there was sort of a flurry of activity – get bread in, get milk in, candles, and I was going up the road with my sisters to get them, and I can remember we were walking back down the road and there was a Brit jeep going into the depo and the back of the Brit jeep was open, this was about 11 or 12 in the morning, and a Brit threw a bar of soap out - now we were only kids- at us going ‘away and fucking wash Bobby Sands.’ So that always sticks in my head for some reason.

Róisín’s discussion about the Hunger Strikes and Bobby Sands death has parallels with Orlaith’s experiences.

> I remember one time, I think it was the hunger strikes, when Bobby Sands and themens died, the top of Brompton Park was barricaded off and every street along the Berwick road was barricaded from Alliance so that no one could get in or out, obviously apart from the bus, but every street, because the army would have tried to get in anyway, so everywhere coming into that district was barricaded.” “By the people?”, I asked. Orlaith- “yea by the people, burnt buses across the streets, I remember the buses being burnt everywhere.

Rose, a woman in her 60s from Ardoyne, told me how at the time of Bobby Sands’ death and for years afterward, girls from the Everton Girls School (a Protestant girls secondary school on the Crumlin Road) would shout and harass them on the way to and from school, “they would yell ‘Bobby’ and making jokes, one time they put a cigarette butt in the teachers pocket and it smouldered.” All of these experiences together highlight the profound impact that the Hunger Strikes and the death of Bobby Sands had on the local community and influenced how they were treated by the ‘other community,’ RUC, and the army.

Another event that demonstrates the extent of community solidary and community bonds in Ardoyne during the Troubles was the funeral of Larry Marley, an active IRA Volunteer who was assassinated in front of his wife and child by Loyalist paramilitaries.[138] References to him were often intertwined with those of the Hunger Strikes. Though they were separated by over six years, several participants connected the two events as examples of British injustice that powerfully impacted the community. Róisín, a woman in her 50s from Ardoyne, spoke at length about the political and Republican nature of her family, but when discussing her childhood, she reflected on the events in the community which became poignant moments in her life.

> Knowing that and feeling like we were very much a minority in our own country, and that progressed in my teenage years. But in my teenage years I was reading a bit more, and it sort of underpinned the injustices even more. I can remember the Hunger Strikes had a massive impact on me politically, as did Larry Marley's funeral. A friend of ours father was getting out of jail, and he was murdered, I don't even think Larry was out of jail a year, and he was murdered, and that had a massive impact on me."
> ER- that's really interesting because other people have talked about that as a moment of like…
> Róisín- A defining moment. Our community suffered incredible injustices throughout the whole conflict, and the Hunger Strikes because of the brutality of what the prisoners had been living under, because of the blankets and the dirty protest in Armagh, I think when they went for the second hunger strike and Bobby Sands died and more went on to die, I think people were absolutely outraged and sickened and how wrong this is that this is allowed to happen. With Larry's funeral, there had always been Republican funerals, but the cops seem to have changed tactics and became very, very defensive against the cortege. Joe Marley would still be one of my closest friends, and he will recount stories, there was five sons, and they were carrying the coffin, now there were other Republicans around them to protect them because people had noticed a really heavy cop presence that morning, and Joe recollects stories of the cops kicking their legs to get them to drop the hearse. Their plan was to take the coffin and bury Larry, but of course, with Irish Republicans, that would never happen.

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[138] According to Ardoyne the Untold Truth, Larry Marley was a husband to Kate and a father to six boys, alongside being an IRA Volunteer. He was arrested many times and spent 13 years as a political prisoner in Long Kesh and the H-Blocks. He launched many escape attempts and a number were successful such as the breakout from H-Blocks in 1983 when 38 Republican prisoners took part in the largest single prison escape in the history of the British penal system. On 2nd April 1987 Larry was at home with his wife and youngest son when UVF gunmen knocked at the door, subsequently shooting Larry several times while his wife Kate protected the body of their baby only a few feet away.

IRA Volunteer Larry Marley's funeral was delayed for three days by the RUC and from various acts of intimidation against the family.[139] This caused outrage from the family and friends, and from the Ardoyne community who wanted Larry to be "buried with dignity and in a way that any family deserves."[140] Anne a woman in her 60s from Ardoyne, discussed Larry Marley's funeral in passing: "I think most people my age would have tried to sort of steer them [children] away from things of the Troubles because we grew up in it and we didn't want that for our kids, although yano they did see something like the Larry Marley funeral, that was just around the corner, and my daughter had to go to school through that so yea she saw all that." When discussing the Marley funeral, people reflected on the brutality of depriving a family of the burial, an important ritual to Irish Catholics to assist with the grieving process. "Humanity was out the window", according to Seán Mag Uidhír's testimony in *Ardoyne the Untold Truth*. He went on to note "how the community reacted to the situation, that is something you just never forget. It is burnt into my consciousness."[141]

Although major incidents also impacted the community, the everyday violence, such as stop and search by the army and nighttime house raids had long-lasting effects on residents of the community. Ethna, a woman in her 60s told me of her experience,

> Many a night when we were coming back, we would get stopped by the soldiers, 'Where've you been? Where are you going? Where do you live? What's your name?' and all of the rest of it. One night, in particular, we were coming back, we were walking through Manor Street, two bloody 14-year-old kids like 'I was dancing with him… oh did you like him?' 'yea fancied the pants of him…' yano? Then I fell over and I'm like fucking hell then the next thing up from the ground, this big soldier stands up. They used to lie in the pathway, you know, in your front garden, right at the gate and lie in your pathway with their rifles on the ground. I had tripped over his rifle, and he gets up, and he's like, 'what's your names?' and my friend is like, 'I'm not telling you' he's like 'Where have you been? Where are yous going?' me, I'm like 'We've just been to the youth club,

[139] "Back issue: Larry Marley's Funeral," *An Phoblacht*, April 10, 1997, Edition, 2023 Issue no.4, https://www.anphoblacht.com/contents/1912

[140] Ardoyne Commemoration Project, *Ardoyne,* 418.

[141] Ardoyne Commemoration Project, *Ardoyne*, 426

and we are going home now' 'Where do you live?' 'Brompton Park' he goes, 'You're a wee bit far from Brompton Park, aren't you?' 'yea, yea.' Because see if you antagonised them, boys or girls, they'd ring for a saracen and the saracen would come you'd be thrown in and whisked off, and I'm like, 'Please don't put me in the saracen, tell them everything I don't want to get in the saracen because if my mummy and daddy find out I've been down the New Lodge Road they'd kill me.'[142] And then it was like 'Open your coats,' that was another thing they would just open your coat and search you, and I'm like open my coat and my mate is like 'No I'm not opening my coat,' and he's like 'Open your coat, or we will take you,' and I'm like '[friends name] open your coat, open your coat' and 'Nope, you get a woman soldier here, and I'll open my coat' so he friggin' kept us there for ages until a woman soldier came and she opened her coat, and I'm like 'My ma and da will kill us!' but it was panic.

The impact of the conflict on small communities like Ardoyne is difficult both to fathom and to quantify. As Seamus, a man in his 80s stated,

> There is nobody in this community that hasn't been affected either directly or indirectly by the deaths of those civilians or volunteers or people who have been imprisoned, everybody knows somebody who's been through that, killed, shot, wounded or imprisoned and that bonds a community together…. Especially in internment, but that was our life you couldn't have avoided it. There is nobody in this district who would turn round and say I don't know anybody imprisoned or anybody who was shot or killed.

This statement also extends to harassment, stop and searches, house raids, and the normalised everyday violence of conflict that dictated the lives of the Ardoyne community and remained a focal part of their memory.

As discussed throughout this thesis, the legacy of the past still influences the political landscape of the present, as demonstrated through the continued collapse of the NI Government. Geography and spatial boundaries are central to the conceptualisation of identity in the North of Ireland, and overall, these have generally remained consistent since the Troubles. However, Shirlow and Murtagh highlight that the micro-borders within North Belfast between Nationalist/Republican and Unionist/Loyalist communities are constantly being altered by demographic shifts.[143] Due to the fluid nature of certain boundaries along the

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[142] A Saracen tank is an armored police vehicle ubiquitous in the Troubles.

[143] Shirlow and Murtagh, *Belfast*, 60.

outskirts of less contentious areas, such as the Cliftonville Road, many interface sites are ever-changing.[144] Yet a few sites have remained a constant throughout the Troubles and into 2024, such as the Crumlin Road, Woodvale Road, Twadell, and Ardoyne Road. The hostile North Belfast communities thus live rigidly apart from one another yet in very close proximity, this is highlighted by the map in Figure 1.3, the orange line indicates the interface. This close proximity can exacerbate territorialism and is reflected in the spatial realities for the Ardoyne and Woodvale (part of the Greater Shankill) communities (Figure 1.3).[145] We see these tensions continue from the Troubles into 2001 with the Holy Cross Girls School dispute, which became one of the first post-GFA, peace-time major incidents.[146] Community worker Jim Potts in a contemporaneous interview stated that the entire dispute was around "territory" and called for the school to be closed as "this is a Loyalist community."[147] The Holy Cross

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[144] Shirlow and Murtagh, *Belfast*, 61.

[145] Sara Dybris McQuaid, "Parading memory and remembering conflict: collective memory in transition in Northern Ireland." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 30, no. 1 (2017): 33.

[146] Holy Cross Girls Primary School is situated on Ardoyne Road, 300 meters beyond where the territorial boundaries of Catholic/Nationalist Ardoyne end at Alliance Avenue. For the duration of the dispute, the pupils of Holy Cross had to walk 300m along Ardoyne Road to get to school through the Protestant/Unionist community of Glenbryn, the site of unrest. According to journalist Anne Cadwallader (2004) the reasoning behind the initial rioting is contentious, but it can be said that the dispute began on the 19th of June 2001, one week before the end of term for the pupils of Holy Cross. Brent Never (2010, 467) suggests that a group of young men from Ardoyne confronted a group from Glenbryn as they were hanging British flags along Ardoyne Road. This contentious encounter brought large numbers of fractious community residents on to the streets. This left the pupils of Holy Cross trapped in the school by angered Glenbryn residents. Over the next three days, the walk to school was confronted by turbulent protests of angry Glenbryn residents, punctuated by verbal abuse and hurling missiles. The fourth day reached a 'dangerous crescendo' with a blast bomb being thrown at the parents and children (Never 2010, 469). The protest continued into the new school year in September with daily protests and in the evening riots between the two communities and spilled over into confrontation with the PSNI. The dispute ended in November 2001 with the promise of tighter security and a redevelopment scheme for the Glenbryn community.

[147] Anne Cadwallader, *Holy Cross: The Untold Story* (Belfast: Brehon Press, 2004), 308.

dispute for the ceasefire generation, represents their first tangible experience of the ongoing, if under-lying, enduring tensions.[148] Through the example of the Holy Cross Girls School incident we can see how the history of the Troubles, alongside issues around territory and boundaries coalesces. The history of this area is cemented in spatial boundaries, which remain as one of the enduring legacies of the conflict.

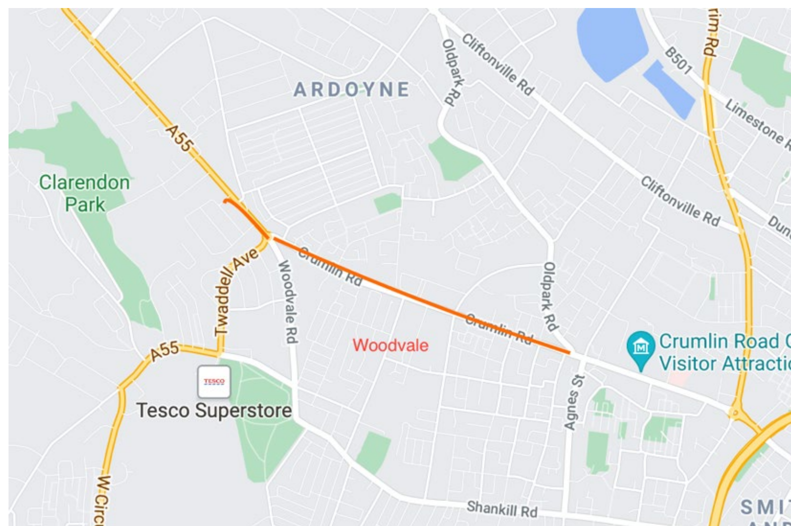

Figure 1.3 shows a map of north Belfast with a red line going down the Crumlin Road indicating the interface between the Catholic/ Nationalist/ Republican community of Ardoyne which is situated above the red line and the Protestant/ Unionist/ Loyalist community of Woodvale situated below.
Source: Map made by Eimear Rosato on Google Maps.

To conclude this section on the historical and geographical context of Belfast by generally setting out the formative history of industrialisation, revolution, partition, violence and sectarianism, we can understand the wider historical narrative which lead to the outbreak of violence in 1969. The remainder of this thesis focuses on the everyday nature of conflict, violence and memory in the local community of Ardoyne. To hear the stories from the voice of the participants reflects the poignance of those memories and the role they play in the wider community memory of the past. I want to emphasise that throughout the violent history

[148] Rosato, "Is it always going to be this way?": Legacies of the Troubles and the Holy Cross Girls Primary School Dispute, *Glencree Journal* (2021): 206.

of Belfast spatial segregation has been at the core and this remains in 2023. It is important to understand how the histories of industrialisation and the formation of enclaves continue to impact how we navigate the city and its micro-boundaries.

Chapter Two

How we remember the past through our emotions and senses.

Emotions

> [talking about violence and gun battles]
> ER- would that sort of thing frighten young people enough to be cautious or do you think people …
> Orlaith- not so much, I think for some people, it would make them cautious, but for some people, it made them angry, they said, "well that's it I'm not taking no more of this" like a lot of people got involved a lot of young people got involved just because it was hard watching that like there was people being murdered all the time…Like there's only so much you can take, but I totally understand why people in Ardoyne… like people all over Belfast talk about people from Ardoyne like "oh my God like Ardoyne it has a bad reputation" but see the rest of Belfast they didn't go through what the people from Ardoyne did, it's ok for them to talk about the Troubles and say "aye it was hard"' but it was really hard there, it was really hard.

Emotions drive us; they give life meaning. Love, hate, anger and fear are at the heart of the historical experience. Considering the impact of emotion is common practice for oral historians and is central to the approach I have adopted in this thesis. In this chapter, through an analysis of the recorded interviews and observational notes taken, I will critically examine the historical and cultural implications of emotions expressed by participants, enriching our understanding of their lived experience of the conflict. Memories create depth and resonance to storytelling and serve as a powerful vehicle to probe and draw-out connections to a diverse range of experiences of the Troubles. By understanding and communicating emotions or "emotives" associated with periods of intense conflict and violence, we can interpret the 'emotional residue' and the ways in which it is transmitted intergenerationally. This endeavour became almost a history from the inside out, the emotional experiences dictating the stories and eliciting memory.

In the first interview I conducted in 2022, the raw and complicated nature of conflict-related emotions was clear, as Ronan, a man in his 60s from Ardoyne, commented,

> Because people were trapped 24/7 in terror, we aren't talking about fear, we are talking about terror because guys were walking down the corner of the street getting shot
> ER- do you think that people have continued to live with that even 25 years after peace?
> Ronan- all the studies show that people bury it, it's not that it's away, it's not available to their immediate thinking, but it goes into their brain and then it interferes with our emotional development and our ability to cope.

This excerpt highlights the complex nature of conflict-related emotions, how the emotions of the past blur with emotions of the present, coupled with the dynamic continuous nature of memory. Additionally, it signifies the cultural codes which emerge as generations deal with the emotional legacies of the conflict – "people bury it" – but paradoxically continue to accommodate its endurance by allowing it to linger, affecting and complicating everyday modern life. Creating the space within the interviews to enable a discussion of emotions and senses was critical to the work and provided an alternative avenue for often difficult memories and stories to surface. In this chapter, I reflect on the emotional component; how this shaped and directed the interviews; what historians can learn from this; the extent to which emotions not encountered firsthand are transmitted to subsequent generations and what impact this has on them. In general, emotions are ambiguous and contradictory: they are individual and social, private, and public, experienced and subdued. However, the research found that in the context of the violent past and current post-conflict NI, emotions appear to be intensified, lingering and almost haunting.

The transcript of an oral history interview may, of course, include emotional context. The emotional resonances of an event may be orally expressed, but such emotional content is not easily researched, it cannot be located in a word search for example. In emotional interviews (interviews where intense emotion is expressed to such an extent that it seems to dominate the interview or sections of it), a range of emotions are recorded: anger, joy, pain,

hope, shame, love, and grief.[149] In most of the interviews, I did not find it difficult to engender a sense of intimacy with participants.[150] This may be due to my positionality; being from North Belfast, many participants knew my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and parents.

Societies that have undergone conflict often fail to completely and honestly deal with the past. Notable examples are Spain and the Pact of Silence, and the difficulties encountered by the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Post-conflict societies such as Northern Ireland have issues of emotional regulation or silence around the past which may cause unwanted feelings to emerge. As discussed in the introduction, emotion can be palpable and visceral often triggered by non-verbal cues. When considering emotion in my interviews, I was conscious of the need to avoid projecting any of my own emotions, feelings or views about the Troubles. I looked for verbal and non-verbal markers that tended to signify episodes of particular emotional importance. However, as Benno Gammerl suggests, this is a simple interpretation, as non-verbal displays are ambiguous, and emotional reactions may not line up with storytelling.[151] It is a challenging task to analyse emotions expressed during an interview process, especially with those who had direct experience of conflict or are living in the shadow of an unresolved past. As researchers we can only use our best endeavours to interpret this arduous field with the analytical tools available to us.

A deep-rooted culture of silence particularly around expressing feelings and emotions continues to exist in working class communities in Belfast which may be attributed in some

[149] Two interviews were conducted over zoom and on the phone, these interviews were less emotional than those in person, this could be due to the lack of in-person relationship, the phone or zoom creates a boundary in the interview. The ability to create an environment of trust and intimacy is more difficult over a screen.

[150] Holmes, "Does it matter if she cried," 7.

[151] Benno Gammerl, "Can you feel your research results? How to deal with and gain insights from emotions generated during oral history interviews," in *Methods of Exploring Emotions*, edited by Helena Flam and Jochen Kleres (New York: Routledge, 2015), 156.

measure to the social and morally conservative nature of society both in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Historically, reliance fell upon the church to provide its parishioners with solace and to trust in God for help.[152] During the 1970s and 1980s, in Northern Ireland, paramilitary groups played a significant role in shaping a dominant culture of silence partly to prevent potential informants but also as a way to exercise social control. Silence permeated society in working-class communities, as captured by poet Seamus Heaney's, 'Whatever you say, say nothing.'[153] During my interview with Patrick, a man in his 60s from Ardoyne, the issue of trauma and the role of counselling arose. He said that, "When we were kids counselling was something Americans did, eejits who went and sat on couches and told people their secrets. In Havana Street that would have been nah, we all knew scandal and dirt about each other, but you never would have said it, you never would have said it to a stranger. Those authority types would have been strangers, who you never would have trusted." [154] At the same time, several women participants shared stories of their mothers gossiping with neighbours on the front doorsteps of their terraced houses. This suggests a distinction between talking to authority figures or strangers and partaking in informal communication with neighbours and friends. The former was prohibited; the latter acceptable, which relates to both the content of the conversation and who was asking the questions. Factual stories shared were often devoid of emotional context, or insights into how they made the person feel. This regulation of emotion is part of the culture of silence in communities that

[152] For majority of those in Republic of Ireland, and Catholic Nationalists in the North the Catholic Church provided religious guidance; for Protestants in the North it would mostly be Presbyterian and Anglican churches.

[153] Blue Ridge Journal, "Seamus Heaney- Whatever you say, say nothing (1975)," Blue Ridge Journal. https://www.blueridgejournal.com/poems/sh-what.htm

[154] Havana street is where he grew up in Ardoyne. An 'eejit' is a slang term for a harmless silly or foolish person. Used in a jovial or charming way in Northern Ireland.

lived through the Troubles, both existing implicitly and woven into the fabric of culture and politics, and community life.

The Commission for Victims and Survivors (CVS) found that the nature of early caregiver-infant interactions shapes the infant's ability to self-regulate emotions, feel compassion, understand different opinions and transform or neutralise negative emotions such as anger or jealousy.[155] They found self-regulation is synonymous with mental health issues. Many who grew up during the Troubles experience difficulty with their own self-regulation and passed down these emotional traits.[156] The environment teaches the child how to identify their own and others' emotions and express their needs, laying the foundations for later mental and social functioning. According to the CVS, emotional reticence stems from the lack of emotional regulation. The ceasefire generation grew up with a linage of ancestors who experienced significant conflict; parents who experienced the Troubles; grandparents who grew up during the Second World War and the Blitz; and great-grandparents who experienced the 1920s Troubles. In light of such extensive family history of wartime emotional reticence it is perhaps inevitable that generational trauma continues to endure.

Paradoxically, I detected some contradiction in my interviews, between the culture of silence alongside the visceral emotions I witnessed and as openly shared by the participants. I believe the culture of silence, is about speaking 'out of turn' in a way that could endanger someone, articulated in the famous expression, "loose lips cost lives." As the CVS argue, emotions of the time were bottled up, potentially not dealt with due to the ongoing nature of violence and tied in with the culture of silence, but with the passage of time some people are

[155] Prepared for the Commission for Victims and Survivors by Ulster University, *Towards A Better Future: The Trans-generational Impact of the Troubles on Mental Health*, (Commission for Victims and Survivors, March 2015), 8-11.

[156] Prepared for the Commission for Victims and Survivors by Ulster University, *Towards A Better Future,* 11.

now able to discuss the emotions of the past. A range of emotions were displayed throughout the interviews I conducted. This chapter will focus on fear, anxiety, anger, hate, loss and humour. Alongside emotions, we must consider the different temporal contexts illuminated from the interviews; the emotions felt at the time of the incident that the participant discusses, and the emotion felt at the time of re-telling, and the fluidity between two contexts. This represents a significant dichotomy; emotions change over time and especially through the process of re-telling. Consequently, the interviews must be considered in the context of silence, emotional reticence and regulation that existed during the conflict. An examination of these emotional themes facilitates alternative stories not previously articulated to emerge, providing additional layers of understanding and enriching the narrative.

Fear

Fear was one of the most prominent emotions felt, experienced, and articulated in the interviews. According to Joanna Bourke, history is saturated with emotions, of which fear may be one of the most relentless. [157] Fear is at the heart of the historical struggle; it centres on the relations of power and resistance.[158] Interviews revealed how fear became a normalised facet of life during the Troubles. We can see this everyday level of fear in the quote from Ronan at the beginning of the chapter, "Because people were trapped 24/7 in terror, we aren't talking about fear, we are talking about terror because guys were walking down the corner of the street getting shot at bars."

In explaining the extent of violence and the pervasiveness and longevity of fear, Rose, a woman in her 60s from Ardoyne, told a story of going to the city center with her mother when she was young. They went to Robinson and Cleavers, a fancy department store in the

[157] Joanna Bourke, "Fear and Anxiety: Writing about emotion in Modern History," *History Workshop Journal* 55, no.1 (2003): 129.

[158] Bourke, "Fear and Anxiety," 123.

middle of Belfast city centre. Rose was sitting with her back to the window when a bomb went off on Bloody Friday; she still remembers feeling the force of the explosion.[159] This event and its ramifications affect her to this day, "I still won't sit with my back to the window." As Rose recalled this story, I became aware of our seating arrangements; on entering the café where the interview was taking place, Rose sat down first and faced the window, leaving the only available seat for me with my back to it, perhaps signifying the longevity of her trauma.

Many participants went to lengths to emphasise the extent of all pervasive fear during the 1970s and 80s. For Joseph, a man now in his 70s from Ardoyne, "the terrifying thing was, in your bed at night you could never sleep properly because there was people coming in and shooting people, every night. You were living in fear every night in your own home." He emphasised the inescapable feeling of fear and the lack of safe space even in his own home or bed. Rory, a man in his 80s from Ardoyne, in the same vein, discussed the fear of, "going outside your own door" and how the fear of leaving the community boundaries resulted in high levels of unemployment, the realities of which is discussed further in the chapter. The association of fear and violence comes from the constant normalised level of violence within communities where bombings, gun-battles, riots, sectarian violence, and British Army raids on houses were all commonplace. Fear arising from violence and death was a central theme; life just existed around it. Constant vigilance became a way of life. Orlaith, a 50-year-old woman from Ardoyne, told me, "You were just always on your game… You would have sort of stood in [on street corners] and looked about and would have went, 'oh I've seen that car before' or whatever, or 'I don't recognise that car' or 'come on we'll stand in here out of the road,' if you saw the Brit's coming down one street or the police or whatever." "Always on

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[159] Bloody Friday, is the name given to events which occurred in Belfast on Friday 21 July 1972. The IRA planted and exploded twenty-two bombs in the space of seventy-five minutes, killing nine people and seriously injuring over 100 others.

your game," meaning always conscious and aware of threats to your safety. The omnipresent threat of violence is also encapsulated by Anne, a woman in her 60s from Ardoyne, who noted how normalised the violence became, and only on reflection did she realise the real danger she had put herself in when growing up.

> I wanted out, I wanted to dance, and I didn't think that I could be killed here, I just wanted out. For how serious it was, it wasn't in your brain; there was an element of 'it's a bit serious,' but there was that excitement, something to talk about… You tried to live as normal a life as you possibly could. When I was growing up, there was bombs going off every day, there was shootings every day and because I was so young, in one way it was nerve-wrecking and in another way it was exciting, you wanted to tell your friends 'wait till you hear what happened today' and maybe there shouldn't have been, but you were so young. To see all these young fellas out rioting and throwing stones, all we were interested in as teenagers was, were they good looking like were they going with anybody? That's all we were interested in, like you could have been shot dead at any minute, but that's just not what was in your head when you were 16 or 17.

However, what the quote above perhaps also indicates is youthful disregard for one's mortality marked by an underestimation of the dangers that existed. The quote "like you could have been shot dead at any minute, but that's just not what was in your head when you were 16 or 17," encapsulates the juxtaposition of growing up during a conflict, the desire to have a normal life, to socialise and 'be young' in the face of the realities of war. As Michael, a 63-year-old participant from Ardoyne who would have been twenty in 1980, told me, "I know so many guys who died or went to prison, girls as well, all my own age. We were shot at, harassed on a daily basis just for walking in Ardoyne, fingertips to the wall, with them Brits asking you for your name, address, everything fuck sake. But sure they would give you a beating every chance they got, like with [name redacted] they made him widen his legs then when he couldn't go anymore they kicked his legs ripping his trousers and doing some fucking damage to him. It was like growing up in a war zone."[160]

[160] When Michael refers to 'fingertips to the wall' with their legs spread apart this is the stance the British Army would make people take to be searched.

The everyday nature of fear became part of daily routines. Clare, a woman in her 40s who grew up in North Belfast, recalled how during her childhood she would watch the evening news with her mother, both waiting for information on attacks that day. Clare's father was a builder and often worked outside of Belfast on building sites or jobs; with no mode of contact, Clare and her mother had to wait for information from the news. Clare spoke of her daily routine.

> Got into the house, put the news on, daddy was out working he would have been all around the place in Fermanagh or Dungannon or wherever. He was a joiner, so wherever the work was he went, and obviously, you're talking about the 80s so the work was shit like. But anyway, so every frickin night that he was away, which was often, she [Clare's mother] would go to me, 'put the news on,' right? And she would sit in front of the news and go *nervously breathing*, and I'd be watching her watching the news, watching her watching the news, and I knew she was waiting to hear whoever had been shot that day right.
> So she used to go to me 'What that say?' 'Where did it say that van was picked up from?' because they used to say on the news every other night that a van was pick up. Mummy would go 'Where did they say, where did they say that van got picked up?!' and I went *breaths nervously pretends to hyperventilate* and then she would go 'Don't think it is, don't think is it' then she would watch and go 'OH Carlisle Circus, your daddy wasn't there he was getting picked up at the bottom of thing…' and I used to be fucking going *nervously exhales* then she would get up and make the dinner. *laughs* But that was really regular…but she would tell you her mummy did the exact same thing as her. My Granda would come home from the country, and they [her mother and aunts and uncles] would run up the street and wait on him getting off the bus or something or getting dropped off. And then I think Granny said, 'Oh God I hope he's coming' so it's obviously just repeating. She was so caught up in her own trauma. But the other thing she used to do, which was the funny part and also not at all funny. Because of him [her dad] being a man, and a young man when him and mummy got married, they had me really young. What I'm trying to say is, my da would have sneaked out every fart's end to go for a pint in amongst all this, so here's what she used to do. The number of the Park Inn- do you ever remember the Park Inn?
> ER- yea yea
> Clare- it used to sit beside our phone right, so in amongst all this, if she couldn't determine whether or not daddy had been shot and he still wasn't home and she was doing the dinner, she would call me in 'phone the Park Inn, phone the Park Inn and see if he's there.' So me phoning 'is my daddy there?' and this went on, and eventually the story emerged that he would have been in and he would have said to the girl 'no tell them I'm not in.' But then it got to the point that I used to say, 'look mummy says it's alright if he's there she just wants to know because there's somebody shot up at Antrim,' 'no no he's here, he's here' 'ok cheerio thank you' *laughs* how fucking weird is that? And we all laugh at that, as if it's a comedy act, but it's not. In the time and the age I was, it all makes sense to me now, all the things that happened after, for me anyway.

Constant watching the news to reassure themselves about their father's well-being thus constituted an adaptive response to the daily fear and dangers of the Troubles.[161] This constant state of fear and anxiety are interwoven in Clare's memories and continued into adulthood, passed down three generation from Clare's grandmother, her mother, then to her.

The long history of violence and death of those who ventured beyond the protective confines of the community can be traced back at least, to the 1920s with the shipyard expulsions and during the Troubles with significant episodes such as the Kingsmill massacre.[162] By June 1970, intimidation was rife within workplaces. Paddy Devlin from NI Labour party questioned the minister for Health and Social Services at Stormont on how many people had lost their employment as a result of intimidation or physical violence, Minister Fitzsimmons could not give an accurate answer.[163] This exchange, alongside the experiences and fear shared in both Rory and Clare's interviews, highlights the control that violence, and fear of violence, had on communities in Northern Ireland during the years of the Troubles.

Fear has a physiology, there is no consistent visceral response, but the emotional body nevertheless rapidly gives forth many signs: the heart beats faster or breathing quickens.[164] In circumstances where fear was not explicitly stated as a dominant emotion during an interview, it could appear in the change of tone, the participant shifting in their seat, their body language

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[161] Barclay, Crozier-De Rosa and Stearns, *Sources for the History of Emotions*, 52.

[162] On the 5th January 1972, near Whitecross in South Armagh, gunmen stopped a minibus carrying eleven Protestant workmen, lined them alongside the bus and shot them. Two people survived one man who had been shot 18 times and a Catholic man on the bus who was allowed to go free. The South Armagh Republican Action force took responsibility for the Kingsmill massacre. It was the climax of a string of tit-for-tat killings.

[163] "Jobs Lost During Troubles," The Irish News and Belfast Morning News (Belfast), June 19, 1970, 6.

[164] Bourke, "Fear and Anxiety," 122.

and non-verbal cues indicating their feelings at the time of the interview. Fear is felt, and although the emotion of fear cannot be reduced to the sensation of fear, nevertheless, it is not present without sensation. As an oral historian who uses audio recordings, in order to reflect on this, I took observational notes in the interviews. Practising the act of self-reflection, assisted my own understanding of non-verbal cues, embodied reactions and emotional, bodily reactions. Fear, for example, was implicit in the interview with Orlaith, a woman in her 50s from Ardoyne. Her underlying negative emotions were visible in how she picked at her nails when she discussed stories of when she was afraid or when discussing how she worried about her children.[165] Some participants kept their emotions close to their chest, making Sean Field's concept of 'sensing the mood' difficult, and underlining the necessity for a knowledge of culturally specific emotives.[166]

Fear also attaches itself to symbols of power produced by language. Sara Ahmed uses the example of a tiger. We react with fear to a tiger because "fear has 'stuck' to the tiger, it has become part of how we understand and respond to the idea of a tiger.[167] Building from Ahmed's concept, in NI, in particular North Belfast, we fear groups of people, 'the other,' who we are divided from physically, socially, and emotionally. A label of fear is often applied to them, either from stories of violent clashes with the 'other side' or from reinforced boundaries and division. Fear is attached to the concept of both place and the 'other.' Young

[165] During the interview I made note of the time on the recording device and topic and her bodily action.

[166] Sean Field discusses non-verbal cues in research on the South African TRC, he notes 'sensing the mood,' which encapsulates the spatial sense of feeling that exists with the dialogue, the inter-subjective framing of oral history dialogue, which includes the unconscious feelings of both members. The mood shapes what is said, how it is said, and what's not, these moods are fluid, shifting with the ebb and flow of the conversations and stories. Sean Field, *Oral History, Community, and Displacement; Imagining Memories in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

[167] Sara Ahmed, Cultural Politics of Emotion, Routledge 2004.

people are encouraged to stay away from the peace walls and interface areas as they are considered dangerous. Those on the 'other side' who are from a different community are also deemed dangerous; they are people to fear. Gráinne, a 22-year-old participant from Ardoyne, when talking about her experience of the peace walls, noted, "I was terrified of what was over there." Sinéad, a 24-year-old participant from Ardoyne, furthers these sentiments, "It was just a line, this is our area, and that was their area, you just seen it as a divide, sad like - yeah they were terrifying, but I was so curious as to what was over there." Fear of the 'other' was encouraged by older generations for protectionist reasons. Passed down within families, such fear creates limitations on lives, it is often an instrument of control perpetuating division and violence.

Other participants discussed fear abstractly. Alex, a 21-year-old from the Shankill, discussed the fear that marked her childhood, "because there was always that fear, fear from you were no age." When pressed, Alex stated that it was a "fear of the other side," which for her and fellow residents of Protestant and Unionist Shankill meant Catholics and Republicans. Fear was experienced on both sides of the sectarian divide, Kerrie, a 29-year-old participant from Ardoyne, similarly discussed an atmospheric feeling of fear. "You knew when something bad was happening; you could feel the fear, it was everywhere, it's the same feeling you'd get around the 12th of July," referring to marches held by the Unionist Orange Order on a public holiday in July. As Smith-Lovin states, "society members share this emotion, because emotions reflect norms, values, and expectations of the society."[168] Young people are socialised to acquire culturally appropriate emotional cues. This is relevant to Kerrie's comments regarding the feeling around the 12th of July, norms and expectations of

[168] L. Smith-Lovin, "Emotion as the confirmation and disconfirmation of identity: An affect control model," in *Research agendas in the sociology of emotions*, edited by T. D. Kemper, 238–270 (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990).

society suggest that intercommunity tensions would rise around marching season, culminating in violent clashes between communities and with the RUC/PSNI.[169] The language and feelings of fear towards the 'other community' are socialised and transmitted consciously or subconsciously to later generations as emotionally appropriate reactions. Gráinne, a 22-year-old ceasefire baby observed that this longstanding fear of the perceived 'other' shared by both communities has slowed progress towards peace and reconciliation. "You can't trust someone you're never going to engage with."

Anxiety

While fear refers to an immediate objective threat, specific and immediate, anxiety refers to an anticipated, subjective threat, a more generalised state.[170] While Bourke's distinction is helpful, within the interviews I conducted, immediate fear and anticipated threats often blurred together. To identify anxiety, I rely on participants' experiences, thoughts, and feelings about living in a period and context of continued threatened violence. For example, Clare's fear of her father's death/ not coming home from work and her mother's coping strategy of scanning the daily news for information, also exemplifies the emotion of anxiety and how its pervasive nature, continuing into the present day. Clare's fears of the conflict manifested in constant anxiety, or as she described it, "I worried about worrying." Participants developed a range of coping mechanisms as a way to control fear and anxiety. Joseph, a participant in his early 70s from Ardoyne, described his fixation on the news as one of dealing with worry. "You got up every morning and the TV was on, 'how many was killed last night?' This act of accepting violence and death became his daily routine throughout the Troubles. Clare's experience was different to the extent that the news became a source of

[169] Marching season is from April to August every year, where bands from the Protestant Unionist Loyalist communities parade or march around Northern Ireland.

[170] Bourke, "Fear and anxiety," 126.

anxiety in itself. She found herself needing, "incessantly to see anything," which ultimately contributed to what she referred to as, her "melt down."

> I got this incessant fear about world war. I went from one extreme from watching the news all the time, then I watched it that much I had learnt all about the Gulf war, then the fear of realising children could get hurt… watching children casualties, like up to that point, I didn't feel fear of walking about because to me I felt that children were safe, we weren't going to be hurt, it was only the adults. It took me years Eimear and I mean like I'm talking, fucking, I still have a fear like see fucking anything that comes out that talks about potential major… I used to freak out and feel physically sick in my soul, of fear which I couldn't explain.
> ER- because you were worried about having to live through things again, that you did when you were a kid?
> Clare- yea but feeling that shaky fear, and going, 'turn the news off, turn the news off' but that's how I know it was trauma because, because it was involuntary, I didn't need to think about it … my brain just went like that *snaps fingers*

She attributed this to her comprehending the permanency of death at an early age and witnessing intense violence, culminating in panic attacks when she reached her teenage years.

The fear and anxiety of living during that time took its toll on women, in particular, according to participants Seamus, James, and Matthew.[171] James, a man in his 80s from Ardoyne, discussed the impact of his employment as a bus driver in the 1960s and 1970s; during this time, bus hijackings were commonplace. When discussing the daily fear of going to work, James said, "It was madness, pure madness, but you bit the bullet, and you trust in God, you get the day over, and you come back, and that's what you do." He went on to discuss the impact that had on his wife.

> I think that's part of what happened she had a stroke, and she wasn't too bad for about 3 or 4 years, then she gradually got worse, and I think it was just all the stress over the years. She always said to me 'see you you're going out there and I don't know if you are coming back and what am I gona do?'
> ER- It takes a toll on the body that level of stress that's so prolonged over an entire lifetime.

[171] The fact that these three men focused on the impact on women was interesting. The experience of conflict is gendered, with men often socialized into being the 'protectors' and the women the care givers. In a more anecdotal way, there is also the potential that these men could not discuss the impacts it had on them but were able to discuss how it affected the women in their families.

> James- Oh yea absolutely, now we weren't the only ones like that suffering the same stress, and I am out there, and I am working away and trying to get the day over, not being fully aware she's at home waiting and wondering 'when's he coming home?' Must have been mad like and you just got on with it best you could, and once things calmed down a bit it wasn't just as bad.

"Many women, in particular mothers, were prescribed medication for their nerves," according to Margaret, a woman in her 70s from Ardoyne. Participants Orlaith and Anne had first-hand experience of this. Anne's husband died during the Troubles, "Before I had fully comprehended the situation, doctors were already prescribing me sedative tablets." Orlaith's mother lost her husband in 1969 and was left to raise three small children by herself,

> My mummy was on sleeping tablets, anti-depressant tablets, she was on diazepam, but before it was diazepam, it was ativan, it was really really strong it was stronger than diazepam, and she used to be completely zoned out, and my mummy was very highly strung at that stage too, and then it sort of reflected on our lives because she was always 'don't touch this, don't do that' yano she was very nervy, and you could see it, so it just use to terrify us…I don't think she knew how to cope with things. But then as she got that bit older, then she came off tablets and things like that and she became a completely different person, so she still is highly strung but not like the way she was before.[172]

Participants agreed that during the years of the conflict, victims were given little alternative methods to deal with loss or suffering other than medication, which, as we see from Orlaith's experiences, did not always help. Bunting *et al.* reported on the gendered impact of the Troubles, with women reporting a higher prevalence of mood and anxiety disorders, while men displayed higher rates of substance abuse.[173] Both Ethna and Bernadette reflected on their father's alcoholism; for Ethna, a woman in her late 60s from Ardoyne, "I am not ashamed to say my father grew up to become an alcoholic as well, just like his father did and back then as well, all this like mental health that's so prevalent now…back then you didn't

[172] This may not be the correct spelling of the prescription drugs.

[173] Brendan P. Bunting, Finola R. Ferry, Samuel D. Murphy, Siobhan M. O'Neill, and David Bolton, "Trauma Associated with Civil Conflict and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Evidence From the Northern Ireland Study of Health and Stress," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 26 (2013): 137.

say you were depressed," (a further example of the participant reverting to cultural language codes). She went on to discuss her father and the effects of unemployment, "and I think for my father he would have had some form of depression back then. He couldn't work, he couldn't provide, and his life stopped, and his career stopped, and he was stuck then in Ardoyne with no work, what's he going to do? He was on the dole, and he would be drinking the dole money, and that's why my mum had to go out to work in a factory so that there was some money coming in to pay the rent." The gendered nature of emotions and expression of emotions in a male-centic community such as Ardoyne, where men were seen (and saw themselves) as protectors and providers of their families and community is evident in the interviews. When discussing the impacts of mental health and silence, Áine, a 22-year-old from Ardoyne, considers the effects this has had on the younger generations, "the adults and the generation before us are walking around depressed and coping with anxiety through alcoholism, and they don't know how to deal with it because their parents didn't tell them how to deal with it. So it's a kind of a chain reaction, and it's hard to talk to them because they were taught not to talk about it or care." She notes how this chain reaction or inheritance of emotional reticence impacts her and her generation.

Fears and anxieties manifest in different ways, with individuals often using their own rituals to feel in control. An example of this came from Rose, a participant in her 60s from Ardoyne,

> When I get changed at night into my night clothes, I always put my trousers, jumper, shoes, socks over my banister in case there's a raid [by the British Army] because living in Brompton Park our house was raided all the time…there was bomb scares, a bomb actually did go off at the top of the street, so it's always that have your stuff ready just in case… I still, to this day, put my stuff over the banister knowing, 'why am I doing this?' and my kids will all say, 'oh are we getting raided tonight?' they wouldn't even know what raided is, like 'mummy would you not just wise up?' actually just, if I didn't do that I would find it difficult to go to sleep.

The CVS found that parents with anxiety disorders, whether diagnosed or not, often passed down such modes of coping, emotional range and techniques are generally learned from

parents or parental figures in early life.[174] The CVS found that many parents who have anxiety stemming from the Troubles can be over-protective, fearing the dangers of the outside world. In Downes et al's 2013 project, mothers discussed how their own traumatic experiences impacted their parenting, negatively affecting bonding and often leading to an overly strict control of children. Their anxieties over their children's lives manifested in control over boundaries even within the confines of their community, with peace walls often serving as the absolute outer limit of children's free movement.[175] Participants from the ceasefire generation discussed this boundary control on their upbringing. "You're not allowed near the wall" Gráinne, a 22-year-old from Ardoyne recalled. She explained how this made her fear the other side of the wall: "I was terrified of what was over there."[176] Thus, fear of the 'other' is further reinforced and inherited through control of spatial boundaries. As discussed by treating the peace wall or interface as the demarcation of safety, community norms encouraged the belief that beyond that marker lies danger, and thus fear becomes associated with the 'other' and all their cultural markers such as flags, murals, painted kerbstones.

Participants often did not use words as direct as 'fear' or 'anxiety' to characterize such emotions. Rather they used more colloquial terms such as 'shittin ourselves' to indicate fear, or 'my nerves were wrecked,' to signify anxiety. Along with such expressions, NI communities have culturally specific emotives, the language of which has changed temporally and evident in the interviews, for example, a participant pointed out that "we didn't know anyone who committed suicide then, I didn't even know what that word was" (Orlaith). Many

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[174] Prepared for the Commission for Victims and Survivors by Ulster University, *Towards A Better Future*, 36.

[175] Ciara Downes, Elaine Harrison, David Curran and Michele Kavanagh, "The Trauma Still Goes On; The Multigenerational Legacy of Northern Ireland's Conflict," *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 18, no.4 (2013): 594. DOI: 10.1177/1359104512462548

[176] This is discussed further in Chapter Three.

of the ceasefire generation participants, spoke about their parent's or grandparents' inability to understand mental health issues. "They call depression and anxiety a 'my generation thing' 'I don't know where all this came from, we grew up in a war, and I'm not anxious'" (Kerrie). In reality euphemisms were used such as, 'nervous' or 'her nerves are away' as an indicator for anxiety. The research detected a change in language used in respect of mental health issues together with a shift in societal acceptance with an emerging recognition that this is a major issue affecting post-conflict society. Anxiety and strategies to address it come in many forms and have evolved over time. Post conflict 1998 and onwards has given rise to a different set of issues that layer over the earlier direct conflict- related experiences (as discussed in the rest of the thesis).

