

Propensity for Peace in Divided Societies

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M.A. International Relations

CAPSTONE : Spring 2019



Abstract

This paper examines the propensity for peaceful resolutions in situations of ethnic or identity-based conflict. In particular, this paper seeks to examine why some ethnicity and identity-driven conflicts have the ability to reach peaceful agreements, while others remain unresolved. This paper examines two identity-based conflicts within Europe, one that has successfully reached a solution, and one where a solution remains elusive. I argue that Northern Ireland and the Good Friday Agreement were a success because high levels of paramilitary violence without the presence of an international peacekeeping force motivated decision-makers to find a solution, while Cyprus remains in the lurch due to the notion of a “comfortable conflict” as the conflict remains largely peaceful due to the presence of UN peacekeeping forces.

Introduction

Ethnicity and identity have been primary causes for conflict within the international community throughout history. With the ever-present relevancy of these issues, it is important to examine which factor or factors may play an integral role in conflict resolution techniques. Doing so is critical to our understanding of the international system, conflict, and what tools may be utilized to promote resolution of such issues in the future.

This study examines two examples of this ethnic and identity-based conflict in particular: the case of Northern Ireland and the case of Cyprus. Both are complex issues of identity, ethnicity, and territory, and have prompted widespread intervention from international organizations including the European Union. The primary objective of this study is to examine what can account for the variance in outcomes between two cases of identity-based conflict, Northern Ireland and Cyprus, in hopes to gain a larger understanding of how international conflict operates as a whole.

The case of Northern Ireland and the complexities surrounding identity among those involved in the region dates back centuries, beginning with the 1167 Anglo-Norman intervention of Ireland when England first exerted its influence over the island, laying the foundation for two separate identities – British and Irish – to come about, never quite intertwining. Later during the 17th Century, British plantations further exerted influence over the province of Ulster, in which present-day Northern Ireland consists of six of the nine total counties of the province (the remaining three belonging to the Republic of Ireland). When Ireland finally won its independence in the early twentieth century, the decision was made to leave the six counties of Ulster as part of the United Kingdom, creating what is now Northern Ireland. The Catholic/Irish minority in Northern Ireland continued its struggle for identity recognition and calls for a United Ireland, which led to the several decades long period of violence between Irish Catholic and British Protestant populations in Northern Ireland known as the Troubles at the end of the Twentieth century. Calls for peace finally won out when international intervention from actors including the United States, the United Nations, and the European Union resulted in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, also known as the Belfast Agreement. For peace to be brokered with two highly competing identities that had fought throughout history provokes a complex question which will be examined in this paper: why was the case of Northern Ireland able to achieve a resolution? While there is much existing research on this subject, the hopes of this study are to create a framework to be applied to similar and future conflicts.

Cyprus is similar to that of Northern Ireland in terms of identity-driven conflict, however the outcome of the situation is still unfolding and a solution remains elusive at this point in time. Cyprus has long been present in Greek mythology throughout the course of history, and is believed to have been home to the Greek Goddess Aphrodite. Greece has believed that Cyprus is rightfully theirs due to the ancient Greek settlement of Cyprus that dates back over 3,000 years, however this has been a source of dispute by both Turkey and to a certain extent, Great Britain. Cyprus had existed under the Ottoman Empire beginning in the 16th century and lasting until the early 20th century, when Great Britain annexed Cyprus in 1878 as a British protectorate, and later as a Crown colony until 1960. What exists today is a divided state of Greek Orthodox and Turkish Muslim communities, resulting in the “Green Line” that separates Northern Cyprus (only recognized by Turkey) and the Republic of Cyprus. These divisions are only emphasized

due to the fact that the Republic of Cyprus is a member of the European Union, as well as Greece, while Northern Cyprus is excluded and Turkey remains in the ascension process. In 2004, the European Union had been anticipating that the proposed Annan Plan would allow Cyprus to join the EU as a united island, however Greek Cypriot rejection of the plan prevented that from happening. In this study, I will examine how attempts for resolution had such a different outcome in the case of Cyprus as opposed to that in Northern Ireland, when the issues of historic identity and ethnicity can be viewed as highly similar. Ultimately, the difference in outcomes of the two cases can be attributed to the differing levels of violence between them.

While some literature comparing the two cases does exist, I hope to account for what is missing in the research by examining the narratives surrounding both cases in order to apply this to future conflicts, as well as examining the potential role of Brexit as it unfolds in present-day politics.

Review of Literature

As it stands, the current literature largely focuses on the concepts of resolutions in international conflicts, particularly within the role of the European Union, which does provide some relevancy to this subject and context to the overall narrative surrounding the cases of Northern Ireland and Cyprus.

Plenty of literature exists that examines each case on an individual basis. With regard to Northern Ireland, Elizabeth Meehan's analysis of what she refers to as "Britain's European Question" provides a useful glimpse into the structure of the Good Friday Agreement, and the impact of its context within the European landscape as a whole as illustrated by the EU's influence in the execution of the agreement.¹ Meehan emphasizes the importance of examining the peace surrounding Ireland within the larger European context. Similarly, Richard Humphrey's book *Beyond the Border: The Good Friday Agreement and Irish Unity after Brexit* also examines the structure of the Good Friday Agreement and how circumstances regarding Brexit could potentially pose a challenge to the Agreement itself. Humphrey gives important background information such as the architecture of the Agreement itself, including the structure of it as two separate documents, one being a multiparty agreement implemented as a political document adopted by the talk's participants, and one being a legally binding international treaty signed by the two governments known as the British-Irish Agreements.²

Research in Northern Ireland also examines the nature of the conflict as a whole. Andrea Grove and Neal Carter's work "Not All Blarney Is Cast in Stone: International Cultural Conflict in Northern Ireland" is a critical piece of literature, as it examines the role of national identity and collective culture.³ Literature from Queen's University Belfast also looks into the longstanding impacts of the conflict, such as the transgenerational consequences that have taken place

¹ MEEHAN, E. (2000). 'Britain's Irish Question: Britain's European Question?' British-Irish relations in the context of European Union and The Belfast Agreement. *Review of International Studies*, 26(1), 83-97.

² Humphreys, R. F. (2018). *Beyond the border: The Good Friday Agreement and Irish unity after Brexit*. Newbridge, Co. Kildare, Ireland: Merrion Press.

