NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

Who are the Victims?

Self-assessed victimhood and the Northern Irish conflict

Ed Cairns and John Mallett,
with Christopher Lewis and Ronnie Wilson

NIO Research & Statistical Series: Report No.7

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June 2003

Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency

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www.nio.gov.uk

The views in this report are those of the authors and are not to be attributed to the Northern Ireland Office

First published 2003

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Bandon Hamber and Ulrike Niens for their helpful comments on an earlier draft, and to Marion Cooper and Lorraine Wylie for research assistance.

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Contents

Executive Summary

- A professional survey organisation (RES) randomly selected a total of 1000 Northern Irish adults (18 years plus) from the 26 District Council Areas in Northern Ireland who were interviewed in their own home by trained social survey interviewers during the period 7 April 2001 to 31 May 2001. This report provides a snapshot of opinions at that time.
- 12% of the total sample reported that they 'often' or 'very often' thought of themselves as 'victims' of the 'troubles'. This figure rose to 15% when those 18-34 years and those 65 years and over were excluded.
- Using more 'objective' criteria some 16% could be said to have been 'direct' victims of the troubles and some 30% 'indirect' victims.
- 'Victims', however defined, are men and women of all ages who come from both denominations, from every social class, and live in areas of historically high, medium and low violence.
- However those who consider themselves to be victims are
  - less likely to be in occupations classified broadly as professional/managerial.
  - are less likely to be young adults.
  - are less likely to live in areas of historically low violence.
- The vast majority of the sample (about 70%) agreed with the proposition that ALL of the victims of the troubles should be remembered in some way.
  - These views were shared equally by 'victims' and 'non-victims'
  - Catholics were more likely to support this view than were Protestants.
  - Those who lived in low violence areas were less likely to support this view.
- The majority of respondents agreed both with the idea of a physical memorial and a Truth commission.
  - there was however, slightly stronger support for the idea of a physical memorial.
  - those in the higher classes (professional/managerial) were less likely to be in favour of either a physical memorial or a Truth commission.
  - respondents who lived in low violence areas were also less likely to support either a physical memorial or a Truth commission.
- A small number of respondents agreed with the proposition that all victims should be remembered but did not agree with either of the methods suggested.
- Reporting having been a victim of the troubles either directly or indirectly, or thinking of one's self as a victim of the troubles, was always associated with lower levels of psychological well-being, as measured by the 12-item General Health Questionnaire.

- Comparing the present data with other surveys suggests the ceasefires have not led to any notable change in overall levels of psychological well-being in the Northern Irish population.
- When asked to think of two events that had happened during the last fifty years in Northern Ireland that they considered notable the first thing to come to mind for 91% of those who responded to this question was an event related to the Northern Irish conflict:
  - The majority (50%) of these events concerned political violence.
  - Less that half (41%) were in some way connected with the peace process.
  - Those who mentioned violence related events did not show signs of lower levels of psychological well-being.
  - Victims, however defined, were no more likely to think of a violence related event.
- Intergroup forgiveness, measured on a four-item scale, produced on the whole positive results.
  - Protestants, those living in areas of historically low levels of political violence and those who consider themselves to have been victims, are generally less positively disposed towards intergroup forgiveness.
- Given that these results can be applied with any certainty only to the time period in which they were gathered, it may be useful to monitor the issues covered by this report on a regular basis.

Chapter 1

Aim

It was the aim of this study to examine various aspects of victimhood in Northern Ireland in relation to the political violence, and in particular to examine the current psychological well-being of those who see themselves as victims.

The specific aims of the present study were to provide policy relevant information related to: -

a. The proportion of Northern Irish adults who consider themselves to have been in various ways victims of the troubles.
b. The relationship between demographic variables (sex, religion, social class and area violence) and self-assessed victimhood.
c. The relationship between self-assessed victim status and current psychological well-being.
d. The estimated levels of mental health in the Northern Irish population post-ceasefires compared to estimates gathered while the political violence was ongoing in the mid 1980s.
e. The relationship between memories of the 'troubles' and psychological well-being.
f. Views on intergroup forgiveness and how the 'troubles' should be collectively remembered.

Chapter 2

Sample

A professional survey organisation (RES) was contracted to survey a random sample of adults from the Northern Irish population. Participants were randomly selected from across the 26 District Council Areas in Northern Ireland and were interviewed in their own home by trained social survey interviewers. All interviews were conducted during the period 7 April 2001 to 31 May 2001[1]. A total of 1000 Northern Irish adults (18+) were interviewed of which 42% were males and 58% were females. Participants ranged from 18 years of age to 89 years of age with a mean age of 49 years. 41% classified themselves as Catholics and 48% classified themselves as Protestants. Of the remaining 10.8% of the sample, 5.4% categorised themselves as being neither Catholic nor Protestant or of no denomination. A further 5.4% of respondents refused to answer. It was possible to assign a social class to 91.7% of the sample. Of these, 1.7% were Professional, 19.1% were Managerial/Technical, 20.6% were Skilled Non-Manual, 18.3% were Skilled Manual, 20.4% were Partly Skilled and 11.6% were Unskilled. Regarding employment, 40.8% were working or in full time education, 7.9% were unemployed or on a government training scheme and the remainder were retired or not working and not seeking work.

[1] for more technical information on sampling procedures see Appendix 5

Chapter 3

Measures

Victimhood

In order to establish if people ever thought of themselves as victims of the troubles respondents were asked to state how often they considered themselves to have been a victim of the troubles on a scale of 1-5 (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Very Often).

Impact of the Troubles

In addition, the respondents were also asked to rate the impact of the troubles on their lives from both a direct (personal) and indirect (the impact on their immediate family/close friends) perspective.

Direct impact: Respondents were asked whether they had ever been intimidated out of their home, whether a bomb had ever damaged their home, and whether they had ever been injured as a result of a sectarian incident (direct impact). (In the present sample alpha = 0.46).

Indirect impact: Respondents were asked if a member of their family and/or a close friend from their community had ever been intimidated out of their home, or had their home damaged by a bomb or been injured as a result of a sectarian incident (indirect impact). Respondents replied either 'yes' or 'no' to these questions. (In the present sample alpha = 0.66).

Remembering Victims

Respondents were asked if they thought all victims of the troubles should be remembered and if this should involve a physical memorial to all victims and/or a Truth Commission. Responses to these questions took a 4-point format with responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Memories of the recent past

Memories of the recent past was assessed by asking the respondents to recall two national or world events or changes that had taken place over the past 50 years, that "come to mind as being important" to them (Schuman & Scott, 1989). Following these filler questions participants were asked the same questions, but this time with the emphasis on Northern Irish events or changes in the last 50 years (Cairns et al, 1995).