Hate, Sectarianism and Anger

In a divided society where, everyday life is impacted by fear and anxiety, hate can also emerge as a common feeling or emotional state. While I did not encounter direct sectarian-fueled hatred from any of the participants, members of the ceasefire generation discussed how they believe sectarianism and hatred of the PUL community does currently exist. In some interviews with participants from Ardoyne there were frequent expressions of hatred for the British state and the British empire. Of course, an element of self-censorship should not be discounted. Political contempt for Britain may perhaps be perceived as being more socially acceptable than expressing sectarian hostility towards Unionist and Protestant neighbours.

Sarah Ahmed's work on love and hate in the context of white supremacy offers interesting insights for understanding the emotion of hate in the context of NI. Ahmed states that the "passion of a negative attachment to others can be redefined simultaneously as a positive attachment" to one's own group. [177] It is the love of one's own group which

[177] Sara Ahmed, "The Organisation of Hate," *Law and Critique* 12 (2001): 346.

supposedly explains this shared "communal" visceral response of hate. "Together we hate, and this hate is what makes us together."[178] According to Ahmed, hate is distributed in such narratives across various figures, all of whom come to embody the danger of impurity. In the case of NI, hate is associated with the embodied danger of the "other community," which for Catholic Nationalists in NI are Unionists, the British Army, and Loyalists in its most sectarian forms. For Protestant Unionists, it's Republicans and the IRA, and Catholics who pose a perceived threat and inspire hatred. The negative attachment to others creates and strengthens the bond within the community; this is particularly evident during times of commemoration or during cultural and sporting events, which will be discussed in Chapters Three, Four and Five.

The emotion of hate towards the other fuels sectarianism in NI. There is a clear hatred that exists there, expressed in the burning of effigies, on social media posts, and in graffiti such as "Kill all Taigs/Huns." It is often found in the rhetoric and actions of politicians and paramilitaries. In 2014, the *Irish News* reported that a five-year-old girl had 'Kill All Taigs' painted onto her face for the 12th of July celebrations, alongside an image of the child (although the *Irish News* subsequently pulled the article, it circulated widely on social media). In the report the mother stated, "the children see it all the time sprayed all over the walls in the area."[179] These acts of sectarian graffiti are also conducted by the Nationalist Republican community. In June of 2016 a World War One memorial in Woodvale Park was targeted and vandalised, with Republican slogans daubed on the memorial overnight, in a previous incident

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[178] Ibid, 346.

[179] Colin Francis, "Police investigate picture of girl with anti-Catholic slur painted on her face," *Irish News*, July 15, 2014. https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/police-investigate-picture-of-girl-with-anti-Catholic-slur-painted-on-face/30430753.html

flags were torn down and poppy wreaths were stolen.[180] This hatred of the other also exists in the communities and homes where children learn sectarian attitudes. Ciaran, a 20-year-old from Ardoyne, opined, “I think it’s still carried through, if you’re asking me is sectarianism still in our communities, 100% and its passed through the generations, because obviously a young person who is six or seven isn’t going to hate people, so it’s coming through family values and stuff or even values from their community getting brought into themens, and then themens are creating a way of thinking for that young person. Young people are confining to the values and beliefs to their community in ways.”[181] Gráinne pushes this further, “I think kids are sponges... If they are growing up in a household with bigoted and sectarian parents, then what hope would there be for things to change? It’s just going to be the same.”

Hatred expressed in sectarianism is an important emotion to discuss due to its impact on later generations. This was pointed out by Sinéad when she discussed her little sister's friend. “So many people our age are bitter about it. It's passed through the generations definitely; I really do think it's the way you are brought up. Like [sisters name redacted] has a wee friend, and she wasn't allowed to join in any cross-community things in school; her mummy just told the teachers, ‘No I'm keeping her home that day.’ And now she's growing up, and she’s so bitter, and she just doesn't like the other side. Because it's pointless, she’s going to have to work with Protestants she’s going to have to engage with them. You can’t live your whole life in a bubble. You should be taught to integrate.” The ceasefire generation could not escape the repercussions of growing up in an environment with powerful emotions of anger and hatred against the Loyalist or Unionist community. Post identifies societies

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[180] Maurice Fitzmaurice, “North Belfast memorial to soldiers daubed in graffiti for second time in days,” *Belfast Live*, June 2, 2016. https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/news/belfast-news/north-belfast-memorial-soldiers-daubed-11416482.

[181] Themens is a slang term used across Belfast to denote a plural of ‘them.’

where hatred is "bred in the bone" through strong patterns of political socialisation transmits dominant frames of thought.[182] Political socialisation theory argues that political behaviour is a learned behaviour, which mainly takes place during childhood, adolescence and young adulthood (but not exclusively).[183] Political socialisation, similar to other forms of socialisation is learned from institutions such as family, church, school, media, social movements etc. Dekker suggests that the most influential messengers of information, particularly political information are the parents, who exert influence for the longest period.[184] For John, a nineteen-year-old from Ardoyne, "certain mentalities are being bred, its parents saying trivially, Protestant scum, this that and the other. Fostering ideas it's sort of trying to create division and the 'us against them,' when in actual fact…the two communities are in the same situation, they are being fostered with the same sort of hatred against each other, the exact same." When parents or grandparents hold onto anger, it is often passed down to the subsequent generation. However, as John's comment above suggests, this is not a given, younger generations can also question and reject such attitudes.

As mentioned previously, hatred of the 'other community' often stems from fear or anxiety inherited through the generations. This strong emotion of hate is rooted within political socialisation cultural events, songs, and echoed in everyday walks of life including sports, reinforcing division and acting as a barrier to meaningful societal connections (this will be developed in Chapter Four and Five).

Humour

[182] J. M. Post "Psychology," in Addressing the Causes of Terrorism, ed. P.R. Neumann (Madrid: Club de Madrid, 2005): 7-8.

[183] Henk Dekker, "Voting and Not Voting: The Principal Explanations," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Political Psychology*, ed. Paul Nesbitt-Larking, Catarina Kinnvall, Tereza Capelos with Henk Dekker (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 212.

[184] Dekker, "Voting and Not Voting," 213.

What was interesting was the casualness of how these stories of trauma, wrapped in emotions of fear and anxiety, were recounted often with humour. Reflecting on the cadence of the speech, I began to detect that stories deemed too emotional by the speaker will often be deflected with a funny quip or "sure we are grand now" or "it was fucking mad ha ha ha." This could simply be another coping strategy or a desire to not be pitied.[185] Throughout the interviews, particularly the go-along with Michael (a 63-year-old man from Ardoyne), amidst stories of war, injustice, and the difficulties of life in Ardoyne during the 1970s and 1980s, I heard funny stories of his youth, all rooted in place. He told of the old laundrette that stood at the bottom of Brompton Park where on a Friday or Saturday young people would dry their jeans over the hot air vent on the roof before going out to the local social clubs. This was an evocative reminder of the normality that also existed, the rebellious, funny nature of young people. In an interview with Conor, a man in his 60s from Ardoyne, I was told harrowing stories of friends and family members being shot and the brutality of being a young man growing up in a conflict zone. Yet Conor couched many of these grim stories in humour. One story in particular sticks out. "I remember times there were rioting going on, especially at August '69 and someone would have said on a Thursday night or Friday night 'there's a couple of land rovers on the top of Brompton park, come on we'll go and attack them' so I'd go 'what time is it? Ahh 11? I can't, told my ma I'd be in by 11.' Then you'd be walking home going 'fucking Che Guevara didn't have to be home by 11!' *Laughs*." When discussing humour, Róisín stated that "obviously it's a coping mechanism that people adopted, it's a strategy- we are witty fuckers like to be fair, *laughs* we have to be. When me and my friend are telling our woes yano, I cheer her up, and she cheers me up. I mean it

[185] There is a growing field of literature on humour and memory especially after violence, such as Anna Sheftel, "'Monument to the international community, from the grateful citizens of Sarajevo': Dark humour as counter-memory in post-conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Memory Studies* 5, no. 2 (2012): 111-248.

wouldn't be in you're a-typical lets go get a coffee, be more like 'would you stop fucking crying' *laughs* 'dry your eyes' *laughs*. Like it's crap, but what are you gonna do about it? Get up and get on. But that's sort of inbuilt. It's definitely a strategy and coping mechanism that people had to develop to get through the worst of the British onslaught." Humour can thus function an act of resilience.

Loss

The final emotion that I have chosen to explore is loss, which is what inspired me to focus so heavily on emotions in this project. For some participants, like Orlaith, who suffered the death of her father, so profound a loss permeated her family life and childhood, robbing them of a sense of normality and wholeness. "It's hard to describe really… I never felt whole or something. I think it's to do with my daddy but also, probably growing up because it was so manic all the time, and you were always like in fear." Orlaith's father was killed by the British Army months before she was born. She felt sadness over a father she had only known through stories and anger and frustration at the state for both covering up his murder and for refusing to give the family answers or justice. These emotions poured out of her as in tears, she repeatedly apologised to me saying, "You'd think I'd be over all this by now." At fifty years old, her sadness and loss were still palpable.

Another form of loss became apparent in an interview with Seán, a man in his 70s, which took place at his home in Ardoyne. Through the course of this interview, I became aware of a pattern that existed in most interviews up to this point. It was an intangible feeling, or as Seán Field put it, "a mood," of loss and grief.[186] This grief was not for a particular person but for a loss of life (perhaps a life not fully lived, in the normative sense) or a loss of opportunity. Many who lived through the Troubles talked about *what* could have been, *who*

[186] Sean Field, "Beyond 'Healing': Trauma, Oral History and Regeneration," *Oral History* 34, no.1 (2006): 36.

they could have been, or *what* they could have achieved if they were not born into "a colonised and divided place" as Seán put it. As expressed by Rose, a woman in her 60s from Ardoyne, "It's something me and my sisters talk about… wonder what it would have been like to be normal? No Troubles, how different would we have been?" This pervasive sense of loss, not simply loss in the sense of bereavement but in broader terms of loss of opportunity and life chances, is one of the major findings of the project. While trauma and memory studies frequently discuss sadness and fear, there is much less focus on the personal loss of normality, loss of childhood, loss of youth, that accompanies conflict.

Seán believed in the socialist potential of Republicanism; he believed the only way to be free from colonial oppression was to take up arms against the colonising forces. Now he lives back in Ardoyne and when he talked of what his life could have been, he spoke with a longing for it; the future he had dreamed of had died, and it was as if he was mourning its loss. His interview was emotionally intense and filled with stories. He longed not only for a different life and future for himself, but for everyone in the area who lived through the Troubles or lived in the long shadow of the conflict.

This feeling of loss was ubiquitous in many other interviews I conducted. Often it was expressed by parents who desired a different life for their children. I found myself asking, what other forms could this loss of a desired life, for lack of a better term, take? Due to the hegemonic Unionist state and the conflict they were born into, the future they longed for was never available to many of the Ardoyne residents I interviewed. Poverty and conflict are tied together in their life stories. Loss has changed and evolved as it has been passed through the generations. For those who grew up during the Troubles it was expressed as sadness, anger or even longing like Anne who longed for normal teenage years to go out dancing and listen to music. For the ceasefire generation, this loss has transformed into frustration that they still do not have access to services, educational or employment opportunities they believe other parts

of Ireland and GB have, which they regard as the fault of the ongoing issues with political parties stemming from the Troubles. The ceasefire generation's frustration may be attributed to the manifestation of their parents' or grandparent's sense of loss. That is to say, they grew up in relative peace yet their parent's dream of the 'peace dividend' of normality and opportunity has not been realised. The realities of post-conflict life, or as I would term it, 'transition life,' has disappointed many of the ceasefire generation by falling short of the expectations promised in the GFA.

At this juncture I should note my own positionality or experiences, as I left Seán's home and walked through Ardoyne, the site of conflict that was the focus of the interview, I became overwhelmed with frustration at the lack of a functioning devolved administration. Stormont, the seat of the NI Assembly, at the time of conducting the interviews, and as I write the thesis, has been in collapse. Northern Ireland has had no functioning executive during critical events such as Brexit and the current cost-of-living crisis, where the need for food banks and social housing has exponentially risen. Elaine, a community and housing activist in her 80s from Ardoyne, informed me of the poor physical condition of many of the houses, black mould and dampness impacting on the health and wellbeing of residents- something I witnessed first-hand during some of the interviews. The loss of a normal life, felt by many participants, is influenced by the housing conditions and economic deprivation experienced by many within the working-class communities across Northern Ireland both Nationalist and Unionist.

During over 30 years of conflict, and in the 25 years since, the people of North Belfast have felt a myriad of emotions about the Troubles, from sadness to inescapable fear turned to anxiety, to grief and loss, to continued anger. In recounting their memories, the emotions were often still raw, easily surfacing, as expressed in tone, gesture and often tears. Emotions are difficult to discuss, especially to a stranger, and equally difficult to convey in the written

word. The desire to remember and forget is intertwined with contradictory feelings. In the opening of her seminal text *Unspeakable Truths*, Prisalla Hayner quotes an interview she had with a Rwandan government official, who lost seventeen members of his own family during the genocide. She asked him, "'do you want to remember or to forget?' He replies 'we must remember what happened in order to keep it from happening again… but we must forget the feelings, the emotions, that go with it. It is only by forgetting that we are able to go on." There is no correct answer to her question. In Northern Ireland, the pain of remembering left wounds for those who live with the trauma of the past but nevertheless manage to 'just get on with things.' Each individual and community has ways of remembering, commemorating healing, coping and feeling.

As I have illustrated in this chapter, emotions found in recollections illuminated potentially forgotten aspects of the past, and provide texture to stories. The significant role of emotions is the connection they create between the storyteller and listener, creating a depth and resonance, which has profound implications on the transmission of memory.

Sensory Memories

> "ER- what brings you back?
> Anne- Songs and smells things like that"

Alongside relationships between memory and emotions, we must take into consideration the senses and sensory memory. Building on the work of Howes, Tullett, Smith, Proust, Verbeek and van Campen, Jenner, Corbin, and Classen, this chapter analyses my oral history interviews and field work in North Belfast vis-à-vis the sensory memory phenomena of visual, auditory, smell, and taste culture, along with the interrelation among all these different sensory registers.[187] For this approach, I looked to sensory histories to help examine

[187] Howes and Classen, *Ways of Sensing,* 13.

the attachment of memory to the senses and how memory can be elicited and communicated through the senses. Paula Hamilton argues, "senses can act as a mnemonic device or a trigger to remembering."[188] My research further demonstrates how different senses become implicated in recovering varied and conflicting aspects of the same lived experience.[189] Within the interviews I carried out, participants discussed multimodal, sensory-inflected memories that shaped both their own recollections and the structure of the interviews. I discovered that the events of the Troubles that are etched into the minds and memories of those who lived through the conflict are ultimately multi-sensory in character, inseparable from smells, sounds, tastes, sights, and touches with which they are associated.

Attention to the senses in oral history is rooted in the very nature of oral history methodology which is founded on sound and the act of listening. Oral history is aural history, it is rooted in sound. It involves deep listening, which is often not easy listening. According to Bull and Black, deep listening involves attuning our ears to listen closely to multiple layers of meaning potentially embedded in the same words/sounds.[190] Similar to emotions, by discussing and critically analysing sensory-based memories, we open avenues of alternative histories; we understand the everydayness of conflict and how, through our senses, we inherit or transmit memories.

Taste

The senses can act as memory prompts and became a focal point in some interviews. For many participants, the sensory experience was central to their recollections of the past.

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[188] Paula Hamilton, "The Proust Effect: Oral History and the Senses," in *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, ed. Donald A. Richie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 818-232.

[189] Gediminas Lankauskas, "Sensuous (Re)Collections: The Sight and Taste of Socialism at Grutas Statue Park, Lithuania," *The Senses and Society* 1, no.1 (2006): 40. DOI: 10.2752/174589206778055682.

[190] Bull and Black, *Auditory Cultural Reader*, 3.

Closely connected the sense of taste, the subject of food was often a powerful mnemonic prompt. Food histories uncover cultural, economic, and social realities of groups, communities, families, kinship networks, and individuals. Food and food traditions can be central to identity and have been effectively utilised by oral and cultural historians, as the sensory experience of taste and smell prompts stories.[191] Anne, a woman in her 60s from Ardoyne, discussed the foods she remembers eating during her childhood and adolescence and the tastes she associates with those memories. "I remember the sweets you ate and going to discos, during the summer you'd get a brown sauce or sugar sandwich and shove it in your pocket for later so you didn't have to go home until dinner time. Then, when you were in school, the school dinners were great; it was the first time I had ever eaten stew because I refused to eat it at home. I loved St. Gemma's [the girls Secondary School in Ardoyne], even though we were taught in unusual circumstances, I remember being in school and making a Victoria sponge cake to the sound of gunfire." She clearly found it helpful to remember in this more sensory way. Often the participants became nostalgic while talking about the food they remembered as children; for Ethna, a participant in her 60s, it was hard-boiled sweets. During our conversations about jars of butterscotch hard-boiled sweets she used to eat, she began to tell me of the food shortages during the 1970s,

> It was almost like rationing, you know the Star Social Club, up at the top of Brompton Park along Balholm?
> ER- yeah.
> Ethna- I remember going up there and getting food rations, like my mummy would say 'go up and get me some milk' or 'go up and get me whatever' because I always

[191] Jeffrey M. Pilcher, The Oxford Handbook of Food History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).; Juniator Tulius, "Family stories: oral tradition, memories of the past, and contemporary conflicts over land in Mentawai-Indonesia," (PhD thesis, *Leiden University*, 2012), 191.; Sandip Hazareesingh, "'Our Grandmother Used to Sing Whilst Weeding': Oral histories, millet food culture, and farming rituals among women smallholders in Ramanagara district, Karnataka," *Modern Asian Studies* 55, no. 3 (2021): 938-972.; Meredith E. Abarca & Joshua R. Colby, "Food memories seasoning the narratives of our lives," *Food and Foodways* 24 no.1-2 (2016): 1-8.

> remember they had the big jars of butterscotch sweets boiled sweets, oh my god I loved them, so yea food was a bit, in the beginning, it was a bit hard.
> ER- But then did the food availability increase as time went on?
> Ethna- aye, as time went on. We would still go up the road all the shops at the top there, we would still go to them shops like O'Haras bakery to go and get our bread, Delaneys as well we went there, so the food supply started to increase so we were able to go to the shops. But it was a case of, if you're going up the road then you go in twos or more, and because again the Protestants on the Shankill and over on the Woodvale they would sort of corner you if you were up the road doing your shopping, doing your messages.[192] So it was a case of get up get your messages and get out as soon as possible.

This story captures important aspects of life in working-class communities during the Troubles, including the everyday difficulties, not just the ongoing conflict itself and the dangers of living on an interface, but labour disputes such as the bread strikes and the food shortages they produced. Here, we see the difficulty in getting access to food and the safety associated with going to the shop. Conor, when talking about going to Ardoyne shops, noted "Ardoyne was a bit like Noah's ark. You travelled in twos." (The dangers associated with space will be discussed further in chapter two.) During the Ulster Workers Strikes in 1974, Anne worked in a shop in Ardoyne; she recalled the surrealness of it, "people queued outside the shops long before they were due to open just to get bread and milk, and these had to be limited to one per customer… everything was now becoming harder to obtain."[193] During the strike the electricity was also cut off, making cooking difficult.[194]

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[192] Messages are a colloquial term in Belfast to mean shopping, it includes everything from groceries to going to the pharmacy.

[193] The Ulster Workers Council Strike was a general strike that took place 15th-28th May 1974. It was called by Unionists who were against the Sunningdale Agreement (signed December 1973). The strikers opposed the sharing of political power with Irish Nationalists and the proposed role for the ROI gov in the running of Northern Ireland. The strike was organized and overseen by the Ulster Workers Council and Ulster Army Council and included Loyalist paramilitaries, who enforced the strike. The strike caused electricity disruptions, with power cuts across the city, alongside impacts on agriculture.

[194] Through the complex act of remembering, some dates here are unclear regarding the Bread Strike and the Ulster Workers Strike.

> That strike where everybody was out in their yard cooking their dinner on a coal fire in the yard, that was so exciting… everybody was out cooking and making sure people had food to eat, and that babies got their milk and everybody made sure they looked out for each other. The staple was stew, the easiest dish to cook… a few house bricks formed a wee pit, and sticks and paper and coal would be lit until the coals were burning embers. The racks from your oven was placed on top and your stew would be bubbling away.

The memories of the taste of stew, the bubbling of it in the pot alongside the atmosphere of comradery and strong community bonds was also a memory shared by participant Conor and was similar to a story I remember my own Granny telling me growing up, with the focal point always being the community's resilience in the face of hardship.

I found the memories prompted by taste were often more nostalgic than the Troubles related stories prompted by the other senses. Margaret talked about the taste of apple buns that her mother would get for her lunch every day growing up during the Troubles. "My mum would usually have a tin of soup and an apple bun with white frosting on the top that she would buy fresh every day from O'Hara's bakery. To this day, I can still see and taste that bun." Through this recollection, we went on to discuss employment issues in Ardoyne, the prevalence of factories such as the 'egg factory,' Beltex, Gallaghers, and their ultimate decline, leaving many in the community without employment. Industry provided the backbone that financially supported many families in Ardoyne and the Shankill. Local housing was built around the factories in the 1930s, indicating just how central they were to the lives of the local working-class communities.[195] Deindustrialisation in these areas contributed to increasing levels of poverty and unemployment, triggering an increase in migration to North America, South Africa, and Australia, and seasonal migration to Britain.[196]

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[195] The houses that make up what people colloquially refer to as New Ardoyne, were built in the 1930s as Glenard, built for Protestant/ Unionist families working in the factories. Catholics squatted in the houses and eventually were given them.

[196] During the Troubles there were adverts and schemes to encourage families to emigrate to North America and Australia, with affordable, pay weekly tickets.

Food is deeply connected to the precarious economic situation that families and communities found themselves in. When discussing the limited work her dad could get and, therefore the limited money coming into the household, Anne talked about little luxuries: "On a Friday night, we would get a fish supper between us. I can still smell it, wrapped in newspaper and smothered in vinegar." She went on to say, "most families in Ardoyne had a treat on Friday nights as it was pay day and Fusco's would be queued out the door."[197]

Rory, a man in his 80s, talked about the mills, and "them closing would have been furthering the unemployment as mills provided a lot of employment for the area… for both men and women." He detailed his parents and grandfather's working lives. "My father had worked in the mill, and my grandfather worked in the shipyard and in Shorts, but he did not have a good experience during the 1920s.[198] He then worked washing pots in the American army camps during the second world war. My mother cleaned people's houses to get money. It was bad then, we did not have it easy growing up." Rory, like many men, including Clare's father, never found work in Belfast, "I would always have to go outside the city for bricklaying work." We see here the generational difference in employment opportunities: his grandfather worked in the mills, his father in the shipyard, then after the 20s worked in the US army camp. But after the wartime employment opportunities dried up and following de-industrialisation, Rory found it difficult to get any job locally. Margaret and Bernadette, two sisters I interviewed, as well as Ethna, all had fathers who worked for the merchant navy – an opportunity of last resort for many when they were unable to find work in Belfast.

[197] The Fusco family owned a fish and chip shop on Alliance Avenue.

[198] The 1920s saw an increase in anti- Catholic Nationalist sentiment in Belfast, with an expulsion of over 2,000 Catholic workers in the shipyards. These expulsions spread to other engineering works, factories and mills. Shorts is an aerospace manufacturer and since 1989 has been owned since Bombardier. Opening in 1936. In 1987 Loyalists working at Shorts erected Loyalist flags and bunting, with Loyalist workers going on strike when management removed their flag from the shop floor.

These different stories of employment, industry and strikes, were all prompted by memories associated with taste. Highlighting the long and multilayered histories of segregation and sectarianism in this enclave in Belfast.

Smells

When asked about sensory memory, many interviewees from Ardoyne also discussed the smell and taste of vinegar. Ardoyne was the site of frequent and intense rioting during the height of the conflict, with the British Army relying heavily on CS gas (or tear gas) to control the crowds.[199] An exposure to CS gas resulted in a burning sensation in the eyes, throat, nose, and mouth, making it difficult to breathe, frequently resulting in disorientation. These symptoms wore off after a few hours. “I dunno whether it’s true or not, that with CS gas if you put vinegar on your eyes, it would stop the CS gas,” Conor a man in his 60s from Ardoyne recalls, “So, for one, I couldn’t see from the CS gas, and then I couldn’t see any fucking clearer with the vinegar. But a load of times, I’d put vinegar on chips, and I’d be back standing in Hooker Street vinegaring myself from the Brits CS gas.”[200] For Anne, a woman in her 60s, vinegar also reminded her of Ownie Whelans chip shop (on Brompton Park and Etna Drive in Ardoyne) that was open after the bars and social clubs in the district had closed.[201] She recalls how one night she went with her uncle for some chips and a gun battle erupted outside. “There was a full-scale riot, there was shooting bombing the whole thing, we were in that chippy and couldn’t get out, so they locked the doors turned and gave us all pasties and chips, turned the music on and everybody had a singsong, it was great, we had a sing-song in

[199] An example found in The Irish News and Belfast Morning News, Monday 18th May 1970, 1, where CS gas was used fifteen times by the Army against stone-throwing crowd.

[200] According to other participants there would have been buckets of vinegar on certain street corners, to dip cloth into, to then put on your eyes to help with the effects of CS gas. From my understanding it was not a common practice to put vinegar straight on your eyes.

[201] No one could tell me the correct spelling of this, either Ownie or Ony.

Ownie Whelans, while there was murder outside *laughs*. When you opened the door, you want to have *smelled* the CS gas. Things like that happened… That's the kind of life you sort of lived, but there was a humour to it as well."

Paula Hamilton writes on the significance of smell for oral history and memory and the centrality of the Proust Effect on the field, of when smell associated with an experience can trigger the memory involuntarily. In the context of NI's Trouble's memory, what is the smellscape of working-class communities? The smellscapes of North Belfast include the smell of industry, of factories and manufacturing, from eggs to the smoke of linen and flax mills. When reflecting on the factories in Ardoyne, both Michael and Anne discussed the smell, "I remember the smell of eggs, I don't know what they were doing in there [the factory], but it stunk to high heaven, you'd used to hold your breath when the workers would come into the shop." During the go-along interview with Michael, a 63-year-old from Ardoyne, he pointed out the sites of the old factories, telling stories of deindustrialisation due to the violence in Ardoyne. He recalled how the British Army took over an empty factory and used it as barracks and how another mill was purchased by Father Myles Kavanagh to help provide employment for the community.

The smellscape of Ardoyne during the conflict includes the smoke from bombs, CS gas, and vinegar to help ease the burning, the smell of houses burning, and smoke lingering from gun battles alongside the smell of industry. This cacophony of smells illustrates the multi-dimensional history and character of Belfast. Each sense holds different types of memory. And while taste seemed to bring back more nostalgia and ultimately happier memories, smell in particular seemed to prompt more conflict-related memories. This contrast in sensory memories became apparent while talking to Rose, a woman in her 60s from Ardoyne.

> There's a smell it's like a chemical smell… I always say to my husband that reminds me of years ago when they blew up, I don't know what shop on the Crumlin Road, but

> McKenzies Chemist, it might have been them, but there's this distinct smell that reminds me of McKenzies shop being on fire. It's like a real chemical smell, it still reminds me of it. It's like that old Lynx deodorant it smells like that.[202]

Yet while talking about community events, in particular, the bonfires in August, she remarks, "I remember as a kid making our own bonfires and getting potatoes, we would boil potatoes and put them in and they tasted lovely, to this day I would get a potato and say 'ah that reminds me of the bonfire,' yano when you get it and put salt on it *pauses* that reminds me of the bonfires." [203] She went on to detail how they would wrap them in tin foil and sometimes, using a long stick, would place them in the bonfires until they were ready. The taste of the bonfire- baked potatoes she clearly remembers fondly, in contrast to the memory that is prompted by Lynx deodorant that reminds her of the burning chemist on the Crumlin Road. These sensory memories are also attached to emotional reactions; our senses, emotions, and memories are interwoven in how we remember and how we communicate those memories. A nostalgic reaction to butterscotch hard-boiled sweets or roasted potatoes may lead to a recollection of an event, as it did for Rose: "I always say to my husband that reminds me of years ago they blew up…" The senses have the capacity to bring the past into the present at any time in a sudden serendipitous way, and they aid the memory communication process.[204]

<u>Sound</u>

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[202] I was unable to find newspaper reports on McKenzie's Chemist, so I think that Interviewee 18 is referring to Boyd's Chemist that was the target of an arson attack on November 2nd 1972. (Belfast Newsletter, Friday November 3rd, 1972, 2)

[203] Bonfires in August would have originally been a celebration of the Feast of the Assumption, but during the Troubles after 1971, it was co-opted as a day to protest against Internment without Trial. August was also the time of the Ardoyne Fleadh.

[204] Hamilton "The Proust effect," 218-232.

Schafer developed the term 'soundscape' to describe the sounds specific to a particular place and time.[205] As previously mentioned historians have adapted this concept further to refer to past acoustic environments and engaging in acts of listening. Alain Corbin demonstrated that throughout history, the sounds of bells carried messages about religion, politics, and social relationships that were central to daily life.[206] Sound can act not only as a tool of communication but also as a tool of power. In the context of Ardoyne, many participants recalled the sounds of bin lids crashing against the ground as a warning sound that the British army were raiding homes. Participants told me that during the conflict, people hid guns in cupboards, under beds, or floorboards; they formed safe houses for IRA men and women to sleep and eat when their own homes were under surveillance by the British army and RUC. In order to ensure the safety of the IRA volunteers or to warn people of incoming army raids, women, in particular, would run to the back-alleys and hit the bin lids off the ground, creating an almighty clatter. This is highlighted by Seamus, a man in his 70s from Ardoyne: "once the bin lids started rattling at 3 o'clock in the morning at Eskdale Gardens you could hear it in Herbert Street and if you were staying in Herbert Street the people would say 'look just make yourself ready' that was the base support. Without that the IRA couldn't have survived." This informal community communication system became synonymous with CNR communities and is the basis for the song 'The Lid of my Grannys Bin.' This is the sound of community and political resistance to the British army.

Sound is, therefore, key in identity construction in Northern Ireland. In a chapter in the Auditory Culture Reader, Paul Moore set out the complex relationship between sound and

[205] R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Turning of the World* (Rochester: Destiny Books, 1993).

[206] Alain Corbin, *Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the 19th Century French Countryside*, translated by Martin Thom (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

identity in NI; he reflects on Anthony Buckley, who noted that symbols underline power and relations between people.[207] In the context of Belfast, it is widely accepted that there are numerous visual symbolic indicators of identity, yet the role of sound as a symbolic signifier has not been as readily acknowledged despite the importance of music, language or the pronunciation of words and letters as benchmarks of cultural identity.[208] We learn sounds culturally and as cultural meanings are identified.[209] Paul Moore argues that if one is growing up in a divided society such as NI, the making of meaning through sounds attains a "duality whereby some sounds connote the individual's own community, and some connote the other."[210] Sounds are heard and perceived through our cultural frameworks of understanding, based on our cultural repertoire. This leads to questions such as, 'are sounds inherited like memories or as boundaries?' ATQ Stewart writes about how an accepted sectarian topography dominates the geographical landscape of Northern Ireland; he suggests that no one teaches where the boundary ends and another begins, the population just simply knows.[211] Can we say the same for sounds? Does a population of a given community instinctively know the cultural associations of those sounds? And, is there an association between sounds and boundaries? Addressing that last question first, in the case of the 12th of July marching bands, there is. Regarding sounds and boundaries, certain shops play anti-Catholic (Kick the Pope)

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[207] Anthony Buckley, *Symbols in Northern Ireland* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1998).

[208] Moore, "Sectarian sound and cultural identity in Northern Ireland," 266.

[209] Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (London: Verso, 1983), 145.

[210] Moore, "Sectarian sound and cultural identity in Northern Ireland," 267.

[211] ATQ Stewart, *The narrow ground: Aspects of Ulster, 1609–1969* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1997), 267.

songs along the Shankill Road, safely within the boundaries of their community.[212] Similarly, in Ardoyne, rebel songs are sung and played during commemorative and other events.

For many, the seminal moment of the Troubles occurred in August 1969, when houses were burned in Ardoyne (as discussed in the Background section.) For Rory, a man in his 80s from Ardoyne, "I just remembered the sound of themens wooping and yelling and shooting." Ethna, a woman in her 60s from Ardoyne but who now lives in England recalled, "I remember that night, actually I remember quite vividly because the sky was red from flames and the men just had planks of wood and hammering it into with nails, that's all they were defending Ardoyne with." Ethna was sent, like many others, to De La Salle school in West Belfast as a refugee; she remembers the noise in the temporary shelter, "It was awful, and obviously you didn't get proper sleep either because people were like *makes a chattering noise ne ne ne ne ne*. Can you imagine, a school hall full of people, the noise was shocking."[213] For her, as a child at the time, the memories of 1969 and having to leave her home for over a month were loud and noisy. This is similar to Rory, who would have been a young man in his twenties in 1969. For both participants, the sound dominates the memories of the event. However, the memories these sounds were associated with were different for each of them, albeit both centered on the turbulent events of the seminal year 1969. Rory's memories were shrouded in the emotion of fear, whilst Ethna's memory focused on being displaced.

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[212] Songs known colloquially as "Kick the Pope' songs, are sectarian anti-Catholic songs sang by the Protestant Unionist Loyalist community.

[213] I am reminded here of Paula Hamilton's example in her article 'The Proust Effect' where interivewees try to demonstrate the way sound became embodied as her interviewee clutched his chest, I7 used her hand to mimic opening and closing of mouths.

"Sound gives us the city as matter and as memory,"[214] writes Fran Tonkiss. Modern cities provide a soundscape to urban living, from cars, buses, the hustle and bustle of people, phones going off, talking, radios, and music playing. In Belfast between 1969-1998, to the typical urban soundscape was added the sounds of explosions, shootings, British Army tanks and armoured vehicle, British Army voices and radios, shouts of protests and clashes, the air chopped by helicopters, among other distinctive conflict sounds. While the sounds examined expressed themselves as 'us and them' they are grounded in a sonic environment where specific cultural memories mix with other symbols to reinforce notions of difference and separation. According to Thomas, a man in his 40s from the Shankill, the sounds of the conflict became normal, "I can remember that you were so used to it, that when the helicopters wasn't up, you were going 'it was awful quiet last night wasn't it?' because you were so used to it." When asked about what sounds he remembers from growing up, he said he always remembered when playing football if "you heard an explosion you just played on, whereas now people would run away, you heard shots it was just shots, these things all became normal to you." The sounds of the conflict and the normalisation of violence co-exist. When asked about what sounds she remembered, Anne, a woman in her 60s from Ardoyne, talked about the chatter in the streets, neighbours standing at their doors chatting, men standing on the street corners, and children playing in the street; she spoke of how there was always noise of some sort. She contrasts this with the present and how the area is quiet, a ghost town, with little of the vibrant communal life of the past. The sounds of the city and the sounds of conflict resonate differently, but as a generalisation, the sensory memories of the conflict are louder, harsher, more cacophonous, raising the question, is silence the sound of peace?

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[214] Fran Tonkiss, "Aural Postcards: Sound, Memory and the City," *The Auditory Culture Reader* edited by Michael Bull and Les Black (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2015): 243-247.

Conclusion

Within the interviews emotions of the past blurred with emotions of the present, highlighting the dynamic living nature of conflict related memory. The emotions of fear, anxiety, hate, sectarianism and anger, alongside loss, depicted in the broadest of terms, characterised the interviews, and set the tone for the participants' recollections of the past. As discussed, the legacy of the conflict has implications for the emotional regulation of communities who have lived through violence and those who grew up in the shadow of it. Throughout the interviews the emotions of fear and loss were the most prominent. Fear and anxiety became a normalised facet of life during the Troubles with far reaching implications, demonstrated by Claire who continues to struggle to watch the news or Rose who cannot break her nighttime routine of putting clothes out on the banister ready to evacuate. Most disturbingly, members of the ceasefire generation, such as Alex, noted that their lives were also characterised by fear.

I found the enormity of the emotion of loss to be most poignant. The ways in which the participants contemplated who they could have been or what their lives might have looked like, reinforced how the Troubles seeped into every aspect of life for the generation who lived through it. As considered in the chapter, the ceasefire generation have inherited this loss. I argue that it has manifested as frustration. They have grown up in the shadow of the unresolved past, during relative peace yet still unable to achieve the promises enshrined in the Good Friday Agreement. The Troubles legacy is a myriad of emotions, ranging from sadness, fear, anger, anxiety to name only a few. An examination through the prism of oral history provides a fuller and richer understanding of this under researched area. Moreover, as discussed in this chapter there are a multiplicity of emotions regarding the past, that are complicated further by the transition into peace. But the emotions expressed in the interviews illuminate the role they play in storytelling, the depth and texture they provide to a story, and

the connection they help create between storyteller and listener has profound implications both on how people remember and also on how memories are transmitted.

Our sensory experience is interwoven with the emotional experience of loss, struggle, oppression, resistance, and happiness. This chapter has examined the culturally specific expression of emotions and senses, as the language around emotions and our senses is dictated by society. In the case of Ardoyne and the Shankill, culturally divided communities, it is expressed as two different but overlapping languages. The emotional community has a shared emotional language associated with loss, oppression, struggle, and resistance. Although not discussed in the chapter, the emotional community within the Shankill has a very similar but slightly different shared emotional language. The concepts of sensory memories can also be located within emotional communities, the shared language and shared cultural understandings of the senses reinforce community bonds and identity.

A key argument advanced in this chapter is that an exploration of sensory memories enables a deeper more textured history to emerge. Our senses shape how we understand the world, but also how we understand the past and ourselves in it. In places like Belfast, my interview participants' memories could be elicited by the sounds of helicopters, the smell of lynx deodorant, or the taste of butterscotch hard-boiled sweets and roasted potatoes. Although we can recreate certain senses, such as the taste of a chippie, or the smell of vinegar, or the sound of bin lids hitting the ground, these cannot necessarily be felt in the same way that they were first experienced. Remembering them in the present adds layers of meaning and texture to the experience. My research into the emotional and sensory landscapes of community memory of the Troubles, contributes to knowledge and to our understanding of an individual's experiences of the past and strengthens our understandings of emotions and the senses in memory. By articulating and providing a space for these memories, we can understand different forms of 'how we remember.'

Chapter Three

How are memories communicated? Place and the built environment.

The previous chapter evaluated the extent to which emotions and senses impact the act of remembering the conflict in Northern Ireland, and specifically North Belfast. I wish to develop these concepts further in the following chapters by critically examining how memories are communicated and impact intergenerationally. This chapter will focus on the built environment, heritage, commemorations, and the role of place and space in the communication of memories.

Given Northern Ireland's patchwork, divided, and fractured topography, place is central to how inhabitants personally and communities collectively encounter and engage with the past in their everyday lives. Ardoyne and Woodvale (which is part of the greater Shankill) sit side by side but are divided not only by a peace wall but by the Crumlin Road, a main thoroughfare that acts as an interface, further entrenching the divide.[215] This research project included place and space as an integral aspect of intergenerational memory that was a significant issue of discussion in the interviews carried out with the younger participants – i.e. the ceasefire generation. The continued geographical division remains one of the major repercussions of the conflict; within these divisions are segregated schools, de facto segregated leisure centres, sports teams, and communal facilities such as doctors' offices, stores, etc. As discussed in the following sections, division which emanated from and/or was reinforced by the violent past both societally and geographically has dictated the lives of

[215] An interface is a site of conflict, according to Boal and Murray (1977, 364-71) the topographic-ideological boundary sector that physically and symbolically demarcates ethnic communities in Belfast from each other. The interface is a spatial construct preeminently linked to the performance of violence. The term interface was central within Boal and Murray's analysis of boundaries that physically and psychologically demarcate ethnic communities in Belfast. These frontier spaces or interfaces are the intersection of segregated and polarised working-class residential zones in areas with a strong link between territory and ethno-political identity (Jarman, 2005, 9).

young people in NI to a significant extent. Utilising a range of methods including in-person interviews, ethnographic field work, and go-along interviews, significant themes relating to memory and place emerged from the research and will form the structure for this chapter. The themes identified are boundaries, the divided nature of society, peace walls, murals, parading, and other aspects of visible memory, in addition to invisible memory situated in place and the built environment.[216] Place in the context of Northern Ireland is inherently political. The argument advanced in this thesis is that politics of place are critically significant to the understanding of how memory is communicated and inherited. This chapter examines how place communicates or acts as a memory prompt and reinforces to subsequent generations specific messages about the past.

I conducted go-along interviews with two participants both from Ardoyne: Aoife, who was 29 years old, and Michael, who was 63-year-old.[217] Unfortunately, none of the participants in the Greater Shankill area were open to the idea of a go-along interview for reasons not clearly articulated, as set out in the methodology. Scepticism or suspicion, especially given my outsider status in the PUL community should not be discounted. Consequently, this made a comparison of the embedded nature of memory into place more difficult, but it also underscores how emotionally and politically charged place remains in the deeply scarred communities, where old divisions, distrust, and fear are never far from the surface even in the current post-conflict period.

[216] Invisible memory, is personal private memories which has no material or public memorialization.

[217] As noted in the methodology section I have chosen to use the term ‘go-along interviews’ instead of walking interviews, given the discourse around this latter term as potentially ableist.

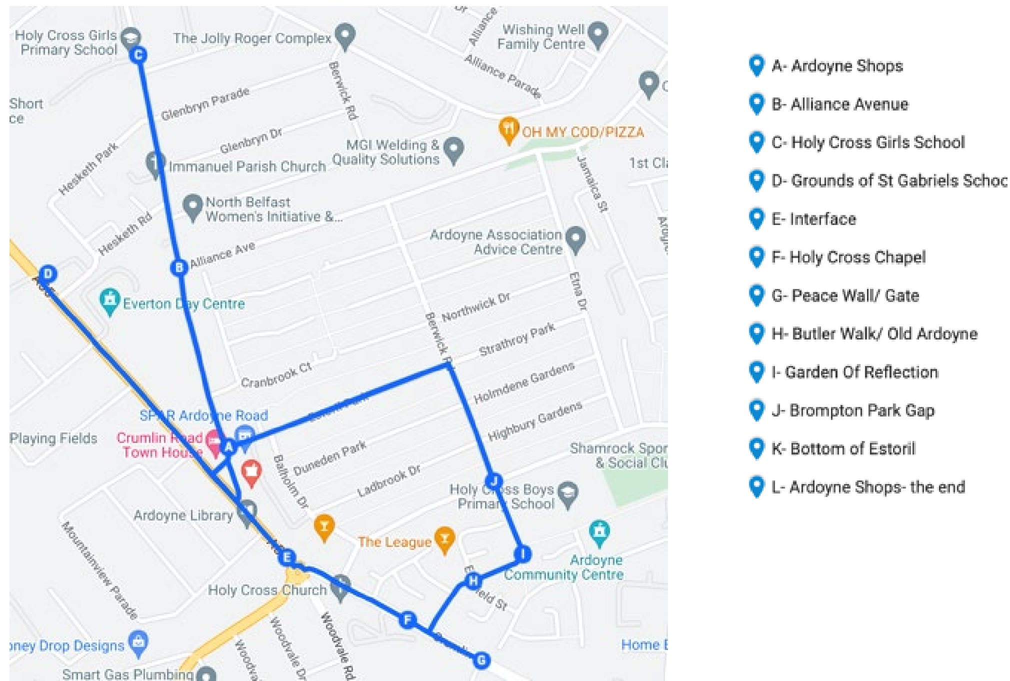

Figure 2.0: Aoife’s walking route on Google Maps,
Source: created by Eimear Rosato.