³ Grove, A., & Carter, N. (1999). Not All Blarney Is Cast in Stone: International Cultural Conflict in Northern Ireland. *Political Psychology*, 20, 725-765. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.sally.sandiego.edu/stable/3792193>

throughout Northern Ireland as a result of The Troubles.⁴

Much of the literature surrounding Northern Ireland investigates the role of the European Union in the peace process. A symposium held at the National University of Ireland, Galway in April 2018 examined the significance of the Good Friday Agreement, the role of the European Union in the peace process, and the potential impact that Brexit will have on the changes implemented from the Agreement, and was attended by the architects of the EU peace programs in Northern Ireland after coming together for the first time in 20 years. Ultimately, the event report concluded that the relationship between both Northern Ireland and the European Union has been a positive and significant one as a whole. However, Brexit threatens this very peace that was ushered in from the Good Friday Agreement, and presents a challenge to North-South and East-West cooperation as implemented by the Agreement's institutional mechanisms.⁵ Similarly, Katy Hayward and Mary C. Murphy's research also examines the role of the EU in the Northern Irish peace process. The core of the authors' argument is that the most critical element of the EU's intervention in Northern Ireland has been the fact that it encourages enduring commitment.⁶

There is considerable literature on the case of Cyprus, as well. Athanasios Moulakis' piece "Power-sharing and its discontents: Dysfunctional constitutional arrangements and the failure of the Annan plan for a reunified Cyprus" examines the failed attempt for peace in Cyprus under the Annan Plan, and provides useful background information regarding the conflict and its ethno-nationalist qualities.⁷ Nathalie Tocci's chapter on the question of reunification of Cyprus in her book *The EU and Conflict Resolution* is also informative within the literature that exists on Cyprus. She discusses the emergence of the conflict in Cyprus, dating back to the emergence of separate Greek-speaking Orthodox and Turkish-speaking Muslim communities on the island during Ottoman Rule, further complicated by British influence through their colonial interests, and ultimately resulting in the "Green Line" dividing the island.

Similar to the case of the literature examining the EU and Northern Ireland, there is also literature on the subject of Cyprus and the EU. Olga Demetriou's report on the role of the European Union in the conflict in Cyprus is valuable because asserts that the European Union was able to provide the framework that heavily involved actors such as Greece, Turkey, and the United Kingdom, ultimately allowing them to shift their positions under a more European identity.⁸ Tocci's previously mentioned piece also examines this, as the situation in Cyprus is

⁴ Gough, M. (2017). The Psychological Impact of "The Troubles" in Northern Ireland on Today's Children: A Post-Conflict, Transgenerational Perspective. THE TRANSGENERATIONAL IMPACT OF 'THE TROUBLES' IN NORTHERN IRELAND. *Queens University Belfast*. Retrieved from <https://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/psy/files/Fileupload,784073,en.pdf>.

⁵ The European Union and the Northern Ireland Peace Process. Event Report. 27 April 2018. National University of Ireland, Galway.

⁶ Katy Hayward, Mary C. Murphy. (2018) [The EU's Influence on the Peace Process and Agreement in Northern Ireland in Light of Brexit](#). *Ethnopolitics* 17:3, pages 276-291.

⁷ Athanasios Moulakis (2007) Power-sharing and its discontents: Dysfunctional constitutional arrangements and the failure of the Annan plan for a reunified Cyprus, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 43:4,531-556, DOI: [10.1080/00263200701348854](https://doi.org/10.1080/00263200701348854)

⁸ Demetriou, O. (2004). The EU and the Cyprus Conflict: The View of Political Actors in Cyprus. *Working Papers Series in EU Border Conflicts Studies*.

made all the more difficult through the complexities of its involved actors, where Greece and the Greek Cypriot community are full members of the EU, while Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot community are not at the present time, and are further left out from it through the exclusion of Northern Cyprus from the EU.

Perhaps one of the most relevant pieces of literature on the case of Cyprus belongs to İlke Dağlı, who introduces the notion of a “comfortable conflict,” in which the nonviolent conflict that persists today in Cyprus has become normalized and accepted, which will be examined further in this study.⁹

While plenty of research exists on the conflicts of Northern Ireland and Cyprus separately, there remains a large gap in the literature that compares the two on their similarities and the difference in outcomes experienced between the two. This research hopes to fill in this gap by finding the exact reason for this variance in outcomes, and to promote more research on these two cases from a comparative lens.

Research Design

As the cases of both Northern Ireland and Cyprus are similar in many respects, I will be approaching them through a Most Similar-Systems Design. I will do so by examining what qualities they hold similar, and finding what specifically is different between the two, to see if it can account for the variation between the two outcomes.

The primary question I am investigating in this research is: Why was the conflict in Northern Ireland able to achieve a peaceful resolution while a resolution in Cyprus has remained elusive?

The relevant variables analyzed in this study are the similarities between the two cases, as well as the primary difference between the two. My independent variables are the similarities in the existence of competing ethno nationalisms; allegiances to a motherland, not independence; competing religious interests; trans-generational consequences; geographic isolation; post-colonial legacies; intensity of economic disparity; structural borders; separate political entities on each island; and level of violence. My dependent variable is the ability to reach a resolution. Table 1 outlines the variables examined in this study.

I score the similarities between the two cases when examining each independent variable. They are ranked as low, medium, and high. **Low** means the variable has little relevancy to the case's conflict, while **high** finds very reasonable relevancy to the case's conflict. Ultimately, this scoring system is designed to identify the similarities and differences between the two cases based upon these variables, and identify what the key difference may be.

I hypothesize that the conflict in Northern Ireland was able to reach a written resolution because there was such an intensity of paramilitary violence that drove the civilians in Northern Ireland to such exhaustion of violence that there was more of a willingness to find a resolution. On the contrary, Cyprus has not been able to find a resolution because it is what can be referred to as a

⁹ Dağlı, İ. “The Cyprus Problem: Why Solve a Comfortable Conflict?” (2017, 5 April). Retrieved from <https://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/blog/the-cyprus-problem-why-solve-a-comfortable-conflict>.

“comfortable conflict,” as UN peacekeeping forces have kept violence at bay, therefore normalizing the conflict.

Research Findings

A discussion of each independent variable and their respective rankings follow. Table 1 provides a visual representation of each variable and their presence in each case.

Table 1

Independent Variables	Present in Northern Ireland?	Present in Cyprus?
Competing Ethno Nationalisms	Yes	Yes
Competing Religious Interests	Yes	Yes
Allegiance to a motherland, not independence	Yes	Yes
Trans-Generational Consequences	Yes	Yes
Geographic Isolation	Yes	Yes
Post-Colonial Legacy	Yes	Yes
Intensity of Economic Disparity	Yes	Yes
Structural Border	Yes	Yes
Separate Political Entities on Island	Yes	Yes
Level of Violence*	Yes	No*

Competing Ethno-Nationalisms

The variable of competing ethno-nationalisms is critical to this study because it provides the foundation for an in group-out group division that is so central to the study of conflict altogether. By creating this “us vs. them” context based upon ethno-nationalist identities that are perpetuated by society, geographic location, family, and culture, conflict becomes a higher likelihood while resolution remains potentially more elusive. Ethno-nationalism in the context of this study is defined by the ethnicity and culture of the two groups in each case. They will be scored based upon levels of strength: low, medium, and high, and compared accordingly.