Psychological Well-being

In order to assess psychological well-being, each respondent completed the 12-item version of the General Health Questionnaire (Goldberg, 1978) aimed at measuring recent changes in such things as sleeping problems, anxiety, and perceptions of personal difficulties[2]. Responses

[2] although the GHQ is often described as a measure of 'mild psychiatric morbidity' in this study we would prefer to refer to it as a measure of 'psychological well-being'

were on a 4-point scale (not at all, less than usual, no more than usual, much more than usual) and were scored using 'Likert scoring' techniques (0, 1, 2, 3). Total scores ranged from 0-36 allowing for maximum discrimination between respondents (Mallett, 2000). Higher scores reflect poorer psychological well-being/mental health (Goldberg, 1978).

The 12-item GHQ has been shown to be both reliable and valid amongst community samples in Northern Ireland (Cairns et al., 1986; Curran et al., 1990). (In the present sample alpha = 0.91).

Intergroup Forgiveness

Intergroup forgiveness was measured using a 4-item scale developed for use in Northern Ireland. This scale included questions such as 'It is important that my community never forgets the wrongs done to us by the other community' or 'only when the two communities in Northern Ireland learn to forgive each other can we be free of political violence'. These items were loosely based on the responses of Northern Irish adults in a series of focus group interviews (McLernon, Cairns & Hewstone, 2002) and items developed in an earlier study (Roe, Peg, Hodges and Trimm, 1999).

The scale contained 2 positive items and 2 negative items with negative items being reverse scored. (In the present sample alpha = 0.73).

Area Violence Levels

The district councils (DC) in which the respondents lived were categorised in terms of the fatalities per thousand as a result of the political violence (Poole, 1999). The three categories were used to classify areas as having historically been exposed to low, medium and high levels of political violence. When these classifications were applied 53% of the sample were recorded as living in district councils with historically high levels of political violence with the remainder equally divided between the medium and low level DCs[3].

Demographic Variables

Various demographic variables were also measured including age; sex; marital status; employment status; social class; denomination; area of residence; number in household; education; housing tenure; income; age of youngest child and ethnic group.

[3] denominational differences associated with this measure indicated that Catholics were under-represented in the Low violence areas, Protestants were under-represented in Medium violence areas and that Catholics and Protestants were equally represented in the High violence areas.

Chapter 4

Results

Victimhood

This section looks at different ways in which people may be categorised as 'victims' and how these categories are related to various demographic indices.

When asked if they ever considered themselves to have been a victim of the troubles (on a five-point scale) the vast majority of the sample (68%) was clear that they had never thought about themselves in this way. At the other end of the scale just under 12% thought of themselves in this way either 'often' or 'very often' (See Table 1).

Table 1: 'Overall do you consider yourself to have been a victim of the troubles?'

Perceived Victimhood	**N**	**%**
Never	667	67.6
Rarely	121	12.3
Sometimes	82	8.3
Often	41	4.2
Very Often	75	7.6
Total	**986**	**100**

Respondents were also asked to indicate if the troubles had impacted on their lives from both a direct and indirect perspective as noted above. Respondents answered 'yes' and 'no' to these questions (See Appendix 1). Respondents who replied 'no' to all of the direct questions were classified as having experienced no direct impact of the troubles and likewise those who answered 'no' to the indirect questions were classified as having no indirect impact. Respondents who replied 'yes' to one of these questions were classified as having experienced moderate levels and respondents who replied 'yes' to two or more questions were regarded as having experienced high levels of direct or indirect victimisation.

Table 2 illustrates that some 85% of the total sample reported no direct impact in contrast to the 70% who reported no indirect impact of the troubles on their lives. Similarly rather more people reported high levels of indirect impact (14%) compared to only 3% who reported high levels of direct impact.

Table 2: Proportion of respondents who have experienced low, moderate and high levels of direct or indirect impact of the troubles on their lives.

	Direct Impact		Indirect Impact	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
None	838	84.6	674	69.6
Moderate	125	12.6	159	16.4
High	28	2.8	136	14.0
Total	**991**	**100**	**969**	**100**

What is not clear is what criteria people are using to decide how to classify themselves as victims (see Table 1). In an attempt to throw some light on this issue we assessed the relationship between perceived victimhood and direct and indirect impact of the troubles. To simplify this it was necessary to recategorise the sample into two groups – perceived victims and non-victims. Those respondents who thought about themselves as victims 'very often' or 'often' were classified as victims while those who responded 'Never', 'rarely' or 'sometimes' were labelled as non-victims.

Table 3 compares perceived victimhood and direct impact of the troubles. The majority of respondents who were self-perceived 'non-victims' also reported that the troubles did not impact directly on their lives (90%) [4]($X^2(2) = 176.96$, $p<.01$). It is of interest to note, however, that some 43% of those who thought of themselves as 'victims' also did not report any direct impact of the troubles on their lives. Further, those who scored highly on the direct impact scale were divided equally between people who thought of themselves as victims, and people who did not (Table 3).

Table 3: Perceived Victimhood and Direct Impact of the troubles.

Levels of Direct Impact	**Perceived victim**					
	NonVictim		**Victim**		**Total**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
None	789	90.1	49	42.6	**838**	**84.6**
Moderate	73	8.3	52	45.2	**125**	**12.6**
High	14	1.6	14	12.2	**28**	**2.8**
Total	876	100	115	100	**991**	**100**

[4] Where X2 is used, this refers to Chi-squared

Table 4 similarly illustrates the relationship between perceived victimhood and self-reports of the indirect impact of the troubles. Again the relationship between these two variables is statistically significant ($X^2(2) = 126.41$, $p<.01$) but not perfect and weaker than that between perceived victim status and direct impact of the troubles (Table 3). This time rather more (9.7%) self-perceived 'non-victims' reported high levels of indirect impact (Table 4).

Table 4: Victimhood and Indirect Victimisation.

Levels of Indirect Impact	**Perceived victim**					
	NonVictim		**Victim**		**Total**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
None	638	74.5	36	31.9	**674**	**69.6**
Moderate	135	15.8	24	21.2	**159**	**16.4**
High	83	9.7	53	46.9	**136**	**14.0**
Total	856	100	113	100	**969**	**100**

The relationship between demographic variables and self-assessed victimhood

Having examined the proportion of Northern Irish adults who consider themselves to be victims of the 'troubles' we next investigated the relationships between demographic variables (gender, denomination, age, area violence and social class) and victimhood.