The first go-along interview was with Aoife; given her experiences of the 2001 Holy Cross Girls School dispute, she wanted to begin at the Ardoyne shops (Point A in Figure 2.0, map above).[218] As we walked northwards up the Ardoyne Road towards the Holy Cross Girls School (Point C in Figure 2.0), she talked about preparing to go to school amid the ongoing dispute, the hostility of the walk and the fear that shaped her formative years and the trauma that remains with her. Despite her experiences, she challenged sectarian narratives, refusing to partake in “green and orange politics.” She argued that Northern Ireland is unlikely to move forward as a society if voters continue to elect parties who “do fuck all for us unless it's election time.” She said that the actions of those who had protested against her and her schoolmates (i.e. members of the PUL community who objected to the presence of Catholics, even mere school children), alongside the experiences of violence while walking to school,

[218] As set out in the Background section the Holy Cross Girls School Dispute centred around the Ardoyne Road, with the young girls and their parents beginning their daily walk to school at the Ardoyne Shops on the Crumlin Road.

were a form of trauma for her. “The violent actions by Loyalists in Glenbyrn passed on a form of trauma to me, my family, and friends.” As conveyed in many of the interviews (with Róisín, Aoife, Caoimhe, Áine, Méabh, and Sinéad), the divisions in society and between communities were sharply and immediately present and clearly communicated to these young girls during this dispute. Áine, a 29-year-old woman from Ardoyne found, “The protest in Holy Cross is carved in stone, nobody is going to ever forget about that.” The dispute ensured their visceral understanding of territory and the safety within (and dangers without) the community’s boundaries, a theme that continues to emerge in the chapter and interviews conducted. This is exemplified by Cíaran, a 22-year-old from Ardoyne, “From a young age there was an invisible line… and I knew subconsciously not to go across the road at the top [The Crumlin Road].” In the go-along interview, we continued to walk to the school, taking a moment to reflect at the gates. Áoife talked about how only recently the Glenbyrn community painted the curbstones outside the school red, white, and blue (Figure 3.1) and flew flags outside of Michael Stone (figure 2.2 from the Irish News), an infamous Loyalist gunman. Both were clear markers of intimidation highlighting the continuing tensions around the school’s location which still exist 22 years later.[219]

[219] Michael Stone is an ex-member of the Ulster Defence Association and Red Hand Commando, Loyalist paramilitary groups. In 1988 Stone attacked the Gibraltar three funeral in Milltown Cemetery, as the coffins were being buried Stone attacked the crowd with grenades and gunfire. He killed three mourners and injured sixty others, he was chased on foot through the cemetery whilst throwing grenades and firing at those pursuing him, he was caught and beaten before the RUC arrived and arrested him. He was convicted of three counts of murder. He was released from prison under the Good Friday Agreement. In 2006 Stone was arrested for attempting to enter Parliament Buildings at Stormont armed with an imitation pistol, a knife and a bomb, he also placed 8 pipe bombs on the grounds. His lawyer at the time described it as a piece of ‘performance art.’ He received a 16-year sentence and was released on parole in 2021.

Figure 2.1: Picture of the Holy Cross Girls School front gates, November 2022.
Source: Image taken by Eimear Rosato.

Figure 2.2: Image of a flag with a picture of Michael Stone and the words 'Hands up if your going to be sectarian today.'
Source: The Irish News, 24/3/2012.[220]

[220] Claire Simpson, "Michael Stone Flag near Holy Cross Girls School a Deliberate Attempt to Intimidate," Irish News, March 24, 2021. https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2021/03/24/news/michael-stone-flag-near-holy-cross-girls-school-a-deliberate-attempt-to-intimidate--2265414/ (accessed July13, 2023).

Figure 2.3: Picture of the Ardoyne Road and Alliance Avenue intersection in Ardoyne. Source: Image taken by Eimear Rosato, May 2023.

Figure 2.4: Picture of Alliance Avenue Intersection graffiti. Source: Image taken by Eimear Rosato, May 2023

As we walked back down the Ardoyne Road, past the Alliance Avenue intersection (Point B on Figure 2.0), graffiti and posters covered the walls and lampposts from both sides of the community (Figure 2.3 and Figure 2.4 show the two sides of the intersection),[221]

[221] Figure 3.3 depicts the walk along the Ardoyne Road towards Holy Cross Girls School with the Alliance Avenue intersection on the right-hand side of the image; Figure 3.4 shows the other side of the wall if walking from the Holy Cross Girls School down Alliance Avenue,

indicating where territorial boundaries end and begins. Continuing back down the Crumlin Road, past the Ardoyne Shops towards Holy Cross Church (Point F, Figure 2.0), the discussion turned to the safety of residents in the houses on the front of the road (which, as noted, acts as an interface). Aoife remarked about the new semi-opaque peace walls (Point G, Figure 2.0).[222] The updated peace walls were intended to symbolize a positive step towards the maintenance of 'good relations' between the divided communities of Ardoyne and Woodvale. During an interview with Matthew, a man in his 50s and resident of Ardoyne, he also spoke about how the new peace wall structures on the Crumlin Road, represented an open space; they "show that there is nothing to fear from this community" but simultaneously continue to provide safety for residents. In contrast, Aoife expressed scepticism regarding the ability of the new peace walls to provide safety, pointing to the remnants of paint splattered on one of the houses. The interviews reflect two generational views, the younger interviewee espousing some scepticism, paradoxically, the older interviewee, who had direct first -hand experience of the conflict had a more positive outlook. Another voice in this conversation was Ben, a 21-year-old from the Shankill. "My granny and granda were saying the other day, I dunno when it was, but both sides were given money, like the Ardoyne side they knocked the wall down, and there's a fence that goes down the Crumlin Road now, and 10 steps across the road you still have a big wall on the Shankill side, and it's just like they pocketed the money, they kept it like." Ben appeared pessimistic at the prospect of the Woodvale wall coming down. Differing views were expressed by the participants Matthew and Ben, regarding

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these two images side by side are indicative of the view of either community as they approach the intersection and also highlight the graffiti both visible and covered up

[222] In 2016 the eight-foot brick Peace Wall on the Crumlin Road, was replaced by railings and landscaped greenery as part of an on-going effort to remove the physical divisions of the past. "Crumlin Road residents wave goodbye to dividing wall," *Belfast Telegraph*, August 11, 2016. https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/crumlin-road-residents-wave-goodbye-to-dividing-wall/34957941.html (accessed July 13, 2023).

replacement of the 'peace wall' with a less obtrusive fence which on one side represented a positive step towards 'good relations,' whereas the alternative view perceived the structures as a necessary safety feature.

The go-along interview with Aoife continued as we moved down Butler Walk into the heart of Ardoyne, past the Garden of Reflection (Point I, Figure 2.0),[223] and along Butler Way leading to Brompton Park (Point J, Figure 2.0). From there, we moved along Berwick Road and up Estoril Park to the Ardoyne shops where the interview ended (see figure 3.0 for the map). It was not until I logged our route into Google Maps that I realized what had occurred: we had chosen (subconsciously or consciously, I do not know) to take the long way around to avoid walking through a series of PUL streets called Hesket Road (which is a thoroughfare between Ardoyne Road and Crumlin Road, between Point D and B on the map in Figure 2.0).[224] Interestingly, this is reflective of the very real sense of place and lived experience of boundaries. Hesketh Road is delineated by Union Jack Flags and painted curbstones, symbols of Unionist territory and ownership, generally perceived as intimidating to those from the CNR community (Figure 2.5). As highlighted by Sinéad, a 24-year-old young woman from Ardoyne, the Union Jack flags and red, white, and blue colours are associated with the PUL community, "That's when you knew you were in a bad area because you seen the red, white and blue." This was a similar sentiment felt by Méabh, a 21-year-old young woman from Ardoyne, "I think it shouldn't, but it does, because if you go into a Protestant community and you see red, white and blue everywhere you think 'oh god I shouldn't be here. I don't belong

[223] The Garden of Reflection is a memorial to the people who died during the conflict from the Ardoyne, Bone and Ligoniel communities. Unveiled in 2016, during the Easter Rising centenary celebrations.

[224] Aoife wanted to walk from Holy Cross Girls School to the site of St Gabriel's school, when creating the map, google attempted to outline the shortest distance between Point C and Point D, which is to cut through Hesketh Road. It did not occurr to me, and I don't think to Aoife either, to take the short cut and most direct route. We instinctively took the longer route perceived as being safer.

here.'" The symbolism reinforces boundaries and evokes feelings of anxiety within the ceasefire generation. Symbols as identity markers of boundaries are found in CNR Ardoyne, with Irish Tricolours, Republican flags or bunting, alongside other Republican symbolism potentially perceived as threating to PUL communities.

Figure 2.5: Picture of the Flags and kerbstone on Hesketh Road.
Source: Image taken by Eimear Rosato, November 2022.

Boundaries

It is important to situate the above discussion historically in the context of Ardoyne's typography. According to Dawson, this small community has experienced geographical isolation; tension and fears due to sectarianism, political violence, and state repression; trauma and loss as a consequence of the Troubles; and a long history of large-scale

unemployment and economic hardship.[225] The effects of these overlapping social conditions have been highlighted by scholars Shirlow and Murtagh in their book *Belfast: Segregation, Violence and the City*, where they reflect on the correlation between socioeconomic deprivation and violence.[226] NI communities occupying marginal, dangerous, or contested urban territories are also usually communities with high rates of social deprivation and poverty. The twenty-five physical interfaces in Belfast cover twenty-two wards, and of these, seventeen (77%) are in the top 10% of deprived wards (measured by the Noble Index 2001).[227] Added to this is the daily experience and pervasive fears around unrest, violence, and the threat of attacks on the community.[228] In the interviews I conducted, Ardoyne participants Sinéad and Méabh – both members of the ceasefire generation – and Orlaith, who lived through the Troubles, believed that peace walls, "give you a wee bit of a sense of security" (Sinéad). Similarly, Ben, a 23-year-old from the Shankill, argued that the constant threat of violence has made many residents in his community hesitant about the potential removal of peace walls, "I don't think they should [come down]. Say something started up again. No point knocking it down if it's so easy to flare up again." The interviews revealed commonalities in the experiences of both sides of the community divide, exposing fears regarding potential violence and security which persist across different generations. Shirlow and Murtagh's research confirm the existence of these concerns finding that the "protective walls" were often the very site where frequent, persistent, low-level violence occurred. Significantly, nearly one-third of all politically motivated murders were located within 250

[225] Dawson, Making Peace, 11.

[226] Peter Shirlow and Brendan Murtagh, *Belfast: Segregation, Violence and the City*. (Belfast: Pluto Press, 2006), 26.

[227] Shirlow and Murtagh, *Belfast*, 64.

[228] Shirlow and Murtagh, *Belfast*, 65.

meters of an interface (i.e. the very places where peace walls were usually placed).[229] The statistics are indicative of a strong link in NI between high rates of violence, residential segregation interfacing, and, of course, class given that the areas highlighted also tend to be the most socially deprived in Belfast.[230]

Aoife and Michael's go-along interviews, support the proposition that the legacy of the Troubles has significantly influenced how inhabitants of contested spaces interact with their surroundings. As ATQ Stewart observed, the people of NI inherit place and boundaries and carry, "the map of this religious geography in [their] mind almost from birth."[231] Similarities appear in the work of Catherine Switzer and Sara McDowell's concept of "cognitive maps."[232] These cognitive maps are both real and imagined, the products of both early socialization and a lifetime of lived experience. They dictate spatial patterns of movement as specific acts of violence engrained the fear of particular places.[233] As Lefebvre argues, "there is a politics of space, because space is political." Space is equally a construct of memory. The routes that community members take in these sites of conflict are often the product of the childhood warnings and lessons handed down within families and communities, coupled with lived experience in navigating those streets. The intimate cognitive maps that guide residents through dangerous interface zones are further informed by physical community symbolism depicted through the display of flags, murals, painted

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[229] Shirlow and Murtagh, *Belfast*, 72.

[230] Shirlow and Murtagh, *Belfast*,.73

[231] ATQ Stewart, *The narrow ground: Aspects of Ulster, 1609–1969* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1997), 180-181.

[232] Catherine Switzer and Sara McDowell. "Redrawing cognitive maps of conflict: Lost spaces and forgetting in the centre of Belfast." *Memory Studies* 2, no. 3 (2009): 338

[233] A, Feldman, *Formations of Violence in the Narratives of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

kerbstones, graffiti, peace walls, and other physical markers that indicate community territory and boundaries in North Belfast and elsewhere in NI. (See Figure 2.5 of Hesketh Road.) The variety of ways in which cognitive maps are created and reinforced emerged in my interviews with young people in Ardoyne. For example, 22-year-old Caoimhe, explained how her understanding of boundaries was reinforced through her lived experience, "You can't walk there because you'll get beat up. I've had cousins beat up for walking in the wrong areas because you're Catholic." For Gerard, a 19-year-old from Ardoyne, the boundaries were reinforced by his parents, "From a very young age you would have been told where and where not to go... but always told not to go past the park or not to go past the roundabout where the rioting took place." This was the same for Sinéad, a 24-year-old from Ardoyne, "I knew exactly where I was allowed to go, I was told not to go past the Brompton Park entry because if you were to go past there, that gets into dangerous territory." For both participants, their parents or guardians used examples of violence or charged language, such as "dangerous," to enforce boundaries through notions of safety. Many other interviewees were told to remain within the bottom streets in Ardoyne, meaning those below the Berwick Road. Interviewee Gráinne, a 22-year-old from Ardoyne, said, "I deffo knew the boundaries, which roads I wasn't allowed to cross, I had to stay in the bottom half of Ardoyne. You did know." Rules and instructions for the avoidance of specific places, such as the top of Brompton Park, which is where it meets the Crumlin Road, map onto historical sites of unrest. Indeed, as Sara Dyrbis McQuaid sets out, the Crumlin Road boundary between the Ardoyne and Woodvale communities, has been the stage for "endemic parade-related rioting" since at least the mid-1990s, and today is still a site of inter-communal anxieties and tensions.[234]

[234] Dybris McQuaid, "Parading memory and remembering," 33.

In the late 1960s and early '70s, the police and various vigilante groups erected temporary barbed wire fences or barricades, which reduced the capacity for violent attacks.[235] Later the temporary expedients were legitimised and transformed into more permanent structures by the government in form of formal Peace Walls, visually and physically reinforcing the continued separation of the 'two communities.' Figure 2.6 and 2.7 are Hugh McKeown's photographs of the community-made barricade at the top of Brompton Park, precisely where interviewees such as Gerard and Sinéad recalled scenes and stories of violence. Ethna, a woman in her 60s from Ardoyne provided context to the barricades,

> Before August 1969, there was a difference between the Catholics and Protestants, but it wasn't as palpable as when the Troubles started and then the barricades went up. The barriers went up, and the soldiers arrived, then it became hatred, if you know what I mean. So that was always indoctrinated in us. Once the barricades went up and the army barracks sprouted up all over the place, especially Flax Street, the bollards were put up at the top of Brompton Park, so you didn't go up Brompton Park to the top of the street. So it was like, 'oh so we can't even leave our area?'
> ER- so the barricades at the top of Brompton Park you physically couldn't get past?
> Ethna- oh no you could, but they were concrete bollards so no cars could get up and down the street. Do not go out, don't exit, don't come in.

Figure 2.6: Picture of community made barricades from burnt out buses, cars and barbed wire. Source: Photograph taken by Hugh McKeown in 'Ardoyne, The Aftermath, 2019, the Belfast Archive Project.

[235] Shirlow and Murtagh, *Belfast*, 67.

Figure 2.7: Picture of army barricades on the top of the Crumlin Road.
Source: Photograph taken by Hugh McKeown in 'Ardoyne, The Aftermath, 2019, the Belfast Archive Project.

Figure 2.8: Picture of community barricades on Chatham Street.
Source: Photograph taken by Hugh McKeown in 'Ardoyne, The Aftermath, 2019, the Belfast Archive Project.

Orlaith, a woman in her 50s from Ardoyne, also discussed the boundaries and barricades at the top of the Crumlin Road that characterised her childhood's geography. "The streets all came up onto the Crumlin Road, but whenever I remember growing up there were timbers, they were up the height of the houses, across each street and you couldn't get out onto the Crumlin Road." She noted this was due to the violence and attacks on the houses after 1969. A press report from August 1969 describes a fierce clash between Protestants, Catholics, and the RUC "on the Hooker Street area on the Crumlin Road where the scenes of mob disorder

lasted for over 12 hours…Eleven petrol-bomb attacks in the Catholic area of Ardoyne, including attempts to set on fire Catholic-occupied licensed premises, were reported… Mr Gerry Fit, Republican MP for West Belfast at Westminster… yesterday warned the British Home Secretary that the situation in Belfast was the most serious since the 1935 sectarian trouble in the city."[236] This site remained a flashpoint of violence throughout the Troubles. For example, another newspaper account from July 1987 described, "the IRA again opened fire on an army patrol in Brompton Park…"[237] While oral history interviews and newspaper sources both highlight the longevity of tension at these interface sites, oral history stories and local memory alone is capable of capturing the cognitive maps that residents perceived as keeping them safe together with vigilance inherited though expression of community fears passed down through the generations.

Peace Walls

Walls are physical structures which are also ideological. Built with the intention to separate and subsequently project both belonging and exclusion, to limit agency by directing movement to interfaces where people can be monitored, surveyed and even prevented from crossing.[238] McAtackney discusses the segregation of space in Belfast, by reflecting on the use of walls in the Ulster Plantation and how the historically situated walls of Belfast were continuously used to separate the haves from the have nots.[239] McAtackney argues that the

[236] The Irish Times, August 4, 1969, 11.

[237] Jim Cusack, "RUC steps up peace line security," *The Irish Times*, July 13, 1987, 1.

[238] Ideological walls are those built with the intention to materialise power, domination, and protection to those inside, and conversely communicating insecurity, fear, and isolation; Laura McAtackney, "The Many Forms and Meanings of (Peace) Walls in Contemporary Northern Ireland," *Review of International American Studies RIAS*, 11, no.1 (2018): 40.

[239] Laura McAtackney, "The Many Forms and Meanings of (Peace) Walls in Contemporary Northern Ireland," *Review of International American Studies RIAS* 11, no.1 (2018): 41.

creation of the first official peace wall in 1969 and the erection of more after the peace in 1998 reflects the ongoing desire to create barriers between the communities.[240] According to Karen Till, walls are "symbolic and material manifestations of political boundaries" that fulfil state agendas through "conflict infrastructure."[241] Northern Ireland's peace walls can be interpreted along similar lines, as colonial state infrastructure and configurations of state power used to separate "rivalling" communities to instil "peace."[242] Various local and public sector bodies, including Belfast City Council and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive share responsibility for the erection and maintenance of these structures. The structures have a shared purpose but vary in terms of construction materials and design.[243] In Ardoyne, peace walls tend to have a brick wall base with corrugated iron and fencing on top (Figure 2.9). The newly erected alternatives include iron gates or fences as seen on the Crumlin Road (as previously discussed and on the right side of figure 2.10). As ideological symbols of the Troubles, the peace walls act as constant reminders of conflict, separation, and division. Interviewee Gráinne spoke of the negative emotional connotations such walls held for her: "They are so in your face, you're intimidated by them, but then you become numb to it. Obviously, they are hard to miss…Even now, they seem big."

[240] Laura McAtackney, "The Many Forms and Meanings of (Peace) Walls in Contemporary Northern Ireland," *Review of International American Studies RIAS* 11, no.1 (2018): 43.

[241] Karen Till, Juanita Sundberg, Wendy Pullan, Charis Psaltis, Chara Makriyianni, Rana Zincir Celal, Meltem Onurkan Samani, Lorraine Dowler, "Interventions in the political geographies of walls," *Political Geography* 33 (2013): 52.

[242] A term I use quite loosely.

[243] McAtackney, "The Many Forms and Meanings of (Peace) Walls."

Figure 2.9: Picture of the Peace Walls on the. Alliance Avenue.
Source: Photograph taken by Eimear Rosato, June 2023.

Figure 2.10: Picture of the Peace Walls on Crumlin Road, Ardoyne.
Source: Photograph taken by Eimear Rosato, June 2023.

Other participants also discussed the meaning and connotations that the peace walls had for them. Cíaran, a member of the ceasefire generation, stated that “it's very symbolic because the conflict hasn’t completely gone away because if it had then the peace walls would be well away. There’s still trouble around the talks and debates about taking the peace down over ‘are we ready in Belfast?’ I don't think everyone would be as sure as I am that we are ready.” Orlaith, who grew up during the Troubles, echoed this sense of anxiety around the peace walls, “If I lived close to a peace wall, I don’t think I would like it being taken down …I mean it just takes one 12th July, and all the houses will be attacked, like it’s nice they can see out onto the road and things like that, but it just made me feel like ‘oh God what’s going on here?’ ... [talking about the peace wall on Alliance Ave] I don’t think they should take that one down, not definitely not, because the relationship Ardoyne has with Glenbryn isn’t a good

one, it never has been.” Seamus reflected on the peace walls in relation to identity and memory, “It’s a constant reminder of sectarianism that this state was involved in and evolved out of. As long as those peace walls and that remain, that’s a reminder of it… Ardoyne was one of the first ones [to come down] and it's open, but if you noticed on the other side of the road, they built new ones. That’s the contradiction, that’s them telling the people we need these, and Ardoyne people saying, ‘well you don’t really need them, we don’t have them’.” (this is found in Fig 2.10). This is suggestive of the divisions that continue to exist between the two communities. The desired effect of the peace wall being replaced with a more open fence, was thwarted by the continued solid wall facing it. Woodvale insisted on retaining its peace wall whereas as Ardoyne decommissioned its wall. Andy, a man in his 40s from Woodvale, expressed the view that the next generation in his community would not care to perpetuate the walls, “The kids don’t give a fuck about them, the generation will die, and that will be it.” This view is supported by members of the ceasefire generation that I interviewed who expressed a desire to see the walls removed. Sinéad pointed out that, “there was a wall on the Crumlin Road, and it was taken down, and it really hasn't made that much of a difference. So you wonder if they all came down what would happen?” Although Matthew believed that they should be taken down, he felt that there should be deeper community consideration,

> It’s well past time, but who decides that? The general consensus is that the people living there should decide that. But it’s a massive bone of contention about opening up the gate/ peace wall at Flax Street. When you open up gates and walls you’re opening up scars. It’s a reminder of things that happened there, so you're not just dealing with the walls… it's not just the physical walls, there are walls within people, they are just a manifestation of it, so you start to take down a wall all of a sudden people are going back into the past. How do you manage all the emotions and all the memories that are coming to the surface? That people probably aren't dealing with or acknowledging.

As noted, peace walls provide a sense of security against the constant or seasonal fear of violence. However, peace walls serve to communicate other messages to the communities they slice through, acting both as protection from violence and paradoxically as instruments

capable of attracting violence. Shirlow and Murtagh suggest that peace walls are both subjects of discussion (e.g. from parents warning their children to stay away from them to the ceasefire generation debating their necessity or value) and physical artefacts that communicate to the communities that live in their shadow, reinforcing messages of division and protection, fear and security. They are functionally and ideologically intricate features of Belfast's conflict landscape that persist into the post-conflict period, creating entangled relationships with those who lived through the Troubles and with those who have come after.

Divided nature of society

Frantz Fanon argued that, for those caught up in them, violent political conflicts create "a world cut in two" within which people are positioned according to, "the fact of belonging to, or not belonging to" one side or the other.[244] Dawson notes that in these divided zones, not only politics but grief and mourning are split in two, polarised across the peace line and axis of violence.[245] Within such spaces, like NI, the past is not past; it is not over or finished but permeates the social and psychic realities of everyday life in the present. Such legacies and memory of conflict are neither linear nor static. This polarized, perpetual division of politics and remembrance is evident across small communities in Belfast where commemorations to personal and collective loss and identity dot the landscape. Dawson calls this desire to not forget the recent past of conflict, the "past present."[246] Space has multiple meanings ascribed to it by everyone who encounters it, but certain events become firmly embedded in a site and in the collective psyche of the community. This is reflective of Shirlow's point that geographies of territoriality emerge in which the territory becomes a symbol of political

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[244] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Penguin, 1990), 29-31.

[245] Dawson, *Making Peace with the Past.*

[246] Dawson, *Making Peace with the Past*, 10.

practice.[247] Continuing even after the signing of the GFA, territory is hugely symbolic for the Ardoyne and Shankill communities. These examples demonstrate how memory is embodied in a living society and how place becomes significant when memory attaches itself to it.

As we have seen with the discussion around cognitive maps, in North Belfast's communities, movement around a place is dictated by boundaries associated with violence. These associations are passed down from parent/ grandparent/guardian to ensure the safety of children, couched in warnings such a "don't go past the Brompton Park entry… it's dangerous," alongside stories of the violence which happened at those sites. However, these associations of violence are also the ceasefire generations' own lived experience given the riots and clashes with police that have occurred cyclically at the interface of Ardoyne and Woodvale for decades and are heavily documented in the media. However, as Méabh noted, these reports do not always reflect the whole truth: "When you hear Ardoyne in the news, everyone thinks we are all joy riders or rioting or that we are all up to madness, that we just don't go to the shop to buy a carton of milk and walk home…it pisses me off sometimes when in the newspapers it's like young people in Ardoyne are branded as if it's all their fault when three-quarters [of rioters] aren't even from Ardoyne itself, they come from everywhere. It pisses you off because it's giving your community a bad name, and it shouldn't. Ardoyne is left tarnished and bruised by the papers." Gerard, felt similarly about Ardoyne's reputation for rioting, "the first thing people think of when they hear Ardoyne is riots. When you type it into Google the first thing that comes up is riots."

Riots and clashes between Nationalists, the police, and Unionists are an enduring legacy of the conflict, occurring in the same sites post-GFA as during the conflict. In the years after the signing of the GFA, rioting at interfaces was prolific. In 2001-2002 rioting continued for months amidst the ongoing Holy Cross Girls School incident. In January 2002, riots and

[247] Shirlow, "Fear and Ethnic Division," 69.

clashes intensified when police came under sustained assault from Nationalist youth hurling bricks, fireworks, and petrol bombs.[248] Clashes occurred again in 2003 and 2004, but the 2005 riots at the interface on the Crumlin Road were extremely violent with roughly 300 Nationalist youths attacking the PSNI (Police Service of NI), with several blast bombs injuring police, members of the public, and journalists. Police retaliated with crowd control water cannons. During this clash, violence unsurprisingly sparked in Brompton Park with a car hijacking.[249] BBC Ireland correspondent Kevin Connolly commented, "It's seven years since the Good Friday Agreement was signed. Today we had an echo of what Belfast sounded and felt like 30 years ago."[250] Connecting contemporary violence to the violence of the Troubles reinforces ongoing relationships between the past and present and exposes unresolved legacy issues which remain to be dealt with. This was particularly apparent during the 2012 - 2014 flag protests in Belfast, which led to intense clashes at the interface in Ardoyne, with a group of Unionists from Woodvale and the greater Shankill area who set up a camp as an act of protest.[251] For many of the ceasefire generation, these riots occurred just as

[248] Suzanne Breen, Police fire plastic bullets as Ardoyne rioting flares again, Irish Times, Jan 10, 2002.

[249] "80 officers injured during riot," *BBC News*, July 13, 2005.

[250] "Violent clashes erupted in Belfast," *BBC News*, Sept 11, 2005.

[251] In December 2012, Belfast City Council voted to limit the days the Union Flag files From Belfast City Hall. From every day to 18 specific days a year, the minimum requirement for UK Government Buildings. Ulster Loyalists argued this was a 'culture war' against their identity as British. On the night of the vote protesters tried to storm Belfast City Hall. In December 2012 and January 2013 protests were held daily and some lead to clashes with the PSNI, with rioters attacking the PSNI with petrol bombs, bricks, stones and fireworks, the PSNI responded with water cannons and plastic bullets. The protests and violence continued into 2013 with the petrol bombing of Naomi Long's Alliance Party office in November of that year. The protest numbers dwindled by 2014, as another cause appeared, the Ligoniel Orange Lodge was rerouted from making its 12th July annual return march past the Ardoyne shops, three days of intense rioting followed. Loyalists pitched tents and a caravan onto waste ground at Twaddell Avenue and the Twaddell Peace Camp was born.

they were moving into young adulthood, producing a lasting memory and contributing to the post-conflict normalisation of continued violence as a political means.[252]

As McDowell, Braniff, and Murphy discuss, commemorative-related violence has become another persistent problem in the post-GFA years, outbreaks of which are often connected to changes in the political landscape.[253] In their definition, commemorations are multi-faceted activities that encompass everything from parades to memorial gardens, anniversary gatherings to theatre performances, art, literature, and, of course, the traditional unveiling of plaques or murals. McDowell *et al*. consider why such commemorations can lead to violence.[254] Leaning on the work of Steenkamp, who focuses on the "culture of violence" concept, which describes societies where violence continues to feature in the post-conflict context, McDowell *et al* argue that violence becomes enmeshed and intertwined with "the broader shared, values and norms of a community."[255] Violence can become normalised and a socially acceptable mechanism to "achieve power and status in society," while it can also articulate feelings of exclusion and disempowerment. [256] Additionally, individuals can become predisposed to the use of violence through long-term exposure, which can perpetuate across generations in seasonal traditions as often experienced in the clashes with police and

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[252] For those born in 1994, they turned 18 years old in 2012, and those born in 1998 at the signing of the GFA they were 14 years old in 2012.

[253] Sara McDowell, Máire Braniff, and Joanne Murphy, "*Spacing commemorative-related violence in Northern Ireland: Assessing the implications for a society in transition*," Space and Polity 19, no 3, (2015): 232.

[254] McDowell, Braniff, and Murphy, *Spacing commemorative-related violence in Northern Ireland,* 232.

[255] Chrissie Steenkamp, "The Legacy of War: Conceptualizing a 'Culture of Violence' to Explain Violence after Peace Accords," *The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 94, no 379 (2005): 253.

[256] Chrissie Steenkamp, "The Legacy of War: Conceptualizing a 'Culture of Violence' to Explain Violence after Peace Accords," *The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 94, no 379 (2005): 253.

heightened tension around the 12th of July parades that historically marched past Ardoyne. Interviewees from the ceasefire generation recalled how such parades became frequent flashpoints of violence. Caoimhe: "Them walking up the Crumlin Rd, the biggest Catholic area in NI, what do they want to walk up there for? With their orange band, I think that's a joke. It's also a joke the reaction that they provoke because if there was no reaction, they wouldn't even want to walk up there. It's a whole big farce." Méabh: "I just live off the interface between Ardoyne and Twadell there, so growing up every 12th July, you just see it on your doorstep." Gerard discussed the violence that erupts, "There was always tensions with them [marches], the rioting used to go on for four or five days at a time like." According to Jarman, parades were a frequent source of unrest and low-level violence between 1994 and 2002, alongside other factors such as the presence of paramilitaries and marginalized youth.[257] NI's parading traditions reflect how the past is negotiated through the practice of commemoration in public spaces. Parading is also clearly about establishing control and reproducing communal divisions. McDowell, Braniff, and Murphy's work to map violence in NI clearly shows that parades are more likely to trigger violence, as these are powerful ephemeral spatial practices that express power and identity through ritual and performance that provoke the 'other.'[258] Protests are found most years at the 12th of July parades through Ardoyne, with individuals arguing that the protests are to "protect and stand up for their community" (Figure 2.11). Despite agreement having been reached with the Parades Commission in recent years, the history of tension and violent clashes of 2013-15 continue to endure in the collective memory.

[257] Neil Jarman, "From war to peace? Changing patterns of violence in Northern Ireland, 1990-2003," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16, no.3 (2004): 421.

[258] McDowell, Braniff, and Murphy, *Spacing commemorative-related violence in Northern Ireland,* 236.

Figure 2.11: Picture of 12th July Protestors holding GARC posters on the Crumlin Road in Ardoyne, July 2016.
Source: Image taken from the Irish News.[259]

Ethno-sectarian segregation in North Belfast remains a reality; communities live rigidly apart but in very close proximity, a fact that exacerbates territorialism and is reflected in the spatial realities for the Ardoyne and bordering Woodvale communities.[260] As Seán, a man in his 80s from Ardoyne, said, "It's never an interface until the marching season, then you start butting heads with each other, whereas if there had of been a moratorium on marching seasons, then they would never have happened." Violence at the Ardoyne-Woodvale interface usually only happens on a large-scale during periods of increased tension as stated above, this tended to occur cyclically during the marching season, particularly on the 12th of July. The parading route traditionally commenced at Ligoneil Orange Hall and

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[259] Suzanne Breen, "Residents to protest against agreed Orange Order parade at Ardoyne in Belfast," *Belfast Telegraph*, September 28, 2016. https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/residents-to-protest-against-agreed-orange-order-parade-at-ardoyne-in-belfast/35085152.html

[260] Sara Dybris McQuaid, "Parading Memory and Re-membering Conflict: Collective Memory in Transition in Northern Ireland," *International J Polit Cult Soc* 30 (2017): 33.

marched down the Crumlin Road past the Ardoyne shops to meet other bands at Carlisle Circus. However, since 2016, the parade has been rerouted at Ardoyne Shops to avoid going past Holy Cross Church which has resulted in a significant decrease in tension and violence. Seán confirmed, “the parade was a source of aggravation and tension, and without it, the violence has lessened.” In July 2023 I attended the parade and observed no violence or tension at Ardoyne Shops, the parade made its way to Carlisle Circus without protest**.** The empirical research and lived experiences discussed in this section demonstrate that NI society’s divided nature is exacerbated at times of increased tension, generally coinciding with commemorative events, most notably Orange Order 12th of July parades. Positive aspects of participation in commemorations strengthen social bonds and solidify collective or social identity through cognitive and habit memory. Yet, the divided nature of NI society means that reinforced place-based commemorative rituals and performances are frequently attended by violence and, even in more quiescent times, promote and perpetuate divisions to later generations.

Visible Memory

Visible markers come as physical pieces of conflict architecture, such as “Peace Walls,” or as community-orientated symbolism like flags, painted kerbstones, murals, and graffiti. Invisible memory manifests in personal boundary markers, cognitive maps and private memories that individuals associate with such sites. This section addresses visible memory whereas a later section will consider manifestations of invisible memory as defined above.

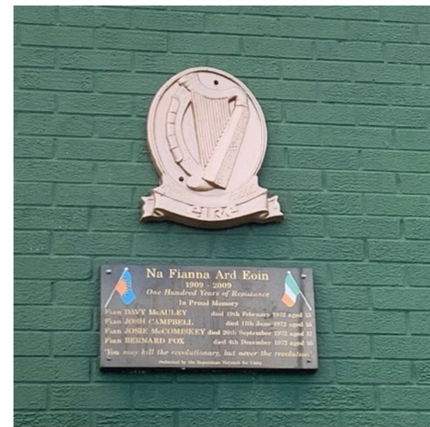

Figure 2.12: Pictures of the Na Fianna Éireann mural, Berwick Road, Ardoyne.
Source: Photographs taken by Eimear Rosato, June 2023.

Figure 2.13: Picture of a commemorative Wall on Herbert Street, Ardoyne.
Source: Photograph taken by Eimear Rosato, June 2023.

As acts of counter-memory, communities like Ardoyne and the Greater Shankill area have greatly emphasised memorialisation, from plaques, murals, and gardens of reflection. These visible physical artifacts are constructed into the built environment and act as memory

prompts, akin to Nora's idea of *lieux de mémoire*. Examples include plaques found on the Berwick Road that commemorate Fianna Boys killed in the 1970s (Figure 2.12 above) or plaques along Butler Way that depict conflict-related dead, including Sammy McLarnon and Michael Lynch (Figure 2.13 above), the first two members of the Ardoyne community killed in August 1969. As Rolston notes, these plaques articulate terrible loss; they invite the onlooker to remember, think, question, or even challenge and contest the past.[261] As displayed in Figure 2.13, the plaques on Butler Way are above a quote by Gen P.H. Pearse,

> Believe that we too love freedom and desire it. To us, it is more than anything else in the world. If you strike us down now, we shall rise again and renew the fight. You cannot conquer Ireland; You cannot extinguish the Irish passion for freedom. If our deed has not been sufficient to win freedom, then our children will win it by a better deed.

The iconography on this commemorative wall is also indicative of Republican military involvement, with two silhouettes of military men with guns, bowing their heads in reflection of those who have died, with two Irish flags waving above them (the official Irish tricolour and the Sunburst flag, which represents the youth wing of the IRA, Fianna na hÉireann).

Figure 2.14: Picture of the Garden of Reflection, Ardoyne.
Source: Photograph taken by Eimear Rosato, May 2022.

[261] Bill Rolston, "Ambushed by Memory: Post-Conflict Popular Memorialisation in Northern Ireland," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 12, no.2 (2020): 8.

Of note, civilians Sammy McLarnon and Michael Lynch's plaques sit outside these symbols of militant Republicanism.[262] In this small space that no longer shows physical signs of the original incidents, there is a high concentration of unmissable memorials that provide an insight into the impact of the conflict on the community.[263] Opposite the wall is a Garden of Reflection (figure 2.14), unveiled in 2016 during the centenary anniversary of the Easter Rising. The Garden of Reflection was created by the Ardoyne, Bone, and Ligoniel Heritage Association (ABLHA). It is described as a 'Republican family' project with significant input from IRA ex-prisoners. The central plaque displays the names of over 130 people who died due to the conflict, from IRA members to political activists, to ordinary civilians from Ardoyne, the Oldpark, and Ligoniel communities.[264] One of the participants in this project was involved in creating several of these Republican commemorative sites.[265] Below is a description and explanation of the Garden of Reflection:

> The community paid for that, we argued that we didn't want to apply for grants. That was a waste ground…. and it was bad, but we thought it would be a nice site for a Garden of remembrance and reflection. We were adamant we didn't want funding because then you are beholden to them, it's their property, they financed it. So, it cost approximately £160, 000 and every penny of that was raised in the community, so the community owns the garden.
> ER- and who upkeeps it?
> Participant- we do, the ex-prisoners.
> ER- and can I ask, when I went round the other day, there's the main bit, so is that what you meant by the role of honour? Because then there's the bit on the ground.
> Participant- that's people who died of natural causes… from a Republican background. Now the people buy them themselves and can request to have a wee plaque in memory of their loved ones. Now some are volunteers who died of natural

[262] I am unclear the reasons behind this, it could potentially be as requested from the families as their deaths occurred in August 1969, at the very beginning of the Troubles.

[263] Rosato, Eimear, and Patricia Lundy. "Shifting memory: place, and intra-community struggle 25 years after the Good Friday Agreement." *Space and Polity* (2023): 11.

[264] Rosato, Eimear, and Patricia Lundy. "Shifting memory: place, and intra-community struggle 25 years after the Good Friday Agreement," *Space and Polity* (2023): 8.

[265] I have purposely chosen not to identify which Interviewee this person is, to further insure their anonymity.

> causes, and we put Óglach[266] beside them. Now you'll see there's three distinctions - the volunteers who died of natural causes, the Republican activists who would be out canvasing for Sinn Féin and supporting rallies and things like that, and you have the patrons, the Republican patrons, now that is very broad, that could incorporate people who held weapons for you, and nobody knew they held weapons, people who fed volunteers they're known as patrons. The only ones that we would object to, because you see if you threw a stone in defence of your area you're a Republican, and the only ones we would deny the right to have a plaque there, is somebody who was a known informant or an agent, their family would be told in a nice way, no I don't think that would be acceptable by the community.
> ER- do you think that's important?
> Participant- I think that's very important, it keeps the flame lit. Now there's other things you can do, but it's important to the people who- the older generation, or not so older generation. I take her, [his dog], every morning for a walk, and I've walked up there at half 7, and there's someone just sitting there on the bench and using that garden just thinking of their loved ones who died by the Loyalists or maybe IRA volunteer families. So, it's serving a purpose that way. It's also from a Republican point of view, no matter what happened 50 years ago, you aren't forgotten, and in this 50th anniversary, we have done something like 8 [commemorations] from January; 1972 was a very, very, bad year for us. But we've got it, and they've been well attended. It's serving its purpose.[267]

The Garden acts as a site of remembrance, located in the historically symbolic Old Ardoyne, built as a space to reflect and acknowledge personal and collective loss. For Róisín, "the new garden of remembrance in Ardoyne is absolutely beautiful, created by local people, maintained by local people, and it's where the commemorations take place on Easter Tuesday as well as any other commemorations that come up." When I asked her why the site's location was so important, she said, "Old Ardoyne is the birthplace of the beginning of the Troubles in Ardoyne." The site remains an important focal point of shared memory for the people of Ardoyne, which is reinforced during times of commemoration, reflecting Assmann and Czaplicka's concept of cultural memory, in which past events' memory is maintained through

[266] Óglach in Irish means volunteer.

[267] The ex- Prisoner's of War (hereafter the ex-POW's) are those involved in the mainstream Republican movement, in connection with Sinn Féin. Within the dissident Republican organisation there are members who are ex-prisoners but do not partake in the ex-POW organisation and are therefore for the premise of this thesis, not included within the phrase 'ex-POWs.'

cultural formations (plaques, monuments etc.) that provide a continued basis for group identity.[268] For Paul Connerton, a society's collective (or social) memory gains legitimacy through the two interlinking social activities or commemorative ceremonies and bodily practices. These, he argues, are intentional acts of shared memory preservation.[269] We see this played out in the various commemorative and cultural events in Northern Ireland, such as the Garden of Reflection and the commemorative parade on Easter Tuesday, continuously link the past and present.

Murals

Considering both Lefebvre and Massey's conceptualisations around the social and political production of space, we must acknowledge the formation of place originally. As previously mentioned, physically, Ardoyne consists largely of rows of terraced housing mostly erected in the 1930s during industrial development. At the end of each row of houses is a gable wall, many of which feature murals or commemorative plaques, where survivors or community members commemorate the dead and tell stories of atrocities and injustice. Such murals and commemorative walls were commonplace during the conflict and continue to be preserved or newly constructed during the period of transition to peace. The political transition of Ardoyne can be tracked in the replacement of murals every few years, with new images and themes reflecting the current political or cultural context. Murals communicate both consciously and subconsciously to community members, while they also function as identifiers of territory, proclaiming the identity of the community who hosts them. For example, the murals along the Shankill Road of the Monarchy, King William III, and of Loyalist paramilitary groups such as the UDA, UVF, UFRF, etc. unmistakably signify the political affiliation of that community as

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[268] Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 134.

[269] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

PUL. At the same time, the murals in Ardoyne of 1916, 1916 martyr Seán MacDiarmuid, the Great Famine of 1845-50, Kickhams GAA, and the Virgin Mary all signify facets of the CNR's cultural and historical identity. Shirlow and Murtagh found murals to be an illustration of "territorial power," the choice of certain political, social, and culturally important events used to present the dominant sense of territorial belonging as well as expressing what Lefebvre would have interpreted as sites of active struggle and political and cultural resistance.[270] At the same time, they uphold, reinforce and maintain the community's link between the past and the present.

The role of murals as memory carriers and prompts to collective historical awareness are captured by Cathal, a 20-year-old from Ardoyne. "With the murals, stuff happened there so when people walk past, they may ask an older person 'what happened?' so they're then talking about it, and then they're thinking about it, it's passed on like a ripple effect." Gráinne, a 23-year-old, worried about this intergenerational ripple effect, "I would struggle to find its purpose, I don't really know if I agree with the political ones because like is that just starting something?" The juxtaposition of the two divergent attitudes above in respect of the value of murals in the post-conflict context reinforces that they are not universally regarded or accepted even within communities. Some view them positively as a means to ensure that the community 'never forget' the horrors of the Troubles by acknowledging moments that shaped the history of the community and Nationalist cause and remembrance of community members who died in the conflict. On the other hand, some worry that this kind of obsessive historical awareness and daily reminders of the Troubles keep the present-day community shrouded in the shadow of the violent past. Others reflected that historical awareness is a more ambiguous issue. Caoimhe, a 22-year-old from Ardoyne noted: "the Troubles are deeply rooted in Ardoyne, I think it's okay to remember our history, and maybe people want to pass that onto

[270] Shirlow and Murtagh, *Belfast*, 68.

their children, but I suppose it's a two-way thing, and puts something in young people's minds, but that could be a good thing or a bad thing- good thing because they know their history but a bad thing because maybe it plants a seed."