Northern Ireland

In the case of Northern Ireland, competing interests between two groups embedded in ethnic and national identity are successfully understood as an “Irish vs. British” rivalry. This rivalry dates back centuries, which led to deeply entrenched ethnic identities that exist to this day. The 1167 Anglo-Norman intervention of Ireland provides the first example of British intervention over the island, providing the foundation for two separate identities – Irish and British – to come about,

never quite intertwining. During the 17th Century, British plantations in the province of Ulster led to an influx of British settling in the North that would put down generational ties and create a longstanding group of individuals that would for the most part identify ethnically and nationally as British. However, there was already a widespread population of Irish indigenous to Ireland. The British that came to settle in Ireland were feared of being overpowered by the Irish majority, and maintained their allegiance to the Crown. While the rest of Ireland was able to obtain its independence from British rule (beginning in 1922 as it became the Irish Free State, and later becoming the Republic of Ireland in 1937), six of the nine total counties in the province of Ulster were left as part of the United Kingdom, due to the strong ethnic ties there since the Plantation period.

The counties in Ulster that became part of the United Kingdom left an Irish minority to a British majority. Irish subjugation to the British community was clear, paving the way for a civil rights movement to emerge that only further divided the two communities. The Irish community staged protest marches that drove the British further into anger¹⁰, resulting in violence that culminated in events such as Bloody Sunday in 1972, when British soldiers opened fire on a civil rights march in Derry put on by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, ultimately killing 13 individuals and injuring 14 others. This period of immense conflict, spanning from 1968-1998, is referred to as The Troubles, a devastating manifestation of ethno-nationalist based conflict. Irish nationalists, took up arms in paramilitary groups such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and later the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) as a means to initially “protect their own,” as many felt they were not safe in their Irish neighborhoods that were policed by a British force. British Unionists responded in turn with their own paramilitaries, such as the Ulster Volunteer force (UVF).

The conflict in Northern Ireland is rooted in centuries of division between two communities separated by ethno-nationalist identities. The Irish language, though not commonly spoken, remains a key part of Irish identity and thus another cause for ethnic division in Northern Ireland, however English remains commonly spoken by those within the country.

Cyprus

Like Northern Ireland, Cyprus has a long history of outside settlements that led to two competing ethnic groups to grow separately but deeply rooted. Greek Orthodox ethnic identity dates back to the foundation of the ancient Greek settlement on the island over 3,000 years ago. This led to a continuity of language, religion, and identity that is still present to this day, maintained throughout various invasions and occupations throughout history.¹¹

¹⁰ Grove, A., & Carter, N. (1999). Not All Blarney Is Cast in Stone: International Cultural Conflict in Northern Ireland. *Political Psychology*, 20, 725-765. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.sally.sandiego.edu/stable/3792193>

¹¹ Moulakis, A. (2007). Power-Sharing and Its Discontents: Dysfunctional Constitutional Arrangements and the Failure of the Annan Plan for a Reunified Cyprus. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 43(4), 531-556. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284566>

Turkish Cypriot identity dates back to 1571, when the Ottoman Empire conquered Cyprus. This led to an influx of Turks that would settle on the island and put down roots during the three centuries of Ottoman rule, creating a competing identity to that of the Greek Cypriots. Unlike Greek Cypriot identity that is rooted in Greek Orthodox religious tradition, Turkish Cypriot identity would remain entrenched in Islam. Turkish Cypriot identity would continue to persevere past the decline and later fall of the Ottoman Empire; Turkey ceded Cyprus to Britain in 1878, who annexed and ruled the island until Greek Cypriots won sovereignty in 1960.

Greek Cypriots fought against the British by staging a guerilla campaign for union with Greece, ultimately resulting in Cyprus' independence in 1960.¹² However, competing the ethno-nationalist identities of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots led to an outbreak in violence soon after in 1963. Turkey proceeded to invade the island in 1974, leading to an expansion of their control over Cyprus, as evident by the expulsion of approximately 200,000 Greek Cypriots from the North that were replaced by mainland Turks. Since then, a division stands between Northern Cyprus, of which Turkish Cypriots claim is rightfully Turkish, and the rest of the island internationally recognized as the Republic of Cyprus, of Greek Cypriot majority. The international community recognizes the Republic of Cyprus, but the only state that recognizes Northern Cyprus is Turkey.

Similar to the case of Northern Ireland, two separate identities were formed as a result of external populations settling on the same island. The ethno-nationalist divisions in Cyprus are highly noticeable during day-to-day engagements, as Greek Cypriots primarily speak the Greek language, and Turkish Cypriots primarily speak Turkish.

Scale for Ethno-Nationalism in Northern Ireland and Cyprus

Both Northern Ireland and Cyprus are embedded in historical divisions of ethno-nationalist identities. Northern Ireland's divisions between the Irish and British can be scored as a **medium** for this study, as they are deeply entrenched although more difficult to identify when examining from an external perspective (due to instances such as a lack of an obvious language barrier, although the Irish language is still cause for division). Cyprus, however, can be scored as a **high** for this study, as not only is it historically embedded in such ethno-nationalist identities, but the obvious language barrier between the two communities only drives the two communities further apart.

Competing Religious Interests

Competing religious interests is a key variable to this study because it is widely accepted that religious divisions have long been a basis for conflict throughout history. Both the cases of Northern Ireland and Cyprus have two opposing religious identities, which can be seen as a potential cause for conflict and a potential hindrance to resolution. Competing religious interests will be defined in this study as varying religions with their own respective doctrines and organizational structure. Their relevancy to each conflict will be scored based upon levels of strength: low, medium, and high, and compared accordingly.

Northern Ireland

¹² "History behind violence on Cyprus" (1996, 12 August). Retrieved from <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/history-behind-violence-on-cyprus-1.76013>.

While the association with the conflict in Northern Ireland with religion is often a misuse of nomenclature, there is an important religious element to the conflict itself that should not be ignored.

British Protestants in Northern Ireland following the settlement of plantations as early as the 17th Century originally had stated their allegiance to the United Kingdom for religious purposes. Upon their arrival in Ireland and throughout the course of Irish history to this day, Northern Ireland Protestants feared of becoming absorbed in a united Ireland that would leave them a minority. Even today, 78.3% of the Republic of Ireland identifies as Catholic; while this is among the lowest rates of Catholicism throughout Irish history, it would still make any Protestants a clear minority if there was a case for a united Ireland.¹³ While religiosity in both Ireland and Northern Ireland is on a decline today, throughout the island's history that was not the case – making it a highly salient issue among both Catholics and Protestants.