No statistically significant relationship was found between perceived victimhood and gender ($X^2(1) = 3.96$, NS) or denomination ($X^2(1) = 3.01$, NS). These results indicate that approximately equal proportions of male and female respondents and of Catholic and Protestant respondents reported that they thought of themselves as victims of the troubles. Statistically significant relationships were found, however, between perceived victimhood and age, area violence and social class and these relationships are explored in more detail in the tables below.

The relationship between age and perceived victimhood

As noted above the relationship between age and perceived victimhood was statistically significant ($X^2(20) = 33.29$, $p<.01$). Examining the data in Table 5 suggests that this could be due to the fact that approximately 16% of people in the age groups that cover the years 35 – 64, saw themselves as victims either 'often' or 'very often'. This is compared to 8% in the two youngest age groups and 8% in the oldest (65 years plus) who placed themselves in the 'often' or 'very often' categories.

Table 5: The relationship between perceived victimhood and age.

Perceived Victimhood	Age*					
	18-24	**25-34**	**35-44**	**45-54**	**55-64**	**65+**
Not at all	80 (73%)	115 (71%)	105 (60%)	72 (59%)	105 (67%)	189 (74%)
Rarely	15 (14%)	22 (13%)	22 (13%)	18 (15%)	16 (10%)	28 (11%)
Sometimes	6 (6%)	13 (8%)	17 (10%)	14 (12%)	13 (8%)	19 (7%)
Often	6 (6%)	3 (2%)	13 (7%)	3 (3%)	7 (4%)	9 (4%)
Very Often	3 (3%)	10 (6%)	18 (10%)	15 (12%)	17 (11%)	11 (4%)
Total	**110**	**163**	**175**	**122**	**158**	**256**

* Mean age of the sample = 49.26 (SD 18.80)

The relationship between area violence and perceived victimhood

Data were available on the historical levels of political violence relating to the ward in which each participant lived. This information was used to investigate the possibility that local levels of political violence could be related to perceived levels of victimhood (see Table 6). This table reveals that proportionately more (15%) of those who lived in areas historically designated as 'high violence' thought of themselves as victims 'often' or 'very often' compared to those who lived in medium (10%) and low (7%) areas of violence respectively ($X^2(8) = 23.055$, $p<.01$). Despite this trend it should be noted that the majority of people in areas of 'high' violence (64%) did not think of themselves as victims.

Table 6: The relationship between area of residence violence levels and perceived victimhood.

'Victim of the troubles'	Area Levels of Violence						Total	
	Low		Medium		High			
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Never	182	76.8	156	67.2	329	63.6	667	67.6
Rarely	25	10.5	37	15.9	59	11.4	121	12.3
Sometimes	13	5.5	17	7.3	52	10.1	82	8.3
Often	4	1.7	10	4.3	27	5.2	41	4.2
Very Often	13	5.5	12	5.2	50	9.7	75	7.6
Total	**237**	**100**	**232**	**100**	**517**	**100**	**986**	**100**

The relationship between social class and perceived victimhood

In order to examine the relationship between social class and victimhood it was necessary to recategorise the sample into three groups: Professional/ Managerial, Skilled non-manual/skilled manual and Partly skilled/unskilled. Table 7 reveals a complex relationship between these two variables with those in the highest SES group under-represented in both the 'never' and 'very often' categories of perceived victimhood. However, if the 'often' and 'very often' categories are combined then it is clear that as SES declines perceived 'victimhood' increases (10%, 12%, 20% respectively). The relationship between social class and victimhood (X^2 (2) = 18.03, p<.01) was statistically significant.

Table7: The relationship between perceived victimhood and social class.

	Social Class					
	Professional /Managerial		Skilled non-manual /skilled manual		Partly Skilled/unskilled	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Never	128	62	266	69	213	68
Rarely	39	19	39	10	34	11
Sometimes	21	10	35	9	20	6
Often	10	5	14	4	17	5
Very Often	10	5	31	8	31	15

Remembering victims

In this section we examine the responses when participants were asked a series of questions regarding how the victims of the troubles should be remembered. The first question asked whether people agreed with remembering all victims of the troubles. Next they were asked their opinions about a physical memorial to all victims and about having a Truth Commission in Northern Ireland. As well as examining the responses to these questions we also looked at the relationship between the responses to these questions, for example were those in favour of a physical memorial equally supportive of the idea of a Truth Commission? Finally, in this section we examine the relationship between the three questions related to remembering the victims and various demographic variables.

Of those who answered this question, 70% (658) were of the opinion that all victims of the troubles should be remembered (Table 8). The response to this questions given by all those who had indicated that they 'often' or 'very often' thought of themselves as 'victims' were compared with the remainder of participants ('non-victims'). This revealed that self-assessed victims and non-victims were equally likely to agree with the proposition that all victims should be remembered in some way (X^2 (1) =.06, NS)

When asked whether they would like the troubles remembered by a physical memorial to all victims the majority of the sample agreed (67%), with only 19.8% disagreeing strongly (Table 9). Similarly when asked if "N.Ireland should have some sort of Truth Commission – that is an inquiry where everyone had to tell the truth about things to do with the troubles" some 65% of the sample agreed while 21.8% disagreed strongly (See Table 9).

Table 8: 'Some people have suggested that ALL the victims of the troubles should be remembered in some way, do you agree?'

All victims should be remembered	**N**	**%**
No	284	30.1
Yes	658	69.9
Total	**942**	**100**

Table 9 Attitudes towards a physical memorial to all victims of the troubles and a Truth Commission.

Attitudes	**Physical memorial**		**Truth Commission**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
Agree Strongly	394	43.7	349	42.9
Agree Somewhat	213	23.6	177	21.8
Disagree Somewhat	116	12.9	110	13.5
Disagree Strongly	178	19.8	177	21.8
Total	**901**	**100**	**813**	**100**

The relationship between remembering all victims of the troubles and attitudes towards a physical memorial

Table 10 illustrates the relationship between remembering all of the victims of the troubles and attitudes towards a physical memorial. It is apparent that most, but not all (62%) of those participants in support of all victims of the troubles being remembered, were also strongly in support of a physical memorial. Chi-square analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between the two variables (X^2 (3) = 451.37, p<.01)

Table 10: The relationship between a physical memorial and the opinion that all victims of the troubles should be remembered.