Murals and their messages lack a consistent interpretation across the different generations. Indeed, within Ardoyne, *intra-community* tensions and power struggles exist between different sets of memory activists in the community.[271] Numerous scholars such as O'Dowd, McKnight, Wang, Weedon and Jordan have noted that while the memory of the past can bind community members together, creating a sense of intra-group identity, it can also facilitate polarisation within and between communities in the politics of urban space.[272] To understand the contested nature of memory or the struggle over the control of the narrative, it is useful to apply the concept of memory activist/ entrepreneur.[273] In the context of Ardoyne, the two major memory activist groups are the ex-POWs who designed, maintain, and utilise the Garden of Reflection (figure 2.12), rival 'dissident Republican groups' such as the Republican Network for Unity (RNU), who hold their own Easter commemorative events,

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[271] Rosato and Lundy "Shifting memory: place and intra-community struggle 25 years after the Good Friday Agreement." Space and Polity (2023): 1-23. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562576.2023.2260152

[272] Liam O'Dowd and M. McKnight, "Urban intersections: Religion and violence in Belfast," *Space and Polity* 17, no.3 (2013): 357–376. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562576.2013.850823; Q. Wang, "On the cultural constitution of collective memory," *Memory* 16 no.3 (2008): 305–317. https://doi.org/10.1080/09658210701801467; Chris Weedon and G. Jordan, "Collective memory: theory and politics," *Social Semiotics* 22, no.2 (2012): 143–153. doi:10.1080/10350330.2012.664969

[273] Jeffery Olick and Joyce Robbins previously used the term 'memory entrepreneurs' to denote active, local-level individuals who are crucial to constructing memory narratives and representations of the past shaped by political and social issues. Developing further McQuaid and Gutman and Wustenberg, re-define the concept to 'memory activists' as an 'agent (individual or group) who strategically commemorates the past in order to publicly address the dominant perception of it.' Guterman and Wustenberg argue that this term is essential for a comprehensive understanding of how memory from below contributes to political transformation. Jeffery Olick and Joyce Robbins (1998, p. 128)/ McQuaid (2019); Gutman and Wustenberg (2021, 2).

and have their own murals and plaques (such as discussed in figure 2.13). Claiming a monopoly over the "symbolic capital of Republican memory" has become increasingly central to the political agendas of both mainstream (i.e. linked to Sinn Féin and thus support the GFA) Republicans and 'dissident' Republican groups.[274] Rolston considers how memory in the context of post-conflict or transitioning societies can be heavily contested, with multiple memory activists pursuing their own agendas for preserving their memories and communities' memories in the public space.[275] This rivalry drives current commemorative events in Ardoyne giving rise to disputes over memory between different Republican groups (pro and anti-GFA). In defence of the legitimacy of ex-POW memorials and murals, Seán a man in his 80s from Ardoyne, argued that without them, history would be rewritten, "see if you didn't have them, some clown would come along and airbrush that and put their interpretation on it." When asked about the influence of dissident Republicans, Matthew, a man in his 60s from Ardoyne, stated the following:

> I think their expression is becoming more dominant, but I don't think it mirrors the ground, I think in many ways you're seeing a need or desire to say we are still here... My experience is that some who used to be quite prominent [in the Republican movement] are now no longer involved, so there's been a movement away... Ardoyne has a much greater representation of dissident Republicans, but over the last few years, my experience is that it is becoming less so. Now you're still getting the murals… My opinion, and I could be wrong, within the dissident movement, there are a portion of them who are every bit as committed as the Shinners [Sinn Féin] were right down the line, they believe in armed struggle, they believe an all-Ireland will come and will only come through an armed struggle.... within the Republican communities you have people who disagree with the GFA and will never accept it. Like with armed struggle, they are entitled to that opinion… Difficulty is, people say all paramilitaries are gangsters and they're not, I come from Ardoyne I know them *laughs*, very very decent people, it's just what they believe…. What's really changed is the whole drug thing.

[274] K. Brown and A. Grant, "A lens over conflicted memory: Surveying 'Troubles' commemoration
in Northern Ireland," *Irish Political Studies* 31, no.1 (2016): 139–162. https://doi.org/10.1080/07907184.2015.1126925151

[275] Bill Rolston, "Ambushed by memory: Post-Conflict Popular Memorialisation in Northern Ireland," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 14, no.2 (2020): 320–339. https://doi.org/doi: 10.1093/ijtj/ijaa004

When asked the same question, Orlaith a woman in her 50s from Ardoyne, highlighted the age of the members of dissident groups,

> Some of them just want to keep things riled up, and I don't understand why because the same people who are in it, they are young, they haven't went through the Troubles as we knew it, so they are thinking of things along the lines of post-Brexit and 'don't let them have their way,' and I understand all that. They would start things up, but to be honest with you, I don't think they have it in them to follow it through. They just wouldn't, and they would just end up starting shit over again that's not called for and as much as I didn't agree with the GFA to be honest with you, I really didn't, and as much as I didn't agree, I just wouldn't, for my own kids sake, want to see it that bad again. And then, like if you have a wee group that very well could start anything up, it's just not fair. It's not.

Conflict-related commemoration can also serve a presentist political function, in which the memory activists consciously or not are engaged in political activity that reflects and shapes the post-GFA environment. As noted, what separates the two-memory activist groups is their respective positions on the GFA, with so-called dissidents believing that the majority faction of the Republican movement that ended its armed struggle and accepted the GFA essentially capitulated to the British State. For these critics of the GFA, the armed struggle is far from over given that, in their view, NI Nationalists continue to live under occupation in a partitioned Ireland. For their part, the ex-POW's message focuses more on movement cohesion and accepts a continuation of the Republican struggle for a united Ireland through political means, similar to that advocated by Sinn Féin. Memorialisation in Ardoyne thus reflects the contested and fractured nature of post-Troubles Republicanism. Murals and street plaques are the space where the tensions and struggles between these divergent political and memory traditions are at their sharpest. Examples of competing murals, plaques, and commemorative events denote the struggle for control over the narrative and memory of the Troubles and its meaning for the community. They have a very different message to those of the RNU, which also ties back to a longer history of Republicanism with the Fianna Boys but through commemorating those who have died. The RNU also highlights ongoing issues such

as the ‘internment of political prisoners,’ the mural in Figure 2.15, a red and black image of hands in chains with a man in the middle holding a flag “cogús” (which translates to conscience); at the bottom, in capital letters, it states: “END INTERNMENT – Cogús.” In July/August 2022, RNU replaced the latter two murals with a Palestinian solidarity image with the caption – “Ardoyne stand with the people of Palestine” (Figure 2.16). The photograph shows Israeli soldiers detaining a young Palestinian man, an image that echoes the past in the collective memory of residents in Ardoyne. There have long been solidarities between Nationalist/ Republican communities in the North of Ireland and Palestine. These have intensified since October 2023. These solidarities are grounded in a history of shared struggle, violence and resistance linked to Britain’s role and legacy in the respective countries. The language surrounding these solidarities focused on the anti-colonial struggles. The messaging in the murals illustrates that and it illuminates the continued and ongoing anti-colonial struggle of Republicans against the occupying forces; the war is not yet over.[276]

Figure 2.15: Picture of the RNU End Internment mural on the Berwick Road, July 2023. Image taken by Eimear Rosato.

Figure 2.16: Picture of the RUN Palestine mural on the Berwick Road, Ardoyne, July 2023, Image taken by Eimear Rosato.

[276] This was erected in August 2022.

The RNU's linking back to longer histories of Republicanism also highlights the power struggle over controlling the narrative and memory. Who has the right to this long history? The above section has teased out the importance of space and intra-community conflict regarding the narrative of the Troubles and who the 'true' custodians of Republicanism and the memories of the Troubles are or should be. As the interviews from the ceasefire generation show, there are frustrations with the messages communicated. Gerard, a 19-year-old from Ardoyne, argued, "So much work is being done here to put the past in the past, but there's a small minority who won't let it go and bring it into the present, they reignite it… like the younger ones are going to see that [mural] and ask what it means, then they're thinking about it and what happened and all. Instead of just getting a clean slate from here on in." Acknowledging that murals communicate political messaging and contribute to the intergenerational transmission of memories, this participant advocates for a movement against murals and reigniting issues which is discussed further in Chapter Six.

Beyond the more obvious political rivalry between Republican groups, one can also detect different versions of the community's 'shared' memory and history, which are reflected in the divergent thematic emphases of different murals. For example, commemorative images of the Easter Rising (Figure 2.17) stress the longer history of Republicanism, whereas the mural of the Virgin Mary (Figure 2.18) highlights the religious nature and devotion to Catholicism of many of the Ardoyne residents. Other murals eschew political and religious themes for culturally significant moments for the people of Ardoyne, such as figure 3.20, which portrays the annual guider race during the Ardoyne Fleadh that includes key community figures.[277] Other culturally significant murals are those dedicated to sports, such as the Ard Eoin Kickhams (Figure 2.19) and the Joe 'The Goal' Gormley (Figure 2.21), a local football player. These murals speak to this small community's joy and pride in sporting

[277] A guider is a handmade type of go-kart.

achievement and point to what is important to members of the Ardoyne community outside of the conflict.

Figure 2.17: Picture of the Easter Rising Mural on the Berwick Road, Ardoyne, August 2023. Image taken by Eimear Rosato.

Figure 2.18: Picture of the Virgin Mary on the Berwick Road, Ardoyne, 2018. Source: taken by Jens Schwarz.[278]

Figure 2.19: Picture of Ard Eoin GAA Mural on Havana Way, Ardoyne, August 2023. Image taken by Eimear Rosato.

Figure 2.20: Picture of the Ardoyne Guider Mural on the Havana Way, Ardoyne. August 2023. Image taken by Eimear Rosato.

278 Jens Schwarz, "Ardoyne," Thummuns, https://www.themmuns.net/ardoyne/

Figure 2.21: Picture of Joe 'The Goal' Gormley Mural on the Berwick Road, Ardoyne. August 2023. Image taken by Eimear Rosato.

At this juncture it is important to reflect on the role of plaques, murals, and artefacts of the past in the built environment. Many participants in the project talked about how the community should 'never forget' what happened. This is articulated best by Seán, a man in his 80s from Ardoyne.

> ER- do you think it does good to remember?
> Seán- yea, it does, it's just not to forget. Now, I would never forget, do you understand me? I would never forget any of them…I go down there [Garden of Reflection], and I sometimes would go to the commemorations, but most of those times, I would have gone to the commemoration because I don't have any other sort of option; it was because of the timing and whatnot… I went up to the graveyard, and I can just go up there by myself. Just because you don't wave the flag doesn't mean you forget or you ever would forget…Yes absolutely, go up and sit in the garden of reflection. See to reflect on what's happened it's very, very, crucial, I would say, because when you reflect, you are looking back on what happened and what not and whatever mistake or whatever happened you could avoid the same in the future, reflection is a good thing, it really is. But you don't have to be demonstrative. Now a lot of people, Eimear I would emphasise this, most of my comrades would disagree with me, I understand this, but that's my opinion.
> ER- do you think some of the marches or commemorations are, you used the word demonstrative?
> Seán- no see, you gotta understand the politics of it, which you do, right, because they're rubbing it in your face all the time, the lambeg drum[279] *echos the dum beat noise*. 'We own this place we have our own way,' no you don't and that's why I said to you about a moratorium. But it would never happen I know that, I absolutely know that.

[279] The Lambeg drum is a large drum, beaten with curved malacca canes, traditionally used by Unionist band members and the Orange order. A replica can be seen in figure _.

Seán talked at length about his desire for a moratorium on all parades and how it should have been part of the Good Friday Agreement negotiations. He believes that this would ease many of the issues facing NI. Similarly, Matthew questioned the need for more plaques and commemorations,

> There's too many, there's almost as if you can over commemorate something so that it becomes meaningless. I think the garden was an attempt to consolidate it all and have one space, but people like their own individual ones, so you'll still see the individual ones around the place. The worst thing to do you tell people to get over it, and I don't mean that, but at what stage do you start moving on? There's the memorial, we don't need all the individual ones around the place, let's have a much more healthy signature around the place, rather than symbols of death everywhere, let's have one that's meaningful for everyone. But again, that could be completely wrong.

However, Rose, a woman in her early 60s from Ardoyne (who is Matthew's sister), had a more family-focused approach to the commemorations. "Well to the families it will be different, but to someone who doesn't have any family or immediate family who died, it's easier for me to say who never had a brother than blew himself up or shot or who was in active service and killed, but maybe someone who had that brother maybe it's a case of they get peace… maybe it helps their grief. It probably does need to be acknowledged and a garden of reflection is the place where it's in your own community not going into anyone else's territory." For some interviewees, particularly former combatants, commemoration is crucial. As noted by Seán and the anonymous participant, "we don't allow our patriot dead in this area to be forgotten. We never allow that to pass." These quotations indicate the lack of a cohesive view, even within the same community and within families, on the practice of commemorations, which is illustrative of the sensitive nature of legacy issues.

Commemorations are accompanied by heightened emotions and can often be contentious given the divisions within society, making them difficult for the different generations to navigate. The ceasefire generation, when asked, had polarising views on commemorations. John, an 18-year-old from Ardoyne said, "Murals, GOR etc it builds on the idea of us against them… When I take a step back and look at it, I become entrenched in this

mentality; it's just going to have a detrimental impact generally, and I guess people can't, or don't have the ability or aren't told to question, its acceptance." Méabh was more concerned with the sectarian nature of some murals and commemorations, "because with the conflict historically you're never ever gonna be able to change what happens [murals being erected], if murals want to commemorate, things like Irish history should be looked at, and it should be expressed, it is just having an understanding of it. If it's something that's going to affect someone, if it's aimed at someone or at another group then no, I don't think it's acceptable. Some of them obvious ones, like Tigers Bay, are guns, etc. that's going to affect the young people down there it's going to put sectarianism out there."[280] Cathal, a 20-year-old from Ardoyne, agreed that, "Place will always have that effect. The murals have an impact because of the conflict, and that's what people remember it by, so that's why it will always stay." Others want a clean slate, such as Gerard, a 19-year-old from Ardoyne, who advocated that they, "Put something positive there to support the community." Similarly, Méabh, Gerard and Cathal all argued that the murals promote sectarianism and a negative preoccupation with the memory of the Troubles. This directly opposes those of the older generations, especially those involved in the Troubles or who lost family members and loved ones. However, this desire to move on was not shared universally by everyone in the ceasefire generation. Gráinne, a 22-year-old from Ardoyne, felt conflicted,

> I think they're an important part of our history, and they have to be respected for that. It's good for remembering, but does it need to be…. I dunno I've never thought about it. I don't know if people would mind if it came away. I think people have their own memories of it, even someone who wasn't involved in it, they will remember how it felt to grow up in the community around that time. The only way forward for Ardoyne is to move forward. If you're going to reflect on 10 or 15 years ago, you're just going to get as annoyed now as you were then. I think you need to push forward with your life.

[280] Tigers Bay is a Protestant Unionist Loyalist area in North Belfast, closer to the docks.

Here, Gráinne indicates the tension between a desire to move on from the past even as memories remain with the older generations regardless of the presence or absence of murals.

Sometimes, the debate over murals focused on details of individual examples that oversimplified or misrepresented aspects of the past in some community members' minds. Sinéad raised objections about a particular mural commemorating Martin Meehan.[281] "There was a mural put up of Martin Meehan when he died, it was a picture of him painted with a gun in his hand, and he was more than that, he worked with and for a lot more than guns. He worked with a lot of people, and he made changes and I think they could have put up a better picture instead of standing with a gun. I think that Ardoyne is moving forward with the cultural murals, I think it's far nicer to see." Sinéad's comments illustrate the contested nature of memory, the battle over the dead and the appropriation of memory to further a cause, potentially without the individual concerned consent. It also demonstrates how commemorative work is a vehicle to transmit memory across the generations and the role it plays in perpetuating and glorifying the Troubles. Members of the ceasefire generation appear conflicted in wanting to move forward while at the same time acknowledging the importance of commemoration and memory work within communities.

As noted, murals play a major role in commemorating the Troubles and in the visibility of memory and history of struggle, but they also reflect local issues. For example, regarding the contentious issue of parading, in 2016, the Greater Ardoyne Residents Committee (GARC) erected a mural/ sign 'Take the alternative route' detailing the community's issues around the Orange Order parade route. As the next section sets out, the parading tradition in NI is highly contentious and highlights issues around power and space, while at the same time solidifies social bonds around group identity.

[281] Martin Meehan was an Irish Republican and former volunteer in the Provisional Irish Republican Army, born in 1945 in Ardoyne and died in 2007. Meehan spent eighteen years in prison during the Troubles. He then became a leading member of Sinn Féin.

Figure 2.22: Picture of a poster/ mural on Flax Street, Ardoyne from 2016. I
Source: Picture taken by Eimear Rosato.

<u>Parading</u>

Parading or marching is another aspect of visible and place-based memory central to the communication of memories in Northern Ireland. In NI, according to Alex, who is 20 years old and from the Shankill, "there are two seasons, marching season and not marching season." April to August each year encompasses a time of practicing and marching for the Unionist and Loyalist community. During this period the St Patrick's Day Parade and Easter commemorations take place in the Nationalist and Republican communities. Parades and commemorative rituals are used in inter-communal competition for domination of space and in the intra-communal struggle for domination of community. They are also part of both communities negotiation of peace.[282] Parades are illustrative cases of culture as a site of struggle and central to the broader identity-making culture.[283] As noted below, parades also play a key role in transmitting memory across the generations.

[282] Dybris McQuaid, "Parading memory and remembering," 24.

[283] Dybris McQuaid, "Parading memory and remembering," 25.

During 2023 I attended various parades and marches, including a St Patrick's Day city centre parade; a dissident Republican commemoration on Easter Saturday (8th April 2023); the mainstream Republican ex-POW led Easter Tuesday (11th April 2023) commemoration in Ardoyne; and lastly, the 12th of July Orange Order marches at Carlisle Circus in North Belfast. The act of marching or parading also features other forms of communication such as songs, imagery, and speeches. I observed, heard, saw, and captured these forms of commemoration first-hand and on my camera and audio recording device. In 2023 there were two Easter commemorations, the dissident Republican march along the Falls Road and the mainstream Republican ex-POW-led parade in Ardoyne, although both part of the Republican tradition these were very different experiences. There were similarities in how the bands were dressed in militaristic uniforms (combat boots and berets), in the tunes they played, such as Grace, Seán South from Garryowen, and Fields of Athenry, and in the instruments used (mostly flutes and drums). The differentiation arose in the iconography. At the Ardoyne parade (figure 3.24), they carried county flags and the Irish tricolour, the flag of Irish nationalism, and the sun burnt flag. However, whilst the dissident Republican march included some of the same flags, they also included more political banners such as 'Irish Prisoners Welfare Association' and 'We serve no King nor President but the Revolution 1871-1916' (figure 2.25). Some of those carrying such banners covered their faces with hats, sunglasses, and black scarves. Focusing on the current political prisoners (figure 2.26), the dissident parade continued to reinforce how the past is not history and the historic struggles continue in the present. This contrasted significantly with the more reflective, nostalgic Ardoyne commemoration. In the dissident event, individuals active in ongoing political struggles adopted hierarchical positions within the parade.[284] For the dissident community, the parade

[284] These individuals will remain nameless, but as known dissident Republicans and their beliefs are reflected in their literature and social media presence.

communicated memories of earlier installments in the ongoing struggles. Interestingly, it went beyond a form of memorialisation or commemoration of the past and developed into a recruitment vehicle for the dissident political objectives. For both dissident and mainstream Republican groups, the act of parading along the Falls Road and in Ardoyne respectively, symbolised the localised nature of the struggle and its memory. Both featured the same kinds of rituals such as laying of wreaths by family members and walking through the streets that were formerly spaces of war and violence. The post-conflict freedom to parade and march peacefully whilst also openly commemorating the paramilitary as well as civilian dead, is a significant contrast to earlier periods when such parades were banned, suppressed by the state, and/or attracted controversial counter protests by Unionists.

Figure 2.23: Picture of the Ardoyne Easter Commemoration Parade.
Source: Photograph taken by Eimear Rosato, April 2023.

Figure 2.24: Picture of the alleged dissident Republican Easter Commemoration Parade on the Falls Road, West Belfast.
Source: Photograph taken by Eimear Rosato, April 2023.

Figure 2.25: Photograph of the alleged dissident Republican Easter Commemoration Parade, image shows a band, waving Irish Nationalist Flags, and a banner for the Irish Prisoners Welfare Association.
Source: Photograph taken by Eimear Rosato, April 2023.

Figure 2.26: Picture of the apparent dissident Republican Easter Commemoration Parade.
Source: Photograph taken by Eimear Rosato, April 2023.

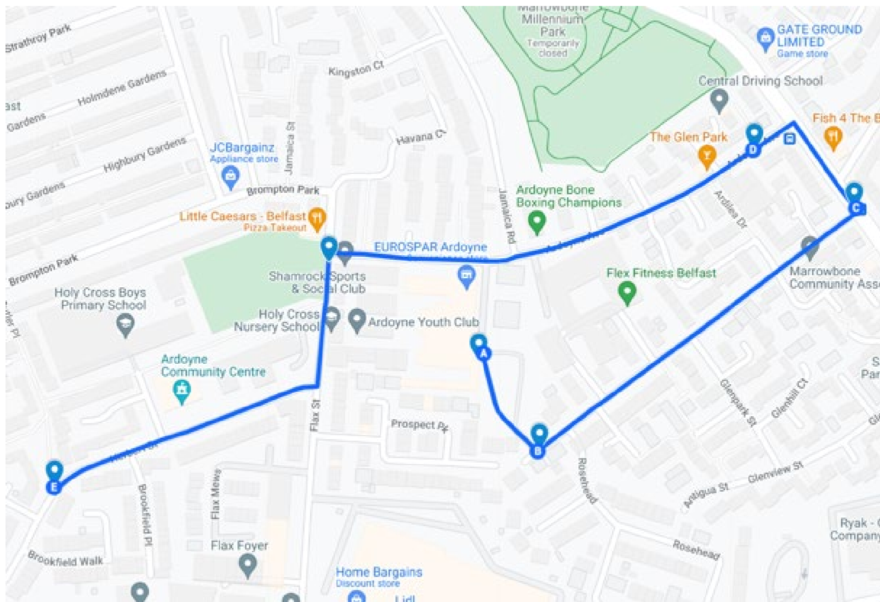

Figure 2.27: Map of the route that the ex-POW Ardoyne Easter Commemoration Parade took. Source: Map created by Eimear Rosato on Google Maps.

Figure 2.28: Picture of the ex-POW Ardoyne Easter Commemoration march. Source: Photograph taken by Eimear Rosato, April 2023.

The act of walking reinforces a connection to space, it is thus worthwhile to consider the specific route that one of the Republican Easter Rising parades followed. In the context of the Ardoyne Easter Tuesday parade, the annual route began at the Flax Centre (Figure 2.28 Point A) and ended at the Garden of Reflection (Figure 2.28, Point E), with speeches from Sinn Féin North Belfast Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and (now) Councillors such as Nichola Begley, Ryan Murphy, and Tomás O'Neill, alongside a rollcall of all ninety-nine local people who lost their lives during the conflict. The large crowd

represented the different generations, from those who remember life before the Troubles, to those who were born during and lived through the conflict, to those born after the GFA, including very young children and even babies. During the commemoration, victims' families were invited to lay wreaths at the foot of the main commemorative plaque whilst many others stood waiting to hear their loved ones' names read aloud. There was an intergenerational aspect to those involved in the commemoration, a few of the banner holders were in their 20s, and those who read aloud the roll call were as young as eighteen. Including the ceasefire generation and younger in the commemoration ensures the passing down of history and their inclusion within the collective identity.

Parading in NI today draws on and reframes collective memories through ritualised practices that reflect identity politics and cultural traditions in a society undergoing a difficult transition from war to peace and from a history of discrimination to cross-community power-sharing.[285] The cultural memory is based on fixed points in the past, these cultural moments are cast in symbols, represented in oral myths or in writings performed.[286] Parades provide a different form of cultural memory and commemoration, encompassing social memories woven together of a more mythical shared past. As McQuaid states, it is not difficult to see the binding function of parades in giving expression to collective or social identities.[287] The Protestant parading tradition is strong and a focal aspect of the community, especially around music. The sense of community was palatable at the 12th July parade I attended in July 2023. According to the Parades Commission, in 2014 currently 59 % of parades are organised by

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[285] Dybris McQuaid, "Parading memory and remembering," 24.

[286] Jan Assmann, (2010). "Communicative and cultural memory," in *Cultural memory studies: an international and interdisciplinary handbook*, eds. A. Erll and A. Nünning, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 113.

[287] Dybris McQuaid, "Parading memory and remembering," 25.

"broad Unionist" in comparison with 3% defined as "broad Nationalist," while the remaining 38 % are described as "other," i.e. church, charity, sport.[288] However, within the CNR community there is a long history of 'politics in the street' as utilised by the Civil Rights Movement, but also found in the defense of the community, and in protest movements such as internment (1971) and the hunger strikes (1981).[289]

Each generation appears to have a distinctive relationship and experience with parading. Róisín, a woman in her early 60s from Ardoyne, reflected on how the cancellation of commemorations due to COVID-19 underscored the meaning that the Easter parades had unconsciously assumed for her over her lifetime, "it becomes part of your makeup whether you realised it or not." For Róisín and Anne, these commemorations are an important aspect of remembering and honouring the dead. Anne, a woman in her 60s from Ardoyne, "It is nice to remember, but I think as the years are going on they are dwindling, like years ago it be the whole district was packed, and there would be a march, and now it's not like that... I think people are dying off. When I go, it's my two grandkids and my daughter, and they don't go to marches and lay wreaths...the younger generation just don't want to do it, whereas the older generation did. Like I say to my Grandkids and all, 'do you want to go round and lay your Grandas wreath?' 'nah I'm not going I'm not walking,' so I think it's just a generation thing, the people who of my generation who grew up who remember will be there."

When speaking to members of the ceasefire generation about parading, most discussed the fallout of the 12th of July parades without mentioning the Nationalist parades or marches. As mentioned previously in this chapter members of the Ardoyne community voiced frustrations and anger at the 12th of July parades in Ardoyne and for the violence which

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288 Parades Commission. "Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2014." (Belfast: HMSO, 2014), 8.

289 Bob Purdie. *Politics in the streets* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1990).

occurs, articulated by Gráinne, "Parades still going on, and everyone is entitled to believe in what they want, and I struggled a lot with the parading because of what it represents. Where my parents live, it's not a matter of, I have to go out of my house and walk to the front of the road to be annoyed, you open your blinds, and it's there. The reality of where they live is not even being able to get to the shop."

As McQuaid states, parading is an activity that is at once embodied, disembodied, and re-embodied, with consequences for how collective memory is exercised and generated.[290] These are spaces of intergenerational transmission as many men walk where their fathers and grandfathers once walked (discussed further in later chapters), often in the same bands. The traditional routes reinforce place-based memory, to walk where generations before have walked while holding flags and banners relating back to 1690 and the Battle of the Boyne, playing and singing songs celebrating King William III's victory (figure 2.30 from the parade). Ben, a 23-year-old young man from the Shankill, recalled, "Growing up it was the best day of the year." He reflected on how the bands mostly comprise of family members, fathers passing on the traditions to their sons. When Harry, a man in his 50s from the Shankill, considered the tension around the 12th he noted, "I suppose tension always built around the summer because of the bands, but when I grew up, when the bands left the 12th morning, they used to be huge, 15 or 16 bands leaving here to join the bigger parade. Like last 12th, there were two, so that changed." The parades have changed due to fewer people joining, the COVID-19 pandemic also reduced the number of parades which has had lasting impacts.

In July 2023 in the weeks leading up to the 12th a report was published by the Orange Order on shortening the route due to the level of anti-social behaviour and alcohol consumption by spectators. An article published by the *Irish News*, suggested the parade route could be shortened by six-miles and the field section could be axed "as part of a radical

[290] Dybris McQuaid, "Parading memory and remembering," 28.

overhaul." According to the article, the Orange Order undertook a review, "in the aftermath of the abysmal and unacceptable Twelfth of July in 2022." The anti-social behaviours focus on Shaftsbury Square in the city centre, where every year there are violent incidents, this year NI women's footballer Billie Simpson was arrested over an assault that took place on the 12th near Shaftsbury Square.[291] This year, eleven paramedics were attacked on the 11th night during the bonfires in Carrickfergus; they were punched, kicked, bitten, and spat at, with threats made on their lives, according to the BBC.[292] This opposes the family-orientated and cultural arguments that many band and Orange Order members make regarding the holiday's significance.

Figure 2.29: Picture of the PUL 12th July parade at Carlisle Circus North Belfast.
Source: Photograph taken by Eimear Rosato, 12th July 2023.

[291] Allan Preston, "Former Northern Ireland women's international Billie Simpson bailed over Twelfth assault," *The Irish News*, July 17, 2023. https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2023/07/17/news/former_northern_ireland_women_s_international_billie_simpson_bailed_over_twelfth_assault-3444122/ (accessed July 30, 2023).

[292] "Eleven paramedics attacked at bonfires on eve of Twelfth," *BBC News*, July 13, 2023. https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-66181670 (accessed July 30, 2023).

Figure 2.30: Picture of the PUL 12th July parade at Carlisle Circus North Belfast.
Source: Photograph taken by Eimear Rosato, 12th July 2023.

The section of the 12th of July parade I attended was mostly a joyous atmosphere amongst the spectators, with many attending with young children dressed up in red, white, and blue clothing, wearing ribbons and playing with toy drums and batons as seen in figure 2.31. The atmosphere was not dampened by a downpour of rain, with people taking shelter under scaffolding and even under one of the band banners (figure 2.32 and 2.33). Apart from a few male spectators, ranging from their early twenties to thirties, who wore Rangers FC jerseys and drank cans of Carling and Coors Lite at 10.30 am during the parade, this was mostly a family affair. The parade itself, the act of walking and celebrating the victory of the Battle of the Boyne, is a clear inheritor of identity, with many young children walking with their fathers and grandfathers who are Orange Order or marching band members alongside siblings and parents (Figure 3.30). This is a clear example of the role of commemoration and parading in forming or reinforcing social bonds and collective identity within a section of society. Charlie, a man in his 40s and a member of the Orange Order and an Apprentice Boys

band, explained to me that the 12th is about family, to walk where your father and grandfather walked, a performance of identity.

Figure 2.31: Picture of the PUL 12th July parade at Carlisle Circus North Belfast. Source: Photograph taken by Eimear Rosato, 12th July 2023.

Figure 2.32: Picture of the PUL 12th July parade at Carlisle Circus North Belfast. Source: Photograph taken by Eimear Rosato, 12th July 2023.

Invisible Memory

While the manifestations of commemoration are very visible and, in certain places, practically dominate the landscape, a further theme to emerge from the interviews was the invisible

nature of place-based memory. Folklorists like Manchán Magan argues that the land remembers; it speaks to us, reflecting back our own stories and memories and those of generations before us.[293] Magan finds that our sense of ourselves today is intertwined with our sense of place.[294] As noted at the beginning of this chapter, both the go-along interviews and the discussions regarding cognitive maps highlight how memory can find a home in certain streets, houses, entryways, stores, and even buildings that have been demolished, but the former site evokes memories. For individuals, these sites act as memory prompts to a private and therefore invisible memory embedded in the environment. A go-along interview with Michael, a 63-year-old man from Ardoyne highlighted the importance of place in his memory of the Troubles, "like streets, there's certain things about streets that always remind me of… like when we were down Jamaica Street, there it just hit me about that gun battle I was involved in… and then when we were walking down not far from there was a house there that reminded me of a family that lived there…" While walking through Jamaica Road, along the bottom of the Marrowbone Park, or as it is colloquially known, the Boney Heights, Michael recounted stories from his youth. "When me and my sister were like eight, and she was maybe ten, we were out playing on the Boney Heights, and it was getting dark and all of a sudden a gun battle started between the IRA and the Brits, we were yelling 'we are kids, we are kids let us down!', but they couldn't hear us over the guns. So we just lay as close to the ground as we could get and prayed to God we didn't get hit. When it all ended, we ran home, and my mammy was ragin.' We told her what happened, and she still gave us a wallop."

Memory embedded or interwoven with place can be subconscious or invisible, with no physical markings or remnants of the past visible to others, just the memories of those who

[293] Manchán Magan, *Listen to the land speak: A journey into the wisdom of what lies beneath us*. (Gill & Macmillan Ltd, 2022).

[294] Magan, The Land Speaks, 29.

lived through the Troubles or the stories they have passed on to the next generation. The sense of invisible memory and place became even more apparent as the go-along interview with Michael continued. During the interview, we walked through the streets of Old Ardoyne and made our way to the Garden of Reflection. As with other interviewees, Michael did not have much to say about the Garden itself, and he continued walking past into the streets of Old Ardoyne. In 1969 and 1971, homes in Ardoyne were burnt down and rebuilt. There are no longer rows of streets made up of industrial terraced housing, the 'new old Ardoyne' is now small, narrow cul-de-sacs. Michael noted that these cul-de-sacs "made it impossible to run through one door, through into the alleyways to escape the Brits." Elaine, a housing activist and long-time resident of Ardoyne in her late 70s, discussed how these narrow cul-de-sacs and closed peace-wall gates prevented quick access for ambulances and fire services. Here, place and design of the new streets acted as forms of control and continued community oppression. As Michael and I walked through the cul-de-sacs, he kept repeating, "I just expect it to be Old Ardoyne, even though I know it isn't." We walked past the League Bar, tucked in behind the houses; Michael stopped to tell me stories about the gendered nature of bars and social clubs in the area, the membership of many of which was exclusively male for many years. We stopped in Elmfield Street, looking down on the Garden of Reflection and upwards to the Crumlin Road and Holy Cross Church. He stood for a minute and then told me of the 'dragons' teeth' that used to stand tall at the top of the road as barricades, to prevent cars from getting into the area (Figure 2.34). Michael had lived in London for a few years in the '80s; when he was seventeen, his mother put him on the boat to England, fearing he would get shot if he stayed in Ardoyne. We were standing, he told me, in the exact spot he stood in 40 years before, where he watched his best friend get shot on his wedding day. This story exemplifies the invisible nature of conflict-related memory; no plaque commemorates how Michael ran and hid behind the dragon's teeth to pull his friend from the group of Loyalists who had shot

him. This memory exists only between Michael and this street. There is no plaque to commemorate or acknowledge that trauma because, as Michael said, "that was just everyday violence." We continued the interview, and along the Berwick Road (Figure 2.35), he stopped at nearly every street corner and told me more stories of violence. It is important to acknowledge the difference between the visible or public memory of plaques and commemorations, and the individual, personal memory of conflict-related trauma that witnessed and continues to reflect on acts of violence over the course of the conflict.

Figure 2.33: Picture of the "dragons teeth". On the Crumlin Road, June 2023.
Image taken by Eimear Rosato.

Figure 2.34: Picture of the Berwick Road, Ardoyne. June 2023.
Image taken by Eimear Rosato

Reflecting on the meaning of space and memory, Doreen Massey argues that places are always "already hybrid," open to a multiplicity of readings.[295] In essence, any claim on the identity of a place depends upon presenting a particular reading of its history. Massey's concept "envelope of space-time" deepens our understanding of how memories in space and place are fluid and layered. They exist for a moment until that space is re-purposed for a

[295] Doreen Massey, "Places and Their Past," *History Workshop Journal 39*, (1995): 182-187.

different memory.[296] For Ardoyne, and its interface with Woodvale specifically, the hybridity of space and place is reflected in how the different generations interact with this highly charged area, each with their own distinct conceptualisations and varying emotions towards this as a site of memory and history. The interface, as Massey would suggest, is a "conjunction of many histories and many spaces."[297] The unavoidable fact of this coexistence dictates the important aspect of the enduring conflict - that it must always be understood in terms of topography. There exists a hybridity to memory in place, for example, Ardoyne shops and Ardoyne Road for older generations, was a site of often-sectarian based violence, that was barricaded off and heavily policed. For the ceasefire generation who went to Holy Cross Girls School, this is where they began their daily walk to school in 2001 through the crowds of PUL protestors hurling abuse at them. Ardoyne shops has also been a contentious site during 12th of July Orange Order parades by there. This one site has multiple layers of memory, for CNR and PULs and for older and younger generations. The root of these memories can be found in the unresolved past that continues to endure and impact the present.

Conclusion

As demonstrated above, topography, place, and space are at the heart of social memory in Northern Ireland. As discussed in this chapter, each generation has its own experiences and memories, with those who grew up before the Troubles remembering Ardoyne as a cross-community industrial space with Protestant neighbours; and those who grew up during the Troubles in a single identity space, who only knew it as a war-zone, with riots and clashes, drive-by shootings, and army raids on homes. The ceasefire generation, who came of age after the Troubles, feel the ramifications of the conflict through the interwoven strands of boundary

[296] Massey, "Places and Their Past," 188.

[297] Massey, "Places and Their Past," 191.

reinforcement, inherited cognitive maps, spatial violence, the transmission of memories through the generations, and socially through commemorative practices.

The key themes teased out in this chapter centered around the visible and invisible nature of place-based memories, boundaries, parading, peace walls, and the divided nature of society. As with all industrial and port cities, class is a major factor in the history and makeup of Belfast. However, with the additional element of sectarianism, the city, from its birth, is further divided on ethno-cultural /religious terms. Therefore, territory and boundaries become intrinsic to the city, history, and social memory. This control of space solidifies and reinforces identities and a sense of belonging within both communities. This chapter reflects on the practice of parading, geographies of memory circulate both in material form (landscapes) and through bodily repetition of performance and cultural displays, reinforcing a sense of identity and place within a community.

Overall, when considering identity and the idea of belonging, place is central within divided societies like Northern Ireland. Urban space is, therefore, one of the most important elements of memory transmission, existing within the public and social realm and the private memories of inhabitants. Place is political, and acts as a space of memory transmission, both consciously and subconsciously. As discussed in this chapter and also in subsequent chapters, the ceasefire generation have a complex relationship to visible memory found in commemorations and murals. While many of the ceasefire generation participants acknowledged the importance of Troubles commemoration so that the recent conflict and its victims will never be forgotten, others desire to leave the past in the past so that the younger generation can have a “clean slate from here on in” (Gerard).

Chapter Four

How Memories and identity are communicated through sports in North Belfast.

As examined in previous chapters, private and public memories of the recent Troubles are elicited and passed on in various ways in the working-class communities of North Belfast. Emotions, the senses, performative rituals (like parading), commemorative sites, the landscape and built environment all play a role in preserving, mediating and transmitting the Troubles experienced within and between different generations. Cultural practices are crucial for the reproduction and transformation of the past and its memory and the meanings that people and communities construct and attach to them. Cultural practices, essentially the activities that social groups do together include music, visual art, literary texts and events, sports, festivals and leisure activities. Involvement in such practices functions as a mnemonic device in the construction and perpetuation of cultural memory.[298] In this chapter, and the next, I critically examine how memories of the recent Troubles are communicated and inherited through popular cultural and leisure practices around sports, festivals, and music. Particular attention will be given to the connections between culture and politics and the mutually reinforcing character of cultural and political identities in North Belfast's divided enclaves.

Drawing upon the oral history interviews conducted for this research and content analysis of social media sites, I illustrate how sport plays a significant role in transmitting memories of the Troubles, reinforcing community political identity, and perpetuating sectarianism. As Liston and Deighan found, the formal ending of the Troubles in 1998 has brought more attention to the cultural realm which functions as a "non-violent means of asserting identities, in which the anthem and flag have become, in effect, symbolic walls of

[298] Mariana Achugar, *Discursive Processes of Intergenerational transmission of history*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 164.

the mind."[299] This chapter focuses on soccer and Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) sports. However, it should be noted that there is significant gender disparity. All of the male participants interviewed discussed a range of sports, including boxing, cycling, weightlifting, soccer, rugby and GAA sports. Only two female participants mentioned sports (in both cases the GAA). Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the highly gendered character of sporting culture and its role in community identity and memory perpetuation.

The history of sport on the island of Ireland involves both shared and divided traditions that reflect class, gender and ethno-religious differences, and rival responses to colonialism, empire and the uneven diffusion of 'British' sports.[300] English style football or soccer[301] had strong historical links to Britain and was particularly popular in so-called garrison towns where a large number of soldiers lived. More distinctively 'Irish' sports like hurling and Gaelic football were more popular in rural areas and would later be codified and promoted in the cultural Nationalist GAA.[302] Before the island was partitioned in 1920/21, the Irish Football Association was the organizing body for the whole island. The introduction of partition led to the establishment of the Football Association of Ireland (FAI). Soccer was and continues to be popular amongst the working classes in the UK, across Europe, and throughout much of the 'Global South'. This remained the case in the north of Ireland, where

[299] Katie Liston and Matthew Deighan. "Whose 'wee country'?: Identity politics and sport in Northern Ireland." *Identities* 26, no. 2 (2019): 216.

[300] Katie Liston and Joseph Maguire, "A Shared Ireland? Identity, Meaning, Representation and Sport, Irish Studies in International Affairs," *Analysising and Researching Ireland, North and South* 33, no.2 (2022): 107.

[301] Just a note on language, football in Ireland could refer to both soccer and Gaelic football, for the premise of this thesis soccer refers to Premier League, Champions League, Irish League and League of Ireland football. Whereas Gaelic football refers to GAA.

[302] David Hassan, "A People Apart: Soccer, Identity and Irish Nationalists in Northern Ireland," *Soccer and Society* 3, No.3 (Autumn 2002): 65.

to this day, the most popular domestic clubs continue to symbolise and propagate a clearly defined working-class culture.[303] Soccer is the most popular sport in NI, with fans supporting teams from the Premier League, Champions League, Europa League, Scottish League, Irish Cup, and NIFL Irish Premiership. In this chapter I focus on two international teams, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland, alongside the domestic teams in the Northern Ireland Football League (known colloquially as the Irish League) and the Scottish League.[304] The IFA includes Linfield, Glentoran, Crusaders, Coleraine, Larne, and Cliftonville, as the top six teams, in a total of twelve teams, the majority of which are Protestant/Unionist teams while Cliftonville and Newry City are the only two teams supported by mainly Catholic/Nationalists. In NI soccer supporters are mostly ethno-sectarian in their support base (such as the Irish League, Scottish League, and the National teams), whereas English (Premiere League or Champions League) or Europa League are not.[305] The ethno-sectarian identity politics around Irish soccer teams also exist in Scottish League teams most notably characterised by the notorious Celtic and Rangers rivalry.[306] Obvious divisions around fan support are also found in the national teams. Those who associate as Irish, mostly drawn from CNR, tend to generally support the Republic of Ireland, whereas PUL communities tend to support Northern Ireland, leading to increased tensions regarding the support base of the respective teams.

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[303] Hassan, "A People Apart," 70.

[304] The League of Ireland, is the soccer league in the Republic of Ireland. The Northern Ireland Football League or Irish League is the soccer league in Northern Ireland.

[305] Scotland also has issues of sectarianism based also on English colonialism.

[306] Celtic being the Catholic team and Rangers being the Protestant team, this rivalry can be violent and sectarian. These rivalries and attitudes travel across the Irish sea, with many Celtic and Rangers fans travelling to Scotland for matches.

Sport acts as a powerful vehicle for group identity, expressed through rituals, symbols and material culture such as flags, songs, jerseys, scarves, emblems, etc. Memories and community identities are inherited by the younger generation through team allegiances, as John, an 18-year-old from Ardoyne said, "I support Celtic because they are the Catholic team."

National Team

Maguire notes that national cultures are typically thought of as something a person is born into, forming a principal source of cultural identity. However, he argues that it is perhaps more useful to view national identities as formed and transformed within and in relation to representations of the past.[307] This historical construction of national identity is clearly visible in NI where there is no hegemonic national identity. Historically it has been split and fractured between an Irish and British identity. However, in the 25 years since the GFA, a third identity has increased in popularity, a distinctive Northern Irish one. Consequently, given this phenomenon, it appears that the rival concepts that Maguire highlights actually co-exist in NI's sporting culture. Team support can be an important aspect of a cultural identity that is formed in relation to the past, and it is also very much inherited from parents. Children are often born into an assumed aspect of their identity (whether they accept or reject it later in life) albeit that in the context of NI's sports culture, it tends to represent an overwhelming masculine inheritance.

As with most cultural aspects of life in NI, the Irish league team divisions also overlap with and relate to more extensive histories of segregated living and communal isolation. The segregated nature of society enables hostile sectarianism to flourish. Connotations linked to identity associated with team allegiances may be found in the myriad of stories and sport -

[307] Joseph Maguire, "Globalisation, sport and nation identities," *Sport in Society* 14, no.7-8 (2011): 979.

related songs that connect a nation's present with its past (as will be discussed further in the chapter). As Billig has argued, nationalism and the nation are re-produced and reaffirmed in many everyday ways, through the display of flags and emblems, in national days of celebration and performative donning of colours that embody the nation-state.[308] Connecting this insight to Benedict Anderson's influential concept of the modern nation as an "imagined community" where members feel they have much in common despite never knowing most fellow members of the nation, I intend to address the role of sport in creating and reinforcing concepts relating to the nation, patriotism, solidarity together with the importance of group bonds between supporters. Sport provides a means through which people are imbued with or reminded of their identity and in the case of NI, the nation is reaffirmed both in local Irish League and International support. Thomas, a man in his 40s from the Shankill explained, "see whenever I was younger I remember asking, 'are we the same as themens?' Like outside of supporting Celtic or Rangers, or Ireland and Northern Ireland, I couldn't have told you a difference, but as I got a bit older like you realise it's how people identify. A Rangers man is a Unionist who is an NI supporter, yano?"