Hunger strikes during The Troubles during 1980 and 1981 were a specific example of religion's key role in the conflict. To provide some context, Irish Republican prisoners led by Bobby Sands refused food as a form of protest against the loss of special category status for Republican prisoners, resulting in the deaths of 10 prisoners. The hunger strikes marked the first time since the outbreak of the conflict in the 1960s that the respective Churches aligned with each side got involved as spokes parties.¹⁴ The Catholic Church expressed their refusal to refer to the hunger strikes as suicide, while the Protestant churches all expressed that the hunger strikers were committing suicide and should be denied burial in sacred ground. This involvement is pivotal in gaining an understanding to the religious basis of the conflict: both Churches expressed clear, unmoving theological differences rooted in deeper fundamental differences, as well as differences in ideology in regards to the conflict.

Though the conflict in Northern Ireland primarily uses religion as a means of identification for two separate ethno-nationalist groups, it is important to acknowledge the religious differences that do exist between both Catholics and Protestants.

Cyprus

The Greek Orthodox Church played a substantial role in the conflict between Greek and Turkish Cypriots on the island. Cyprus is home to 78% Greek Cypriots, which mostly identify as Orthodox Christians, and 18% Turkish Cypriots, which mostly identify as Sunni Muslims.¹⁵ Much like the case of Northern Ireland (in which Catholics are the minority), Cyprus is home to a clear religious majority (Greek Orthodox Christians) and a clear religious minority (Turkish Sunni Muslims).

While similar to Northern Ireland in that the conflict's religious element may seem to be more founded in terminology, the role of the church is still quite salient. Interestingly, while less than

¹³ Ireland Central Statistics Office (2016).

¹⁴ O'Malley, P. Religion and Conflict: The Case of Northern Ireland. *John M. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies Publications*. Paper 29. http://scholarworks.umb.edu/mccormack_pubs/29

¹⁵ Hadjipavlou, M. (2007). The Cyprus Conflict: Root Causes and Implications for Peacebuilding. *Journal of Peace Research*, 44(3), 349-365. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.sally.sandiego.edu/stable/27640515>

one-fourth of Greek Cypriots believe that the Orthodox Church had much to do with the creation of the conflict in Cyprus, more than half of Turkish Cypriots believe that the Orthodox Church did in fact play a significant role. The Cyprus church got involved specifically in 1950 when it organized a plebiscite in which 96% favored Cypriot union with Greece. Following the independence of Cyprus, the Cyprus church and the President (Archbishop Makarios) continued to emphasize the importance of union with Greece, notably leaving out the concerns of Turkish Cypriots.¹⁶

While the conflict in Cyprus may have somewhat less theological substance in comparison to Northern Ireland, the role of the Cyprus church on behalf of Greek Orthodox Cypriots brings about a significant religious element. This element is often understated, especially when it comes to the clear religious minority of Turkish Muslims in Cyprus.

Scale for Competing Religious Interests in Northern Ireland and Cyprus

Both of these cases can be rated as a **medium** on this study's scale. As a result of the religiosity of both cases being overstated in much of the literature, neither can truly be marked as a high on the scale as the core to the religious debate in both cases is highly identity-based, rather than doctrine-based. However, it is still very salient in both Northern Ireland and Cyprus, which is why they are both considered a medium.

Allegiance to a motherland, not independence

Allegiance to a motherland, not independence is an important variable to the context of this study because it presents a distinct complexity that exists within both cases. Neither Northern Ireland nor Cyprus, on a large scale within the realm of such an identity-driven conflict, ever fought distinctly to consider themselves independently Northern Irish or independently Cypriot. Both cases found themselves distinctly tied to the identity of a motherland – British or Irish, Turkish or Greek. Allegiance to a motherland, not independence will be defined as this lack of independence movements in both cases, and the relevancy in each case will be scored as either low, medium, or high.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, motivations on both sides of the conflict were founded in a commitment to a nation-state that was not that of an individual identity seeking independence, rather both proclaim allegiance to their perceived motherland. British Unionists exercised desire to remain as part of their motherland, the United Kingdom. Conversely, Irish Nationalists fought to rejoin for one United Ireland. In fact, this notion still remains relevant today even after a peaceful resolution to the conflict came about in 1998. In my interview with 24-year old Conor F. from Fermanagh, N.I., he stated that there should not be a separation: "To me, it's all one Ireland."¹⁷

While some in Northern Ireland do identify themselves as exclusively Northern Irish, the two competing identities of Irish Catholic and British Protestant are aligned specifically with a larger group. Irish Catholics in Northern Ireland identify with Irish Catholics as a whole, while British Protestants in Northern Ireland identify as British Protestants as a whole. While this is further

¹⁶ Hadjipavlou, M. (2007).

¹⁷ Interview, Conor Flanagan, from Fermanagh. Conducted March 2019.

complicated by the creation of Northern Ireland as a state that results in a Northern Irish identity, the larger discussion is based upon allegiance to either Ireland or the United Kingdom, two preexisting states, rather than calls for an independent state.

Cyprus

Similar to the case of Northern Ireland, neither Greek Cypriots nor Turkish Cypriots call exclusively for their own independent statehood. Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political interests are entrenched in ‘motherland’ nationalism, in which both communities associate their purpose with whom they are ethnically tied – both, in this case, to a group outside the island.¹⁸

The Greek Cypriot guerilla campaign led by Col. George Grivas and Archbishop Makarios against British Rule was not founded upon a desire for an independent Greek Cypriot rule. Interestingly, it was based upon a desire for ENOSIS – the Greek and Greek Cypriot ideal of union with Greece.¹⁹ For Greek Cypriots, the 1974 Turkish invasion was welcomed. While Turkish Cypriots in Northern Cyprus are technically proclaimed as independent, they refer to their northern-third of the island as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, only recognized by Turkey. While claims for an independent Cyprus on behalf of Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots have been made throughout the course of the island’s history, the predominant occurrence is an allegiance to each community’s motherland – Turkey and Greece.

Scale for Allegiance to a motherland, not independence: Northern Ireland and Cyprus

Both the case of Northern Ireland and Cyprus are scored as **high**, as this motherland-driven allegiance is paramount to both sides of each conflict. Efforts were never interrupted by calls for independent statehood, rather both sides in Northern Ireland and both sides in Cyprus felt dedicated to their own respective motherlands.

Trans-generational consequences

Trans-generational consequences are an important variable to this study because they make clear that the effects of conflicts are not confined within the period in which the conflict occurs. They are passed on through generations, whether through the stories told in family settings, textbooks used in classrooms, or the segregation that exists within cities that only furthers the grounds for more conflict to continue, increasing the likelihood of a longer period of conflict. This variable will be defined as the long-term impacts of the conflicts in each scenario, and will be scored on a level of low, medium, and high.