Attitudes towards a physical memorial	**All victims of the troubles should be remembered**					
	No		**Yes**		**Total**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Disagree Strongly	129	52.0	35	5.7	164	19.0
Disagree Somewhat	78	31.5	29	4.7	107	12.4
Agree Somewhat	32	12.9	172	27.9	204	23.6
Agree Strongly	9	3.6	380	61.7	389	45.0
Total	**248**	**100**	**616**	**100**	**864**	**100**

The relationship between remembering all victims of the troubles and attitudes towards a Truth Commission

Table 11 illustrates the relationship between remembering all of the victims of the troubles and attitudes towards a Truth Commission. Again, it is clear, that the majority (53%) of those participants, in support of the troubles being remembered, are strongly in favour of a Truth Commission for Northern Ireland. Chi-square analysis revealed a significant statistical association between the two variables (X^2 (3) = 119.98, p<.01).

Table 11: The relationship between a Truth Commission and the opinion that all victims of the troubles should be remembered.

Attitudes towards a Truth Commission	**All victims of the troubles should be remembered**					
	No		**Yes**		**Total**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Disagree Strongly	95	42.2	73	13.2	168	21.6
Disagree Somewhat	46	20.4	58	10.5	104	13.4
Agree Somewhat	42	18.7	129	23.3	171	22.0
Agree Strongly	42	18.7	294	53.1	336	43.1
Total	**225**	**100**	**554**	**100**	**779**	**100**

The relationship between demographic variables and how victims of the troubles should be remembered

A number of statistical analyses were performed in an attempt to investigate the relationship between demographic variables and how victims of the troubles should be remembered. Variables investigated included denomination, gender, social class and historical violence in the area where the respondent lived. As in previous analyses social class was divided into three categories professional/managerial - skilled manual/unskilled manual and partly skilled/unskilled.

The relationship between denomination and how victims of the troubles should be remembered

Table 12: The relationship between denomination and approving of all victims of the troubles being remembered.

Denomination	**All victims of the troubles should be remembered**					
	No		**Yes**		**Total**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Protestant	176	71.0	268	44.8	444	52.5
Catholic	72	29.0	330	55.2	402	47.5
Total	**248**	**100**	**598**	**100**	**846**	**100**

There were denominational differences with regards to views on remembering all victims of the troubles (X^2 (1) = 48.07 p< 0.01). Table 12 shows that among those in favour of remembering the victims a majority were Catholics (55%) while a majority of those against this idea were Protestants (71%). Put another way, while 60% of Protestants questioned supported the idea of remembering all victims, some 82% of Catholics who took part in the survey answered 'yes' to this question.

Tables 13 and 14 follow a similar pattern to that seen in Table 12. That is, as with remembering all victims, more Catholics responded positively to the idea of a physical memorial (X^2 (3) = 77.24, p< 0.01) and to the idea of having a Truth Commission in Northern Ireland (X^2 (3) = 40.72, p< 0.01).

Table 13: The relationship between denomination and the idea that a physical memorial should be built for all victims of the troubles.

Attitudes towards a memorial built for all victims	Denomination					
	Protestant		Catholic		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Disagree Strongly	121	78.6	33	21.4	154	100
Disagree Somewhat	69	63.3	40	36.7	109	100
Agree Somewhat	106	56.1	83	43.9	189	100
Agree Strongly	140	38.4	225	61.6	365	100
Total	**436**	**53.4**	**381**	**46.6**	**817**	**100**

Table 14: The relationship between denomination and attitudes towards a Truth Commission.

Attitudes towards a Truth Commission	Denomination					
	Protestant		Catholic		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Disagree Strongly	110	71.0	45	29.0	155	100
Disagree Somewhat	57	58.2	41	41.8	98	100
Agree Somewhat	88	56.1	69	43.9	157	100
Agree Strongly	133	40.9	192	59.1	325	100
Total	**388**	**52.8**	**347**	**47.2**	**735**	**100**

The relationship between gender and how victims of the troubles should be remembered

There was no statistically significant gender difference with regards to remembering all victims of the troubles ($X^2(1) = 2.35$, NS). Despite this gender differences did emerge in response to the two questions regarding a physical memorial ($X^2(3) = 20.51$, $p < 0.001$) and the possibility of a Truth Commission ($X^2(3) = 11.17$, $p < 0.011$). In each case proportionately more women supported the proposition than did men (see Tables 15 & 16).

Table 15: The relationship between gender and the idea that a physical memorial should be built for all victims of the troubles.

Attitudes towards a memorial built for all victims	Sex					
	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Disagree Strongly	92	51.7	86	48.3	178	100
Disagree Somewhat	42	36.2	74	63.8	116	100
Agree Somewhat	101	47.4	112	52.6	213	100
Agree Strongly	135	34.3	259	65.7	394	100
Total	**370**	**41.1**	**531**	**58.9**	**901**	**100**

Table 16: The relationship between gender and attitudes towards a Truth Commission.

Attitudes towards a Truth Commission	Sex					
	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Disagree Strongly	89	50.3	88	49.7	177	100
Disagree Somewhat	39	35.5	71	64.5	110	100
Agree Somewhat	81	45.8	96	54.2	177	100
Agree Strongly	130	37.2	219	62.8	349	100
Total	**339**	**41.7**	**474**	**58.3**	**813**	**100**

Social class and how victims of the troubles should be remembered

The results in relation to social class followed a similar pattern to those with gender. There were no statistically significant differences between respondents from different social classes (re-classified into three categories), when asked if all victims of the troubles should be remembered. There were, however, statistically significant differences in response to the questions about a physical memorial and a Truth Commission. As Tables 18 and 19 indicate significantly fewer respondents in the Professional/Managerial category 'agreed strongly'

with the idea of having a physical memorial ($X^2(6) = 16.64$, $p<.01$) or a Truth Commission ($X^2(6) = 15.22$, $p<.01$).

Table 17: The relationship between social class and approving of all victims of the troubles being remembered.

Social Class	**All victims of the troubles should be remembered**			
	No		**Yes**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
Professional/Managerial	69	26.3	124	20.6
Skilled/ Unskilled Manual	109	41.6	260	43.3
Partly Skilled/ Unskilled	84	32.1	217	36.1
Total	**262**	**100**	**601**	**100**

Table 18: The relationship between social class and attitudes towards a physical memorial.

Attitudes towards a memorial built for all victims	**Social Class**					
	Professional /Managerial		**Skilled /Unskilled Manual**		**Partly Skilled /Unskilled**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Disagree Strongly	43	26.1	76	46.1	46	27.9
Disagree Somewhat	34	31.2	40	36.7	35	32.1
Agree Somewhat	43	22.2	89	45.9	62	32.0
Agree Strongly	64	17.8	147	40.8	149	41.4
Total	**184**	**22.2**	**352**	**42.5**	**292**	**35.3**

Table 19: The relationship between social class and attitudes towards a Truth Commission.