The NI international soccer team has been perceived, since the mid-1980s, as a much more resolute symbol of Britishness, or perhaps more accurately, non-Irishness, for the predominantly Unionist support base it now commands. This is partly due to the symbols associated with the NI team, such as the NI flag and as expressed in various anti-Catholic/anti- Irish chants and songs, which signify it as a cold house for Nationalist supporters, while reinforcing the Unionist population's own sense of identity.[309] This has led to the majority of northern Nationalists becoming isolated from the international NI team

[308] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).
[309] Hassan, "A People Apart," 71.

(their perceived Irish national identity was rejected by many of the team's following).[310] That said however, the popularity of soccer amongst Irish Nationalists in NI has provided many with an opportunity to express their Irishness. Support for Irish national teams with the attendant football jerseys and memorabilia provide an alternative avenue for expressing national identity, which has long been and remains a controversial act in such a divided space. Such practices also function as a way of communicating ideas of community and national identity to younger generations. Liston and Deighan argue that sport has been a "dual agent of separation and hatred and a contentious point of ethnonational contact in which imagined nations/communities are activated and become more self-evidently real in sporting competition."[311] They reflect on the habitus codes, which are also divided.[312] Connections between identity and national character for Liston and Deighan identify the paradoxes that are deeply embedded in the game in NI. They discuss, for example, the fact that the British national anthem is the national anthem of the NI team, and the complicated relationship that this creates for the Nationalist players on the team.[313] The association of the national anthem sung by the NI team serves to create further division and reluctance for Nationalists to engage in these spaces. Conversely, Catholic Nationalist Republican (CNR) communities tend to have a deeper connection with the Irish National Anthem 'The Soliders Song/ Amhrán na bhFiann' which excludes PUL members and fans.

[310] Hassan, "A People Apart," 71

[311] Liston and Deighan, "Whose 'wee country'?" 203.

[312] Habitus codes, embodied feelings and discursive practices of the individuals who make a nation, play a powerful role both in the foundation of cultural relations and in the construction and maintenance of national identities. Joseph Maguire and E. Poulton. "European Identity Politics in Euro 1996: Invented Traditions and National Habitus Codes." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 34 (1999), 19.

[313] Liston and Deighan, "Whose 'wee country'?" 205.

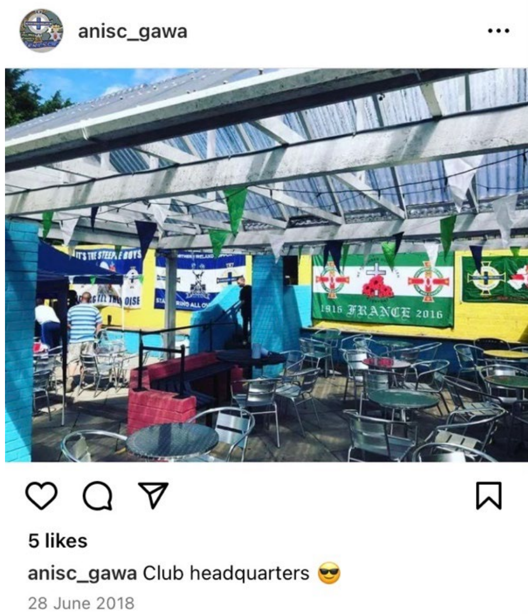

Figure 3.0: social media posts from anisc_gawa, Source: Instagram, June 28, 2018.

Figure 3.1: social media posts from gawa_on_our_way. Source: Instagram, January 3, 2019.

Figure 3.2: social media post from Northern Ireland FC. Source: Instagram.

Figure 3.3: social media post form gawa_on_our_way. Source: Instagram, November 8, 2020.

The NI team's connection to Britishness and the union is also found in their use of symbols such as the poppy and support for veterans of the Crown forces. Both Unionists and Nationalists have family members who fought during the First and Second World Wars, but in NI political culture, Remembrance Day and its symbolism is associated with empire, Britishness and the union. Remembrance Day obtained central cultural significance to PUL identity and to the identity of the NI state itself, rendering it unpopular for many within the CNR community and anathema to Republicans. However, it is widely noted in the historiography of WW1 the involvement of Irish Catholic soldiers, and many organisations and cross community groups use this shared history as a way to connect. Remembrance Day symbols can be found on flags during remembrance month, however they are predominantly flown at matches, and in remembrance commemorations at games by teams from the PUL community. This is highlighted in social media posts from the Antrim Northern Ireland Supporters Club (see figures 3.0, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4).

Although the shared history of WW1 does exist and is acknowledged, many members of the CNR communities tend not to wear the poppy as it symbolises Britishness and British militarism which often further serves to isolate them from the NI team. Although in a gesture of moving forward in a shared society, Alex Maskey, the Sinn Féin Lord Mayor at the time, laid a wreath for victims of the Somme at the Cenotaph at City Hall in 2002.[314] As some progress is being made there are others who continue to refuse to wear the symbol of the poppy. A widely reported example of this arose when James McClean, from Derry, who played for the Irish international team and various English teams refused to comply.[315]

[314] Suzanne Breen, "Maskey lays wreath for victims of Somme," *The Irish Times*, July 2, 2002, https://www.irishtimes.com/news/maskey-lays-wreath-for-victims-of-somme-1.1087131 (accessed December 14, 2023).

[315] Wrexham, Wigan Athletic, Stoke City and West Bromwich Albion before his retirement in 2023.

McClean was condemned and vilified by British media for his refusal to wear the remembrance poppy and received sectarian abuse and Loyalist threats.[316] He publicly stated his objection comes from his affinity with Derry, which was the site of British Army atrocities during the Troubles, such as Bloody Sunday in 1972.[317] Given the ongoing sectarian abuse he endured due to his stance, McClean is revered by Irish soccer fans. Aodhán, a 24-year-old from Ardoyne, in a conversation around identity, played me a clip of Ireland fans singing a song that celebrates McClean:

> He wouldn't sing God Save the Queen, McClean McClean,
> He told the North go fuck yourself, McClean McClean
> And now he plays for the boys in Green
> And now he sings Amhrán na bhFiann
> James McClean, he hates the fucking Queen
> He turned back against the flag, McClean McClean
> He called the Queen a dirty slag, McClean McClean
> He hates the poppy, hates the Brits
> He hates the North their fucking shit
> James McClean, he hates the fucking Queen

These lyrics clearly articulate the rejection of Britishness in preference to the adoption of a national identity linked to Ireland. The language of the second verse intensifies and evolves into expressions of anti-monarchy, anti-British and anti-poppy, reinforcing Ireland fans' connection to these three issues. The football league has taken steps to combat anti-British and sectarian lyrics by imposing large fines on teams whose fans are heard singing such lyrics during matches. However, many of the male participants who attend soccer matches showed me videos of chants and songs or told me the lyrics, all of which had very sectarian attitudes. The CNR community's opposition to the monarchy, the British national anthem, and the Union Jack flag is part of a wider post-conflict culture war in NI around symbols, flags and

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[316] Henry McDonald, "Threats to Sunderland footballer James McClean prompt police investigation," The Guardian, November 18, 2012 www.theguardian.com/uk/2012/nov/18/james-mcclean-sunderland-threats-investigation

[317] McClean grew up in the Creggan estate, where six of the murdered men in Bloody Sunday 1972 were from.

emblems in public life. That said, attitudes towards symbols of Britishness and a connection to England, as well as those towards Irish nationalism and Irish national identity, are continuously communicated to the younger generations in each community. This reinforces their sense of identity and their place within NI. During the interview with Aodhán, I asked him what national team he supports.

> Ireland, obviously.
> ER- why?
> Aodhán- because Northern Ireland doesn't exist, not if you don't recognise the state, NI team is for Protestants anyway.
> ER- Why is it for Protestants?
> Aodhán- just is, I support Ireland because I'm Irish, they support NI because they are Northern Irish or British
> ER- would you ever refer to yourself as Northern Irish?
> Aodhán- nah, never because I am Irish
> ER- so who is Northern Irish?
> Aodhán- Unionists maybe, they always go on about 'our wee country' and all. I guess people who refer to themselves as British might now, maybe more younger Unionists call themselves Northern Irish. I dunno.

Sugden and Bairner argue that "cultural division is the way of life in Northern Ireland to such a degree that most of the population derive comfort from the totems of the separate civil societies."[318] Sports and the symbolism of flags and anthems associated with it are an integral part of this civil society segregation. While their observation is 30 years old and NI society has evolved considerably in the interim, sectarian division of society and communities is still prevalent. Former Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure of NI 2011-2016 Carál Ní Chuilín's noted the continued lack of cultural comfort within the Catholic and Nationalist communities in representing and supporting NI.[319] Numerous scholars including Rolston, Braniff, Liston and Diegan concur that the underlying conflict continues in the post-conflict

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[318] J. Sugden and A. Bairner. *Sport, Sectarianism and Society in a Divided Ireland.* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993), 136.

[319] C. Murray and D. Hassan, "The Good Friday dis-agreement: Sport and contested identities in Northern Ireland since 1998," in *Sport and contested identities*, ed. David Hassan and Ciaran Acton (New York: Routledge, 2018), 36-37.

period through the prism of culture. Cultural differences are expressed mainly along ethno-religious lines because "ethnicity is the invoking of culture in claims about identity," the legacy of the past is found throughout soccer fan support.[320]

Liston and Maguire argue that this is the paradox of sport, as a social glue and/ or social toxin, and its double-edged potential for engendering both understanding within communities and distrust without.[321] In the former context, sport can act as a form of social capital, or glue, binding communities together by facilitating a sense of belonging, common purpose and shared meaning. These social ties stretch across generations, evident in the generational support for teams passed down from grandparents to parents to children. Sport can thus provide an 'anchor of meaning' but crucially this is only intracommunal, as simultaneously sports can also pull intercommunity relations apart, eroding trust and fostering old wounds. This duality also arose in the context of parading traditions (as outlined in Chapter Three), where cultural and social practices bound communities together while exacerbating societal divisions with rival communities. Even more pervasive than parades, sport in NI in particular, mirrors societal divisions and functions as a popular vehicle for communicating and reinforcing ethno-sectarian political, social, and cultural identities and divisions.

As noted throughout this thesis, the divided legacy of the past pervades all aspects of life in NI, and sport is especially effective as a means to embolden sectarian division and tit-for-tat politics. The underlying divisions within NI society – i.e. Irish versus British; Irish versus Northern Irish; Nationalist versus Unionist – are on prominent display in sporting culture. Globally recognised sporting figures such as Rory McIlroy have found themselves at

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[320] Máiréad Nic Craith, *Culture and Identity Politics in Northern Ireland* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 3.

[321] Katie Liston and Joseph Maguire, "A Shared Ireland? Identity, Meaning, Representation and Sport," *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 33, no.2 (2022): 105.

the centre of identity politics debate in NI. Under the GFA, as a person born in NI, Rory McIlroy has the right to define himself as Irish, British, or Northern Irish or all three simultaneously. These choices and possible hybrid identities become contentious in the context of international tournaments where players are required to declare which country they will represent. In the run-up to the 2016 Rio Olympics, McIlroy said, "I just think being from where we're from, we're placed in a very difficult position. I feel Northern Irish, and obviously, being from Northern Ireland, you have a connection to Ireland and a connection to the UK. If I could, and there was a Northern Irish team, I'd play for Northern Ireland. Play for one side or the other or not play at all because I may upset too many people."[322] McIlroy's experience highlights the fluidity of identity in sports and within NI. However, the reality on the ground is often more binary and zero-sum. Thomas, a man in his 40s from the Shankill, acknowledged, "the fact is I would never wear an Ireland jersey up the Shankill, we just aren't there yet." This juxtaposition between Rory McIlroy on the international stage and local community identification highlights the disparity in sentiment between the ideals of the GFA and the sectarian reality on the ground.

When conceptualising national identity in NI, the three overarching categories available to most are Irish, British and Northern Irish. The adoption of a Northern Irish identity has increased since the end of Troubles. In the NI Life and Times Survey of 2022, 13% aged 18-24 years old selected "Don't know" when asked if they were Irish or British. In the question, "do you think of yourself as a Unionist, Nationalist or neither?" 15% of people aged 18-24 selected Unionist, 25% selected Nationalist, 41% said neither, and 17% selected don't know. In the other age brackets 25-34 only 4% selected don't know, 2% of 35-44 and

[322] "Rory McIlroy: I may not play in Rio Olympics," *BBC*, January 3, 2013, www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-20896990 (accessed May 14, 2023).

45-54 selected don't know.[323] In the Youth Life and Times Survey in 2022 which focuses on 16-year-olds in NI, in the question "Which of these best describes the way you think of yourself?" 24% said British, 42% Irish, 5% Ulster, 45% said they were Northern Irish, 5% said Other, and 2% said I don't know The researchers also examined religious identification,18% of Catholics, 62% of Protestants, and 60% of those of no religion selecting Northern Irish Identity.[324] These statistics indicate that 23 years into the peace process the under 25s are moving beyond the more sectarian identity binaries which characterised the past. 41% of 18–24-year-olds selected "Don't know" for identity, versus 2% for 35–54-year-olds. This is a huge disparity. These finding highlight how the ceasefire generation is acquiring a more complex relationship with their identity, with the more nascent identity of Northern Irish increasing in popularity.[325]

Irish League

What Murray and Hassan find interesting is the relationship between sport and identity politics that has retained its potency despite the significant improvements in the political and social landscape since the GFA.[326] The football stadium in East Belfast, Windsor Park, is the home of both the international NI team and Linfield FC, which furthers the connection between the NI team and the PUL community. Fans such as Conor, a man in his 60s from Ardoyne, refers to the weekly pilgrimage to the stadiums as socially significant, in effect a

[323] Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, " Question, Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Unionist, Nationalist or neither?," NILTS, last modified April 28, 2023, www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2022/Political_Attitudes/UNINATID.html

[324] Young Life and Times Survey, "Which of these best describes the way you think of yourself?," YLT, last modified August 29, 2023, https://www.ark.ac.uk/ylt/2022/Identity/NINATID.html

[325] The changing nature of identity also may reflect the changing demographics and increasing diversity in Northern Ireland.

[326] Murray and Hassan, "The Good Friday Dis-Agreement," 30.

ritual around spaces of meaning in the built environment which demands collective devotion. But for Murphy and Hassan it also acts as a metaphor for an imagined Ulster.[327] Connerton's work emphasises the importance of these kinds of social ritual and ceremonial performances as a form of "habitual memory" or habitual commemorative acts for communities that involve the "mnemonic of the body."[328] In this pilgrimage to the stadium that is enacted each week, all generations of supporters wear the team colours, jerseys, scarves and hats, cheering and singing and bonding together in the stadium over the emotional highs and lows of the game. The ritual aspect of this culture is reinforced further by the fact that many supporters sit in the same seats each week, sometimes for decades, while they also habitually go for a pint before the game in the supporter's bar, and for another afterwards in the social club to celebrate or commiserate together. Through these rituals fans are reaffirming their collective identity and solidifying their social bonds. I went to a Cliftonville Vs Linfield Match in October 2023 with my dad and his two friends. Although it was a freezing cold night, there were supporters of all ages there, children as young as five, to elderly pensioners. Their bodies reacted and moved almost in unison when a Cliftonville player took a shot at goal. They all stood up from their seats, putting hands to their heads when players missed, yelling obscenities at the referee when obviously wrong calls were made. "Bet he will have one or two down in the [Orange] Lodge tonight", the man behind me remarked as another 'foul' against the Cliftonville player was said to be ignored, insinuating that the referee had a sectarian bias against the mainly Nationalist team.

Fierce rivalries between certain teams are an important aspect of NI football culture. Not all of them follow sectarian or political lines of division. For example, perhaps the

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[327] Murray and Hassan, "The Good Friday Dis-Agreement," 31.

[328] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 74.

biggest rivalry is between two Unionist teams, Linfield and Glentoran, from South and East Belfast respectively. Rivalries also exist between Cliftonville (North Belfast) and most other teams, especially Crusaders who also hail from North Belfast. Inevitably some rivalries are more hostile and sectarian, such as the rivalry between Nationalist Cliftonville and Glentoran, the team from the Shankill. To focus on the sectarian aspect of such rivalries, Conor, an interviewee in his 60s from Ardoyne, discussed going to matches as a Cliftonville fan and hearing chants sung by the fans of rival teams, such as Linfield: "Sure in Windsor Park they sing up to your neck in fenian blood at the reds fans." The Billy Boys song is an example of a violent Loyalist song imported from Scotland that has long been associated with both British fascists and Rangers FC. In NI, this infamous song is mostly sung by Linfield supporters, potentially due to the links between Rangers and Linfield as 'Blues Brothers.'[329] A sectarian atmosphere is a feature of many matches. Michael regularly attends Cliftonville matches with his son who is a member of the ceasefire generation. He reflected on bringing his son to matches when he was growing up, "I'd bring him to some matches but never big rivalries, years ago they would have been intense, with loads more sectarian abuse than there is now. There was also a heavier police presence at the matches. Honestly, it's nowhere near as bad, like you still get stuff at the away matches down at the Oval or at Windsor, they sing their songs and all, but they get fined now, so just doing the club a disservice." When I asked him about the police presence he said, "when you go to a Glentoran match at the Oval like Cliftonville supports have one entrance and its completely cordoned off with barriers, we essentially have a corridor of barriers made that we just walk down and into our seats and it's all policed, especially on the way back out so we aren't allowed to go into East Belfast at all."

[329] 'Ulster's strong influence in the formation and history of Rangers FC is brought to book,' Ivan Little 13 April 2019. Belfast Telegraph

For away supporters, the stadium can be a very hostile space. Hassan and Ferguson note that Windsor Park was "toxic" for visiting members of the minority Nationalist community.[330] As Andy, a man in his 40s from Woodvale, commented, "I'd say Solitude is as hostile for Unionists as the Oval is for Nationalists."[331] The hostility between teams and supporters is often based on sectarianism and the community identity of teams. According to Aodhán, a 24-year-old from Ardoyne, "The teams are based on communities, so Crusaders, Linfield and Glentoran are all Unionist teams like, they are in Unionist areas like. A Nationalist could never support a team like Linfield like look at their 2020 jersey, it was a UVF flag, like how's that not making it a cold house for Nationalists? That's antagonising." Aodhán is referring to Linfield's 2020 away kit in Figure 4.4, with a purple background and orange stripe, that bears a striking resemblance to the paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) flag. However, Linfield released a statement claiming that the resemblance was "totally coincidental." Apart from the resemblance to the UVF flag, the jersey also has an orange strip resembling the iconic sash worn by members of the Orange Order, an anti-Catholic masonic organisation. This further alienates and antagonises Nationalist supporters of these teams. Flags, of course, are a highly controversial issue within NI, used to mark territory, reinforce boundaries and exert control. This jersey's similarity with the UVF's flag performs the same function, especially as an away jersey, as noted by Michael, a man in his 60s from Ardoyne. "They are wearing those colours in our stadiums, they are antagonising us, showing us that they are still connected to the UVF that's what they're saying."

[330] Hassan and Ferguson, "Still as divided as ever?"

[331] Solitude is the Cliftonville stadium, and the Oval is the stadium for Glentoran.

Figure 3.4: Picture of the Linfield FC kit. Source : Extra.ie, June 12, 2020. https://extra.ie/2020/06/12/sport/soccernews/linfield-jersey-ulster-volunteer-force

The sectarian overtones of team identity can also be found in chants, such as this one sung by Cliftonville supporters against Linfield, according to Aodhán, a 24-year-old from Ardoyne, “Cheer up David Jeffrey, oh what can it be, to a sad orange bastard and a shite football team.”[332] Illustrating that fans from both communities sing songs or chants that include overt sectarianism. In the interviews, many participants told me about the types of songs sung at matches. Michael informed me that many examples could be found on YouTube. During a Linfield match in 2016, a video shows a group of young men and teenagers singing the traditional Orange anthem, ‘The Sash My Father Wore’ (Figure 3.5), and another shows the supporters on the way to the Irish Cup Final in 2016 accompanied by a Unionist band, with young people at the forefront (Figure 3.6). Both images depict the symbolism associated with unionism, such as the Northern Ireland flag and Union Jack. By comparison Figure 4.7 shows Cliftonville fans use of the Irish tricolour to reemphasise their

[332] Sang to the tune of Daydream Believer by the Monkees. David Jeffrey was the manager of Linfield from 1997-2014 and is a member of the Orange Order.

connection to their Irish identity. This is also found in the lyrics to the song about James McClean.

S.B.P.B. & Linfield Supporters Parade To Irish Cup Final 06/05/16

Figure 3.6: Youtube screenshot of Linfield Supporters Parade with South Belfast Protestant Band at the Irish Cup Final May 2016.
Source: Youtube profile Relentless 03.

Figure 3.5 on the left: Youtube screenshot of Linfield VS Cliftonville, Source: Youtube account Blue Unity.

Figure 3.7: Image of flags at the Cliftonville match.
Source: taken by author Eimear Rosato, October 2023.

Amateur leagues

The ethno-sectarian divisions between national teams and the Irish League are reproduced within Lower tier soccer teams, even at the under-18 level. Conor, a man in his 60s from Ardoyne, discussed how as a youth he was, "beat up for being a Catholic on a mixed football team in the 70s." He remembered that at one particular game, he could hear even the parents and spectators yell to the players on the other team "the [goal]keepers a fenian!" These attitudes within lower tier sports have not subsided with the implementation of the GFA. Ben, a 23-year-old from the Shankill, explained that when local youth teams from the Shankill play Catholic teams, family members as well as other community members generally attend.

> It's a big thing like even if you just go watch a Sunday League team, like say the 22nd Bar or the Royal is playing a Catholic team, there will still be a big crowd at it because they know it's a Catholic team. Whenever there was a match down in the Hammer there will be people you've never seen before down there watching that match, and just because it's the other side of the fence, there's a kick or a punch being thrown, and they want to see that.
> ER- at the matches, would there be sectarian chants or like digs being thrown?
> Ben- aye wee digs 100%, you would have been told beforehand, these guys all play Gaelic they are gonna be rough, so leave the foot in or kick them or something, yano what I mean, again it was only because they were from the Catholic side. Even if it wasn't said, everyone's thinking it, everyone knows. Then there would be parents coming down who'd never watched a match before, but just because it might get a bit rough or there might be a few things said, has everyone down. It doesn't help prevent it; probably encourages it more than anything else.
> ER- do you mean people of all ages? Like older people and younger people
> Ben- yea yea if there's a team, like Shankill juniors, and I never played for them, but you'd go down and watch their match on the Saturday, but you knew all week they were playing a Catholic team like Donegal Celtic or something, there was talk the whole week for the Saturday morning to have as many people as you could on the sideline. I am sure there's a few boys da's down there have held a gun before, and they are intimidating some child, calling him a 'fenian bastard' or something on the sideline. Poor kid probably doesn't know what to do. But like it happens on both sides you hear the Catholic teams parents shouting shit too, everyone's at it, that's the problem.

Ben and Conor's experiences in the amateur league reflect unambiguous, direct and targeted sectarian hostility emanating from both sides of the sectarian divide. Other examples of sectarianism within youth soccer point to abusive chants or banners, which act like a form of social learning of sectarianism through cultural acclimatisation. In this way youth are taught

that such behaviour is acceptable. Aodhán, a 24-year-old from Ardoyne, discussed what it was like to play at the under-18 level in Belfast: "Playing against all them Protestant teams, they'd have called you taig this and taig that. Parents on the side-lines doing it too." When playing against other North Belfast teams from the Unionist community, Aodhán talked about just how brutal they were, "some of the things they'd say like, Jesus Christ, couldn't repeat it, but then like I'm sure we called them huns and all that, gave as good as we got." Sectarian ideology and insults in sports culture are also spread by both communities via social media. Gerard, a 19-year-old from Ardoyne, described how, "Even things like football bring it up, if you see a post on Facebook about football, one thing leads to another thing, to another thing, sectarianism leads people to bring it back to the Troubles just all from a simple post." Many sports fans do not espouse sectarianism, but for some, the two go hand-in-hand, an association that is still being inherited by many members of the ceasefire generation.

In this context, ethnic identity and sporting allegiance are used to identify how the perpetuation of sectarian identity influences the complexity and actuality of sectarianism within Northern Irish society. As discussed throughout the rest of this chapter and thesis, sectarianism is an integral component of the inheritance of identity and division.

Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)

Gaelic games reflect the distinctiveness of Irish cultural and social life, which at times in Irish history has played a political role in resistance to imperialism.[333] Modern state formation on the island of Ireland involved a slow shift in power relations between 'Irish' and 'British'- from colony to region of the U.K to a self-governing Free State in the Commonwealth, to the emergence of a fully independent Republic amidst continued partition in NI.[334] The Gaelic

[333] Liston and Maguire, "A Shared Ireland?,"107.

[334] Liston and Maguire, "A Shared Ireland?,"108-109.

Athletic Association was set up in 1884 to preserve Ireland's native games, part of a broader revival of Irish culture against advancing Anglicisation that included the Gaelic League to promote the Irish language. The GAA presented ethnically 'pure' sports, such as Gaelic football and hurling, as nationalising idioms and alternatives to English games and sports culture such as soccer and rugby.

The CNR community's identification with the GAA has become weaponised by Unionists such as Jim Allister who argued that the wearing of GAA shirts was creating a "substantial chill factor" for Protestant students at the University of Ulster, claiming the shirts were causing an "intimidating atmosphere."[335] As Conor, a man in his 60s from Ardoyne, questioned, "How do you wear a shirt aggressively?" Language around sports is frequently aggressive with terms such as "intimidating" regularly used. Sports equipment such as hurls [the sporting equipment used in hurling] were deemed a "weapon."[336] Margaret, a woman in her 70s from Ardoyne, talked about her children playing sports growing up in the 1990s:

> Our oldest boys were about 17 in 1991 and I would have had worries about them in so far as they were teenagers and young Catholic boys were getting shot in the street, so you need to be careful where you're going. I would have been very nervous, and I remember going to see my husband's dad in the hospital, and I had picked my son up; he used to go to St Enda's to play hurling, and he threw the hurls in the boot of the car, and I dropped him home and drove on down to the hospital, got stopped by the police, and I remember thinking, 'sweet Jesus he's gona open that boot and there's hurley sticks.' Hurley sticks were classed as a weapon then, but he looked in at me, and he just waved me on, but I would have been worried about our boys coming along with a hurley stick in their hand.

[335] Chris Kilpatrick, "2,500 get shirty over Jim Allister's bid to ban GAA tops from university campuses," April 11 2014, *Belfast Telegraph*, https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/education/2500-get-shirty-over-jim-allisters-bid-to-ban-gaa-tops-from-university-campuses/30174982.html (accessed September 3, 2023)

[336] Arguably, McAllister's comment draws on a long history of anti-Irish or anti-Catholic language from English or British politicians and media, that associate Catholic and Irish with 'brutish', 'aggressive' or 'violent' tendencies.

Hurls continue to be regarded as a weapon in certain circumstances by the PSNI and in April 2013, a young boy had his hurl and sliotar [the ball used in hurling] confiscated by police who deemed it an "offensive weapon."[337] The Antrim GAA Chairman at the time, Jim Murray, complained that the sport was being "politicised." During 2013 and 2014 numerous young people across NI were stopped by the PSNI for carrying a hurl. Pat Sheehan Sinn Féin Policing Board member at the time, noted that this indicates the prejudicial view the PSNI have around people with hurls. According to the *Irish News* through a reply to a Freedom of Information Request they submitted, sports equipment was seized by the PSNI on 150 occasions, hurls fell second highest on the list with 28 seized. Participants who discussed sports or sportswear often reflected on the fear associated with wearing GAA jerseys. As Joseph, a participant in 70s, noted, "you couldn't have worn GAA shirts or anything." This idea or conceptualisation that GAA is violent is noted in the comment from Ben from the PUL community: "they play Gaelic; they are rough."

Societal progress is underway with the creation of a GAA team in the PUL heartland of East Belfast. The East Belfast GAA club has gone from stride to stride with 400 members since its establishment in 2020, whilst facing some hostile attacks aimed at closing the club. Their crest (figure 3.8) is hugely symbolic of a shared community, with the red hand of Ulster, shamrock and thistle representing the different communities, the Harland and Wolff cranes connecting the team to the local area, the sunrise symbolising 'new beginnings,' the waves representing the region's proud links to shipbuilding. Their club motto 'together' is the most important detail, and it is depicted in three languages, English, Irish and Ulster Scots.[338]

[337] Francesca Ryan, *Belfast Media.com*, April 26, 2013. www.belfastmedia.com/cops-say-hurley-an-offensive-weapon (accessed Septembr 3, 2023)

[338] The East Belfast GAA, "Club Crest," East Belfast GAA, https://eastbelfastgaa.com/the-crest

Progress is also evident in St. Michaels club, which is made up of members from the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). The GAA's century old, Rule 21 excluded members of the British security forces from being members of the GAA. Rule 21 is representative of how the GAA is a "cold house" for members of the British security forces even for those who are Catholic Nationalists. In 2001 Rule 21 was lifted, and St Michaels was established in 2002, playing their first game against the Garda GAA in Dublin.[339] The establishment of both of these teams highlight the recent progress in NI regarding GAA as acceptable sports to play in predominantly Unionist areas and within the PSNI.

Figure 3.8: The East Belfast GAA crest.
Source: https://eastbelfastgaa.com/the-crest

As Liston and Maguire summarise, the sporting landscape of NI continues to be "fuelled by sectarianism, compounded by nationalism" with sports continuing to "exacerbate the fault lines of society."[340] In October 2023, Ireland and the UK were confirmed as the Euro 2028 tournament hosts. Northern Ireland's contribution to the bid came in the form of Casement Park, a stadium which has not been used in ten years. Plans to redevelop the grounds into a modern 34,000 capacity stadium have been on the table for a decade, but due to political instability, issues with planning permissions etc. the project has been on hold.

[339] The Garda Síochána are the police force in the Republic of Ireland.

[340] Liston and Maguire, "A Shared Ireland?,"122.

Named after an Anglo- Irish Nationalist martyr of the 1916 Rising, Casement Park is located in West Belfast and was previously a GAA pitch and club. When fully renovated, it would be the largest stadium in NI, even surpassing the region's National Stadium which only holds 18,500 spectators. Given the continuous sectarian divisions within society and sports, NI fans are apprehensive about Casement Park holding the Euro 2028 matches, many of whom expressed a preference that the money be invested instead in a soccer stadium. This ongoing issue has illuminated many sectarian biases and caused decades-long tensions to rise to the surface. Examples of this are found on social media, such as the Facebook group 'The Real Irish League Banter Page!' (figure 3.9), with many calling the GAA the sporting and recruiting wing of the IRA. Many fans are calling for a boycott of the stadium, and at the NI match on the 17th of October 2023, fans could be heard singing, "you can shove you're Casement Park up your hole." Unionist opposition to Casement Park and perception of the GAA as a "training ground" for the IRA (as seen in figure 3.9) furthers influences younger people attitudes towards engagement in sports associated with cultural identity.

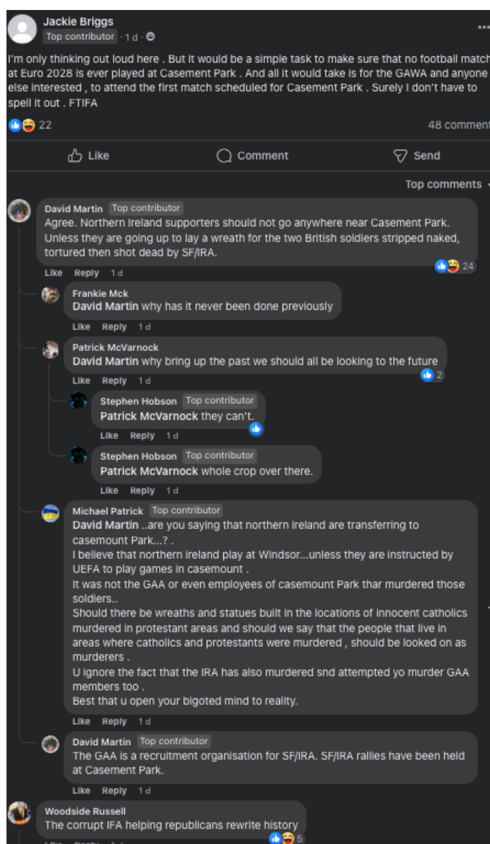

Figure 3.9: Social media post about Casement Park. Source: the Facebook group, The Real Irish Language Banter Page, https://www.facebook.com/groups/101841342896151

Alongside the division that is often perpetuated by sports or fan support, progress also exists in the dedicated work of community groups in creating cross-community soccer teams. Additionally, EU-funded projects such as 'Football for all,' aims to eradicate sectarianism from home international games.[341] Many interview participants from both Nationalist and Unionist communities participated in the cross-community soccer camps, including Thomas, a man in his 40s from the Shankill:

> We did a trip to Newcastle or something, we did it every year, and suddenly we were away with these Catholics who you only knew by name or fighting…and we were making new friends who when stuff was going on you were waving at them across the road. As the years went on the relationships grew, and I think that was before the ceasefire and still going up until a few years ago. .... I think it made a massive difference; for the first time, we had Catholics playing in our team.

Cross-community initiatives around sport are common in Northern Ireland, with many youth groups and summer schemes/camps set up to encourage cross-community friendships and teamwork. A majority of the participants from the Shankill either participated in cross-community soccer teams or organised the running of them. Both Harry and Charlie told me of an event in 2018 where around twenty parents of young Gaelic players from ROI and Scotland who were in town for a tournament, were given a tour of the Ballynafeigh Orange Hall in South Belfast. Bredagh GAC, returned the favour and welcomed several members of the Ballynafeigh Orange Order to the nearby playing fields, as part of a cross-community event. One of the organisers Mr MacFarlane said he and Stephen Biggerstaff (from the Ballynafeigh Orange Order) had been discussing the event for nearly a year, "both of us understand that we're custodians of this community for the younger generations coming through and it's all about the children."[342] The relationships formed at this event continued

[341] David Mitchell, Ian Somerville and Owen Hargie, "Sport for peace in Northern Ireland? Civil society, change and constraint after the 1998 Good Friday Agreement," *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 18, no. 4 (2016): 7.

[342] Stewart Robson, "Ballynafeigh Orange Lodge rolls out welcome mat for Bredagh GAA club," *Belfast Telegraph,* July 2, 2018. https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-

and during the 2020 pandemic the two organisations got together to help restock food banks.[343] While some members of the ceasefire generation participated in cross-community clubs and activities in school and on the weekends, according to the ceasefire generation participants, many others chose (or were encouraged by parents) to play on teams within their communities that were mainly segregated, "for safety reasons because they are still just too nervous" (Gerard, a 19- year-old from Ardoyne).[344] However, from the interviews conducted with the ceasefire generation who work or volunteer as youth and community workers, such as Alex from the Shankill and Ciaran and Gerard from Ardoyne, they appeared more optimistic about the possibility of the current generation of under 18s being more open to cross community events and sporting groups. Alex told me of a participant in her youth club, "his parents were dead against it, like him joining the youth club in the first place, but definitely against him playing in a shared community football team, but fair play to him he convinced them and now his da goes and cheers him on. Just shows you, sometimes you just need to have people to open your eyes and you see its grand."

As the beginning of this chapter argues, sport is divisive and a place where identities are reaffirmed, solidified and inherited, where social bonds are formed and strengthened through ritualistic attendance at matches. Many people in NI, especially young people who play sports and attend matches as spectators, express themselves and their identities through sport which is central to their social lives. This chapter draws mainly on interviews with CNR

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ireland/ballynafeigh-orange-lodge-rolls-out-welcome-mat-for-bredagh-gaa-club/37069391.html (accessed Dec 13, 2023).

[343]Allan Preston, "Coronavirus: Belfast GAA club and flute band praised for volunteer effort," *Belfast Telegraph*, April 2, 2020, https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus/coronavirus-belfast-gaa-club-and-flute-band-praised-for-volunteer-effort/39095462.html (accessed Dec 13, 2023).

[344] A study of such cross-community initiatives while extremely interesting was unfortunately outside the scope of this research.

participants, supplemented with content analysis of social media sources, providing insights into how sport is also the context in which young people learn on the ground politics of their community, and where communal identities, social bonds and prejudices are inherited and performed. Through cross-community projects, sport can also provide an alternative venue to discuss and challenge everyday aspects of sectarianism and societal divisions, and to gauge how communal divisions have impacted everyday lives for the ceasefire generation.

Chapter Five

How memories, a social past and identity are communicated through music.

> Aodhán, a 24 year old from Ardoyne- "I hate the Tories and the DUP like but I'm not about to join the RA because of a few rebel tunes."

Art and music play a crucial role in facilitating the construction of the self and simultaneously legitimising the exclusion of others and processes of othering.[345] Raphael Samuel stresses that history is a social form of knowledge produced by "a thousand different hands," this includes songwriters, bands, and countless other cultural actors, history keepers and meaning makers.[346] Music has the ability to transport us back in time, to rouse old forgotten memories. This section will review through analysis of interviews and song lyrics the role that songs and music play in eliciting and communicating memory and solidifying and expressing community identity in Ardoyne and the Shankill.

Socially, music has a binding function that can improve group cohesiveness and cooperation. Garrido and Davidson give the example of hundreds of people moving and singing in unison at a concert, experiencing the emotional highs and lows of the music as one.[347] This emotional response triggered by music is a form of emotional contagion involving empathy and mimicry, through which the listener begins to feel the emotions expressed in the music.[348] The spatial and temporal contexts have an influence on the emotional contagion of the listener.

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[345] Catherine Baker, "Music as a Weapon of Ethnopolitical Violence and Conflict: Processes of Ethnic Separation During and After the Breakup of Yugoslavia," *Patterns of Prejudice* 47, no. 4-5 (2013): 409-429.

[346] Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London: New York: Verso, 2012), 20 (in the e-book).

[347] Sandra Garrido and Jane W. Davidson, *Music Nostalgia and Memory, Historical and Psychological Perspectives* (Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies, 2019), 2.

[348] Istvan Molnar-Szajacs and Katie Overy, "Music and Mirror Neurons: from motion to emotion," *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience* 1, no.3 (2006): 235-241.

Anderson notes that nothing connects us affectively to the dead more than language. He argues that there is a special kind of contemporaneous community which language alone reinforces, especially in the emotionally resonant contexts of poetry and songs. He uses the example of national anthems, no matter how banal the words and mediocre the tunes, there is an experience of simultaneity whilst singing. In these moments people unknown to each other sing the same verses to the same melody, which echoes the physical realisation of an imagined community.[349] There is a subconscious, or conscious, connection with others in such moments that reinforces a sense of belonging within those spaces. One could go so far as to argue that nothing connects us quite like imagined sound. This is evident in community cohesion around sports teams. National anthems used at sporting events have the ability to both include and exclude within our imagined communities. While Anderson's interest in nationalism leads to a focus on national anthems, in this chapter I will apply his arguments regarding music and imagined communities to a wider range of music that connects, and divides communities in NI.

For a community to imagine itself into being, it is necessary to have a set of cultural codes that are accepted, and in which group members see themselves as a group. These cultural codes are passed down through acts of socialisation when we are young, as I have discussed in earlier chapters. Music constructs our sense of identity through the direct experiences it offers of the body, time, and sociability, which are experiences that enable us to place ourselves within imaginative cultural narratives.[350] In this chapter, I propose to focus on expressive music culture specific to Northern Ireland in the form of marching bands, flute

[349] Benedict Anderson*, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: New York: Verso 1983, 2006), 145.

[350] Simon Frith, "Music and Identity," in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (London: California: New Delhi: SAGE, 1996): 124.

bands, rebel songs, sectarian songs, 'kick the pope' songs and chants, and other genres and type of music or song which solidify intracommunal cohesion and intercommunal division in Northern Irish society. We absorb songs into our own lives and rhythm into our own bodies, as music acts as both a cultural code and a ritual to reinforce individual and group identity. [351] Therefore, music is one of the strongest triggers of nostalgic remembrance, and our need to connect with the past may also influence the choice of music we listen to.[352] This effect can be triggered by a lyric, phrase or word, depending upon the listener and their personal situation and history. As Rolston suggests, the phenomena of songs can express and entice feeling and provides an emotional language to articulate grief, loss, anger, pride and is found throughout musical cultural traditions in NI, a society that has often struggled with a culture of silence. [353] For people who lived through the violence of the Troubles music can provide an outlet for emotions otherwise silenced.

Robinson, Buck and Cuthbert argue that for most people, "political" music is synonymous with politicised lyrics that have a preferred reading and are not open to endless interpretation.[354] I would suggest that a song's political meaning is often subjective dependant on the listener's interpretation, which is itself formed by one's community influences, identity, personal politics, etc. As Street argues, where a song is used by a people or

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[351] Frith, *Music and Identity,* 121.

[352] Garrido and Davidson, *Music Nostalgia and Memory,* 8.; Frederick S. Barrett, Kevin J. Grimm, Richard W. Robbins, Tim Wildschut, Constantine Sedikides and Petr Janata, "Music-Evoked Nostalgia: Affect, Memory and Personality," *Emotion* 10, no.3 (2010): 390-403.

[353] Bill Rolston, "'This is not a rebel song': the Irish conflict and popular music," *Race and Class* 42, no.3 (2001): 50.

[354] D. Robinson, E. Buck and M. Cuthbert, *Music at the Margins: popular music and global cultural diversity* (London, Sage, 1991), 266.

community already united by their politics, it merely has to confirm their sense of unity.[355] This is what Sivanandan imaginatively refers to as "communities of resistance," which have mechanisms of solidarity and support, one of these have traditionally been music.[356] One could argue that we see examples of communities of resistance during the Civil Rights Movement in Derry, where the song "We Shall Overcome" played a considerable role in forging solidarity links between the people of NI and the American Civil Rights Movement. Music can inspire, mobilise and galvanise political groups; in this sense music can be organic in the Gramscian sense of the term, growing out of a political constituency and speaking for that community.[357] There is a particularly strong relationship between music and politics in NI, where a large corpus of songs relate to the lived experience of each community and speak to its identity and social memory from the community's perspective. Such songs confirm group identity, creating and reinforcing a sense of community in the face of hardship, repression, injustice, threats from outside, and seemingly overwhelming odds.[358] When conflicts end, the histories and emotions attached and articulated through songs can endure. Songs live on beyond the historical moments that inspired them, by being passed down to younger generations via family gatherings, parties, during community commemorations, or among peers during various events.

Republican Songs

[355] J. Street, *Rebel Rock: the politics of popular music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 80- 81.

[356] A. Sivanandan, "All that melts into air is solid: the hokum of New Times," *Race and Class* 31, no. 3 (1989): 24.

[357] Rolston, "This is not a rebel song," 51.

[358] Bill Rolston, "Music and Politics in Ireland: The Case of Loyalism," in *Politics and Performance in Contemporary Northern Ireland* eds. John P Harrington and Elizabeth J. Mitchell (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 42.

Discussing music emanating from the Catholic Nationalist Republican (CNR) community of Ardoyne, Kerrie a 29-year-old resident explained subtle differences within the genre "Nationalist music."

> It's all based on class, more cultural nationalism is listened to by more middle-class families, SDLP vibes, yano? Like the Chieftans.[359]
> ER- so what did you listen to growing up?
> Kerrie- probably with Daddy's side it was all Dubliners and Christy Moore, like Molly Maguires, Johnstons Motor Car, like old IRA. Then mummy's side were always Wolfe Tones which was Lugh Sheelin Eviction, Grace, Highland Paddy, but the hard-core stuff was always an eye roll for all of them, like 'go on home' etc., almost like they were better haha
> ER- with the eye roll do you mean they didn't like the hard-core stuff?
> Kerrie- awk they do like it when they are in a crowd that likes it, but they never liked me and [her sister] singing like 'go on home British soldiers' or 'rifles of the IRA', I think it was more fear. And also, with mummy anyway there was an element of she thought it was tacky.
> ER- what do you mean by hard-core stuff?
> Kerrie- like the hard-core ones are so tacky like they are the ones people sped up to dance tunes *laughs* like you're a nutcase if you listen to that.

This participant was of the view that there was a difference between cultural Nationalism and Republican/ rebel tunes which correlated to class, with the latter genre being more popular in working-class communities, precisely where the impact of the Troubles was more pronounced.