Northern Ireland

The Troubles spanned over three decades with over 3,500 deaths. Even prior to the Troubles, Northern Ireland saw much division and conflict due to the longstanding “us vs. them” outlook of Protestants and Catholics/British and Irish in Northern Ireland. With a conflict this entrenched throughout history with so many deaths and tragedies, the legacy and consequences as a result have been passed on throughout generations. This is also emphasized through the segregation of

¹⁸ Dağlı, İ. “The Cyprus Problem: Why Solve a Comfortable Conflict?” (2017, 5 April). Retrieved from <https://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/blog/the-cyprus-problem-why-solve-a-comfortable-conflict>.

¹⁹ “History behind violence on Cyprus” (1996, 12 August). Retrieved from <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/history-behind-violence-on-cyprus-1.76013>.

schools in Northern Ireland based upon religion, with integrated schools few and far between. As a result, individual narratives continue to be passed down to the next generation.

This trans-generational impact of the violence and conflict that occurred manifests in a carrying on of the conflict as a means of revenge, as well as mental health issues and trauma passed on through generations. One example is particularly evident among those in economically deprived areas in Belfast: families who live in highly segregated areas (upon basis of religion) have been linked to a higher likelihood of religious segregation, poverty, low educational attainments, paramilitary influences, and potential higher risks of substance misuse, as well as more widespread instances of post-traumatic stress disorder.²⁰

My interview with 24-year old Seana M. from Newry, N.I. sheds light on the impact she has felt passed on through generations as a result of the conflict:

My mum has told me stories of hiding under the tables in primary (aged around 4 to 7) when there was a bomb scare in the town. She also said she would check underneath her bed every night for bombs before going to sleep. I believe this fear had to have been made even worse for her when her uncle, a Catholic police man, was blown up from a car bomb believed to be planted by the I.R.A. As for my dad, he lived on a street that was rife with violence during these times. He has told stories of being held at gunpoint walking home from primary school by British soldiers who were patrolling the streets most days and being pulled to safety by an older child under a van to escape gun shots when they were being fired.²¹

Young people throughout the course of Northern Ireland's troubled past carried with them, and still do, the stories of their families that are charged with emotion and personal heartbreak – and it is only natural that alongside these stories come opinions and room for resentment to grow. Consequences of the Troubles are felt beyond those initially impacted due to the trans-generational nature of the conflict.

Cyprus

The ongoing nature of the conflict in Cyprus has created a legacy of generations passing down their experiences, personal biases, and narratives onto those that come after them. Much like Northern Ireland, schools in Cyprus are segregated, continuing on the passing of identity-based narratives to its children. One particular example of this narrative comes from a Greek Cypriot textbook describing the Ottoman Empire's arrival in Cyprus:

It was obvious that one day the Turks would try to grab Cyprus. That way the state of the Sultan expanded, little Cyprus appeared like a weak mouse in the claws of a wild lion.²²

²⁰ Gough, M. (2017). The Psychological Impact of "The Troubles" in Northern Ireland on Today's Children: A Post-Conflict, Transgenerational Perspective. THE TRANSGENERATIONAL IMPACT OF 'THE TROUBLES' IN NORTHERN IRELAND. *Queens University Belfast*. Retrieved from <https://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/psy/files/Filetoupload,784073.en.pdf>.

²¹ Interview, Seana McDonald, Newry. March 2019.

²² Brody, L. N. (Nov. 2016). "Confronting the 'Post-Conflict' Label: An Exploration of Sectarian Identity in Northern Ireland and Cyprus." *The Yale Review of International Studies*. Retrieved from http://yris.yira.org/essays/1892#_ftn13.

This institutionalized bias in education is examined further by scholar Yiannis Papadapis:

Every important date in our history as Greeks bespoke our encounters with Turkish barbarism. And I was a product of this history. [...] I did hate the Turks, and that was what being Greek meant, or so my schoolbooks had taught me.²³

Narratives formed at the hands of educators passed down political ideals of the conflict in Cyprus that allowed for a continuation of an “us vs. them” environment within Cyprus. However, this trans-generational aspect to the conflict is also in part due to family tradition and societal norms. Research conducted at the University of St. Andrews found that despite positive interactions with the Greek Cypriot community, Turkish Cypriots still followed the traditional negative out-group perception.²⁴ Similar to the case of Northern Ireland, because the conflict spanned multiple generations, biases and narratives still continue.

Scale for Trans-generational consequences: Northern Ireland and Cyprus

In terms of trans-generational consequences, both the examples of Northern Ireland and Cyprus can be classified as a **high** salience cases. The narratives passed down through generation carry on the resentments that exist within each country, further dividing the already existing separations between the identities in each case.

Geographic Isolation:

Geographic isolation is a relevant variable to this study because geography plays a key role in the study of international conflict as a whole, in terms of willingness and ability to engage in conflicts, and consequences of those involved in conflicts. In this particular case, geographic isolation is relevant because it prevents citizens in each example from mass-exodus across borders. Both Northern Ireland and Cyprus are islands, and their closest neighbors are involved in the conflicts, leaving little room for escape. This variable will be defined as isolation based on the geographic nature of each state as islands. The relevancy will be scaled as either low, medium, or high.

Northern Ireland

The fact that Ireland is an island on the western edge of Europe makes it increasingly difficult to escape political violence via mass migration.²⁵ Additionally, it's closest neighbor is the United Kingdom, in which Irish nationalists dispute its role in Northern Ireland, thus further preventing mass migration from being a tangible option.

²³ Brody, L. N. (Nov. 2016).

²⁴ Kadioglu, P. The Impacts of Transmitted Memories of Conflict in Post-Conflict Societies and Dynamics of Reconciliation: The Case of Cyprus. *University of St. Andrews*.

²⁵ Brody, L. N. (Nov. 2016). “Confronting the ‘Post-Conflict’ Label: An Exploration of Sectarian Identity in Northern Ireland and Cyprus.” *The Yale Review of International Studies*. Retrieved from http://yris.yira.org/essays/1892#_ftn13.

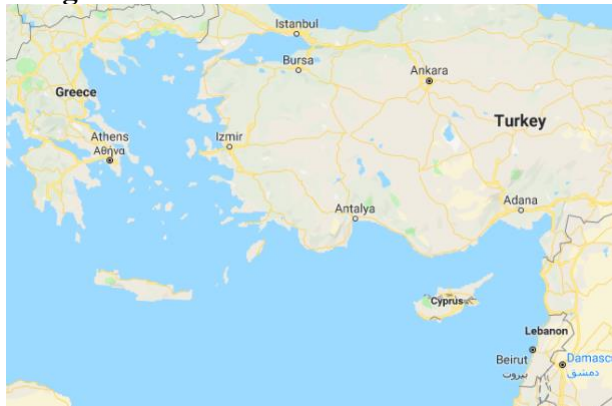
Image 1



Cyprus

Much like Northern Ireland, Cyprus is also an island and thus subject to geographic isolation. Close by is Turkey, making mass migration a difficult issue for any Greek Cypriots who wish to flee.