Attitudes towards a Truth Commission	Social Class					
	Professional /Managerial		Skilled /Unskilled Manual		Partly Skilled /Unskilled	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Disagree Strongly	44	28.2	72	46.2	40	25.6
Disagree Somewhat	30	29.1	40	38.8	33	32.0
Agree Somewhat	33	20.5	72	44.7	56	34.8
Agree Strongly	66	19.9	128	38.7	137	41.4
Total	**173**	**23.0**	**312**	**41.5**	**266**	**35.4**

The relationship between area violence and approving of all victims of the troubles being remembered

The pattern which emerged, when area violence levels were examined, indicates that, whether the question related to remembering all victims, a physical memorial or a Truth Commission (see Tables 20, 21, & 22) respondents from wards categorised as having historically 'low violence', were less likely to agree with these proposals. Further, in each case the appropriate chi-square test was statistically significant ($X^2(2) = 7.19$, $p<.01$; $X^2(6) = 22.53$, $p<.01$; $X^2(6) = 26.22$, $p<.01$).

Table 20: The relationship between area violence and remembering all victims of the troubles.

Area Violence	All victims of the troubles should be remembered			
	No		Yes	
	N	%	N	%
Low	80	28.2	139	21.1
Medium	55	19.4	166	25.2
High	149	52.5	353	53.6
Total	**284**	**100**	**658**	**100**

Table 21: The relationship between area violence and attitudes towards a physical memorial.

Attitudes towards a physical memorial	**Area of Violence**					
	Low		**Medium**		**High**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Disagree Strongly	58	32.6	28	15.7	92	51.7
Disagree Somewhat	38	32.8	26	22.4	52	44.8
Agree Somewhat	50	23.5	61	28.6	102	47.9
Agree Strongly	76	19.3	99	25.1	219	55.6
Total	**222**	**24.6**	**214**	**23.8**	**465**	**51.6**

Table 22: The relationship between area violence and attitudes towards a Truth Commission.

Attitudes towards a Truth Commission	**Area of Violence**					
	Low		**Medium**		**High**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Disagree Strongly	58	32.8	38	21.5	81	45.8
Disagree Somewhat	32	29.1	20	18.2	58	52.7
Agree Somewhat	40	22.6	50	28.2	87	49.2
Agree Strongly	54	15.5	89	25.5	206	59.0
Total	**184**	**22.6**	**197**	**24.2**	**432**	**53.1**

Psychological Well-being

There has been much speculation and a little research into the relationship between the troubles and mental health[5] in Northern Ireland (for a review see Cairns & Wilson, 1993). To explore this issue all respondents were asked to complete the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) (Goldberg, 1978) and of these 97.9% did so in full. The mean score[6] for the total sample was calculated at 10.05 (SD 5.29), with a modal score of 6 (23.4%).

In this section we use this information to explore the relationships between psychological well-being/mental health as measured by the GHQ and other variables including perceived victimhood and self-reported impact of the troubles, and end by discussing the results of the present survey in the context of other surveys of the population of Northern Ireland which have also employed the GHQ over the last thirty years.

The relationship between perceived victimhood and current psychological well-being

The present study aimed to shed light on the relationship between perceived victimhood and current psychological well-being. Using GHQ scores as the dependent variable and perceived victimhood and direct and indirect victimisation as the independent variables a series of one-way ANOVAs were performed. Similar to previous analyses direct and indirect victimhood was classified into three levels - low, moderate, and high.

The main effect of victimhood on GHQ scores was statistically significant, $F(4) = 9.93$, $p < 0.01$. As Table 23 reveals, those participants who report that they 'very often' view themselves as victims of the troubles obtained a higher mean GHQ score (12.93) than those participants who did not consider themselves to be victims (9.39). This indicates lowered levels of current psychological well-being amongst those who consider themselves to be victims of the troubles[7].

This relationship between whether one perceives oneself to have been a victim or not and psychological well-being becomes even clearer if the perceived victimhood scale is collapsed to form two categories by combining the 'often' and very often' categories to equal 'victim' with the remainder classified as 'non-victims'. When this is done the mean GHQ score for 'victims' is 12.2 and that for non-victims is 9.7. To illustrate this relationship further Appendix 4 shows the proportion of 'victims' and 'non-victims' scoring at each level on the GHQ. What this clearly shows is that the mean difference between these two groups arises because many more victims scored at the high end of the scale.

[5] Often measured using the GHQ
[6] Likert scoring method
[7] A similar pattern was found if victimhood was measured with respect to direct impact of the troubles, $F(2) = 8.45$ $p < 0.01$, and indirect impact of the troubles , $F(2) = 7.35$ $p < 0.01$.

That is many more 'victims' reported worse levels of current psychological well-being.

Table 23: The relationship between perceived victimhood and current GHQ scores.

'Victim of the troubles'	Mean (GHQ)*	SD	N
Never	9.39	4.70	602
Rarely	10.85	5.61	110
Sometimes	11.00	6.01	73
Often	10.89	5.35	37
Very Often	12.93	7.18	70

* Means are from total scores on The GHQ12. Higher numbers are often interpreted to reflect poorer mental health.

Psychological well-being in Northern Ireland: 1988-2001

In Northern Ireland the GHQ12 has been widely used across a range of community settings (eg Cairns & Wilson, 1984; Cairns & Lewis, 1999; Curran et al., 1990). It is interesting to compare the results obtained in these studies with those in the present study in order to shed light on the psychological well-being in the Northern Irish population post-ceasefires compared to estimates gathered while the political violence was ongoing in the mid 1980s. Table 24 compares data from a number of studies all of which employed the twelve-item version of the GHQ12. These results suggest that no real differences can be demonstrated in the levels of psychological well-being in the Northern Irish population before and after the ceasefires.

Table 24: GHQ12 scores in Northern Ireland before and after the ceasefires.

Pre-ceasefire	Study	Sample	Mean GHQ12*
1988	Cairns (1988)	Random sample of 2 Health Districts	9.45
1992	Wilson and Cairns (1992)	Quota sample of Enniskillen/Lowtown	Enniskillen = 10.81 Lowtown = 10.82

Post-ceasefire	Study	Sample	Mean GHQ12*
1999	Cairns and Lewis (1999)	Quota sample of Enniskillen/Lowtown	Enniskillen = 10.31 Lowtown = 10.26
2000	Mallet (2000)	Random sample of 30 electoral wards in Derry City Council	10.82
(2001)	Present study	Random sample of Northern Irish population	10.05

* Means are from total scores on The GHQ12. Higher numbers are often taken to reflect poorer mental health.