> This is just based on my own experience growing up and I don't want to offend anyone but it's true… with Gary Óg and Wolfe Tones that real hardcore they used to come into the Fleadhs[360] and play. It was all working-class areas that they came to and they do just speak to the people and it was so hard core and sectarian and what they were probably experiencing and probably in-line with political parties in those areas as well. But the more you get up the classes it probably does reflect their beliefs as well, like SDLP vibes with the Fureys and the Chieftains and all that in that category. It's just what we know, and obviously there will be the anomaly that will be wrong, there are families that came from working class areas who got into that music and now are maybe more middle class and still love that music... all the flags and all those

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[359] SDLP is the Social Democratic and Labour Party in Northern Ireland.

[360] Fleadh is a music festival, which can be held within local communities or at a wider island wide level such as the National Fleadh Cheoil, which includes music events and a competition. The National Fleadh Cheoil is associated more with traditional Irish music. Each Nationalist community in Belfast in particular held their own Fleadhs, such as Ardoyne which is usually in August, and has existed throughout the Troubles with Planxty, Christy Moore and the Wolfe Tones playing in various years. The Ardoyne Fleadh continues today.

> experiences of stuff like sectarianism is all in working class areas, that's why it speaks to them more because it's all about identity, so it makes sense.

Continuing with the themes articulated by Kerrie, Nationalist music consists of a broad spectrum including older songs made famous by the Clancy Brothers: e.g. 'Whiskey You're the Devil,' 'The Croppy Boy,' 'The Rising of the Moon,' 'The Foggy Dew,' 'The Mountain Dew,' 'The Parting Glass,' 'Tim Finnegan's Wake,' even a cover of 'Kevin Barry.' The Fureys and Davey Arthur, in particular, are popular in this genre, especially their song 'Go Lassie Go'. Although both bands also played covers of The Green Fields of France, a song which is based on the first world war, and thus not Nationalist though still rooted in working class experiences and anti -war sentiment. However, within this Nationalist music genre, no group has been more dominant than the Dubliners, with their famous versions of 'Whiskey in the Jar,' 'The Rocky Road to Dublin,' 'The Molly Maguires,' 'Seven Drunken Nights,' 'Raglan Road,' 'Black Velvet Band,' 'The Rare Auld Mountain Dew,' 'Dirty Old Town', 'Johnson's Motor Car' and 'Fields of Athenry.' Many such songs touch upon the Irish experience of colonial oppression at the hands of the British, but many are also joyful, even humorous, such as 'Tim Finnegans Wake,' 'The Rare Auld Mountain Dew' and 'Seven Drunken Nights.' This music is often part of the repertoire played at weddings, family gatherings, as well as in bars and pubs in Nationalist areas of Belfast, becoming more mainstreamed during the 1960s and 1970s the music is popular across Ireland and among the diaspora, especially in America.

Rose also discussed these differences within Irish Nationalist music, noting, "my husband hates rebel songs, but we love Irish music, I would because that was part of me growing up, but I never related it to what was going on, just that daddy and mummy like that music and put it on. My husband can't stand rebel songs, he's from Andersonstown, so there's no reason for him to hate it, he was obviously brought up with it as well, but he can't stand

it."[361] Rose discussed her preference for "Irish music" differentiating between that and rebel songs, many of which were popularized by the Wolfe Tones. The latter songs tend to be aimed more at disparaging the security forces such as 'Go on home British Soldiers,' 'Come Out Ye Black and Tans' and 'Men Behind the Wire,' or they are implicitly about the reunification Ireland, such as 'A Nation Once Again,' 'Only Our Rivers Run Free,' or about the IRA 'The Broad Black Brimmer,' 'Rifles of the IRA.' Many militant songs reach back to earlier rebellions such as the 1913-23 revolution, but a few emerged from the post-1968 Troubles period, such as 'Joe McDonnell' which is about the 1981 Hunger Striker. While this genre tends to focus on the armed struggle against Britain over the centuries, it is interesting to note that very few mention the Protestant/Unionist community in the context of Northern Ireland. Stephen Miller stresses that very few rebel songs are "overtly anti-Protestant" in the way that Loyalist songs are overtly anti-Catholic. However, others have argued that rebel songs can be viewed as "politically sectarian" because they tend to be "used against the Loyalist and Unionist communities".[362] Miller notes that it may not always be the lyrics themselves but the "add-ins" by fans or by certain bands such as the Wolfe Tones. He provides an excerpt from 'Joe McDonnell':

> And you dare to call me a terrorist while you look down your gun (YA FILTHY HUN!)
> When I think of all the deeds that you have done
> You had plundered many nations, divided many lands
> You had terrorized their peoples, you ruled with an iron hand
> And you brought this reign of terror to my land

Alongside 'ya filthy hun!' are chants of 'P-I, P-I, P-IRA' at the end of the song, a shorthand for Provisional Irish Republican Army. Other songs within the rebel tunes genre written since

[361] Her reference to her husband being from Andersonstown was to identify him as a Nationalist, or more likely, to identify him as *not* being from a Unionist background.

[362] Stephen Miller, "Let the people sing? Irish rebel songs, sectarianism, and Scotland's Offensive Behaviour Act," *Popular Music* 35, no.3 2016): 304.

the 1970s have more overtly sectarian overtones, especially those written within the local community about local events. I asked Michael, a 63-year-old, who grew up in Ardoyne, if he knew of any such songs. He thought for a while before sharing the following:

> Up the Crumlin Road came the Orangemen singing the Sash my Father Wore,
> but when they got to Hooker Street they sang the sash no more….
> they came out and they shot them 4 by 4
> and that was the end of the Orangemen singing the Sash my father wore' (sang to the tune of Sash my Father Wore)

Such sectarian songs are part of an oral tradition shared in local pubs or social clubs, in homes, or by children who heard them at home. These songs depicted local histories referring to local IRA men as the gallant victors. Michael found it difficult to think of any other rebel songs that were sectarian in nature, other than perhaps the 'Provo's Lullaby.'[363] Significantly, he felt that he knew more of them from the oral tradition – i.e. people singing them in pubs and on the street corners, than from commercial records, highlighting the parochial nature of the lyrics often shared only within the community.

Throughout the interviews, the Wolfe Tones were consistently referred to when discussing rebel music. The band is associated with the infamous Féile an Phobail, where they regularly play the Celtic Symphony, which includes the chant, "oh ah up the Ra," enticing large crowds of thousands to chant in unison. [364] Unionist politicians voiced concern over this as Féile an Phobail receives public funding from the Northern Irish Government, which led to an investigation by the Charity Commission. Emma Little Pengelly, a DUP member,

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[363] Go to sleep my weary Provo, 'go to sleep my weary Provo, let the time go drifting by, Oh cant you hear the bullets humming, That's a Provo's lullaby' a line in the verse 'One day you'll die and go to heaven, And you'll find no Loyalist fuckers there'. In live performances of the song, you can hear audience members yelling 'Up the IRA' throughout.

[364] The Feile an Phobail is a week long festival with cultural days, film screenings, talks, seminars by academic's, local historians, folklorists and activists, regarding solidarity movements, local and international histories culminating in concerts 2022 headliners were Imelda May, Damien Dempsey, Kneecap, Gary Og, Shebeen and the Wolfe Tones.

criticised the event, arguing that taxpayers' money should not be used to fund "a hate fest, where thousands of people chant about terrorism."[365] Breaking News.ie reported, "The West Belfast Festival hosted a programme which was interspersed with raw sectarian hate. Repeated chants throughout the concerts about the Provisional IRA, led by the musicians on the stage."[366] In the same report by the Belfast Telegraph, TUV leader Jim Allister told the BBC that acts which caused offence at Belfast Féile were "deliberately and consciously" booked for the festival. Essentially, critics were arguing that the festival was antagonistic, sectarian, and risked bringing the communities back in time. In response to these claims, Republican balladeer Warfield told the *Irish Mirror,* "we're entitled to our own song and culture. They might give medals and titles back to the people who killed for England over the years- Sir or Lord this- but we don't give titles to the Irish people that fought for freedom. What we do is we give them a song in their memory." He also pointed to the funding towards July bonfires on council grounds in Unionist areas (popular public events where sectarian songs abound) calling the Unionists and DUP critics "hypocrites." He reflects on how songs of this tradition are a form of commemoration and remembrance of the struggles the CNR community endured, "people are allowed to have their heroes…now if that happens to be their heroes, they might have a reason that it is their heroes." This has given rise to debates about the place of these songs in current society. Songs, together with politically loaded murals and other forms of cultural remembrance may be viewed as encouraging the next

[365] Garrett Hargan, "Image of the Queen and poppies appear on Bogside bonfire as politicians appeal for calm," *Belfast Telegraph*, Mon 15 Aug 2022. https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/image-of-the-queen-and-poppies-appear-on-bogside-bonfire-as-politicians-appeal-for-calm/41913128.html

[366] Rebecca Black, "Pro-IRA chants, Parachute Regiment flags spark outrage in North," *Breaking News.ie,* 15 Aug 2022. https://www.breakingnews.ie/ireland/calls-for-political-leadership-after-incidents-spark-outrage-1350200.htmlr

generation to regard the dead combatants as martyrs worth emulating. This is a view expressed by Unionist politicians.

Stephen Nolan, a populist local radio host, spoke at length about the féile on his show. Róisín a woman in her 60s from Ardoyne, recalled his comments and complained, “the next morning it was all about the young people, a line of many Wolfe Tones songs is ‘oh ah up the Ra’ and yano the way they were being demonised for it, like fuck sake give it up.” I asked Patrick, a man in his 60s from Ardoyne, to comment on Stephen Nolan’s statement that the Wolfe Tones were “IRA recruiters” and he said, “I think there is a lot to do with *what* people hear, it is to do with songs telling our history, but even the Wolfe Tones stuff back then wasn’t what it is now, with thousands and thousands of people cheering and stuff that just wasn’t the thing back then [during the Troubles]. The thing back then to recruit people was hundreds of Brits with machine guns and tanks.” Patrick and Róisín both expressed the view that the idea that these songs encouraged the youth to join Republican organisations was almost laughable – in fact they did both laugh.

Other commentators, however, have taken seriously the possible role that political songs may have in contributing to violence, due to textual potency of the songs.[367] Republican songs can stir up old sentiments and perpetuate tired old myths, and it has even been said that young men have gone out to kill and die simply so they will be remembered in a ballad.[368] When considering the Irish War of Independence of 1919-21, Whitfield concluded that ballads performed “an indispensable function… giving [Volunteers]them courage to continue,

[367] Olusegun Stephen Titus, “Music Performance for Political Mobilisation and Violence During 2011 General Elections in Nigeria,” *African Journal of Peace and Security* 1, no. 2 (2013): 225.; Jacques Attali, Noise: A Political Economy of Music.; Helen Hintjens and Rafiki Ubaldo, “Music, Violence, and Peace Building,” *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice* 31 (2019): 281.

[368] Rolston, “Music and Politics in Ireland,” 33.

warming their hearts in bitter times…without ballads there might not have been the same continuity of aspiration, the same steady stream of young idealists."[369] Literary and cultural critic Declan Kiberd disagrees, arguing that this reading of the poems and ballads of the post 1916 period is "insulting to the intelligence of the general public and of the IRA."[370] He instead pushes for a consideration of the context, as reasoning behind people joining paramilitary organisations. However, Whitfield's argument does shed light upon the emotional benefits of song, and the ways that they inspire, give hope, rouse anger, or incite tears. There is a power to these songs, and it is thus not unreasonable to take seriously to what extent they may contribute to the normalisation of sectarian-based violence in both communities in NI.

The Féile is one of the biggest Irish music festivals Belfast has to offer; the Wolfe Tones played to a crowd of 10,000 people. As Figure 4.0 indicates the crowd at the front consisted of mainly under 35-year-olds, the ceasefire generation, dressed in GAA and Celtic jerseys, waving Irish tricolours and donning green, white and orange cowboy hats. Videos circulated on social media and found on YouTube give an insight into the intense community spirit, with the crowd singing along to every word of the Wolfe Tones set (apparently including 'Come Out Ye Black and Tans,' 'Oró, Sé do Bheatha 'Bhaile,' 'Celtic Symphony,' 'Grace,' 'Some Say the Devil is Dead,' 'Seán South from Garryowen,' 'A Nation Once Again.)'[371]

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[369] É. Whitfield, "Another martyr for Old Ireland: The Balladry of revolution," In *Revolution? Ireland, 1917-1923* ed. D Fitzpatrick (Dublin: Trinity History Workshop, 1990), 68.

[370] Declan Kiberd, "The elephant of revolutionary forgetfulness," in *Revising the Rising*, ed. M. Ní Dhonnchadha and T. Dorgan (Derry: Field Day, 1991), 13.

[371] Joe McCann, "FÉILE 202:The Wolfe Tones deliver an amazing end to Féile," *Belfastmedia.com*, August 15, 2022. https://belfastmedia.com/feile-2022-the-wolfe-tones-deliver-an-amazing-end-to-feile

Figure 4.0: Picture of the crowd at the Wolfe Tones 2022.
Source: Belfastmedia.com https://belfastmedia.com/feile-2022-the-wolfe-tones-deliver-an-amazing-end-to-feile

Music and festivals in particular are an experience that bring people together, connects you through feelings, of communality, of belonging due to the social and emotional nature of many of the songs. Ben a 20-year-old who grew up on the Shankill went to university in England and became friends with a group of boys from North Belfast,

> We would go to afterparties with all these people from Belfast, but like mostly North Belfast and they would play the rebel tunes and all, and fuck sake like now I know all the words, but they were great like standing on the tables all shoulder to shoulder singing, they had me right in there with them.
> ER- was that not weird for you?
> Ben- nah like kinda made me change my opinion on what I thought the songs were though, they like weren't against us, do you know what I mean?

Rose reiterated the peer communication of rebel songs, she discussed how her daughter is familiar with the Wolfe Tones even though that type of music was not played at home because her husband dislikes it. When asked how she thought her daughter encountered it, she said it was "the influence of all the Irish ones in Liverpool," where her daughter settled. This may be attributed to the emotional nature of memory, music has the ability to heighten a perceived sense of commonality and, in turn, help individuals feel connected, inspiring a stronger collective memory and reinforcing group identity. While at the same time such songs can be perceived and/or experienced by the other community as intimidating, offensive,

valorising 'terrorists.' It is interesting to consider why so many young people from the Nationalist community are gravitating towards these concerts. Aodhán, a 24-year-old from Ardoyne, said:

> I actually dunno, like they are great craic, everybody knows all the words and everybody you know goes.
> ER- what do you think of what Stephen Nolan said that it's 'recruitment for the IRA'?
> Aodhán- no fuck sake like, I hate the Tories and the DUP like but I'm not about to join the RA because of a few rebel tunes.

Despite some political commentators suggesting that such events 'recruit' young people to paramilitary culture, Aodhán's comments highlight the importance of individual agency. This phenomenon evidences the continuing strength of intergenerational memory albeit that the messages conveyed may have evolved over time or are interpreted differently by the younger listeners. Nonetheless, the argument that such songs may transfer anti-British and in particular anti-British army sentiments and sectarian views is a valid point worth further exploration.

<u>What is communicated through songs? Social history</u>

Music and songs are a powerful medium of communication, they provide an alternative realm for communities to learn their own local and national history from more 'official' academic and statist realms. Millar argues that it acts as an alternative social memory that creates sonic connection between the past and present.[372] Songwriters have long taken an active role as memory activists shaping the re-telling of history and popular memory of events, very often providing a counter-narrative to official state and media narratives. Songs can be seen as a grassroots form of history, where oral traditions get repackaged and given sustained life in popular culture. Aodhán, a 24-year-old from Ardoyne, recalled how he learned about the life and doomed love affair of a 1916 combatant from a song: "yea to be fair, I never knew about Joseph Plunketts wife or any of that, I'd say they are beneficial in that way, but I also find

[372] Stephen R. Millar, "Let us entertain you: paramilitary songs and the politics of Loyalist cultural production in Northern Ireland," *Race and Class* 63, no.4 (2022): 9-34.

them very crass and cringy." Aodhán referenced 'Grace', a popular song that tells that the story of Joseph Plunkett and his fiancée Grace, whom he married in Kilmainhaim Prison hours before he was executed due to his part in the 1916 Easter Rising. The song provides additional layers of meaning and understanding to that historical period of struggle. Given the interconnected nature of music and social history, Dijck argues that musical memories can therefore be understood as a transfer of collective heritage, not only by sharing music, but also by sharing stories.[373] Nationalist songs often tell the stories of battles, revolutions. Patrick, a man in his 60s from Ardoyne, commented:

> 1916 was something we knew about because of rebel songs. I realise that whenever I talk about the Troubles, that's like old people telling me about when Kevin Barry was hanged. Like when I was younger older people would be crying about it and I'm like, 'it's only a song for God sake get over it.' Alright its bad, god help him like, it's not real, but it is real for them, just like the songs of the Troubles are real for me.

Patrick reflected on how his parents and grandparents sang the ballad of Kevin Barry, who was a young member of the Dublin IRA during the War of Independence and was executed by the British Government in 1920 for his role in a deadly attack on British troops.

> In Mountjoy Jail one Monday morning
> High upon the gallows tree
> Kevin Barry gave his young life
> For the cause of liberty
> Just a lad of 18 summers
> Yet there's no one can deny
> As he walked to death that morning
> He proudly held his head on high
>
> Just before he faced the hangman
> In his dreary prison cell
> British soldiers tortured Barry
> Just because he would not tell
> The names of his brave comrades
> And other things they wished to know
> 'Turn informer or we'll kill you!'
> Kevin Barry answered, 'No!'
>
> Calmly standing to attention
> As he bade his last farewell
> To his broken-hearted mother
> Whose sad grief no-one can tell
> For the cause he proudly cherished
> This sad parting had to be
> Then to death went proudly smiling
> That his country might be free
>
> Another martyr for old Ireland
> Another murder for the crown
> Whose brutal laws may kill the Irish
> But can't keep their spirits down
> Lads like Barry are no cowards

[373] José van Dijck, "Record and Hold: Popular Music between Personal and Collective Memory," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 23, no.5 (December 2006): 364.

From the foe they will not fly
Lads like Barry will free Ireland
For her sake they'll live and die

The lyrics detail his execution and torture, alongside the draconian British laws, but culminates with the rousing lyrics “Lads like Barry will free Ireland, For her sake they’ll live and die.” With lyrics depicting his mothers’ grief at the death of her young son, it is clear why the song resonated with the later generations like Patrick’s family who witnessed the death and imprisonment of many young men and women in their own time. This song also reinforces the community value of enforced silence, i.e. that you should choose death and martyrdom rather than becoming an informer. This same song was mentioned by other participants as one they would have heard in their homes growing up and sung along to in social clubs or even during their time in prison. Its popularity was reinforced by covers by such artists as The Wolfe Tones, the Clancy Brothers and even Leonard Cohen in 1972.

These songs can also act as sonic reminders for the generation who grew up during the Troubles of their own past, socialising at clubs, seeing bands that used to tour around Ireland and play in the social clubs in Ardoyne (The Saunders, the Star, the GAA club or Tobys Dance Hall). The significance of music and its power to move and to trigger nostalgia has been examined by Davidson and Garrido, music is a catalyst for remembering particular events, people, emotions and places.[374] During my interview with Róisín, a friend of hers popped in for a few minutes to ask her if she wanted to go for a cigarette. Róisin asked her:

Do you remember all those bands that used to play in Ardoyne?
Friend- oh my god, like katmandu? I loved them
Róisin- you used to have to queue for ages to get in, and we would sneak in when we were underage, Jesus you’d have to get there before dinner to make sure you got in.
Friend- here those were the days weren’t they? We had some craic
ER- would yous have gone to the fleadh’s?
Róisín and her friend- oh yea, yea,
Friend- every year we’d be there

[374] Davidson and Garrido, *Music Nostalgia and Memory,* 33.

> Róisín- awk Irish ones would have come up, like the Wolfe Tones, but see at the start the Fleadh would have had the likes of the Hot House Flowers and Planxty, they were one of the main groups who played at the Fleadh, ah they were brilliant.
> ER- would you say music, it would pass down things?
> Róisín - yea aye, yea I would say when they hear Republican songs, the more popular ones they would all know and it's probably just been from background to them growing up. Does it mean anything politically to them? I'm not sure. But it would be the soundtrack of your life.
> Friend- its part and parcel of growing up though isn't it, 'armoured cars and tanks and guns,' my partners sister sang that at her mummys wake.
> Róisín - armoured cars and tanks and guns?
> Friend- aye that's what she got up and sang. *they both laugh*
> Róisín - I can remember being a child and my mummy said 'the poke man's out in the street' and wanting a poke (ice cream), and she goes 'sing Billy Reid and I'll get you a poke' *laughs* so aye there was no escape from us.[375]
> Friend- I would have got my grandkids to say 'up the Ra' and gave them money for it. *Laughs*

As McCann states, cultural and political songs often reflect Ireland's long colonial relationship to England. Even songs Kerrie refers to as 'cultural nationalism' often refer to Ireland's freedom, exile or forced migration. These songs continue to act as holders of social history, reminding each generation of the past. These songs may not, as Whitfield suggests, necessarily encourage young men to kill and die so that they can be immortalised in a ballad, but they clearly have an impact on young people's sense of identity and place within a community. Attending concerts like the Féile or the Fleadh and watching bands like the Wolfe Tones sing about community experience and history necessarily reinforces a sense of communal identity. Growing up and listening communally to rebel songs that signify the political beliefs of those around can be a means of transferring those values, that in turn young people may internalise. Music may not transmit actual memories, in the same way that stories do, but it is involved in the intergenerational transmission process, reinforcing community and group identity, linking the past and the present, and highlighting shared emotions over the trauma of the past. By asking questions around music, communities and

[375] The poke man is a colloquial term for an ice cream truck.

identity formation surrounding sound, we can 'hear' alternative social memories from below that often get ignored in scholarship.

Alternative Memories

The above discussion illustrates the use of songs and music as an alternative avenue for storytelling. Discussing festivals, community events, songs and traditions provides a more textured understanding of the realities and (ab)normalities of life in Northern Ireland during the Troubles, for both the Nationalist and Unionist communities.

Indeed, music, songs and other cultural actives all played a major role in the solidification of community identity, strengthening social bonds within small communities during a time of extreme violence. Apart from what can be described as traditional music another different, more contemporary but arguably equally rebellious, type of music emerged during the 1970's which acted as a deflection or form of refuge and release during the Troubles. This genre of music spoke to young people, creating subcultures such as punk and metal. Importantly, it had the ability to cut across community divides. Punk music venues were renowned for being cross community spaces which is remarkable given the context of extreme violence during that period in particular. Andy, a man in his 40s from the Shankill reflected:

> And I remember my cousin played the Sex Pistols 'anarchy in the UK' and the song 'is this the MPLA, or is it the UDA I thought it was the UK' and I was like 'what did he say UDA in that song? Put that on again' boom head explodes then I realised there was guys like Stiff Little Fingers and Alternative Ulster, Teenage Kicks and the Undertones, the Outcasts, what the fuck is all this!!? Then you meet Terry Hooley when you're 18, and he drops his eye into your pint and goes 'whats new?' And you realise there is an entire alternative culture right on your doorstep. Then there's the songs about abortion, all these things that Northern Ireland couldn't deal with, or get forward on. Here's John Lydon going 'there's the answer kid, you know now.

Unionist/ Loyalist Songs and Musical Traditions

Those from the Protestant-Unionist community I interviewed held polarised views on the meaning and function of music for their self and community and identity. Of the six PUL

participants, one was heavily involved in Loyalist marching bands, three regularly attended the 12th of July parades as a community event, while the remaining two felt that the parades and music no longer reflected their beliefs or how they chose to celebrate their PUL identity and culture. Unionist musical cultures can be split into a variety of sub-genres: the music of the marching bands, which includes both religious and non-religious songs, and so-called 'Kick the Pope' songs which are more explicitly sectarian in tone. All six participants found the 'Kick the Pope' songs to be 'disgusting and sectarian' and all assured me that they did not participate in them. A number of possibilities need to be reflected upon; the fact that I am a member of the CNR community may have influenced their responses on this issue; the size of the sample of PUL participants may be too small to be considered wholly representative; or it potentially represents a more positive move forward with regards to these songs.

As previously discussed, Nationalist/ Republican songs tend to focus on the community's history of rebellion, with lyrics about martyrs for the Irish cause, anti-British sentiment and some songs were anti-PUL and sectarian in nature. Unionist/ Loyalist songs reflect the community's anxieties in particular a 'siege mentality' (essentially a defensive posture against native Irish rebellions and attacks), as well as community pride in such traditions and events as the Orange Order and the victory of the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. In the Unionist/ Loyalist genre I found a significant proportion of songs with sectarian content that were overtly anti-Irish Catholic. Well known Unionist songs cover a range of themes. Examples include the following: 'the Sash My Father Wore' which talks about passing Unionist traditions down to the next generation; 'Build My Gallows' , an ode to loyal Ulstermen who fought the IRA and freed their native land from 'evil men'; 'The Protestant Boys,' which celebrates the history of the Williamite War in which 'loyal' Protestant Apprentice boys resisted Catholic James I and French mercenaries; and 'Dolly's Brae' which commemorates the Battle of the Boyne, when a group of 'Papists' tried to stop Loyalists from

walking across the Dolly Brae. As can be seen, this canon of Unionist songs has much to do with winning battles and defeating the IRA and Catholics over the centuries.

However, there are a number of more 'hard-core' songs that use more explicitly violent language. One such example if 'Born under a Union Jack' which includes the lines, "taigs are meant to kill" and directly threatens former Sinn Féin President, Gerry Adams. This kind of language is typical of the loosely defined 'Kick the Pope' genre. Throughout the interviews, the most frequently referenced example of such a song was 'the Billy Boys' which has had a long history, first originating in Scotland, and now a popular Rangers and Linfield football chant.

> Hello, Hello
> We are the Billy Boys
> Hello, Hello
> You'll know us by our noise
> We're up to our knees in Fenian blood
> Surrender or you'll die
> For we are
> The Brigton BillyBoys

The song's lyrics have changed over the years with Rangers fans altering it to suit the matches they attend. Sports and music are deeply connected, with this song in particular being banned from Scottish football and by the IFA. I asked interviewees what messages such Unionist songs perpetuate, particularly the line 'we are up to our knees (or 'neck') in fenian blood.' Similar to songs discussed above in the CNR community, it could be argued that these songs could encourage violence, normalise sectarianism and send a negative message to the younger generations. As Alex, a 20-year-old from the Shankill put it, "You are learning those songs in different ways and identifying to those songs. Then you wonder, that's learnt culture. They are hearing this in the house then at the weekend they are going out to the band parade with their mates, and they are singing 'we hate Catholics' or vice versa or whatever it is, then is it any wonder you hate the other side, that's peer group association." The lyrics used in such songs clearly encourage an 'us and them' sectarian mentality, both inside and outside the

football stadiums. Harry, a 50-year-old from Ballynafeigh reflected, “there needs to be more thought about what’s passed down, we need to stop romanticising the Troubles.”

<u>Social history</u>

As discussed previously songs have a social history function, for example, the Unionist song ‘Gibraltar’ acts as counter-narrative to Republican/ Nationalist narratives of the notorious series of events regarding a public funeral of several IRA members killed by British troops on Gibraltar that was targeted attacked by a solo Loyalist gunman. [376] The song goes on to detail the incident at the funerals where Michael Stone threw bombs as the families gathered round the gravesite:

> This strong loyal Proddy,
> He's called Micheal Stone,
> Right in to the graveyard,
> he went on his own,
> Five bombs they were thrown and yet only one missed,
> But you couldn't see the fenians from the steam off their piss.
> And the I.R.A, were blown away,
> Three corpses were left in old Miltown that day.[377]

For Alex, songs provided a form of education about the Troubles, “you make up your own education, you make it up with songs, because if you’re not learning it from school, so that’s where you will hear it from.” Songs have the ability to shape or reinforce the community’s preferred narrative around events and set the tone of community recollection and commemoration, especially for young people who have no direct experience of the Troubles. In ethno-national conflicts which centre on divided identities, music serves a variety of

[376] This is similar in theme to a song about four UDR members who were convicted of killing Catholic Aidan Carroll in 1983, “together again, we’ll fight as young men, as our forefathers did in the great days of yore and the IRA scum, over the border will run, in the charge of the UDR 4.”

[377] In chapter 2 I provide a footnote regarding Michael Stone as s flag with his face was recently erected outside Holy Cross Girls School in Ardoyne.

functions. An important function in this context includes the justification of physical violence and engendering hatred in the present, in addition to legitimising past violent events.

During the interviews, two participants in their twenties from the Shankill Road, brought up band shops, local institutions which according to Alex, “will have the music playing around the community constantly.” Such shops sell a variety of Unionist paraphernalia such as Union Jack hats, flags, mugs, and commemorative items, as well as paramilitary flags, Rangers FC items, and music C.D.’s of local and Scottish Unionist music. The musical merchandise at Unionist band shops include some of the following: popular artists, Alex Allen who covers standard songs such as Gibraltar, UFF, King Billy’s On The Wall, Men of the UDA, Our Union Jack and UDA All the Way; and albums by and about the UVF and other paramilitary ‘platoons’, such as Fourstep Volunteers for the 30th anniversary of the C Company UVF, Songs of the UVF, and an album called ‘No Greater Honor’ by the 1st Battalion A Company. The latter includes such songs as ‘Dedication,’ ‘One Platoon,’ ‘Ulster Girl,’ ‘Dads Uniform,’ ‘Some gave all,’ ‘Lest We Forget’ and ‘Here lies a soldier.’ All the album covers depict paramilitary emblems or iconography, as seen in Figure 4.1. Such music simultaneously draws connections to past historical events such as Battle of the Somme and the First World War, while celebrating the Loyalist paramilitary groups and combatants that emerged in the recent Troubles. This connection between the long history of the PUL and more recent paramilitarism is also reflected in album and band iconography that is similar to that depicted on murals in Loyalist communities.

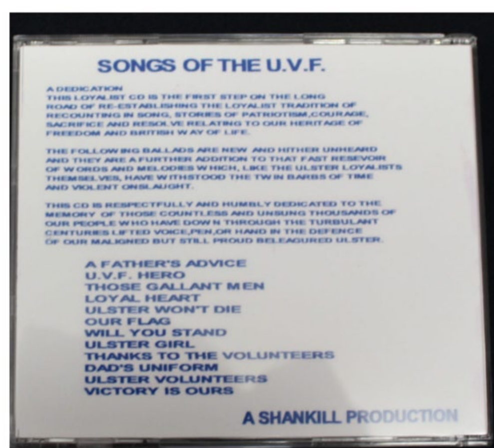

Figure 4.1: This is the front cover of the album, Songs of the UVF by Platoon, and the second image is the back of the album.
Source: https://unionjackshop.com/

Radford describes Orange and Loyalist paramilitary songs as being "connected by a certain degree of overlapping and shared material" manifested in shared melodies and in "recurring themes in the texts that include comradeship, around strength and anti-Catholic rhetoric."[378] Charlie, a man in his 40s from Ballynafeigh, explained that many songs within the Unionist tradition were based on the tune of old traditional songs with different lyrics superimposed on them. Radford notes that some see such repurposing as an attempt to legitimise claims to the tunes from within Northern Protestant music heritage, while others regard it as little more than acts of cultural and political piracy. Examples of this are found with more militant songs such as 'Men of the UDA' which is set to the tune of 'Black Velvet band,' but the most famous instance is Fields of Ballynafeigh, which appropriates the Nationalist famine-theme ballad, the Fields of Athenry, with very similar lyrics as seen below.[379]

<u>Fields of Athenry</u>
By a lonely prison wall,

[378] Katy Radford, "Loyal Sounds; music as a marker of identity in Protestant West Belfast," (Unpublished PhD thesis), 43, cited in Millar, "Let us entertain you," 18.

[379] I could not find published lyrics of this song online, I had to listen to the song and decipher the lyrics and I could not understand what this word was.

I heard a young girl calling,
Michael, they have taken you away
For you stole Trevelyan's corn,
So the young might see the morn,
Now a prison ship lies waiting in the bay
Low lie the fields of Athenry,
Where once we watched the small free birds fly,
Our love was on the wings we had dreams and songs to sing,
It's so lonely 'round the fields of Athenry

<u>Fields of Ballynafeigh</u>
By a lonely prison walls I heard a young girl calling,
Billy, they are taking you away
for you tramped on fields of corn [this could be an incorrect lyric]
For our young and freedom to be born
Now a prison bus stands idle in its bay
Low lie the fields of Ballynafeigh,
where love we watch our Orange men go by,
Over banners they will fly every 12th day of July
Its lonely round the fields of Ballynafeigh

When asked about the nature of ‘Kick the Pope’ songs Andy, a man in his 40s, stressed their affinity to fascism and racism.

> What I really remember is the racist songs, loads of them ‘ain’t no black in the union jack,’ ‘join the national front’ we were taught that at no age. Really strong, really really strong links between fascist groups and Loyalist paramilitaries, which shouldn’t be a surprise to anyone, sure there are swastikas everywhere on the Shankill, more fucking swastikas than there was pictures of the Queen... these things are intrinsically linked, skinhead culture, racist culture, fascist culture, royalism, intrinsically linked. But music a couple of things jump out, I knew all the kick the pope songs, course I did you learnt them at the bonfires, the 12th, usually the bonfires, everybody contributed to the bonfires, even I did. You learnt the kick the pope songs ‘up to your neck in fenian blood’ all that sort of thing.

The nature of the ‘Kick the Pope’ songs is quite violent, often depicting the murder or serious injury to Catholics. Alex a 20-year-old admitted “I never realised what the songs meant but you sung them, they were a chant, and you followed the band and you were in a vibe and loving life, when you get older and you listen to them songs, them songs are horrible.”

In an attempt to better understand the music culture within the Unionist community, I asked Ben, a 20-year-old young man from the Shankill, where he would have heard the ‘Kick the Pope’ songs. He answered, “I would have heard those songs in other people’s houses or

like when that time of year comes, band season, someone's got the old speaker blasting them, there's a few shops on the Shankill Road that would blast the music out into the street, all about King Billy and the wall and all. Its mad. They live for it up there." For Alex, whether such songs played at home depended on "what type of home you come from… People in their houses will be playing it… it's more in the family, can be individual thing too but I think it's a family thing." Thomas, a man in his 40's from the Shankill, had a similar experience to Alex, who also found that learning songs happened more within the home and at the bonefires on the 11th of July. He recalled, "when I was a kid my granny had me on her knee and the songs she was learning me was 'kick the pope' songs, like that's how I was brought up." These memory mechanisms are very similar to those within Nationalist Ardoyne, highlighting the social aspect to music within working-class communities across the sectarian divide and how sectarianism is reinforced and transferred to subsequent generations.

What is communicated?

The songs from both of the main NI traditions contribute to the perpetuation of their respective ideologies. For young people in Unionist communities, the central message is pride in the paramilitary groups UVF and UDA who engaged in violence during the Troubles. As Figure 4.1 indicates, these songs are about re-establishing the Loyalist traditions and recounting stories of Loyalist patriotism and sacrifice for 'Ulster'. Songs vindicate past acts of violence towards Catholics and justify continued violence as defensive. However, Charlie, a member of a Unionist band, believed the band centred around family, tradition and intergenerational memory. What was interesting about this interview, was the sense of belonging articulated by Charlie, despite the violence and sectarianism promoted by 'Kick the Pope' songs. For band members and advocates, PULs of all generations find a home, family and community within the band culture, and a powerful expression of their shared local and national identity as 'Shankill' community members and Ulstermen and women. When one

puts aside the sectarian content of so much Unionist songs and music culture, the function of the bands has strong similarities with the role that music plays in Nationalist Ardoyne.

Conclusion

On both sides of NI's political/sectarian divide, music, songs, and band traditions act as methods to preserve history and memory in working-class communities impacted by the Troubles. In the absence of official truth-recovery or history mechanisms, songs and music culture help communities preserve social and cultural traditions and tell their versions of history that differ from that of the official state narrative and rival local communities' versions of the past. Sports and music often go hand in hand in terms of cementing social bonds and creating a sense of belonging at both the local and the national level. These social bonds and shared identities are central to the inheritance of memories and the formation of group identity. This chapter on music, along with the previous one on sports, demonstrates the diverse ways in which social memory is communicated and transmitted within the divided communities in North Belfast. Songs, band traditions, sports, sporting affiliations and festivals are popular expressions of identity that overlap with and sustain the legacies of the recent conflict, both as remembrance and perpetuation of sectarianism. As the research found, younger listeners contemporary interpretation often did not align with the strident messages and took a softer less militant direction.

Chapter Six

Intergenerational memory and the ceasefire generation

> Seán, a man in his 60s from Ardoyne: "kids sit in the house with their granny's and their ma's and da's and and wee stories here wee stories there and when they get older they go into the pubs and they would hear more and what not."

This thesis explores the variety of ways in which events of the recent Troubles are remembered at an individual, community, and societal levels. This final chapter builds upon the previous chapters by examining how memory is inherited and how it intersects with different forms of memory, while it also considers the materiality of that memory. Theories of collective, social, cultural, political, and intergenerational memory are applied to the oral history interviews conducted during the fieldwork. The chapter is in two parts, the first part examines storytelling as a mechanism for intergenerational memory transmission, with particular focus on emotional regulation and sectarian attitudes. The second part of the chapter reviews the outcomes and consequences of memory transmission, such as the impact on mental health, alongside the legacies of socio-economic deprivation and violence in NI.[380] The discussion of the history of violence and how it is transmitted will consider the role that paramilitaries continue to play and the control they continue to exert in NI's working-class communities. Finally, it will also situate the ceasefire generation as political actors, highlighting their agency and contribution to the cultural landscape and to positive social change in their communities.

Memory

This chapter relies on the memory studies theories and frameworks set out in the previous sections on social and cultural memory mechanisms, the role of place-based memory, and

[380] Structural violence, is a form of violence where social structures or social institutions may harm people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs and perpetuates inequalities.

sensory memory. Halbwachs influentially posited that all memory is socially structured, that is, that we remember in the context of shared group memories and that memories of the individual exist only in so far as she or he is a member of particular groups or communities. Fentress and Wickham found that communication, especially the act of talking, was critical to the formation of social memory.[381] As discussed elsewhere in this thesis, all such social memory is invariably situated within a cultural framework, where distinctive customs and cultural norms prevail.[382]

All groups, whether state or non-state actors, and from nations to local communities, to peer groups and families, construct shared memories amongst themselves to connect and make sense of the past and the present.[383] Specific individuals play an important role in this collective process. As discussed in Chapter two, Guterman and Wustenberg offered the term memory activist, to understand how memory from below contributes to political transformation. In post-conflict transitional contexts such as NI, memory activists are instrumental to the (re)conceptualisation of the contested past within communities. In Ardoyne memory activism emerges in many forms, including community-workers, the ex-Prisoners of War organisation, dissident republic groups, victims' family groups, and others. As I will argue later in this chapter, members of the ceasefire generation are a more recent addition to memory activism in their communities.

<u>Telling Yarns/ Storytelling</u>

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[381] James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory, New Perspectives on the Past* (London: Blackwell Publication, 1992), x.

[382] Jan Assmann, and John Czaplicka. "Collective memory and cultural identity," *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 125.

[383] James McAuley, Maire Braniff and Graham Spencer, "Through a single lens? Understanding the Troubles of the past, present and future," in *In Troubles of the Past?* ed. James McAuley, Maire Braniff and Graham Spencer (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2023), 8.

Previous chapters examined the multitude of ways we remember, from sensory and emotional memory, site-specific memory, formal commemorations and rituals like parading, popular culture and leisure activities like music and sports. It is important to consider how social or cultural memory is inherited by later generations who did not directly experience the violent conflict that continues to dominate community identity and life. Storytelling represents a major conduit for intergenerational information transfer. Thomas, a man in his 40s from the Shankill, noted the family and community aspects to this tradition of storytelling, "Every community has a great storyteller, whether its sitting in the pub for the first time and everybody is gathered round this guy who's telling all these stories, half of he's probably making up about the Troubles 'we did this, let me tell you about the night we stole this flag or there was a shooting in here,' and your history is built up from listening to these stories and then from your granny and granda your uncles, their stories." In his experience the stories come from kinship networks of parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles and this extends to neighbours and fellow community members as you move through life. In these contexts, similar stories are shared, and communal norms and values are reinforced. A similar sentiment was expressed by Seán, a man in his 60s from Ardoyne (as reflected in the opening of this chapter): "kids sit in the house with their granny's and their ma's and da's and what not and wee stories here wee stories there and when they get older, they go into the pubs, and they would hear more and what not." The incredible similarity in how both Thomas and Seán, two men who grew up twenty years apart in bitterly hostile communities from one another, discuss the intergenerational nature of memory transmission from those who lived through the Troubles to the subsequent ceasefire generation is striking. Although the stories and anecdotes they shared may be totally different, the basic mechanisms and setting for memory transmission are the same.

The social content of stories varies, as noted by Thomas. Stories told in a public communal setting can be nostalgic, grandiose, and celebratory, while stories told in private may be more intimate and personal. John, an 18-year-old from Ardoyne noted, “I guess you would hear like the likes of my dad talking about it or whatever, and you sort of hear factual stuff, not in great detail, not maybe to the same detail as some other people's parents would. No real grand narrative just stories.” There are multiple forms of storytelling, especially within families. John’s falls into Assmann’s concept of communicative memory, based on everyday communications and characterised by a high degree of non-specialisation, reciprocity of roles, thematic instability and disorganisation.[384] Assmann notes that communicative memory takes place between partners, the telling of a joke, a memory, a bit of gossip, or an experience. Through this manner of communication, the individual composes a memory which is socially mediated and relates to a group. Every individual memory constitutes itself in communication with others who then conceive their unity through a common image of the past.[385] This process is evident particularly in Thomas’s anecdote, in which the stories are told within the collective group as a joke or an experience. Even if exaggerated or not entirely factual, they help the listeners reaffirm their place within the community. As discussed throughout this thesis, snippets of the past can be elicited by sensory or site-specific prompts. Illuminated by the memory of a specific person, or event or year, such stories or snippets of the past are often told without a grand narrative.

Kerrie’s parents often used Troubles-laden indicators when discussing local people and places. She recalls “aye the conflict is there in everything they say or do, the other day I was getting a cuppa tea with my mummy in a café and she was talking to this woman, afterwards I asked who it was, and she goes ‘her brother was [name redacted] who got

[384] Assman and Czaplicka, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” 126.

[385] Assman and Czaplicka, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” 127.

murdered in '72, the Brits shot him dead, yano who I'm talking about?' Like she couldn't have just told me she knew her from school or something?" For the older generations who lived through the conflict, it becomes the lens and framework they see the world through and acts as a memory filter. Kerrie and John's experiences are prime examples of forms and characteristics of intergenerational communicative memory. Ciaran, a 22-year-old from Ardoyne, told me, "when I started secondary school, I started talking to my parents more and my grandparents and they would be more open to tell me the stories. Not so much of being sectarian, or one side or single identity stories. But like my granny and my mummy lived in Manor Street at the time and they were burnt out of their houses, and they had to go stay with friends and they were able to tell me stories about how worrying that was. My granny would have told me about people being murdered and stuff like that." This shared memory of being burnt out of their homes and the emotional recollection of "how worrying that was," demonstrates the intimate connection between the stories being told and the emotions that surrounded the events at the time and since. We learn politics, history, emotions, beliefs and values from primary caregivers, whether that is parents, grandparents or guardians, in intimate private spaces of the home. We understand the world through their guidance. These acts of socialisation shape us, our politics, and our identities and are important to our sense of belonging whether we agree or disagree.

In contrast to the conversational experiences of John and Ciaran, Méabh's experiences were an amalgamation of different memory approaches.

> Well, my mummy would have been really open about the conflict, like on the 12th [parade] she would have brought me up to see it because she thought that it's your history you should know about it, why should you be hidden from it. You should know about it and know what's going on in your community. So, I can remember the marching and the rioting. And hearing from the older ones, like my older brother and sister and stuff and how it really affected them, between adults having an impact on what they were saying and what they were doing and the paramilitaries having a big thing within our community.

Her experience of Troubles' memory transmission entailed both communication from her siblings and a more formal explanation alongside cultural events, where she attended the 12th of July parades of "the other community" in order to fully understand "her history" and the history of where she lives [Méabh is from the Nationalist community]. This highlights how it is often not a single method of memory transmission or articulation that confers later generation inheritance of group memory, but rather how our lived experience usually entails multiple, simultaneous memory transferences. Méabh however felt that it was through stories from her family members that she most came to know, construct, and understand the past.