Image 2



Scale for Geographic Isolation: Northern Ireland and Cyprus

Both cases are scaled as **high**, as both are islands and geographically separated from states that could act as havens for those hoping to escape the conflict. The closest neighbors in both cases are already involved in the conflict: The Republic of Ireland and Great Britain, and Turkey and Greece.

Post-Colonial Legacy:

The concept of a post-colonial legacy is relevant to this study because it highlights the impacts outside leadership have on states with convoluted identities and histories. The impact of colonialism is key to the study of international conflict as a whole, as it lays the grounds for nuanced identities to emerge and thus conflicts to follow as a result. This variable is defined as the history of outside governance from the native people of each territory in this study, and will be measured based on a scale of low, medium, or high relevancy.

Northern Ireland

Ireland's colonization by the British has already been discussed in great length. While some debate exists over whether to specifically consider Ireland a "colony," this paper argues that Ireland was Britain's first colony. This is due to its largely unwelcomed presence throughout the course of its many invasions, only welcomed by Protestants living in Ulster seeking religious protection (who originally emigrated from Britain). Cyprus also experienced colonial rule under Great Britain, creating yet another similarity between the two cases.

Cyprus

Cyprus has a long history of colonization that extends from beyond Great Britain, as illustrated through its history under both the Greek Empire and the Ottoman Empire. Its shared history with Northern Ireland as a subject of British authority is identified with the United Kingdom's absorption of Cyprus as a colony following the decline of the Ottoman Empire. This lasted until the Greek Cypriot's guerilla campaign against British rulers for union with Greece in the 1950s.²⁶

Scale for Post-Colonial Legacy: Northern Ireland and Cyprus

In terms of the salience of each state's post-colonial legacy in this study, Northern Ireland is scored a **medium** while Cyprus is scored a **high**. While Northern Ireland's history of British rule is deeply embedded within much of the conflict, referring to it as colony of Great Britain is still up for much debate within the international relations community. However, Cyprus has a much longer and more complex history of colonial rule, which is why it receives a higher score in this context. However, the concept of a post-colonial legacy is highly relevant to both cases in this study.

Intensity of Economic Disparity

Intensity of economic disparity is a relevant variable to this study because economic motivations are highly salient in many international conflicts. Economic disparity can be grounds for increased tension and conflict, and does play a role in both Northern Ireland and Cyprus. In this study, this variable is defined as a clear economic disadvantage of one community in opposition to the other. This will be scored as low, medium, or high in terms of relevancy to the conflicts.

Northern Ireland

As a result of the vast Protestant majority in Northern Ireland, Irish Catholics were left as a minority and through the course of the Troubles found themselves kept out of jobs, safe housing, and economic development in their communities. Unionist policies between 1921 and 1971 encouraged sectarianism in employment, thus resulting in increased Nationalist grievances that only heightened support for their causes.²⁷ Scholars agree that during the period following the partition of Ireland, Catholics were discriminated against in three main areas: the electoral system, the allocation of public housing, and the labor market. In particular regard to the labor

²⁶ "History behind violence on Cyprus" (1996, 12 August). Retrieved from <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/history-behind-violence-on-cyprus-1.76013>.

²⁷ Byrne, S., Thiessen, C., & Fissuh, E. (2007). Economic Assistance and Peacebuilding in Northern Ireland. *Peace Research*, 39(1/2), 7-22. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.sally.sandiego.edu/stable/23607901>

market as a primary source of economic inequality, discrimination of Catholics was illustrated by their underrepresentation in high-grade jobs.²⁸

Image 3

TABLE II Occupational Distribution (%) by Community: Northern Ireland and USA

	<i>Northern Ireland (1971)</i>			<i>United States (1960)</i>		
	Protestant	Catholic	Diff.	White	Black	Diff.
Professional/Managerial	16	9	+7	25	7	+18
Lower Non-Manual	17	12	+5	16	7	+9
Skilled Manual	27	23	+4	23	12	+11
Semiskilled Manual	24	25	-1	22	27	-5
Unskilled Manual	16	32	-16	15	47	-32
	100%	100%		100%	100%	

Sources Auger (1978) p. 90.

U.S. Census of Population 1960 PC(1)-1C, Table 88.

Both calculated for males only and exclude farmers.

Table by Hewitt, C. (1983). Discrimination in Northern Ireland: A Rejoinder. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 34(3), 446-451. doi:10.2307/590258

Image 3 illustrates a table crafted in a study by Christopher Hewitt in 1983 examining discrimination in Northern Ireland during the Troubles (particularly in 1971, in the midst of the conflict).²⁹ As made clear by the table, Catholics were most notably left out of professional/managerial positions, while made the clear majority in unskilled manual labor, which ultimately put them at an economic disadvantage.

Cyprus

Much like the case of Northern Ireland, economic disparity between the majority and minority in Cyprus is evident throughout the conflict's history. Turkish-Cypriots felt both economic and social inequalities throughout majority Greek Cypriot authority, particularly between the period 1963 to 1974 and thereafter. In 2007, inequalities between the two communities became clear, as the GNP of Greek Cypriots was reported as three times higher than Turkish Cypriots.³⁰ Economic disparity between the two communities was only elevated when the Republic of Cyprus was admitted to the European Union in 2004, while Northern Cyprus remained unrecognized to all but Turkey.

For most of Cypriot modern history, Greek Cypriots have economically been considered wealthy

²⁸ Breen, R. (2000). Class Inequality and Social Mobility in Northern Ireland, 1973 to 1996. *American Sociological Review*, 65(3), 392-406. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.sally.sandiego.edu/stable/2657463>

²⁹ Hewitt, C. (1983). Discrimination in Northern Ireland: A Rejoinder. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 34(3), 446-451. doi:10.2307/590258

³⁰ Hadjipavlou, M. (2007). The Cyprus Conflict: Root Causes and Implications for Peacebuilding. *Journal of Peace Research*, 44(3), 349-365. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.sally.sandiego.edu/stable/27640515>

whereas their Turkish Cypriot counterparts were viewed as more economically downtrodden. However, the fall of the Greek economy changed the situation and prompted a reversal of fortunes for the two Cypriot communities in 2012. Ever since this change in economic status, Turks in Northern Cyprus experience economic success while Greek Cypriots were left to deal with an economic bailout due to ties with Greek banks.³¹

While economic circumstances have changed in recent years for the Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities, the history of economic disparity between the two illustrates a critical similarity to that of Northern Ireland, in which the minority communities (Turkish Cypriots and Irish Catholics) fall short economically at the hands of the majority communities (Greek Cypriots and British Protestants of Northern Ireland).

Scale for Intensity of Economic Disparity: Northern Ireland and Cyprus

Both the cases of Northern Ireland and Cyprus have histories of the minority population being at an economic disadvantage to those in the majority, which is why both are ranked a **high** in terms of relevancy to each conflict.