Memories of the recent past

It is of course entirely possible that people have different memories of the troubles – either because they experienced the troubles in different ways or simply because they have either consciously or unconsciously remembered different events. These memories in turn could influence whether they see themselves as victims or indeed could influence their current psychological well-being. Because we had asked all participants to recall two events that had occurred in Northern Ireland in the last 50 years that they considered to be important it was possible to explore these ideas by examining memories of the troubles in relation to other factors such as perceived victimhood and scores on the GHQ.

A total of 846 participants mentioned at least one Northern Irish memory and these were classified into 96 different categories (see Appendix 2). Participants were also asked to date the events they had mentioned and for the first Northern Irish memory, dates ranged from 1945 to 2001 with two modal dates - 1998 and 1969. As Appendix 3 shows the Good Friday/Belfast agreement was the most frequently mentioned event (n = 154) with the general (unspecified) memories of 'the troubles' and the Omagh bomb occupying second and third positions respectively.

To facilitate further analyses these memories were then recoded into three subgroups; events relating to the troubles (negative memories);

events relating to the peace process (positive memories)[8] or other events not concerned with either the troubles or the peace process.

Table 25 indicates that the vast majority (91%) of participants, who recalled a first Northern Irish event, mentioned something related to Northern Ireland's conflict which has dominated the recent political past. Further, the majority of these events related specifically to incidents involving violence in some way (50%; here labelled 'troubles'), while a slightly smaller proportion mentioned events relating to the peace process including the ceasefires (41%).

Table 25: Memories of Northern Irish events.

Memories	N	% of Total
Troubles	424	50.1
Peace	344	40.7
Other	78	9.2
Total	**846**	**100**

Memories of Northern Irish Events and perceived Victimhood

Using the classification of Northern Irish memories noted in Table 25 above it is possible to investigate the possibility that those who think of themselves as victims, are more likely to recall memories related to the troubles rather than to the peace process or other non-troubles related events. To aid this procedure perceived victimhood was again collapsed so as to form two categories. This was done by combining the 'often' and very often' categories to equal 'victim' with the remainder classified as 'non-victims'. As Table 26 shows there was no relationship between these two variables with self-perceived victims recalling troubles or peace related memories in the same proportions as did 'non-victims'[9] ($X^2(2)=1.49$, NS).

Table 26: Memories for Northern Irish Events and perceived Victimhood.

	Troubles	Peace	Other
Not a victim	379 50.5%	305 40.7%	66 8.8%
Victim	45 46.9%	39 40.6%	12 12.5%
Total	**424**	**344**	**78**

[8] We acknowledge that it is possible that for some people a memory of the peace process could be a negative memory

[9] This result is obtained even when this analysis is repeated separately for Catholic and Protestant respondents

Memories of Northern Irish Events and demographic variables

There was no evidence that whether respondents recalled memories associated with the troubles or with events associated with peace was influenced by their religious denomination ($X^2(2)=1.74$, NS). Nor was the type of memory recalled influence by the violence level in the historical past in the respondent's area ($X^2(4)=2.02$, NS). Finally, there was also no association between social class and memories for recent Northern Irish events ($X^2(4)=5.50$, NS).

Memories of Northern Irish Events and Psychological Well-being

The next set of analyses explored the possibility that the type of Northern Irish event or memory recalled was related to a participant's psychological well-being. As shown in Table 27 the mean GHQ12 score obtained by those individuals who recalled incidents relating to peace in Northern Ireland (9.99) was lower than the mean score obtained by the overall sample (10.08) and lower than the mean score obtained by those individuals who recalled incidents relating to the Troubles (10.19).

However, a one way analysis of variance indicated that the main effect of Northern Irish memories on GHQ scores was not statistically significant[10], (F (2) = 1.13, NS).

Table 27: Mean GHQ scores and Memories of Northern Irish events (Troubles/ Peace/ Other).

Memories	Mean*	Std. Error
Troubles	10.19	5.59
Peace	9.99	4.84
Other	9.97	5.28
Total	**10.08**	**0.20**

* Means are from total scores on The GHQ12. Higher numbers are often taken to reflect poorer mental health.

Intergroup Forgiveness

How one sees oneself, as a victim or not, may influence one's views on intergroup forgiveness. As noted above, Intergroup Forgiveness was measured using a four-item scale (alpha = 0.73). Scores on these four items were summed to form a forgiveness total score that could range from 4 to 16. Usable data were obtained from 713 respondents (71.3% of the total sample) and the scores recorded covered the full range possible. However, the scores were positively skewed with a modal score of 16 with 50.6% of the sample scoring at or above the mean of 13 (SD = 2.62).

[10] Again this result is obtained even when this analysis is repeated separately for Catholic and Protestant respondents

In order to examine the relationship between intergroup forgiveness and other variables, and given the skewed nature of the intergroup forgiveness responses, we decided to categorise the sample into two groups – those definitely in favour of forgiveness and those definitely not in favour of forgiveness.

To do this those participants who had scored approximately half a standard deviation above and below the mean (½ SD = 1.31) were omitted from further analyses. Those who scored between 4 and 10 were classified into those 'not in favour' of forgiveness (low forgivers) and those who scored between 15 and 16 were classified into those 'in favour' of forgiveness (high forgivers). This meant that participants who scored between 11 and 14 (neutral forgivers) were excluded from further analyses (see Table 28).

Table 28: The frequency of individuals in favour/not in favour of intergroup forgiveness.

Attitudes towards Intergroup forgiveness	N*	% of total
LO: Not in favour of forgiveness	135	13.5
HI: In favour of forgiveness	217	21.7
Neutral in relation to forgiveness	361	36.1

* 287 participants were coded as missing as a result of failing to respond to some or all of the intergroup forgiveness questions.

The relationship between intergroup forgiveness and perceived victimhood

Table 29: The relationship between intergroup forgiveness and perceived victimhood.

Self-assessed Victimhood	Intergroup Forgiveness			
	Not in Favour		In Favour	
	N	%	N	%
Not a victim	107	36	189	64
Victim	28	50	28	50

Table 29 illustrates the relationship between perceived victimhood and intergroup forgiveness. This suggests that while a majority of 'non-victims' are in favour of forgiveness, 'victims' are however, less likely to fall into this category (X^2 (1) = 3.82, p<.05).

The relationship between intergroup forgiveness and demographic variables

Examining the associations between the various demographic variables and forgiveness reveals first that intergroup forgiveness was not statistically significantly associated with sex (X^2 (2) = 0.94, NS) or social class (X^2 (3) = 0.22, NS). There were however associations with denomination and area violence which are explored further below.