When considering the role of storytelling and its perceived importance, I posed the question, "why do the older generations continue to tell stories and why is it important?" Gerard, a 19-year-old from Ardoyne, replied,

> I think the older ones are clinging on because they've lived through it, they've had things happen to them or family members, whereas us the younger generation can only remember riots around the 12th July, or beatings and punishment shootings, but it's nothing as serious as what happened around the Troubles with everything that went on, like bombing. We haven't experienced that. I think it is a generational thing, even at that, a lot of older people are ready to move on, just a small minority clinging to it. But I don't think it will ever be forgotten, and never not affect people within families and communities.

Ciaran, a 22-year-old from Ardoyne, also spoke to the significance of Troubles stories, "Yes the legacy is still there, with young and old I think. There are people who can't let go of the past, for whatever reason. Obviously, there are people who have suffered horrendous tragedies over the Troubles. But I think it's still carried through." Both of these participants framed storytelling as "clinging to the past" or a matter of an older generation who "can't let go." Ciaran also interpreted this inheritance negatively as being associated with sectarianism (a theme I will take up further below). Sinéad, a 24-year-old from Ardoyne, related the Troubles' generation's stories to a longer memory of violence in Ireland,

> When you're speaking to older people about their experiences and stuff you can tell they are really troubled by it. They probably had stories passed to them about Irish

> revolutions against the British like the Easter Rising, they then passed on stories down the years so it will probably continue on that way.
> ER- some young people our age are really….
> Sinéad- bitter about it, yeah. It's passed through the generations definitely; I really do think it's the way you are brought up.

Within the intimate spaces of the home, spontaneous moments of inheritance can occur in stories of gun battles, house raids, use of CS gas, and everyday violence. Aodhán, a 24-year-old from Ardoyne, referred to this as "yarns" his dad would tell him. "My dad is always telling stories or yarns, but they are not cohesive or anything, sometimes it will be about a donkey getting let loose in Ardoyne, or house raids or about the Brits shooting up Toby's dance hall, or the shibeens people used to drink in, just wee yarns."[386] When I asked Aodhán about what he took from those stories he said, "I guess I just understood how awful it was to live in Ardoyne back then, like how hard it was dealing with the army every single day, my da tells us about the state the houses were in and all, like how could you allow people to live like that? It's a fucking joke." These stories or yarns appeared to compound the ceasefire generation's feelings of anger and grievance, adding their families' experiences in the past to their own feelings of frustration with their own lived experience in the post-conflict period.

From the other side of this memory transmission, Róisín, a woman in her 60s, reflected on the stories she tells, "yes there would be a lot of stories passed down, and sort of when I am talking about the Troubles, I be very careful not to romanticise it to young because it wasn't fucking romantic in the slightest. We lived under militarised colonial occupation, with the Brits policing us constantly." This was very different to Rose, also a woman also in her 60s from Ardoyne: "I was careful that I didn't talk too much about it, always kept my own personal prejudices to myself because I didn't want to influence them [her children] and I didn't want them to have that intergenerational trauma, I didn't want to pass it on to them." When asked about the role of storytelling in her family, she remarks, "I probably haven't said

[386] A shibeens is an illegal community bar.

as much to the kids as I should pass onto them, but I think they have enough. I don't want to inform them or their decisions, but I have talked about it, how Ardoyne was a square and we were surrounded, how we had a daily basis of violence, and we were constantly worried about being evacuated or something happening." Rose, as mentioned previously in Chapter One, still leaves her clothes over the banister each night in case she has to flee. In this anecdote she talks about her children's reaction to this hyper-vigilant behavior, "they make the joke about the clothes over the banister or cleaning the kitchen before you go to bed, because the [British] army could come in and see your dirty dishes and kitchen. I cannot go to bed without doing the dishes because the army could come in at any time, like we lived in Brompton we were used to getting raided." In this situation, it has become a family joke or jovial subject around Rose's actions, an element of dark-humour, a coping mechanism, or a form of deflection from the reality at the core of her actions. In both of these instances the stories told reflect the difficult experiences of growing up during the conflict.

Margaret, a woman in her 70s from Ardoyne, told me stories of her youth growing up in North Belfast. I asked her whether she had shared them with her children:

> ER- would your children or grandkids know all these stories?
> Margaret- once they got older, I didn't even tell my own kids these stories until they were a right age, and I wouldn't tell the grandkids. Though my grandson said 'get Eimear up to see my chucky Granny' and I'm not a chuckie *laughs* but I just appear more Nationalist than their granda.[387]

The reference to telling her children conflict-related stories when they got older is also reflected in the statement above from Ciaran who spoke about how his family began to talk to him about the Troubles only when he got to secondary school (ages 12-18). These anecdotes reveal a variety of different issues and considerations that comprise the act of storytelling, whether to disclose or withhold information in order to shield young children from the harsh

[387] A chucky refers to an Irish Republican, a colloquialism deriving from the Irish phrase, Tiocfaidh ár lá, the Irish Republican slogan meaning 'Our day will come.' Margaret's grandson saw my post on facebook and helped to facilitate the interview.

realities of life in NI. However, despite the desire to shield, many participants from the cease-fire generation gained first-hand experience of violence and division stemming from later periods of turbulence, such as the Holy Cross Girls School dispute in 2001-2002.

The Need to Remember

The interviews uncovered a real need to remember or, just as importantly, to not forget the past. A sentiment that was powerfully expressed by Orlaith from Ardoyne, whose father was murdered in the early years of the Troubles:

> I always talk about him because I always said to myself, I never want my daddy to be forgotten because the next generation that comes along need to know. I mean for the amount of shit that that district has gone through and then the ones coming up now, like no one talks to them about it, and I think that's a real shame, I think it should be remembered, everybody should be told. Everybody should tell their kids, I tell my kids and there like sort of the same view as me. My sons are pretty quiet, but they would get annoyed about certain things as well, but I always talk about my daddy and what went on. My husband too, like he would know more about what went on in that district than I did, he was one of those kids that was out in the middle of everything, and he always talks about stuff to them and they love hearing about it. It was exciting *laughs*. But if there was any young ones talking about the Troubles, they would have got it from their parents, I would say they would probably talk to them from the heart, what they have went through. He [her husband] suffers from PTSD because of some of the things he's seen in that district, he was in Flax Street and some woman was shot dead in front of him, and he was only a kid, so he's had all this growing up, and there's been a few people he's seen murdered and that. But he doesn't sit down and be serious about it, but he would make a bit of a joke, 'aye remember a time this happened…' it's not making it seem like 'oh my God petrify them', make a bit of a joke about it, like what other way can you talk about it? Because I think if you don't sort of make a joke of it then your gona go 'oh my god did I actually go through that?' and then you start over thinking and you dwell on things too much, you just need to say it as it is, that's all there is about it. It is, it's hard like, God. That district was just crazy at some stages.[388]

This desire to remember both the history and those who died, was repeated in the testimony given by Anne, Seamus, and Conor. Anne's husband was murdered, and both Seamus and Conor lost brothers in the conflict. Seamus, a man in his 80s from Ardoyne, "How could I ever forget, how could the district ever forget what we went through?" Preserving the memory of her husband was particularly important for Anne: "I want my grandkids to know

[388] Interview with Orlaith, a woman in her 50s from Ardoyne, in 2022.

who their Granda was, how important he was to us." It was clear for both Orlaith and Conor that their memories were formed through the stories of their loved ones, both hearing them and telling them. This desire to keep the memory of their loved ones alive was passed down to the next generation and this also emerged in the ceasefire generation that I interviewed.

However, there was one participant within the ceasefire generation who did not recall hearing any stories about the Troubles growing up. This was Gráinne, a 29-year-old from Ardoyne. She commented that her parents, "didn't really go into it and I think they were afraid to go into it because, when we have kind of spoke about it briefly since then, she [her mother] said she didn't want me to know too much, and she deffo didn't want my brother to know too much. My parents honestly, they really did shelter me and my brother a lot from it." At the same time, Gráinne was a pupil of Holy Cross Girls School during the time of the dispute in 2001, and at only seven years old her walk to school every day took her through crowds of protesting members of the PUL, yelling abuse at her and her classmates. Gráinne reflects on her parents during this time, "I think when it came to my brother they sheltered him too much, and because he really didn't know what was going on, that's why he stopped speaking. The silence and the unknown really affected him." When I questioned her further on what she meant by "sheltered" she said "like they didn't explain the history to us, or the politics, or why it was happening, but I don't know what we even would have understood we were so young. But you couldn't have missed it [the dispute], it was all over the news, everyone was walking on eggshells, it was just crazy. I think they really did impact on me and my brother." Thus, although Gráinne's parents never really spoke to her and her brother about the Troubles, her own experiences of the Holy Cross dispute introduced her to the difficult legacy of the past at an early age. Anne, a woman in her 60s from Ardoyne spoke about how she tried to shield and protect her daughter from a lot of the Troubles. Her daughter was born at the end of the 1980s so, "she grew up through a lot of it, but I feel like I shielded her from a

lot of it, well I tried to. More so than when I was a teenager, we were just in it, you just had to live in there, there was no other real choice. I think most people my age would have tried to sort of steer them away from things of the Troubles because we grew up in it and we didn't want that for our kids, although yano they did see some things. I'm not really sure how much it impacted on her." The unknown impact of 'knowing too much' was an issue reflected in earlier comments by Rose and Margaret. Appreciating this from the perspective of both those who grew up during the Troubles and the ceasefire generation, indicates the complexities of memory transmission in storytelling and the juxtaposition of knowing too much versus silence.

Seamus, an Ardoyne man in his 80s, stated, "it's good to remember," while for Seán a man in his 70s also from Ardoyne, it was important that "no one forgets what happened, what people in this community went through." This might be regarded as two sides of the same coin, memory as a positive or proactive act and as a more protective, defensive effort against forgetting. Participants from the older generations seemed to share a sense of duty and urgency to transmit the memory of the conflict to younger generations. When I asked Rose why she wanted to be involved in the project she said, "Because you have all these memories, your kids are fed up hearing them and you're at an age now where that memory will just die with me." As people get older they want to convey and leave something of their experience for future generations, they want their children to understand what they lived through, and what the community went through. In truth recovery processes conducted in other post-conflict societies, phrases such as 'never forget' are central to historical justice campaigns, the insistence to remember so as to not forget.

Alternative modes of history learning

Notwithstanding the widespread urge to 'never forget' the injustices, victims, and many other aspects of the Troubles, silences also played a significant role and pervaded the conflict's

memory. Members of the younger generations often have to make an effort to fill in some of the silences and withheld details they received from their parents' and other elders' selective stories. Sinéad grew up in Ardoyne, attended Holy Cross Girls School during the 2001 dispute, heard some stories from her parents, and read as a way to better understand the Troubles.

> When I started getting my eyes opened to how deep rooted it was and listening to my mummy telling me stories about when she was younger with the Troubles and things like that. [During the dispute] They didn't explain the politics of it to me, I think I was just too young, they never explained why or why these people didn't like us walking up the road. But I really loved reading when I was younger, and my mummy's two brothers were killed in the Troubles, and yano Ardoyne the Untold Truth? Well, I started reading that and getting a wee bit of an understanding about it, then I read more and taught myself and then I would have asked questions and they were happy to answer.

According to the Commission for Victims and Survivors (CVS), in spaces of silence, young people, especially children, will fill in the blanks. We saw this process in an earlier chapter on the social history found in songs.[389] Of course, there are alternative ways to learn about the past, aside from stories. Education, or lack thereof, is integral to our understanding of the past. A community worker recounted a time when they brought a group of young boys (between 12-14 years old) on a cross-community residential overnight trip. When he asked the group about community history, the boys from the PUL community knew the basic dates and outcome of the Battle of the Boyne but could not provide more details than that. Conversely, the boys from the CNR community group were able to tell the boys from the PUL community the history of the Ulster Plantation, the Great Famine, Battle of the Boyne, among other key events. Noting this disparity in historical information, the youth worker observed, "like these Catholic boys were teaching our boys about their own history, this just is one example of the educational differences between the two communities." However, there are some young

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[389] Siobhan O'Neill, Cherie Armour, David Bolton, Brendan Bunting, Colette Corry, Barney Devine, Edel Ennis "Towards a better future: the trans-generational impact of the Troubles on mental health." (Belfast, Northern Ireland: Commission for Victims and Survivors, 2015), 16.

people from the PUL who are better educated in ‘their side’s’ history. While I was not able to interview anyone from the ceasefire generation involved in the Unionist band tradition, Charlie a band member, explained to me the “band is where young men expressed a deep knowledge of their history, although they don’t get taught it in school, they learn by being in the band.”

The lack of standardised history education in NI and continued high rates of educational segregation between Protestants and Catholics creates disparities in what the youth in each community or district know. Rose called for a more robust way of telling the shared history, “I think sometimes what’s passed on to the next generation is not really what happened, it’s your own personal experience and I pass that on, and my kids only have my story so I think it needs to be more collective. Kids need to know but more in an informed way, like proper historians doing the research.” On the other hand, to draw on Sinéad’s insights, the ceasefire generation have agency and curiosity, they watch documentaries, read books and articles, and consume the news reports. As a result, there are many who are extremely well informed about NI’s politics and recent history. Pat, a man in his 60s from Ardoyne reflects on this, “all the questions are being asked by your generation, because you are more critically aware, this generation is different from my generation.” I will return to the concept of agency later in this chapter.

Sectarianism

Sectarianism was a major theme in interviews with the ceasefire generation who viewed ongoing tensions between the PUL and CNR communities as a serious present and historical legacy problem connected to memory transmission of the violence of the Troubles. Connolly *et al.*, found that while only small numbers of three and four-year-old children demonstrated some identification with either the Protestant or Catholic communities (5% and 7%

respectively), this identification rose to just over one in three among six year olds (34%).[390] The researchers concluded that this adoption of religious identification (which usually entailed some prejudice towards the other community) is an active process, and thus "we need to understand both the 'what' and the 'how' of prejudice transmission within families in Northern Ireland."[391] Many members of the ceasefire generation that I interviewed said that sectarian attitudes or perceived negative differences between the two communities were inherited by children from their parents or grandparents and that a chief mechanism for this was storytelling. As Ciaran said, "I think it's still carried through, if you're asking me is sectarianism still in our communities? 100% and it's passed through the generations, because obviously a young person who is 6 or 7 isn't going to hate people, so it's coming through family values and stuff or even values from their community getting brought into themens, and then they are creating a way of thinking for that young person. Young people are more or less confined to the values and beliefs of their community in ways." These sentiments were echoed by Áine, "I do believe that anyone from our generation is openly sectarian is because their parents are openly sectarian." Méabh went so far as to say that children are, "Brought up in a way of hatred, they're brainwashed."

The open sharing of sectarian attitudes within families assumes a variety of forms. According to Kerrie, "it could be from hearing critiques about political parties like the DUP, UUP or TUV, like you'd hear sometimes 'Unionist bastards,' or yelling about Sammy Wilson being an orange bastard, stuff like that. But that's not talking about the whole Protestant community that's just complaining about their parties. It's when parents tell their kids directly

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390 Paul Connolly, Alan Smith, and Berni Kelly, *Too young to notice? the cultural and political awareness of 3-6 year olds in Northern Ireland* (Belfast: Community Relations Council, 2002), 5.
http://www.unescocentre.ulster.ac.uk/pdfs/pdfs_alan/2002_Too_Young_to_Notice.pdf

391 O'Neill et al., Towards a better future, 44-45.

that Protestants are bad or evil.” Alex, a 21-year-old Protestant from the Shankill recalled that sectarian attitudes were expressed within her own home growing up, “My daddy hated Catholics and my mummy had strong views, but she never forced them into me, but my da did. If you had of asked me back then I’d have been like ‘oh we don’t like Catholics’ because that’s what I was born to believe I was brought up in a household that believed that. Like something that’s been passed onto you, down through your family, you could say that in a community way as well, it passes sectarianism and division down too.” Alex went on to tell me about experiences with her dad regarding the sectarian identification of space as being Catholic or Protestant, “my daddy is very staunch Protestant, and he doesn’t like integrating or anything. I remember the car broke and we were walking down the Crumlin Road and he wouldn’t walk on the left side (of the road) he made me walk on the right side, he said, ‘listen we don’t walk over there, that’s not our side of the road’ like that’s some of the things he was saying. The car broke down literally at Ardoyne shops and he was freaking out, and made me cross the road straight away, ‘this is our side of the road’ and that’s the first thing I really do remember.”[392] Her father’s identification of the side of the road as ‘ours’ and ‘theirs’ and his emotional reaction of “freaking out” taught Alex fear of the Catholic ‘other’ and reinforced PUL community’s notions of identity, safety and belonging.

Many parents continue to feel anxiety about their children going to cross-community events or leaving the confines of the community. Cathal, a 20-year-old youth worker in Ardoyne, reflects on his own family dynamics, “Its inherited I think, personally. When I was young going down to the Hammer [Shankill youth club], you still got like your mummy being like ‘you be careful.’ It's the older generation that have a fear of that. I don't think they are seeing the change as much as youth workers and young people do.” Cathal works in a youth

[392] The Crumlin road acts as an interface between Ardoyne on the right hand side of the road and Woodvale on the left hand side of the road.

club that does incredible work both within the community of Ardoyne and through cross-community initiatives with youth clubs in the Shankill such as RCity and the Hammer.[393] When talking about some young people in the youth clubs or in the area he said, “some of them are brought up in a way of hatred, they’re brainwashed, ‘sure they did this to my family, my family suffered through this because of them.’ They’re not moving forward, they’re moving steps back instead because of the affect that the Troubles had on their families, then their families put that through to themens, ‘that’s the way it was, this is how it happened,’ so really we aren’t gona move forward basically.” Cathal’s frustration at the retrograde mentality of some parents who act as barriers to the next generation’s ability to overcome sectarian attitudes through cross-community initiatives was palpable.

Part of the work youth clubs is to eradicate stigma around the other community and to encourage dialogue and engagement between young people in the two communities. As Ciaran said, “It’s hard for a young person in Ardoyne because they may not be able to engage with a young person from the Shankill so you’re creating this persona in your head which obviously isn’t true.” This hints at fear of the other discussed in Chapters one and two above. Yet despite such constructive initiatives, many young people continue to inherit stories that reinforce sectarian division. When I probed Cathal further on the topic of Troubles-related memory and whether he thought that perhaps there should be no more active remembering of the conflict, he said,

> no like it interests me. I take a massive interest in history, I enjoy it because it’s your past, and it didn't happen that long ago, and it is this very community. That interest I think it come from my parents and their relatives, like they were involved in it, so it makes it more interesting in that someone close to themens was involved, like its more real. Someone will always be affected by it, actually a bit of research we were doing the other day [in the youth club] 1 out of every 5 people who own a house in Ardoyne…half of their family members have suffered through the conflict. So it will always be passed down no matter what, that's what I’m saying about it being inherited, it will always be there.

[393] RCity and the Hammer are both Youth Clubs on the Shankill Road.

Cathal and his ceasefire cohort advocate for a less bigoted, less sectarian version of remembrance or inheritance within families and communities as opposed to calling for a complete halt to commemoration.

Part Two

The second part of this chapter considers some of the negative fallout that accompanies the transmission or inheritance of conflict memory, including mental health issues and ongoing violence. The ceasefire generation's agency as political actors/activists in their communities, their attempts to combat the legacy of violence, sectarianism, and post-conflict mental health issues is also considered. The section concludes with a review of the structural issues affecting the ceasefire generation amidst the imperfect peace process and historical inequalities in NI.

Conflict, Mental Health and Deprivation

Mental health is a sensitive area that is not within the scope of this research project to explore it in detail. I was mindful of this and therefore did not raise it directly with participants. Nevertheless, it did emerge, unsolicited, during interviews with all 40 participants. Consequently, mental health issues connected to the legacies and memory of the Troubles as voluntarily referred to by interview participants are discussed below insofar as I was able to do so within the confines of my training.

Those of the ceasefire generation who were born in 1993/1994 are turning 30 years of age in 2023/ 2024; they grew up during the peace process but nevertheless witnessed lower level but continued violence in their communities. For example, in August 25th, 2005, the *Belfast Telegraph* reported tit-for-tat sectarian violence in North Belfast, "follow[ing] a sickening attack … when a three-month-old Catholic baby and two other young children were covered with paint and glass… and a number of homes in the Nationalist Alliance Avenue

were attacked with petrol bombs."[394] Other sectarian attacks are also common along the Woodvale interface, in 2014 the BBC reported that a pensioners home had been attacked and residents have blamed Nationalist youths.[395] In 2016 two thirteen year old boys from the Woodvale area were beaten up by older teenagers from the Ardoyne area.[396] It is important to note that post-GFA NI remained heavily militarised, with Operation Banner and British military deployment not officially ending until 31st July 2007. The RUC's replacement known as the PSNI, continued to carry heavy weaponry, while riots were common, as was the presence of burnt-out cars and buses, especially at interface flash points. Members of the ceasefire generation saw and experienced all of these events as impressionable children. Caoimhe told me of an incident she experienced in 2006:

> We [her and another female friend] were walking through the Westland entrance to the Waterworks, and a group of boys who were like 16 or 17 came up to us with a crowbar and were like 'say the alphabet,'[397] and we said 'no leave us alone,' he said it again and held the crowbar up and we just looked at each other and legged it. Still, like that used to happen, it was common, and we should have known better than to walk through that entrance.[398]

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[394] Jonathan McCambridge and Lisa Smyth, "Calls for calm after. Night of tit-for-tat attacks," *the Belfast Telegraph,* August 25th 2005, 62. https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/calls-for-calm-after-night-of-tit-for-tat-attacks/28236024.html

[395] "Woodvale: 'Sectarian' attacks on elderly homes condemned," *BBC News*, January 31, 2014, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-25975870 (accessed December 20, 2023).

[396] The Newsroom, "Sectarian attack on Woodvale teenagers," News Letter, May 22, 2016, https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/sectarian-attack-on-woodvale-teenagers-1237268 (accessed December 20, 2023).

[397] Saying the alphabet is said to be a way in which one can identify different ethnic/religious groups in NI because Catholics/Protestants are said to pronounce letters - such as H - differently.

[398] The Waterworks is a park in North Belfast, with entrances on the Antrim Road, the Cliftonville Road, the Cavehill Road and the Westland Road, these entrances are all within different communities. The Cliftonville Road entrance was deemed the Catholic entrance and the Westland Road entrance was the Protestant entrance, the other two were in mixed areas. Caoimhe went on to say how she thought the boys must have seen her and her friend walk down from Ardoyne, down the Westland Road and through that entrance.

Geographical location in NI is often an indicator of religious affiliation, social class and socio-economic status. In 2018 the *Belfast Telegraph* published the list of the top ten most deprived areas in NI. Ardoyne was third, Woodvale was fourth and the Shankill was ninth.[399] In their work, Murtagh and Shirlow note that such sites of socio-economic deprivation closely map onto areas of intense violence from 1969-1998. These social conditions are associated with higher rates of mental health issues. Bunting *et al*., found that individuals who stated that they had lived ,"as a civilian in a place where there was ongoing terror of civilians for political, ethnic, religious or other reasons" were almost twice as likely to have mood disorders and more than twice as likely to have anxiety and impulse-control disorders, than those who had not endured such trauma.[400] In NI, more people have taken their own lives since the GFA than were killed in political violence during the Troubles (between 1969-1997).[401] NI's most deprived areas had a suicide rate that was almost twice that of the least deprived areas in 2020, 19.7 deaths per 1000,000 in the most deprived areas, 10.8 per 100,000 in the least deprived areas based on the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM).[402] This reinforces the strong correlation between increased mental health problems and lower socio-economic conditions.

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[399] Jonathan Bell, "Revealed: Northern Ireland's 10 most deprived areas," *Belfast Telegraph*, Thursday 26 July 2018. https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/environment/revealed-northern-irelands-10-most-deprived-areas/37157128.html

[400] B.P. Bunting, S.M. Murphy, S.M. O'Neill, & F.R. Ferry, "Lifetime prevalence of mental health disorders and delay in treatment following initial onset: evidence from the Northern Ireland Study of Health and Stress," *Psychological Medicine* 42 no. 8 (2012): 1736, doi: 10.1017/S0033291711002510

[401] August 25th 2005, the Belfast Telegraph

[402] Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, Finalised Suicide Statistics in Northern Ireland, 2015- 2021, published 30th November 2022.

The mental health crisis in the North was a continuous theme throughout the interviews I conducted. Róisín, a woman in her 60s from Ardoyne, noted, "I was doing some reading and apparently every country that comes out of conflict their suicide rates increase massively, is that intergenerational trauma? I'd say so!" Muldoon and Downes argued that PTSD is the most common mental health problem resulting from years of war and conflict."[403] Many of the people in NI with symptoms that may suggest PTSD do not regard themselves as victims of the conflict. Instead of seeking professional help some self-medicate and "treat" their symptoms with drugs and alcohol. This was commented upon in interviews with Ethna, Margaret and Bernadette, all of whom reflected on their parent's alcoholism and depression. Áine, a member of the ceasefire generation, said that, "the adults in the generation before us are walking around depressed and coping with anxiety, and alcoholism and they don't know how to deal with it." Participants Seamus, Seán and Patrick, talked about the high number of ex-POWs or ex- combatants who have addiction problems. As has been noted, "the nexus of long-term unemployment, poverty, relationship breakdown, alcohol, and substance abuse, and at times the existential anxiety of the 'terrible futility of the things' they were involved in can result in mental health problems."[404] This is found also among ex-Loyalist paramilitaries. Andy discussed how many ex-paramilitaries left prison and fell into depressive episodes or turned to alcohol. He went on to say how many have now turned to religion and this has provided them an alternative outlet and refuge. At least 15,000 people were incarcerated in NI during the conflict, the effect on individuals and the knock-on effect on

[403] O.T. Muldoon and C. Downes, "Social identification and post-traumatic stress symptoms in post-conflict Northern Ireland." *The British Journal of Psychiatry,* 191 (2007): 148.

[404] Elizabeth Gallagher, Brandon Hamber, Elaine Joy, "Perspectives and possibilities: Mental health in post-agreement Northern Ireland," *Shared Space: A research journal on peace, conflict and community relations in Northern Ireland* 13 (2012): 66.

extended families cannot be underestimated.[405] As discussed previously, doctors heavily prescribed anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medications in NI.[406] Breen-Smyth argues that this is inadequate because justice is also essential to restoring mental health to conflict-torn communities. "If we put a pill in somebody's mouth when they are grieving and the lack in their lives is the lack of justice and the lack of reconciliation, then we are storing up trouble for our own futures and for our children's futures." She calls for positive societal change as a critical part of how we address the impact of Troubles on mental health.[407] Members of the ceasefire generation have fathers, mothers, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents who were involved in the conflict and they live with the ramifications of their actions, potential guilt, PTSD or trauma stemming from their actions or time in prison. Some of the ceasefire generation that I interviewed were aware of their family member's actions and their involvement in the conflict, and they too had to live with these associated feelings, and/or felt that they had to 'do their part.'

Scholars such as Veeran and Morgan, have reflected on the resilience of communities, in particular younger community members, during and after violence and conflicts.[408] Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, and

[405] Elizabeth Gallagher, Brandon Hamber, Elaine Joy, "Perspectives and possibilities: Mental health in post-agreement Northern Ireland," *Shared Space: A research journal on peace, conflict and community relations in Northern Ireland* 13 (2012): 68.

[406] I found it difficult to find books or journals or newspaper sources that discussed this, however, many of the participants in the project openly talked about how the women of Ardoyne (and other Catholic communities) were overly prescribed medication to deal with their "nerves."

[407] Elizabeth Gallagher, Brandon Hamber, Elaine Joy, "Perspectives and possibilities: Mental health in post-agreement Northern Ireland." *Shared Space: A research journal on peace, conflict and community relations in Northern Ireland* 13 (2012): 68.

[408] Vasintha Veeran and Tony Morgan, "Examining the role of culture in the development of resilience for youth at risk in contested societies of South Africa and Northern Ireland," *Youth and Policy* 102 (2009): 53-66.

threats, it means "bouncing back" from difficult experiences.[409] According to the Róisín, resilience in the NI context often looks like "get up and get on with it, sure you're grand or stop crying and come on." These attitudes pervade many communities in interviews. Participants such as Kerrie, a 29-year-old from Ardoyne, mentioned how their family or friends often hid that they were struggling. It may be a coping mechanism that ultimately harms health and wellbeing, and in the last fifteen years, the concept of resilience in NI has been challenged. It is now also contended that the failure of the government to acknowledge the pain of the past and deal with outstanding conflict-related issues, is at least in part, about the neglect of the massive impact the conflict has had on the society.[410] It could be argued that these attitudes of 'sure you're grand' or 'just get on with it' are forms of societally imposed silence around the emotional challenges and difficulties stemming from the conflict.

Paramilitaries, Youth and Social Control

The key theme that I seek to draw out in this section is the issue of social control that paramilitaries still exert over young people in parts of NI. Chapter two sets out the contestation over memory, intra-community tensions and the battle of the dead existing within Ardoyne. The act of commemorating and claiming 'ownership' of the dead, as discussed previously, can be used by memory activists to reaffirm and legitimise political ideology or political action. The nuances around the battle of memory were not discussed within my interviews with members of the PUL community, so I cannot say for certain that these exist. However, given the violent splits and territorial disputes between Unionist and Loyalist organisations and paramilitary bodies such as the UDA, UVF, Red Hand Defenders, and

[409] Dr. Russ Newman, "The Road to Resilience," American Psychological Association, last modified October 2002. https://www.apa.org/monitor/oct02/pp

[410] Consultative Group on the Past, *Report of the Consultative Group on the Past –Executive Summary* (Belfast, 2009). http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/victims/docs/consultative_group/cgp_230109_report_sum.pdf

veterans organisations, it seems likely that intra-community tensions over commemorations exist within the Greater Shankill area too. But to focus on Nationalist Ardoyne, amidst the ongoing battle between rival memory activists such as ex-POWs and so-called dissident Republicans, the ceasefire generation have appeared as a new factor or interest group, political actors and commemorators in their own right with their own relationship to the Troubles and its legacies.

Ardoyne as a site of geo-political tension and conflict has changed since the signing of the GFA, but the legacies, murals, peace walls and spatial boundaries remain, acting as constant reminders of the conflict. As discussed in Chapter Two, memories of the violent past are prompted by sites of memory or spaces where private and social memories have embedded themselves. Some of those memories are marked by commemorative plaques, murals or even gardens of reflection or remembrance that function as important forms of remembrance for those who grew up during the Troubles and lost family members or friends. However, some members of the ceasefire generation, particularly those in Ardoyne, feel detached from these Troubles related narratives and social memory of the community. (This, however, does not necessarily include younger people who lost family members in the conflict who are remembered at key local sites). But to focus on those ceasefire voices uncomfortable with or critical of the current commemorative status quo in their locales, John, an 18-year-old from Ardoyne, was of the view that, “murals and gardens of remembrance build on the idea of us against them” or are used to reinforce the dominant voice in Republicanism. Gerard a 19-year-old from Ardoyne argued, “So much work is being done here to put the past in the past, but there’s a small minority who won’t let go and bring it into the present, they reignite it. Like what’s the point…put something positive there, to support the community. Like the younger ones are going to see that [the RNU dissident mural] and ask what it means, then they are thinking about it and ‘what happened and all’, instead of just

getting a clean slate from here on in." His statement illustrates the frustration and disconnect between the ceasefire generation and the generations before over commemorative narratives about the Troubles. Although murals act as sites of education, community reflection and acknowledgement of the dead, according to some of the ceasefire generation they contribute to feelings of bitterness in the youth and thus reinforce an inability for some to move forward. Similarly, to John and Gerard, Méabh, a 21-year-old youth volunteer from Ardoyne said,

> There are so many issues … that affect young people more than the conflict, that I think people want it over but there are some minorities who don't and keep dragging it back. The likes of dissidents and paramilitaries, who seem to be … just using the conflict as a cover up for what they really want to do. They're using it as an agenda.

The interviews conducted reveal a clear sense of frustration towards dissident groups and other paramilitaries that persist in attempting to influence the ceasefire generation, while overlooking the contemporary issues that affect them.

Many of the older participants felt that the role of the dissidents is lessening in Ardoyne. Orlaith, a woman in her 50s from Ardoyne, felt that "some of them just want to keep things riled up and I don't understand why because the same people who are in it, they are young they haven't went through the Troubles as we knew it, yano so they are thinking of things along the lines of post-Brexit and don't let them have their way, they would just end up starting shit over again that's not called for." Seamus, a man in his 80s from Ardoyne, believed that "they have no input into this area whatsoever, none, and regards to community spirit, none whatsoever and I can say that without fear of contradiction. They [dissidents] just have no input, just a waste of space if I am being quite honest." However, Seán said that the dissidents were targeting young people, "now they have a wee bit of a squeeze on young people, but young people don't really understand by and large the reason for the dissidents." Interestingly, Matthew expressed a different view regarding the cultural influence and on-the-ground influence and control exerted by dissidents,

> I think their expression is becoming more dominant, but I don't think it mirrors the ground, I think in many ways you're seeing a need or desire to say we are still here... My experience is that some who used to be quite prominent are now no longer involved, so there's been a movement away. I think here, Ardoyne has a much greater representation of dissident Republicans, but over the last few years my experience is it is becoming less so, now you're still getting the murals, but yano what you can paint the whole street in murals. But at some levels, dissidents cover such a large space of stuff, who is a dissident and who's not? My opinion and I could be wrong, within the dissident movement there are a portion of them who are every bit as committed as the Shinners [Sinn Féin] were right down the line, they believe a united Ireland will come and will only come through an armed struggle... the difficulty for those people is that they have also been surrounded by others who are jumping on the band wagon, it's not the same; people say about the gangsterism within Republicanism and loyalism – it's not. Within the loyalism there is gangsterism, within the Republican communities you have people who disagree with the GFA and will never accept it, they are entitled to that opinion. But they are being immersed within so many other people, including the gangsterism. The difficulty is, people say all paramilitaries are gangsters and they're not, I come from Ardoyne I know them *laughs*, very very decent people, its just what they believe…. What has really changed is the whole drug thing.

There was consensus across the divide that the 'new paramilitaries' act more like gangsters and drug dealers than did the paramilitaries of the Troubles. Thomas, a man in his 40s from the Shankill agreed with Matthew on the sentiment against paramilitaries, "like after the GFA and people signed off on peace I don't think there's any need for paramilitaries, but now you have these sort of new age gangsters if you want to call them, that I don't believe represent Republicanism or represent loyalism, they're drug dealers they're gangsters they're extortionists, so it's totally different than it was back then."

When discussing the issues facing young people in NI and paramilitary control, drugs was the major issue that was raised by participants. Many such as Matthew, Thomas, and Andy noted how there are some people who are either dissidents or work under the "protection of dissidents supplying the drugs to young people." Thomas argued that drugs are

> doing more damage to the communities than the Troubles, it's doing more damage to communities than anything you can imagine. A lot of people are getting into debt coming from it, people getting involved in other activities stealing, selling themselves to pay off drug debts, we've seen it firsthand. We work with young people and community members who run up bills, some are on cocaine habits of 400 pound a day. How can every right man afford that?! That's some of the things we are up against, but we fight back by keeping things positive, by doing the work we are involved in and constantly raising the aspirations of young people.

It is difficult to separate these issues of conflict legacy, educational underachievement, unemployment, austerity and the rise in drug dealers and drug possession convictions. Róisín discussed this intersection of the drugs problem with other social issues. "I'd say drugs are the enemy to the development of our community, but then there's lots of local people involved in it, so do we isolate them? It's hard." We talked about the underfunding and a lack of opportunities "if you stop [drug dealing], you're not going to walk into a 40 grand a year job, so I get where people are coming from, its quick money and a lot of it. But I don't like the sinister side of it, like I do not agree with it." An important aspect to consider is that drug dealing provides a way out of financial insecurity during a cost-of-living crisis. Claire remarked, "ask young people in Ardoyne, what are they going to be when they grow up, you'll be terrified of the answer. ER- wait are kids actually saying drug dealers? Claire- oh yea." This is not just an issue affecting NI, it is a global phenomenon for working-class marginalised people.

As we can see from the above addiction is a huge issue in NI with many participants discussing the level of addiction issues within their communities. The members of the ceasefire generation that I interviewed related addiction to the legacy of the Troubles but also saw it as a form of structural violence. Inadequate support from the state to assist survivors of the Troubles, including ex-prisoners, compounded social problems in working-class neighborhoods like Ardoyne and contribute to the levels of drugs on the streets. For years it was an open secret who the drug dealers in Belfast were. According to a participant, "oh, in Torrens you knew exactly who they were, and they were the dissies at the time as well, got to use the name of Republicanism to protect themselves."[411] This is similar to the Shankill as

[411] Due to the sensitive nature of these comments, for safety reasons I will not include this person's acronym. Torrens is a neighbourhood just outside of Ardoyne towards the Cliftonville Road.

documented by a recent BBC One Spotlight report on the level of drug dealing in this Loyalist community.[412] Ben, a 20-year-old from the Shankill echoed similar sentiments, "aye, they run the area, what they did was during the Lanark Way riots all the young ones with debts to them, they told them if they went out rioting they would get their debts halved. Like thesens had no money to pay the debts so course they are gona throw a few bricks, easier than getting a beating."[413] Paramilitaries continuing to exert control over certain communities makes it difficult to move forward as a society. Another participant from the Shankill told me,

> So, whenever we were drinking in the park, before the police came the paramilitaries would have came and chased you and if they got you they would have thrown you home and gone into your house and said like 'next time we maybe won't be so nice' even small things like that. They will know who you are and know where you live, it would feel like there's eyes on you at times, you have to have your wits about you at times because like they know who you are and know where you live, fucking keep the head down like.
> ER- so what they were 'protecting' the community from anti-social behaviour?
> Participant- yeah but by causing anti-social behaviour, so say like there's a fella I grew up with… he got caught drinking in the park and they took him home and went into his house to his ma and da, and basically threatened them 'if you don't control him we will' - then again if he just keeps getting into trouble or whatever they are either gona beat you or you now work for them.
> ER- work for them?
> Participant- they would ask you to do shit and if you don't do it there's a beating at the end of it so like.
> ER- like either way you're gona get the shit kicked out of you?
> Participant- aye or you'll get arrested or something … they say they are cleaning up the area but they are just cleaning it out because they control it and want to exert their dominance.

The practice of community policing has continued from the Troubles, with the added more contemporary aspect of controlling the supply of drugs in areas as well. Historically, many Nationalist areas in Northern Ireland were designated "no-go" areas with fierce resistant to

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[412] Slugger O'Toole, "Paramilitaries: Clear and Present Danger (BBC Spotlight)," Youtube, December 8, 2020. News video, 33.11. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMVb_kYPZM8; Julian O'Neill, "NI rioters have drug debts cleared by paramilitaries, MPs told," *BBC News*, February 1, 2023. https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-64483914.

[413] Due to the sensitive nature of these comments, for safety reasons I will not include this person's acronym.

any form of police presence. To fill the security vacuum the IRA assumed the role of de facto police in communities where lack of trust with RUC and later the PSNI was high. Control was enforced by punishment beatings, kneecapping and more extreme violence in the name of defense of the community. In this way anti-social behaviour, drug taking and trafficking were tightly controlled. Following decommissioning IRA control lessened but was, to a large extent, replaced by the emerging dissident groups who later were perceived by their community, as being involved in drug misuse for personal gain while maintaining an outward façade of being anti- drugs. Paramilitary involvement in the drug trade and the social problems it creates clearly undermines their claim of 'supporting' or 'protecting' the community. An anonymous participant asserted that the remnants of Troubles-era paramilitary organisations contribute significantly to the violence on the streets despite ceasefires, the GFA, decommissioning of weapon and reform of the police service.

A further method of paramilitary social control over post-conflict Ardoyne and other working-class communities entails published lists of the names of people accused of 'anti-social behaviour' by Republican activists. A participant told me about this chilling practice: "have you seen the list? ER- what list? Participant- the one the dissies send round every year or whatever, of the people selling drugs and all. ER- no I haven't seen it." The participant pulled up the list on her phone from Facebook,

> ER- wait, so [name redacted] just published it on their own Facebook page?
> Participant- yea just their own page and then people have shared it, then I got it as a WhatsApp as well, like people obviously screenshot it and sent it around.
> ER- and what happens now?
> Participant, well they are meant to leave the district like, or they'll get kneecapped or like have the shit kicked out of them."[414]

[414] Kneecapping is a form of punishment involving shooting the offender in the leg near the knee. It was so common a form of injury during the Troubles that Belfast's main hospital has a recognized expertise in treating gunshot wounds to the knee.

Paramilitary policing to control anti-social behaviours such as burglary, car theft, joy riding and non-paramilitary drug dealing has increased over the last 10 years despite the GFA's promise of reforms to policing and the justice system that would create for NI a normalized system of law and order respected by all communities. The *Belfast Telegraph* reported 36 shooting incidents in 2015/2016 and 61 in 2016/2017.[415] In 2020-2021, there were 18 paramilitary style shootings reported; in 2021-2022 there were 12, with a further drop to 10 in 2022/2023. These incidents occur across NI and are visible reminders of paramilitary control of communities and in particular young people.

During 2021, there was increased tension in NI stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns exacerbated by a non-functioning NI government and continued uncertainty over Brexit. In particular issues regarding the NI Protocol concerning the border between NI (UK) and ROI (EU) heightened tensions. Unionists believe that the NI Protocol creates an economically unified Ireland, which they are completely opposed to. Arguably the tensions relate to two periods of intense violence in April and November 2021. These violent clashes and protests illuminated to the rest of NI the continued control that Loyalist paramilitaries continue to have in certain flashpoint PUL areas of Belfast, even after decommissioning of paramilitary weapons and the disbandment of paramilitary organisations during the Peace Process and GFA. Thomas, a man in his 40s from the Shankill, believed that, "what happened last summer was young people being used as political pawns for… be under no illusion I know I'm being recorded saying this, some communities are still hell bent on moving forward and some communities are still living in the past and its people within them communities who are no longer relevant but are trying to keep themselves relevant, be under no illusion this is what it is - nothing more." Andy, a man in his late 40s from the Woodvale

[415] Adrian Rutherford, "Teenager shot in the legs one of 50 named on social media hit list," *Belfast Telegraph*, July 15, 2017, https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/teenager-shot-in-legs-one-of-50-named-on-social-media-hit-list/35932538.html

area, talked about deterrents, meaning paramilitary style control, punishment beatings, kneecapping etc. "ER- do you think there are still deterrents in those areas? Andy- oh definitely. ER- would certain organisations still have a controlling hand? Andy- oh absolutely, of course".

Many of my interviews took place in 2021, a few months after significant riots on Lanark Way (figures 6.0 and 6.1). According to an article in the Belfast *News Letter*, following an April 7th Loyalist protest at the peace wall gate at Lanark Way, there were successive nights of protests, in which scores of police officers were injured after being attached with petrol bombs, fireworks and stones. Community worker Isaac Andrews said, "For me personally, what I witnessed over those two days was very reminiscent of what you would have seen in the early 1970s in street disorder, that's how bad it was." He argued that the unrest in the Loyalist community had been "murmuring for two-three years." Due to a "feeling of loss of identity, culture being eroded." He asserted that the riots and protests were ultimately due to Brexit and the Northern Ireland Protocol. "In terms of Brexit, people were looking at what would happen along the border, watching the Nationalist protests and all this talk that we can't even have a camera on the border or we could return back to violence…Many in unionism and loyalism feel that threat was appeased and we have ended up with this Northern Ireland Protocol and another border has been created."[416] The riots in April spread across Northern Ireland, with incidents in Belfast, Carrickfergus, Newtownabby and Derry. During the riots, cars, phone boxes and bins were set on fire, as was a bus at the junction of Lanark Way and the Shankill Road along the peace line (Figure 5.0 and Figure 5.1). According to the *Irish News* this explosion of Loyalist unrest was due to frustration over

[416] "Lanark Way rioting was very reminiscent of what you would have seen in the early 1970s… that's how bad it was," *The News Letter*, April 18, 2021. https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/uk-news/lanark-way-rioting-was-very-reminiscent-of-what-you-would-have-seen-in-the-early-1970s-thats-how-bad-it-was-3205240

the decision not to prosecute members of Sinn Féin over alleged coronavirus regulation breaches at the funeral of Republican Bobby Storey, alongside opposition to the NI Protocol and drug seizures against a dissident faction of the UDA in south-east Antrim.[417] BBC journalist Julian O'Neill stated that the UVF is suspected of involvement in the worst night of rioting, it's said to have encouraged the trouble at the interface, although this has been disputed.[418]

Figure 5.0: Image shows a bus on fire.