Border of Division on Island

This is a highly relevant variable as border divisions are physical embodiments of the barriers that exist between opposing identities. Borders only further the divisions between such opposing identities, which provides even more grounds for conflict to emerge. This variable is defined as physical structures keeping communities apart, and will be scaled as low, medium, or high in each case.

Northern Ireland

Following the partition of Ireland in 1921, a land border was constructed to cement the division between Ireland and the United Kingdom, that would impact all aspects of life for those living in the border counties in both countries. This hard border resulted in several consequences, some seemingly miniscule to the outside eye but profoundly impactful to those impacted. For example, certain train routes crossing the border were no longer running, small businesses lost access to their suppliers or customer bases, and smuggling became the norm.³² Violence along the border became the norm, and already separated Irish and British identities became further divided as a result of a structure asserting the very real separation between the two. Today, a hard border no longer exists in Northern Ireland, as a result of the EU Single Market removing all customs posts in 1993 and the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, resulting in the removal of a visible border on the island. However, what is important to recognize is the division that still exists on the island, and could return again. Additionally, a border of division still stands within the capital city of Belfast, dividing the Catholic communities and the Protestant communities, and does not appear to be taken down any time soon.

³¹Kakissis, J. For Cyprus' North and South, A Reversal of Fortunes. [All Things Considered]. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/2012/11/27/166022822/for-cyprus-north-and-south-a-reversal-of-fortunes>.

³² De MARS, S., MURRAY, C., O'DONOGHUE, A., & WARWICK, B. (2018). Navigating the Irish border. In *Bordering two unions: Northern Ireland and Brexit* (pp. 11-22). Bristol: Bristol University Press. doi:10.2307/j.ctv56fh0b.7

Cyprus

Cyprus has been divided by a 120-mile-long UN Buffer Zone since 1974, following the Turkish invasion of Northern Cyprus after the Greek-supported junta took control of Cyprus. This ceasefire line and border became known as the “Green Line,” in which Turkey bolstered with barbed-wire, military outposts, walls, and various minefields.³³ The border divides the capital, Nicosia, between the two nations, and UN Peacekeeping forces maintain patrol along the Green Line. In recent years, checkpoints have opened across the border allowing free movement for Greek and Turkish Cypriots and tourists alike, but the cultural and identity-based differences are still vast on either side.

Scale for Border of Division on Island: Northern Ireland and Cyprus

Both cases are relevant examples of the impacts of structural borders on identity-based conflicts, and are both relevant in the fact that both capital cities are divided by borders. Each case can be measured as a **high** for the scale of this study, because they are both equally relevant in each case.

Separate Political Entities on Island

This is a relevant variable to this study as it represents another similarity between the cases of Northern Ireland and Cyprus, as well as illustrates the potential for separate systems of governance on one land mass to further accentuate divisions within a society. This variable will be defined as differing political entities on one land mass, and will be measured on a scale of relevancy from low, medium, to high.

Northern Ireland

Since the partition of Ireland in 1921, two various governing structures emerged, establishing Home Rule in what is now the Republic of Ireland and six counties in Ulster being left as part of the United Kingdom. Since then, there have been two different political entities on one island, the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom. This not only divides the nation politically, but further accentuates the divisions in identity that were already present.

Cyprus

Similar to the island of Ireland, Cyprus is also a politically divided island. In 1983, the Turkish Cypriot population established their own independent state to that of the Republic of Cyprus. Now, two separate political entities exist, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and the Republic of Cyprus. However, it is important to remember that the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is only acknowledged internationally by Turkey.

Scale for Separate Political Entities on Island: Northern Ireland and Cyprus

While both have separate political entities on each island, Northern Ireland ranks as a **high** while Cyprus ranks as a **medium**. Northern Ireland, as part of the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Ireland are both widely acknowledged members of the international community, while the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus has yet to be recognized from any state other than Turkey.

³³PBS. (2005, July 26th). Retrieved from <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/uncategorized/the-worlds-most-complex-borders-cyprus/2321/>

However, they are both relevant cases of two differing political entities that potentially accentuate identity and politically driven differences.

Level of Violence

Examining the level of violence as a variable to this study is critically important, as violence is a useful measure for understanding the nature of the conflict as a whole, and how it can potentially act as a motive for resolution in certain conflicts. In this study, level of violence will be defined as the length of the period of violence and the amount of violent incidents occurred within the conflict. It will be scaled on a level of low, medium, or high in each respective case.

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland's history has been plagued with conflict as a result of the formation of sectarian organizations who embarked upon violent tactics in order to achieve their political goals. To the external eye, the Troubles appeared as a civil war complete with guerilla warfare and a suspension of civil rights. The IRA, historically founded in Irish history prior to partition, became the central Republican paramilitary organization to protest British rule and protect Irish Catholics in Northern Ireland; important to note, however, is the division that came about in 1969 which resulted in the Provisional IRA and the Official IRA. The most active in Northern Ireland during the Troubles was the Provisional IRA (PIRA).³⁴ Loyalist paramilitary groups such as the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and the Ulster Defense Association (UDA) formed in retaliation to Irish nationalist paramilitary activities.

The Provisional IRA's warfare and loyalist paramilitary reaction created a vicious cycle of violence and retaliation on both sides. Paramilitary violence resulted in several shocking attacks on civilians, which therefore impacted the daily lives of all in Northern Ireland, and many in the Republic. In 1971, fifteen civilians were killed in a bomb attack in Belfast at a local bar, carried out by the UVF. January 1972 was home to Bloody Sunday, when thirteen unarmed civil rights protestors were killed in Derry at the hands of British paratroopers. The worst year of violence during the Troubles was in 1972, when 472 people died as a result of the violence in Northern Ireland. Violence continued even just after the Good Friday Agreement was signed, when one of the most shocking events of the Troubles occurred, the Omagh bombing carried out by a splinter group called the Real IRA, which resulted in the deaths of 29 civilians.³⁵

Violence surrounding Northern Ireland was not confined within its borders, however. The IRA received financial support from many Irish Americans, as well as arms and explosives from Libyan dictator Muammar el-Qaddafi.³⁶ In 1996, the PIRA detonated a truck bomb in Canary Wharf, London. While a majority of the violence during the Troubles was largely based within Northern Ireland, the reach of the conflict was quite global. Both local communities and international eyes watched as the violence kept going in Northern Ireland until the Good Friday Agreement was finally agreed upon in 1998. The violence within Northern Ireland lasted for

³⁴ (2019). Irish Republican Army. Retrieved from <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/british-and-irish-history/irish-republican-army>

³⁵ Melaugh, M. (n.d.). Violence: List of Significant Violent Incidents. Retrieved from <https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/violence/majinc.htm>

³⁶ Bittner, J. (2019, April 04). Brexit, Ireland and the Failure of the European Idea. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/04/opinion/brexit-ireland-and-the-failure-of-the-european-idea.html>

over 30 years and resulted in over 3,600 deaths. UN peacekeeping forces were never deployed in Northern Ireland.