Intergroup Forgiveness and Denomination

Table 30 highlights the relationship between intergroup forgiveness and denomination and shows that the majority of those not in favour of intergroup forgiveness were Protestants while the majority of those in favour were Catholics. Or to put it another way, Catholic participants were clearly in support (76%) of intergroup forgiveness Protestant participants were more equally divided ($X^2(1) = 29.38$, $p< 0.00$) for and against.

Table 30: The relationship between intergroup forgiveness and denomination.

Denomination	Intergroup Forgiveness					
	Not in favour		In favour		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Protestant	93	69.4	86	39.6	179	51.0
Catholic	41	30.6	131	60.4	172	49.0
Total	**134**	**100**	**217**	**100**	**351**	**100**

Further, when denominational differences were examined as above but, this time, taking into account the respondent's status as a perceived 'victim' or 'non-victim' differences also emerged. What this analysis revealed was that while Catholic participants' status as a victim or non- victim was not associated with their views on intergroup forgiveness ($X^2(1) =.46$, NS) this was not true for Protestant respondents ($X^2(1) = 5.84$, $p< 0.05$). For Protestant respondents only, 'non victims' were approximately equally divided among those in favour of intergroup forgiveness and those not in favour. For Protestant 'victims' however the division was 29% in favour and 71% against.

Intergroup Forgiveness and Area Violence

Table 31: The relationship between intergroup forgiveness and area violence.

Area Violence	Intergroup Forgiveness					
	Not in favour		In favour		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Low	19	14.1	63	29.0	82	23.3
Medium	33	24.4	44	20.3	77	21.9
High	83	61.5	110	50.7	193	54.8
Total	**135**	**100**	**217**	**100**	**352**	**100**

The data in Table 31 suggests that the majority of people, regardless of where they lived, were in favour of forgiveness. However, proportionately more of the people living in areas of historically low violence are likely to support intergroup forgiveness ($X^2(2) = 10.42$, $p<.05$)[11].

Intergroup Forgiveness and Psychological Well-being

In the psychological literature there is growing evidence that interpersonal forgiveness is associated with better levels of both physical and mental health. To explore the possibility that this relationship held where intergroup forgiveness is concerned those respondents in favour of intergroup forgiveness in the Northern Irish context and those not in favour where compared in terms of their scores on the GHQ12. This comparison failed to reveal any statistically significant differences between the two groups in terms of current psychological well-being ($t(325)=1.69$, NS).

[11] This result is obtained even when this analysis is repeated separately for Catholic and Protestant respondents

Chapter 5

Summary and Conclusions

Victimhood

It has been suggested that in some senses everyone who lives in Northern Ireland can consider themselves to have been a victim of the 'troubles' of the last thirty years (Bloomfield, 1998). On the other hand Smyth (1998) dismisses this 'as neither a viable or advisable way to approach the past' (p. 57).

The results of the present study lend support to Smyth's position because only a relatively small proportion (12%) of the Northern Irish adult population apparently think of themselves in this way, at least on a fairly regular basis. What is clear, however, is that the vast majority of those questioned reported that they 'never' thought of themselves as victims of the troubles. In addition, given the fact that the troubles have led to more deaths among Catholics and among men (Fay, Morrisey & Smith, 1998), it is surprising that in the present survey these groups were no more likely to think of themselves as 'victims' that were Protestants or women. Further, when prompted to provide more 'objective' evidence of victimhood these figures went up, not down, with the result that some 16% could be said to have been 'direct' victims of the troubles and some 30% 'indirect' victims.

This suggests that people in Northern Ireland may be setting stricter criteria for those who are to be accorded the label 'victim'. This may in turn be related to several factors. For example, the fact that quasi-legal definitions, such as those used by the Victims' Commissioner (Bloomfield, 1998), reserve the term 'victim' for those who have died and those who have been injured, plus their relatives, may influence attitudes in this area. In addition, as with everything in Northern Ireland, victimhood has its political implications. It may be, therefore, that people choose to describe themselves as victims based on a range of factors not strictly limited to the direct impact of the troubles on their lives.

A caveat to these findings, and indeed to all the other material in this report, therefore, is the fact that these results represent the views of people in Northern Ireland at a particular moment in time. What we cannot tell, for example, is exactly how the ongoing political situation in 2001 influenced these views. Nor can we tell if people today are less likely to think of themselves as victims than they were, say, ten years ago. This suggests that there is a need to monitor views about victimhood and associated factors on a regular (perhaps a five-yearly) basis. In addition, future research might want to make use of interviews and/or focus groups in order to probe in more detail the actual reasons for people's decision to label themselves as victim or non-victim and the temporal nature of these decisions.

That there were statistically significant relationships between all three of the measures of victimhood used in the present study is not particularly remarkable. What is worth noting is the fact that these relationships were not one to one. In other words there were, for example, people who considered themselves to be victims, who had not been in any way directly touched by the troubles (nor had their family or close friends). At the same time, there were others who reported that they had been injured in a sectarian incident, and had their home damaged in a bomb explosion, and had to move house because of intimidation – but still did not ever think of themselves as a victim of the troubles! This phenomenon is similar to, but more marked than that reported in the survey carried out by the Cost of the Troubles Study[12] that found a "complex relationship between experience of the Troubles and the reported effects of the Troubles". (p. 86).

Looking more closely at the background of those who considered themselves to be victims it is obvious that 'victims' are men and women of all ages who come from both denominations, from every social class, and live in areas of historically high, medium and low violence. However examining the data did reveal certain trends that suggest that those who consider themselves as victims are less likely to be in occupations classified broadly as professional/managerial, and less likely to live in areas of historically low violence. Further self-perceived 'victims' were also less likely to be very young or very old adults. All of these relationships are, no doubt, related to exposure to the troubles.

Remembering Victims

How victims are remembered after any internal conflict can be a divisive issue. What is surprising about the results obtained in the present survey is that the vast majority of the sample (about 70%) agreed with the proposition that ALL of the victims of the troubles should be remembered in some way. This level of agreement is perhaps surprising, but is reinforced by the fact that the 2000 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey found that 64% of people agreed with the proposition that there should be a 'special memorial to victims of the troubles'. What the present study can add to this picture is the fact that, counter to Hamber's (1998) suggestion, there was no evidence that 'victims' are more likely to support such a policy compared to 'non-victims'.

Of course the devil is often in the detail in this matter as in others and so respondents were next asked how victims should be remembered – by a physical memorial and/or a Truth Commission. Again, the majority of respondents agreed (either strongly or somewhat strongly) to both these propositions. There was however, slightly stronger support for the idea of a physical memorial. Again this is similar to the results from the 2000 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey where

[12] it should be noted that the Cost of the Troubles Study survey used a radically different sampling method in which electoral wards were stratified on the basis of deaths (of residents only) due to political violence. Their sample therefore was not representative of the Northern Irish population as a whole.