Source: taken from X (formerly Twitter), post by the Police Federation of Northern Ireland, April 7, 2021.[419]

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[417] "Bus set on fire and press photographer attacked as disorder resumes in Belfast," *The Irish News,* April 7, 2021, https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2021/04/07/news/watch-bus-hijacked-and-set-on-fire-in-west-belfast-2280886/

[418] O'Neill, "NI rioters have drug debts cleared by paramilitaries, MPs told."

[419] Police Federation for Northern Ireland, "Shocking scenes which could set out society back years. Thinking of our brave @policeserviceNI colleagues dealing with this disorder in Belfast tonight and those law abiding citizens caught up in this needless violence." X (formerly Twitter) April 7, 2021, https://twitter.com/PoliceFedforNI/status/1379885468591009793?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1379885468591009793%7Ctwgr%5E019f79b7d894660efb636d35d3fceef1fa9bcc6e%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.irishnews.com%2Fnews%2Fnorthernirelandnews%2F2021%2F04%2F07%2Fnews%2Fwatch-bus-hijacked-and-set-on-fire-in-west-belfast-2280886%2F

Figure 5.1 : Image of youths rioting at the Lanark Way Peace wall. Source : taken by BBC, April 14, 2021.[420]

Alongside shootings, bombings, kidnappings, ambushes, assassinations, and torture the Troubles were infamous for crowd violence, with frequent riots, community clashes with each other and with the RUC and army. Arguably, this heritage of street violence and unrest normalised and de-sensitised rioting and unrest amongst the ceasefire generation.[421] According to Tomlinson, over 40 per cent of children in Northern Ireland are growing up with parents who have high or moderate experience of the conflict and one in five are growing up with an adult who has high experience of conflict.[422] There is clearly a heightened exposure to violence (directly or indirectly) in conflict zones like NI. Participants of the ceasefire

[420] Michael Hirst, "NI riots: What is behind the violence in Northern Ireland?" BBC News, April 14, 2021. https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-56664378

[421] A society that relies on violence to voice its anger and frustration, passes that on to younger generations. In societies that are divided, the streets become spaces of violent clashes. For example, Derry has always been a tense space between members of the Catholic Nationalist Republican community and the state (as well as between the two main communities), with a long history and tradition of street protests such as the 'Free Derry Zone.' 7th-8th September 2023 in response to PSNI raids on CNR houses, 'riots' or violent clashes between the PSNI and youth broke out, with a crowd of young people throwing petrol bombs at PSNI jeeps.

[422] Mike Tomlinson, Paddy Hillyard, Grace Kelly, "Child poverty in Northern Ireland: results from the poverty and social exclusion study," in *Beneath the Surface: Child Poverty in Northern Ireland*, eds. Child Poverty Alliance, (Belfast: Child Poverty Alliance, 2014), 30.

generation talked about such Troubles violence in a matter-of-fact way. John, an 18-year-old from Ardoyne, reflected, “sure you get used to it, you hear of people being shot and it barely makes the 6 o’clock news here.” In November of 2021 riots flared again and two boys 12 and 15 years old were arrested on suspicion of riotous behaviour. Sinn Féin Assembly member (MLA) Pat Sheehan remarked, “Tonight's trouble is a direct consequence of the dangerous and irresponsible stunt organised by Loyalists at the Lanark Way interface this evening... with the sole intention of heightening tensions and causing trouble.”[423] During this time people were questioning the reasons behind the violence, especially young people’s involvement. Brian Smyth, a Green Party councillor, said blamed “the failure of politicians to address the root causes”. He went on, “you tell young people who believe they have nothing, no future, poor educational outcomes, unemployed and can’t afford a bus into the city centre…That's at the root of this and we are trying to communicate with young people who have little to no hope, trying to sell them a dream but there’s no reality for that on the ground… It’s heartbreaking and the failure of politicians to address the root causes, poverty, inequality, poor health outcomes, poor educational outcomes, youth services stripped back - all they [young people] have known is austerity, they may not know what austerity means but they’ve lived through it."[424] Joseph, a man in his 70s/80s from Ardoyne, argued that “the paramilitaries are behind it [Lanark Way violence]...them paramilitaries are stirring it all up...they all talk about going to war, going to war with who? Who will they fight?” Seán agreed with Joseph, sarcastically remarking that, “aye that was protocol, wise up, it was the UVF bringing them out, it was the DUP activating UVF and the UVF were activating the kids. These are 12-year-old kids, do you think they wanted that?” He continued to ask the

[423] “Lanark Way: No one wants disorder to escalate, says PSNI chief,” *BBC*, November 4, 2021. https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-59158328

[424] Emily McGarvey and Luke Sproule, “Reaction to another night of violence in NI,” *BBC,* April 8, 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/live/uk-northern-ireland-56661771

question – "what 12-year-olds know about the Protocol?" Another interviewee, Matthew, similarly believed that "they [young people] are listening to the older ones. ER- like their parents and stuff? Matthew- aye they were cheering on the young ones setting buses on fire and all." Anne also noted this cross-generational participation and support:

> I think it's coming from their parents and their grandparents and going, like it was East Belfast right? So it was mostly against Catholics like 'don't be letting themens come into our community' 'get you out', they were sending their young kids out, no respect for police or whatever, they just didn't care, setting cars on fire. Then on our sides I'd say it was the same thing, 'get out there and you protect our area from them coming into us' and they think they are doing it and they're not. I can't explain it, but they think they are out protecting our area from somebody coming in and attacking it and it's not happening. There's no respect there, young boys and young men in my generation had to go out and protect their areas genuinely and put their own lives at risk while being trailed off the streets and thrown in jail, yano, they did it because they believed they were trying to protect their areas and trying to protect their people because of what was happening at that time. But now kids going out to just loot and ruin people's districts, cars and livelihoods and just have no respect, like there's just no respect there, I would feel our generation would have more respect for people they tried to look after everybody in all the darkness, in all the horrible things that happened.

During the interviews participants showed me messages that had circulated on Facebook and WhatsApp within the Unionist community, calling for people to go to the peace wall/ interface and protect their community. The message from the April 2021 protests read,

> Calling all patriot Loyalists onto the streets. Do you care about your future in NI? If so now is the time to stand up and be counted the call is going out to all areas to shut NI down like the Workers Strike in the 70s, until the CC and his gold command structure are sacked or told where to go. Enough is enough, they are saying Protestant people are going to be the minority, lets show them who the minority is, come out and block the streets once again from 5-7 every night. If you care be there, we will not be the generation to fail Ulster.[425]

The historic allusions in this particular message are clear and clearly place a burden on the ceasefire generation of PULs to challenge the historic tradition of defending the union albeit from new threats.

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[425] I am not sure what CC and the gold command structure is.

Of course, youth taking to the streets is not a new phenomenon in NI. We see historic patterns of children and young people partaking in riotous behaviour, during and since the Troubles. In the post-conflict period, for example, the *News Letter* reported in August 2005 on violence that there were, "Rioters now aged just six years old."[426] Arlene Healy director of Family Trauma Centre at the time, said that, "a lost generation was involved in recreational rioting." The article continues by noting that boredom is the cause for many riots during this time. This language echoes that of the community worker participants I interviewed. But the violent clashes and rhetoric of 2021 detracted from the life-changing work conducted by Unionist community workers and did not represent the feelings expressed by my participants.

Alongside the riots or clashes at the interfaces, social media has become a new interface for sectarianism, hatred, and division. Alex, explained to me how "Snapchat has become the new thing, where a wee boy can go to an interface take a snapchat and within half an hour there's a riot, happens in Facebook group chat too, they are all in group chats together even though they hate each other. It's how they get their night in because they would get threw out of the youth club at a certain time so they would put a picture up or whatever, then after 10 they would go home. They would get adrenaline or hype out of it, they find it fun." Matthew talks about the use of social media by adults, he calls it "toxic," and emphasises how much support social media personalities like Jamie Bryson can garner and how much harm they can cause.[427] He also acknowledges how social media is an invaluable tool for a lot of older people, a space where they can remember the past in a positive way. Facebook sites such as Old Ardoyne Memories allow people to post old photographs and share stories, remember anniversaries and thus feel connected to their community. This social function was

[426] *News Letter*, Thursday August 25, 2005, 16.

[427] Jamie Bryson is a spokesperson for the alt-right, bigoted, sectarian side of Unionism. He has a big twitter (now X) following.

especially important during the isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, he notes that this can be negative where people post or comment on a status and, "the next thing you know everyone's going at each other" with sectarian abuse becoming rampant and getting further normalised among young people. Cathal said, "when I played against Shankill and there was loads of tension built up over Facebook, Ardoyne's gona do this, Shankill's gona do this, so there was a big massive crowd watching it. After the game there was a lot of fighting going on outside the ground and it was all over Facebook and sectarianism and that. Social media's where they see most of it nowadays that's where they see everything, it's such a big factor in what happens. Majority is negative like."[428]

Youth, Agency and Hope

Young people who participated in this project were very vocal about their opposition to ongoing paramilitary control and violence within their communities and advocated for community solidarity against regressive forces trying to pull the ceasefire generation back into the sectarianism, violence and hopelessness of the Troubles. For the younger generation, especially those who are community workers and volunteers, this entails challenging Republican ex-prisoner and dissidents who claim a monopoly over Troubles commemoration and the social memory of the community. Gerard, a 20-year-old community youth volunteer, is one of those working to create new forms of social remembrance that reflect the post-GFA generation's experiences and place within the Ardoyne community. "We are trying to get more murals to represent young people and the positive things in the community, not bringing it back[wards]." In 2016 the original ex-POW Garden of Remembrance was moved to Old Ardoyne (as discussed in Chapter two) and replaced by the Ardoyne Youth Club's 'Garden of Hope' and mural, unveiled on 10 September 2019 to coincide with World Suicide Prevention

[428] Interestingly social media such as Instagram and TikTok are spaces where young comedians from Belfast do comedy sketches and mock sectarianism.

Day (Figure 5.2 below). For Kerrie, "The [new] mural reflects something that's important to us, everyone in this community is suffering and we need to acknowledge it so we can move on." Gerard said, "Ardoyne every year has mental health issues, and it's like a domino effect within the community, there was a time in Ardoyne there was 15 [suicides] in one year. It's an ongoing thing in Ardoyne, and it's just trying to get people to speak out more because every year we are having so many suicides and it's devastating the families. And that their mural is maybe what Ardoyne needed because of what it's been through, even stuff like the Troubles and the conflict can lead people to having mental health issues as well." Sinéad found the new mural to be about tearing down stigma around mental health, noting, "there seems to be more of an emphasis on young people to talk and that there shouldn't be a stigma attached to mental health anymore, it's just something that people have to deal with and talk about if they need to. Because there has been so many suicides with young people and drugs I think it would be good for people for it not to be hid away. So that it's not seen as taboo or anything anymore." This site acts as an example of Doreen Massey's "space-time envelope," highlighting how the ceasefire generation's memory and experiences that are shaped by the contemporary socio-economic and political struggles, are nonetheless layered over older memories of the past. It also reaffirms Garner *et al's* point that the post-conflict generation may "reinterpret, repurpose, and reject the meaning of their inherited surroundings," and subsequent generations can renegotiate and rework narratives of the past to fit their own present circumstances.[429] We see the ceasefire generation acknowledge the role of the past in shaping their current struggles, as they reinterpret the site to contribute to the social memory within the built environment. They are now entering the landscape as political actors and

[429] T. Garner, M. Mansour, and D.J. Marshall, "Intergenerational intimacy geopolitics: family interviewing and generaitons of memory in occupied Palestine. Fennia 199, no.2 (2021), 234, https://doi.org/10.11143/fennia.97092

memory activists, pushing the community's social memory and narratives to evolve and adapt to current conditions.

Figure 5.2: Garden of Hope mural by the Ardoyne Youth Club.
Source: Photograph taken by Eimear Rosato, May 2022.

A community worker from RCity showed me the role of young people in designing new murals for the interface on the Shankill. He talked about the work RCity are doing, not simply reimaging murals but looking at alternative ways to showcase art.

> Have you noticed the one on the Woodvale, the big taxi? That was them, the young ones here in RCity, they wanted to give it a history that's not a dark history of the Troubles, so they came up with the idea of the black taxis. Lanark Way there is a Terry Bradley mural its RCity too, he came in and worked with them, he was particularly interested in the work they were doing around mental health.[430] So they took the area that had seen some of the worst trouble the city had seen in years and tried to put something positive up, so that if something ever happened again they might think twice about it because there's an amazing mural up. The mural is of old dockers and that represents people from both sides of the community, it's that hard working-class image.

Here we see examples from both sides of the community, acknowledging the troubled histories of their areas but choosing alternative forms to express themselves that engage with local histories and local artists. What is significant is the overt inclusion of young people's voices that are too often ignored. Indeed, many younger interviewees expressed to me their

[430] Terry Bradley is a famous local artist in Belfast, he is from the working-class Protestant, Unionist, Loyalist community of the Shankill road.

frustration that too often their generation's perspective is not listened to, with the risk that this neglect is creating a generation of apathetic, apolitical citizens. Aodhán, a 24-year-old from Ardoyne spoke about the potential for another election due to Stormont's collapse. He complained, "What's the point in voting sure they won't do anything?" Many like him feel similarly frustrated, tired, and let down by the politicians. They believe their perspectives and concerns are ignored because they did not live through Troubles, they only 'picked up the pieces' of this history whose shadow they live in. The ceasefire generation appears almost haunted by the post-memory of the Troubles, a generation trying but failing to escape the war-time politics and stories that still dominate 'post-conflict' Northern Irish society.

Many of the young people interviewed for this study felt that the older generation continuously tells them "you've had it easy" growing up. Frustrations manifested in a resentment from both the ceasefire generation and those who lived through the Troubles. Kerrie discussed how her parents would often say, "We grew up in a war, you don't know how good you've got it ... Sure what have you got to be anxious about? We grew up in the middle of gun battles and we weren't anxious." As discussed throughout this thesis, growing up in and living through the Troubles in Ardoyne meant constant army checkpoints to get in and out of the area, raids on homes by the RUC and British Army, and a high threat of violence and a constant feeling of fear. A study from 2013 found that NI has one of the highest rates of PTSD globally due to conflict-related events.[431] Kerrie went on to say how her parents' comments made her feel guilty for not appreciating "how lucky I had it." This sense of resentment and guilt felt by the second-generation is another legacy of the conflict. Participants from the older generations, such as Seán a 70-year-old from Ardoyne, echoed

[431] Brendan P. Bunting, Finola R. Ferry, Samuel D. Murphy, Siobhan M. O'Neill and David Bolton, "Trauma Associated With Civil Conflict and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Evidence From the Northern Ireland Study of Health and Stress," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 26 (2013): 134.

similar sentiments as Kerrie's parents: "I hate to say this but the young ones, do they really know what's going on? I don't know. In many respects many do but there are others that don't really understand it, and that would be on the Loyalist side too. They haven't lost." Margaret, a woman in her 70s from Ardoyne similarly felt that the younger generation, "didn't live through anything" worth complaining about because "nothing happened to yous." When discussing the low-level violence of recent years Patrick, a man in his 60s from Ardoyne, stated, "I know there's people who feel jealous of the generation before, that's what it is, there's disconnect." Other people such as Anne and Rose, both in their 60s, felt that "young people are nostalgic for the Troubles," that they missed out on their opportunity to experience history. However, from the interviews I carried out with the ceasefire generation, this nostalgic sentiment was simply not expressed. Indeed, all of the fourteen participants from the ceasefire generation, one way or another, talked about a desire to move on. These included Áine, a 22-year-old from Ardoyne, who said, "I think that people of our generation are just going to get on with it and are just waiting for it [sectarianism and division] to die out." Méabh, a 21-year-old, put it this way, "I think people want it to be over. So many issues and things affect young people more now than the conflict, I think people want it over but there are some minorities who don't and keep dragging it back." Sinéad, a 24-year-old, asserted that that even if there are people who want to continue violence, "I just think that majority of people just want to move forward now, it's only a small minority." Speaking of those holding society back, John an 18-year-old from Ardoyne pointed to the politicians and dissidents: "I just don't think they're really serious about wanting any sort of change, I think they relish the grimness of it."

North Belfast and NI's younger generation have spent their lives thus far hearing stories of the conflict, while living in the shadow of the unresolved past as manifest in cyclical riots every July, the flag protests of 2012-2013, and the explosive Lanark Way

violence of 2021. They are living in a social and political climate of constant division with a failing government that does nothing to support them in meaningful ways. At the same time this ceasefire generation experiences the feelings of loss inherited from the older generations, the pain and sadness over the absence of a normal life and childhood for residents of Nationalist Ardoyne as well as PUL communities of North Belfast. For younger people, this sense of loss is inherited as frustration, alongside the culture of violence which encourages them to vocalise their frustrations through violent acts. The ongoing repercussions of a failed or imperfect GFA settlement have deeply affected the ceasefire generation. As Lyra McKee a young journalist (tragically killed in Derry in 2017) aptly put it, “We were the Good Friday Agreement generation, destined to never witness the horrors of war but to reap the spoils of peace. The spoils just never seemed to reach us.”

Legacy

What then is the legacy of the Troubled past for the ceasefire generation? Alex, a 20-year-old from the Shankill who is involved in RCity felt that the,

> Legacy is for the next generation to break the cycle, to be the hope. But we still have to battle with the older generation, who lived through the Troubles, I think people need to understand that we need to move forward and not stay still. The country needs to develop; look at the politicians if they can’t move forward, how are we meant to on the ground? But that’s something that bothers me because the work being done [in youth groups] is by kids and young people it’s not regarded as big enough. When these young people are my age we will have created a whole generation ourselves to change the country. That’s the big hope. Who's to say we can’t have our young people sitting in the roles of politicians changing this country in 10 years, breaking the cycle?

Méabh felt that the legacy of the Troubles in Ardoyne was something that needs to be countered, “I feel as if this community can go forward. We need to stop this media impression that this community is hopeless. Mental health is awful in this community, but the media doesn't help, if you tell someone ‘you’re always going to be an apple’ then they will always be an apple, they’re never ever going to change because they don't know any different.” The work that young people and youth groups are doing in working-class communities like

Ardoyne and the Shankill is potentially life-changing and legacy changing by providing alternative spaces for young people to socialise, by providing them with resources to help with acquiring life skills, by providing opportunities for cross-community friendships, and by showing them the world beyond their enclave.

For many members of the older generation, the community's legacy looks quite different. For older interviewees such as Róisín, Seamus, Seán, Conor and Patrick, the defining and omnipresent legacy is the injustice of the Troubles they lived through. In Seamus' view, "That's our legacy that's not other people's legacy, that's Nationalist people's legacy, no ifs or buts on that." As I recorded the interviews, the so-called Legacy Bill with its controversial amnesty provisions was under debate in Westminster. It subsequently passed through the House of Commons, albeit with no backing or support whatsoever from any political parties in NI. This is an extremely rare instance of Nationalist and Unionist communities in NI agreeing on an issue! Additionally, along with numerous Troubles victims and survivors' groups, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) actively criticised it, as did the UN, the EU's Human Rights Council, and the Council of Europe. Rolston and McVeigh argue that the British politicians who want to draw, 'a line under the past' and move on are blind to how they have benefited from colonialism.[432] Róisín, however, counters the idea that they are merely 'blind,' she felt that the bill was purposeful.

> It rewrites decades of murder perpetrated by the British army and the British state, and its offensive in every way possible. Its offensive and it is brutally disgusting and I think they will continue to push for it, when I think of Soldier B being tried here, that was a defining moment for them, and for me it should have been the officers that were giving these orders, because there was a shoot to kill policy in Ireland and again its back to the injustices I felt growing up, you knew the Brits could have come in and shot anyone and there was never going to be any repercussion for them doing it.

[432] Bill Rolston and Robbie McVeigh, *Ireland, Colonialism and the Unfinished Revolution* (Belfast: Beyond the Pale Publications, 2021), xii.

Seamus agreed that the backers of the amnesty "are trying to write this official history of the conflict, it will be all airbrushed and their version will be set out and most people will believe their version of it, yano. The basic facts if you just look at them from a very subjective point of view, what society would let a family wait 40 years on a coroner's report? Now the reason why that is, is because there's stuff in that that the Brits don't want people to know." Patrick found the state versions of the past to be filled with "False information with deliberate decisions to lie, why would this be any different." It would appear that the kind of 'moving on' that lacks support in NI is the kind advocated for by the British state which involves amnesty for atrocities.

Aodhán, a 24-year-old from Ardoyne felt angry and frustrated, "I feel like it prolongs the process of moving on, I think it's absolutely wrong and unfair… it really makes my age group annoyed with the British government." When we talked about the fallout of Brexit, the cost-of-living crisis, and austerity, he added, "sure what's here for young people? There are no opportunities." Like many other young people in NI, Aodhán and a few of his friends are heading to Australia for a better life. "I'd say my generation don't want to be involved in conversations around the Troubles, but this is forcing us to look at it." The rebuilding of truth, respect and equality are being undermined by the very forces of colonialism, state violence, and structural inequalities that created Northern Ireland and then destroyed communities and lives in the first place. As Rolston and McVeigh stress, while the coloniser insists on the virtues of empire, the colonised continue to contest and resist. We find an example of this resistance in the continuous protests against the Legacy Bill.[433]

Conclusion

This chapter examined how social memory is transmitted and inherited between generations via the mechanism of storytelling. Drawing upon extensive oral history interviews in both

[433] Rolston and McVeigh, *Ireland, Colonialism and the Unfinished Revolution*, 6.

CNR and PUL communities in North Belfast, I demonstrated the centrality of storytelling to the social memory and cultural life of both sides of the Troubles in NI. I also showed how this mechanism of memory transfer functions very similarly in the otherwise hostile and polarised CNR and PUL communities. The need to remember, or to never forget, the victims, injustice, and everyday traumas are what pushes and inspires those of the older generations to continue to tell stories and histories of the Troubles to the ceasefire generation. This transmission of the social memory of the Troubles strengthens social bonds across the generations and within the tight-knit communities of North Belfast, but it can also perpetuate sectarianism and de-sensitise younger people to violence. Additionally, mental health problems remain one of the underappreciated legacies of the Troubles that NI society, including the younger post-conflict generation, wrestles with. Another negative legacy of the conflict in NI is continued presence of paramilitaries who attempt to exert community control behind the scenes, as illuminated in recent years with the violence at Lanark Way peace wall in 2021 and the involvement of many children and young people, used as political pawns by these organisations. Drug trading and drug related addictions are another area where paramilitaries exercise a negative influence on post-conflict communities. Thus, in the communities of Ardoyne and the Shankill, the ceasefire generation's contemporary socio-economic struggles and experience of the ongoing legacies of exclusion and marginalisation are layering over older legacies and memories of the Troubles. Driven by their own experiences, members of the ceasefire generation are entering the commemorative and social memory arenas as memory activists in their own right.[434] Finally, the chapter situated the ceasefire generation as actors with agency, hope, and a strong desire to move forward.

[434] Rosato and Lundy, "Shifting memory," 18.

Forms of intergenerational memory coincide with lived experiences of violence, but also forms of structural violence, economic inequality discriminatory laws and policies, inadequate access to healthcare, educational disparity, housing inequalities, food insecurity, environmental injustice, criminal justice system that targets and incarcerates certain groups and other legacies of structural violence. Indeed, all aspects post-GFA life are impacted by the Troubles. Living in the shadow of the unresolved past has meant that the ceasefire generation have had to navigate through political uncertainty, sectarianism, segregation and continuous division. Meanwhile, the British state's ongoing failure to establish an overarching legacy policy that respects the interests of the very communities that lived through the conflict, propagates further injustice and provides fertile ground for continued contestation over the memory and legacies of the Troubles.

Conclusion

This project derived from my own experience as a Belfast native and member of the post-1998 ceasefire generation, coupled with my research aim to critically examine the dynamics of intergenerational memory in the context of Northern Ireland's Troubles. As my field work and interviews unfolded with participants of all ages in the North Belfast Catholic-Nationalist community of Ardoyne (with a smaller sample of interviews from Protestant-Unionist Woodvale and Shankill), I began to understand how memory, identity, and belonging (and its opposite: sectarian hostility to the 'other') intertwined in the transmission of Trouble-related memories within communities and between generations, like individual threads weaving together to create a tapestry, with each strand crucial to the overall piece.

This thesis was divided into three main strands, each exploring a different aspect of Troubles social memory. The first strand focused on theoretical approaches, drawing on Memory Studies. The second strand considered the theory and methodology of Oral History, with an emphasis on alternative vehicles for storytelling including often overlooked factors such as the senses and emotions, songs, murals, and sports. The third strand draws these elements together to offer an empirically informed analysis within North Belfast's post-conflict but still turbulent and divided communities, of the ways in which we socially remember, communicate memory, and transmit and inherit memory across generations, especially during periods of conflict and violence. The emphasis of this research was focused on a bottom-up approach, engaging active listening non-directional techniques in interviews with members of some of the working-class communities where Troubles violence was most sustained. The project participants led the way with their stories informing and steering the interview direction and exercising control over the themes that emerged. Consequently, Chapter One on emotions and senses, and Chapter Three on sports, supporters' clubs, and Chapter Four on music, arose from the fact that participants expressed their memories and

identities in reference to these themes and practices. To fully understand the mechanisms of memory transmission, it became clear that it is necessary to draw from the various aspects of everyday life that participants reflected on, such as, the home, community, local bars, soccer or GAA pitches, concerts and even social media.

How then do my research findings shed light on our understanding of intergenerational memory of post-Troubles Northern Ireland? As David Lowenthal notes, "The Irish do not live in the past; rather Ireland's history lives in the present."[435] As this thesis has demonstrated the history of the Troubles, and indeed centuries of Ireland's experience under British colonialism, is not in the past: the history of plantation, revolutions, rebellions, famine, partition, Catholic civil rights, the post-1968 Troubles, the recent Peace Process and the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) remain dynamic and 'alive' to varying degrees in Belfast's landscape, in its murals, graffiti, flags, commemorations, peace walls, neighbourhood interfaces, parades, music, sports and other aspects of daily life. Throughout the thesis I examined how this painful historical experience is transmitted and engrained in the minds of people young and old, Nationalist and Unionist, consciously and subconsciously, through their stories, emotions, senses, cognitive maps, parades, murals, sports, and songs. The legacy of Northern Ireland's troubled past is evidenced in the continued segregation and territorialisation of communities, persistent reliance upon unsightly peace walls for 'security' reasons and the intermittent outbreaks of violence at contested spaces, despite two decades of relative peace or at least post-conflict conditions. These flashpoints have longer histories of spatial violence and sectarianism upon which post-Troubles grievances and tensions are layered. The research demonstrates that the unresolved legacy of NI's violent past casts a long shadow on the lives of people in NI today. This shadow extends to where you grew up, who

[435] David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 250.

you played with, what games or sports were played and where, sports jerseys worn and where they were worn, the schools attended, the language and idioms used, cultural hobbies, musical instruments played or genre of music preferred, concerts attended, and choice of friends. Today in NI, politics still hinges broadly on sectarian 'Green versus Orange' conceptions of identity and some politicians continue to engage along sectarian lines. As the interviews I carried out with young people evidence the legacy of the Troubles haunts even those who were too young to experience it directly. Stories of the conflict play a major part in transmitting memories of the conflict to the so-called ceasefire generation. As illuminated by both Séan and Thomas in the previous chapter, storytelling is a central facet to life and to memory transmission. There are multiple forms of storytelling telling and is important to reflect on the yarns, stories by your grandparents about their childhoods and life told to you in the living room, stories told at the kitchen table, the everyday communication expressed by gossip, a joke or like in the case of Kerrie, how her parents referred to people. These stories shape our identity, politics, beliefs, values and our positionality. These inherited stories do not constitute trauma per se but coupled with Belfast working-class youth's own lived experiences of violence and division they significantly impacted on the ceasefire generation's identity, social memory, political outlook and even mental health. Yet there is pushback by members of the ceasefire generation who question the importance of storytelling, as "clinging to the past" (Ciaran). But for other members of the ceasefire generation, they want to understand their history and its legacy and they acknowledged the central role of storytelling and the oral tradition in the inheritance of histories.

By discussing emotions first, my aim was to establish an overarching tone for the rest of the thesis, that captured the complicated and often contradictory nature of emotions and the extent to which they are inextricably interwoven with memory. In Chapter Two I delved into the emotions of fear, anger, anxiety, loss, and humour together with the textures of life from

1969-1998 (and onwards). The emotion of loss felt by the participants, punctuated the interviews, and clearly inherited in the form of frustration to the ceasefire generation. Emotions help us to understand an individual's worldview, the realities of 'normal' life linked to the sensory experience of memories. As discussed in Chapter Two, participants recounted memories of the conflict prompted by particular smells and food, which brought back memories of belonging and community solidarity in times of hardship and violence. These sensory and emotional recollections help us to connect with the storytellers. We may know the familiar smell of vinegar in a chip shop, or the sound of metal hitting the ground, we know a form of these senses (devoid of the historical context, of course) but our knowledge helps us to relate to the story and the storyteller. The senses and emotions-based memories and stories help us to see beyond the bare facts, such as fatality statistics and simple chronological accounts of events relating to the Troubles. It keeps the past alive as we move beyond the well-known narrative to the micro, the local, the everyday experience of conflict.

As mentioned in Chapter Six, memories shared during interviews often emerged in the form of 'yarns', small stories, and snippets recalled by smells or street corners, prompting memories of riots, clashes, and deaths, or, more mundanely, of shops, mills, and industry. The research findings demonstrate that emotions and senses provide an additional element of storytelling and offer new ways of better understanding memory and the past. Thus, my research pushes the boundaries of current scholarship to provide a multisensory experience of the everyday and the normalisation of conflict and violence.

There is no correct way to remember. In Northern Ireland, the pain of remembering left wounds for those continuing to live with the trauma of the past. Each individual and community has ways of remembering, forgetting, commemorating, silencing, healing, and coping. As evident in the oral history interviews, 'emotional residue' remains attached to certain events or periods that had a powerful impact on individuals and their community.

When focusing on Ardoyne and considering the Shankill, my use of emotional communities combined Rosenwein's concept of 'emotional communities' and William Reddy's 'emotional regimes.' The language around emotions is dictated by society, but in the case of a divided society like NI, it gives rise to two distinctive but overlapping languages. Ardoyne has a shared emotional language associated with loss, oppression, struggle, and resistance. The shared emotional language within the Shankill is also embedded in loss and sacrifice, alongside loyalty to the Crown and union. This is evidenced in the language reflected in song lyrics and chants at soccer matches and pictorially materialised in murals. I argue that the concepts of sensory memories can be located within emotional communities/ regimes and the shared language and cultural understandings of the senses reinforce community bonds and identity. Our sensory experience is interwoven with the emotional experience of loss, struggle, oppression, happiness, etc. I further argue that understanding sensory memories helps our understanding of an individual's experiences of the past and strengthens the connections and understandings of emotions in memory and memories' attachment to space. By articulating and providing a space for these memories, we can understand different forms of 'how we remember.'

Chapters Three, Four and Five discussed how memories are communicated, beginning with place. Each generation inherits the built environment and the topographies of their community through cognitive maps which mark out territories and boundaries of safety. Chapter Three used two go-along interviews with Michael and Aoife to understand the embedded nature of private memories in the landscape of Ardoyne. Michael, for example, walked me through the Old Ardoyne area that he remembers even though much of it no longer exists. In this space, he reflected on harrowing stories of suffering and loss alongside happier, funnier memories of teenage life, all prompted by familiar street names and reconstructed spaces. In Chapter Three, I highlighted the difference between public

commemorations, plaques, the Gardens of Reflection and the private/personal memories told through stories and yarns. The divided landscape of NI and the patchwork nature of many communities in North Belfast illuminate how identity is deeply tied to a sense of space and belonging. Urban space is, therefore, one of the most important elements of memory transmission I encountered. Within this chapter, we also saw how the ceasefire generation is grappling with these memories embedded in their cultural landscape, as they try to 'move forward' constructively beyond the older generation's perceived obsession with the past.

Chapter Four turned to the ways memory is communicated and how it reinforces community and identity. While I anchor my treatment of sports-related identities in the scholarship of Hassan, Liston, Dieghan and Maguire, my aim was to privilege participants' voices, allowing them to lead the conversations about memory, support for sports teams, sectarianism and identity. When excluded from the political arena, Irish people, have long found alternative ways to have their voices heard, whether through boycotting, protesting, or the use of political flags at soccer games, chants, or songs. By highlighting the everydayness of alternative politics in working-class communities of North Belfast, we can better understand how identities are solidified and community ties are strengthened across generations. During my examination of sports as a means of transmitting memory and identity, I found that sectarianism is part of the ceasefire generation's lived experience of sports. Ben and Aodhán, two young men from the Shankill and Ardoyne respectively, had similar experiences of witnessing parents on the side-lines of youth matches actively encouraging and teaching sectarian attitudes and behaviours. What was meant to be a leisure activity and a place to spend time with friends and play sports, turned into a platform for expressing division and sectarianism. This chapter evidences the deep-rooted nature of such divisions that are engrained within both the landscape and cultural practices. The imperfect peace and ongoing legacy of the past conflict is found in every sector of Northern Irish

society where people express themselves and socialise. Sport is divisive, a key cultural site where communal identities are reaffirmed, solidified, and inherited, and where social bonds are formed and strengthened. Through these same mechanisms of memory transmission, music plays an equally influential role.

Chapter Five draws on Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined community' to examine how rival national anthems and collective singing in unison reinforce a sense of belonging and connection within NI's polarised traditions. As discussed throughout the thesis, the two communities discussed are bound by ideas of national identity connected on one side to the union with Britain and on the other side with a reunified Ireland, communicated through various cultural modes, such as, 12th July parades and Easter Rising commemorations. There has long been a strong relationship between music/songs and politics in the North. Songs speak to identity and social memory, while reinforcing a sense of community. The central issue within Chapter Five is the connection the ceasefire generation of Ardoyne has to Nationalist/Republican music and songs. The phenomenon of young people attending Wolfe Tone concerts en masse suggests a deeper connection to political songs as acts of protest. The participants did not have singular or unanimous answers to these questions, but they universally dismissed simplistic suggestions that such songs encourage young people to join paramilitary organisations. Young people are political actors in their own right and are carving a place for themselves within the political arena that challenges and complicates notions that the politics and values of the older generation are merely reproduced in today's youth.

Music offers a unique connection to the past, serving as an alternative way to learn about social history. As highlighted in Chapter Five, this is particularly significant for the PUL community. Songs like 'The Sash my Father Wore,' hold great importance to their history and association with bands and the Orange Order. During interviews with the PUL

community, all six participants expressed opposition to pejorative ‘Kick the Pope’ bands and songs, and instead focused more on the family-centred nature of the 12th of July. Charlie, a member of a band, centred the interview around the social history and cultural traditions passed on through membership of the band and attending parades. However, as noted in Chapter Five, participants Alex and Ben reflected that some bands continue to sing more incendiary songs, encouraging sectarian attitudes and furthering societal divisions. In this chapter, I set out some of the cultural mechanisms that transmit ideas of identity, culture, and community alongside memories of the past transmitted to the next generation. In examining music, songs, and support for sports teams, I have highlighted the similarities of these factors in each community. While no truth recovery or legacy mechanism exists, culture provides an avenue to preserve and communicate social and cultural histories. Music, as a form of storytelling, is an emotive bridge between the past and present, reinforcing connections and the longevity of struggles. Music situates us within our traditions and communities, reinforcing our sense of belonging when our voice joins the chorus around us. The research findings reveal the emotional attachment people have to music, songs, parades, commemorations, sports teams and illuminate the role they play in social history, memorialisation, storytelling and passing down forms of identity in addition to connection to the past.

The development of these chapters and analysis culminated in the examination of how memory is transmitted-inherited. In the interviews I carried out, participants reflected on storytelling and how it was a central component in their lives, as illustrated by Seán, “kids sit in the house with their granny’s and their ma’s and da’s and hear wee stories there and when they get older, they go into the pubs and they would hear more…” This quotation illustrates the role played by those who shape the memory of the past in the present: grandparents, parents, peers and others within kinship networks. There are various ways in which we

communicate memory, from storytelling, selective yarns, complaining about political parties or politicians, gossip, conflict-inflected descriptions of places or people, etc. Chapter Six highlighted what is transmitted through storytelling, such as our place within the community, a sense of belonging and an understanding of community histories, alongside a culture of violence and sectarian ideas. As Aodhán noted, "I guess I just understood how awful it was to live in Ardoyne back then, like how hard it was dealing with the army raids…" This statement (along with others) helps in understanding the stories, emotions and their impact in the community, together with the younger generation's feelings of anger and frustration at the conflict legacy that compounds their own daily experience of poverty, drug addiction, and other social problems. Alongside the emotions and stories, themes such as sectarianism, present in both communities, were discussed by the ceasefire generation as inherited by parents to the next generation. For many participants this is a major block for youth and community workers who continue to work tirelessly to move communities forward and eradicated sectarianism.

As discussed in Chapter Six, the current political context and structural violence must also be considered. There are major issues facing the ceasefire generation in working-class communities across Northern Ireland, such as the mental health crisis. This is particularly bad in North and West Belfast, places with the highest rates of Troubles related violence and death, alongside high levels of continued socio-economic deprivation. North, West and also East Belfast have witnessed Troubles-related violence alongside continued heavy police and military presence (until 2007). In the context of a culture of violence, it is important to understand territoriality and segregated living, which remains central to the lived experience of the ceasefire generation. This was starkly drawn out in interviews with those who experienced the Holy Cross Girls School Dispute or the riots and clashes in 2005, 2009, 2012-13 and 2021. The chapter also revealed and provided insights into the persistent role, impact,

and grip of paramilitary groups and drugs on communities, an extreme example of this is the 2021 riots. The issues of sectarianism, paramilitaries and a culture of violence highlight the inescapable legacy of the Troubles in NI society.

Post-Troubles life in NI's poorer communities remains fraught. Hatred and distrust of 'the other' make it almost impossible for power-sharing mechanisms to exist and flourish, as evidenced by the current political impasse. In the interviews I conducted with the ceasefire generation, there was frustration at the political instability and volatility, which many regarded as evidence of the failures of the promise of the GFA.

Members of the ceasefire generation have nonetheless developed into political actors and memory activists in their own right. Programmes created by Youth and Community workers, alongside the daily work they do on the ground within working-class communities, are instrumental in the repair and future development of the North of Ireland and its people. Much of this work focuses on the mental health crisis facing the communities explored in this thesis. A visible example can be found within the Garden of Hope mural, as illustrated in Chapter Six and Figure 5.2, which used to be the site of the memorial and plaque to those who were killed during the Troubles, and now a site of a Garden of Hope, created by the ceasefire generation. This mural is a perfect example, in the context of Northern Ireland, of Doreen Massey's memory layering, and the present layering over the past. This chapter concludes with consideration of the ceasefire generations' own agency, their hopes and desire to simultaneously move forward as a society from the dark chapter of the Troubles, whilst acknowledging the past and its legacies. This twin hope to both transcend yet 'never forget' the Troubles' legacy reveal how current memories and experiences layer over older conflict related memories.

I believe that all of these themes and areas of memory inheritance create an environment of societal or communal grievance and loss that are so profoundly felt and

accepted as normalised aspects of life that only through oral histories, life narratives and go-along interviews can we even begin to understand. This thesis provides a conversation and there is much more to understand about the intergenerational inheritance of memory especially with regards to emotion and particularly the emotion of loss. In the inheritance of loss to the ceasefire generation, I argue that it can develop into frustration (this represents only one way that the emotion of loss can develop). I believe that by seeing emotions, sensory memory, alongside place, commemoration, murals, sport, music, violence, paramilitaries, socio-economic conditions, and hope, can we understand the bigger picture of how society and our sense of belonging within society (or community) is central to intergenerational memory transmission. We must see it as an individual, family, community and societal issue.

To draw together the threads of this thesis, it is useful to consider Raphael Samuel's poignant observation that history is not the invention of the historian but a social form of knowledge and "the work of a thousand different hands."[436] For my project, these 'thousand different hands' included local storytellers, family members, songwriters, singers, musicians, paraders, mural painters, commemorationists, and many others who hand down the stories of the community's past. In North Belfast, the legacy of the recent violent past is found in almost every aspect of life. It is important to reflect on the significance of culture as a way to preserve stories of the past, but also as a way to inherit them, to ensure they continue, to 'never forget.' However, while social memory strengthens social bonds within a community, it also transfers sectarianism and violent traditions to the next generation. At the same time, the legacies of structural violence and deprivation exacerbate many conflict-based problems, including the mental health crisis.

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[436] Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London: Verso 1994), 15.

This thesis has sought to push the boundaries of oral history research on the Troubles by highlighting the different mechanisms for storytelling. However, further community-led research is required to engage more comprehensively with the younger generations' experience and their efforts to break the cycle of sectarianism, distrust, and division. That is how we will move forward.

> Sinéad- Is it always going to be this way?
> ER- I don't know, I hope not.
> Sinéad- I guess it's up to our generation to break the cycle.

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Appendix A:

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Study Title: Across the Peace Line: Difficult Spaces, Contested Histories and Integrational Memory of the Troubles in 'Post- Conflict' Northern Ireland.
Researcher: Eimear Rosato, Department of History, Concordia University.
Researcher's Contact Information: rosatoeimear@gmail.com; 514-549-1016
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Gavin Foster, School of Irish Studies, Concordia University.
Faculty Supervisor's Contact Information: gavin.foster@concordia.ca; (514) 848-2424 ext. 5117
Source of funding for the study: N/A

You are being invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the research is how the memory of the Troubles has impacted the 'ceasefire generation' who were born before or just after the signing of the Belfast/ Good Friday Agreement in 1998, but whose lives, current experiences and understanding of Northern Ireland and their community's recent past have all unfolded in the shadow of the unresolved conflict. Undertaking a cross-community approach, this project will critically explore the rival embedded local and national histories of Northern Ireland, looking in particular at two communities in North Belfast: Ardoyne (majority Catholic/Nationalist) and Shankill (majority Protestant/Unionist). Secondly, it will investigate the extent and impact of intergenerational memory of the Troubles on the "ceasefire generation." Thirdly, it will consider the effects of the physical environment such as peace walls, segregated housing and education, and cultural artefacts such as murals and memorials, and how they affect the transmission of ideas and emotions across the generations.

B. PROCEDURES

If you participate, you will be asked to take part in one, two or three (depending on what you decide) aspects of the oral history interviews. The first is a one-to-one sit-down interview,

discussing your life and growing up in your community. The second aspect is a walking interview around your district/ community, discussing different important sites of Troubles related memory. The third and final aspect, is a group interview with two or more members of your family unit, to help uncover how memory is transmitted through the generations. Each interview will take roughly two hours, including pre-interview, interview and post-interview conversation. You are free to stop the interview at any time.

In total, participating in this study will take at least two hours per interview. These interviews will be recorded and transcribed.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

You might face certain risks by participating in this research. These risks include: speaking about the Troubles, and the impact of it on your life which may bring up difficult or upsetting memories surrounding this period. However, if you feel uncomfortable or distressed at any time you are free to stop.

Potential benefits include: Your perspective will help to uncover how we transmit conflict related memories and legacies onto second and third generations, which although is a major issue in our society is neglected by our politicians.

Within the interviews you must not disclose any incriminating information, including any involvement in paramilitary groups or activity.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

I, Eimear Rosato, will gather the following information as part of this research: your personal thoughts and experiences surrounding Troubles related memory.

These interviews will be recorded and transcribed, however, I will not allow anyone else to access the information. I will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form. Your personal information gathered including your name will be kept confidential, and will be coded, meaning that it will not be possible to make a link between you and the information you provide.

I will protect the information by encrypting the information and recorded interviews on my personal computer.

I intend to publish the results of the research. However, it will not be possible to identify you in the published results.

F. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. You can also ask that the information you provided not be used, and your choice will be respected. If you decide that you don't want your information to be used, you must tell the researcher within 6 months after you receive your transcripts of the interview(s).

There will be no negative consequence for stopping the interview or asking for your information to not be used.

G. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

NAME (please print)

____

SIGNATURE

____

DATE ____

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or oor.ethics@concordia.ca