Cyprus

Similar to Northern Ireland, Cyprus also has a history of violence between the two divided communities on the island. Inter-communal violence following the independence of Cyprus from Great Britain was prominent between 1963 and 1964. There was a presence of some nationalist groups such as the Ethnikí Orgánosis Kipriakou Agónos (EOKA); EOKA was dedicated to ending British rule in Cyprus and promoting unification with Greece. However, there was no strong paramilitary presence on within Cyprus, particularly when compared to Northern Ireland.

Intercommunal violence sparked in December 1963 when Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots clashed in Nicosia, resulting in three deaths. Military hostilities emerged in 1964, when Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots clashed several times – one instance resulting in the deaths of eleven individuals, and another resulting in the deaths of ten individuals.³⁷

Following the intercommunal violence in 1964, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) was established and deployed to prevent any further violence from occurring within Cyprus. Now, the UNFICYP is one of the longest standing peacekeeping missions. While plans for a resolution to the conflict have remained elusive in Cyprus, since the UNFICYP was deployed violence has largely remained nonexistent -- Cyprus is even a highly popular holiday destination, despite its position as the last divided capital in Europe.³⁸ The conflict, with a lack of violence and a long history of an inability to find a solution, has become normalized. This is what is referred to as what Dağlı has coined as a “comfortable conflict.” The conflict is stagnant and progress towards a solution has remained elusive, so there is less motivation to deploy large efforts towards creating a resolution, as lives are not plagued with intercommunal violence due to the presence of UN peacekeeping forces.

Scale for Level of Violence: Northern Ireland and Cyprus

While both cases had instances of violence within their periods of conflict, it is clear this is where the rankings differentiate the most among all the variables used to examine each conflict. Northern Ireland’s period of violence was so much longer and experienced much higher level instances of violent outbreaks and deaths than opposed to that of the case of Cyprus, which had a short period of violence followed by UN peacekeeping forces that kept violence at bay, to which is still currently experienced. Violence within the case of Northern Ireland can be measured as **high**, while the case of Cyprus can be measured as **low**.

Main Conclusions

The similarities that exist between the cases of Northern Ireland and Cyprus indicate important factors within the nature of identity and ethnicity-based conflict. That similarities such as the nature of the conflict (identity and ethnicity-based), geographic isolation, existence of borders, among the other variables listed, exist and yet can still result in different outcomes is telling

³⁷ University of Central Arkansas | UCA. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://uca.edu/politicalscience/dadm-project/europerussiacentral-asia-region/cyprus-1960-present/>

³⁸ Dağlı, İ. “The Cyprus Problem: Why Solve a Comfortable Conflict?” (2017, 5 April). Retrieved from <https://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/blog/the-cyprus-problem-why-solve-a-comfortable-conflict>.

about what other factors may play a role in whether a conflict can result in a peaceful resolution or not.

Northern Ireland's history of paramilitary violence without any international peacekeeping force is a key difference to Cyprus's comfortable conflict. While it may seem counterintuitive that high levels of violence can result in a more resolved outcome, when examining these two cases it appears that the major difference between the two is such, and that difference proves salient to the nature of identity-based conflict.

Northern Ireland's high volume of paramilitary violence had lasting impact on the civilians, particularly as a result of the amount of civilian casualties during the Troubles. As a result of the high amounts of violence, the stakes were higher for those involved. In the case of Cyprus, nationalist paramilitary groups were few and far between. While there were cases of violence, they were over a short duration of time – mostly within 1964 (compared to the over 30-year span of the Troubles), and when looking at the violence, the inter-communal violence within Cyprus was much less institutionalized compared to the Troubles which had organized paramilitary groups dedicated to violent means of securing political goals. Upon the arrival of UN peacekeeping forces, with the exception of a few outbursts, the violence subsided within Cyprus and the conflict became much more normalized. While there is no resolution, Cyprus remains an altogether peaceful environment. Northern Ireland had high stakes motivating a solution, as the death toll rose daily; Cyprus, while a settlement is nonexistent, has become a stable environment. I argue that higher stakes, particularly high levels of violence, are a motivating factor for actors to find a peaceful settlement in cases of identity and ethnicity-based conflict.

Moving forward: is Northern Ireland truly “post-conflict”? Could Cyprus become the new “post-conflict”?

While conflict in Northern Ireland since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement has been relatively resolved, new challenges posed by Brexit have brought up old resentments that pose a challenge to the resolution created in 1998.

The challenges Brexit poses to peace are accurately illustrated in a *New York Times* article, in which the author asks locals in Derry, Northern Ireland, their opinion the impact of customs checkpoints and a hard structured border:

“This is Ireland! The English have no business here,” he exclaimed. He pointed down the road toward a small stone bridge. The checkpoint there vanished two decades ago, he said. Should the British try to erect a new guard house, he went on, “we will burn it down.”³⁹

Brexit threatens the security brought about by European integration of both the United Kingdom and Ireland: as both states were members of the European Union, they could find similarities based on a larger European identity, rather than focusing on their differences. There have been no hard borders, there has been intense economic integration between the two states, and free

³⁹ Bittner, J. (2019, April 04). Brexit, Ireland and the Failure of the European Idea. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/04/opinion/brexit-ireland-and-the-failure-of-the-european-idea.html>

travel between the countries has brought about a largely peaceful environment. With the potential for a hard border as Brexit unfolds, violence emerges once again. An offshoot of the IRA called the “New IRA” killed a journalist in Northern Ireland during rioting in April 2019.⁴⁰ After visiting Northern Ireland in March, I argue that tensions are on the rise and violence is likely to emerge again as a result of Brexit.

Cyprus, on the other hand, has been unable to achieve a resolution yet has low levels of violence. This may prompt us to reexamine what we constitute as a “post-conflict” environment. If Northern Ireland’s relative peace and resolution is threatened by Brexit, we may no longer be able to refer to it as a “post-conflict” environment. Cyprus could now be an example of the positive impact of UN peacekeeping forces, and a new “normal” of conflict that is merely stagnant.

Future research as Brexit unfolds should examine the impact European integration has on peace in such identity and ethnicity-driven conflicts. We may see a reversal of fortunes unfold: Cyprus emerging as an example of a “post-conflict” despite no official resolution, as Northern Ireland’s underlying tensions become increasingly salient with the departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union.

Future research should also move forward to overcome the shortcomings in this research. Investigating other pertinent factors as to why Northern Ireland reached a peace process, such as the role of the European Union and the dwindling influence of the IRA at the time of the Good Friday Agreement, will be critical to expanding the larger portfolio of research on this subject.

⁴⁰ Lyra McKee murder: Journalist shot dead during Derry rioting. (2019, April 19). Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-47985469>

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