52% of those asked choose a physical memorial over a 'day of commemoration' or both a memorial and a day of commemoration (23%).

Looking at the demographic breakdown of those who wanted all victims remembered it was clear that Catholics were more likely to support this view than were Protestants and while there were no associations with sex or social class, those who lived in areas of historically low violence were less likely to support this view.

Interestingly, although all social classes supported the idea of all victims being remembered, those in the higher classes (professional/managerial) were less likely to be in favour of either a physical memorial or a Truth Commission. Perhaps related to this, those respondents who lived in low violence areas were also less likely to support either a physical memorial or a Truth Commission.

Psychological Well-being

Ever since the outbreak of the current troubles there have been fears for the mental health of victims and indeed for the general population of Northern Ireland. In the present survey current mental health, or, we believe more accurately, psychological well being, was measured by the 12-item version of the General Health Questionnaire. It was apparent from the analyses conducted in this area that, however one measured victimisation, whether in terms of a simple self-classification or by attempting to use more 'objective' criteria, those most likely to be classified as 'victims' were more likely to obtain higher scores on the GHQ. In other words, it would appear that either being victim of the troubles in the ways measured here, or indeed thinking of one's self as a victim of the troubles, is associated with poorer levels of current psychological well-being.

On the other hand it should be noted that the GHQ scores reported here do not indicate a level of suffering comparable to the 30 percent PTSD rate reported in the Cost of the Troubles Study survey. This could be due to the failure of the latter survey to use a reliable or valid measure of mental health (p. 90). The current results are, in fact, more in line with those reported in a recent study carried out in Derry (McConnell, Bebbington, McClelland & Gillespie, 2002). This study, using the most modern methodology and instrumentation available reported a 1-month prevalence rate of psychiatric disorder of 7.5%. This, as the authors note, is similar to or even higher than that found in inner city London using the same methodology and no doubt reflects the combination of social deprivation and political violence that the citizens of Derry have been exposed to.

Undoubtedly, political violence has impacted on mental health levels of some but perhaps not all individuals in Northern Ireland. In fact it may be that this impact has been largely confined to 'victims' or those more directly involved in the violence. Evidence to back this assertion comes from the fact that when the data from the present survey are compared

with those from other similar studies, both pre- and post-ceasefires, it is apparent that the ceasefires have not been associated with any notable change in overall levels of psychological well-being in the Northern Irish population.

This could be interpreted in two ways. Either pre-ceasefires levels were healthy and this has not changed or pre-ceasefires levels were unhealthy and the ceasefires did not bring about any improvements. One piece of evidence to support the latter hypothesis is that the present survey suggests that the recent political past of Northern Ireland is still very much in the minds of people who live here. Respondents were asked to think of two events that had happened during the last fifty years in Northern Ireland that they considered notable. 85% of the sample agreed to provide at least one such 'memory' and it is interesting to note that of these memories over 90% were in some way related to the Northern Irish conflict. Further the majority of these events concerned political violence while less that half (41%) were in some way connected with the peace process. However, there was no evidence to back up the idea that those with political violence on their minds are currently experiencing lower levels of mental health. Or, more precisely, those who mentioned a violence related event did not show signs of lower levels of current psychological well-being, as measured by the GHQ, when compared to those who mentioned peace related events.

Again this is something that needs to be monitored on a regular basis. Without the proper evidence only speculation is possible. For example, the lack of change in levels of current psychological well-being/mental health over time may mean that the people who suffered psychologically during the troubles are still doing so perhaps because they have not received adequate support and/or treatment. On the other hand, it may be that the psychological stresses engendered by the troubles will take a much longer time to dissipate, generations rather than decades. Finally, and most likely, is the explanation that psychological health is influenced by a range of factors, of which the troubles are just one, and that until these other (social) factors also change, no appreciable improvement in psychological well-being in Northern Ireland will be achieved.

Memories of the recent past

When asked to recall a Northern Irish event from the last 50 years almost all (91%) of those who responded to this question mentioned an event associated with the region's recent political violence. As might be expected this produced a long list of events (see Appendix 2) and of these the most frequently mentioned single event was the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement. These results are therefore quite similar to those reported by Cairns and Lewis (1999). In a quota sample drawn from two towns in Northern Ireland they reported that 87% of their sample mentioned an event related to the recent political violence and that the most frequently mentioned event was the ceasefires.

What is perhaps surprising, in the present study is that, even when these events were reduced to three categories (Troubles, Peace and Other), no statistically significant associations were observed. This uniformity of memory extended even to those who ascribed to themselves the role of 'victim'. That is, victims, however defined, were no more likely to think of violence related events than were those who did not think of themselves in this way.

In these data it could be argued therefore that there is evidence that could be interpreted to support the claim that in some sense everyone in Northern Ireland is a victim of the troubles. Certainly it could be argued that everyone has had at least some experience of or exposure to, the political violence of the last thirty years and remains conscious of its effects, even now that an uneasy peace reigns at the time of writing. This argument relates to the claim (Cairns & Roe, 2003) that victimhood and memories are closely related phenomena. In particular Montville (1993) has argued that a sense of victimhood often stems from memories of unacknowledged or unreconciled historic losses. Of course, as the Cost of the Troubles Survey notes, 'experience' is subject to a wide interpretation (p. 54). The data they report illustrates this very clearly with 82% of men and 79% of women reporting that they 'very often' encountered the troubles in news reports but only 9% of men and 7% of women saying that they had 'very often' been involved in a bomb scare. It is unlikely therefore that many of the respondents in the present study were physically present at the events they recalled – but unfortunately this was a question that was not asked.

Intergroup Forgiveness

Intergroup forgiveness, measured on a four-item scale, produced on the whole relatively positive results. For example on a scale with a possible minimum of 4 and a maximum of 16, the mean score was 13 and the mode 16. In an attempt to overcome this positive bias in the intergroup forgiveness scale scores, the sample was divided into those at the extreme positive end of the distribution and those at the extreme negative end omitting those in the 'neutral' category.

Not unexpectedly two other variables were associated with intergroup forgiveness – victimhood and denomination. 'Victims' (that is perceived victims) were less likely to be in favour of intergroup forgiveness. This lends weight to Hamber's (1998) assertion (based on his experience in South Africa) that (in Northern Ireland) "…victims (no matter what the state of a peace process in a country) are not expected, either implicitly or explicitly to forgive the perpetrators". (p. 65).

However, this relationship between status as a perceived 'victim' and level of forgiveness was moderated by the participant's denomination. This was because, for Protestants only, thinking of oneself as a victim was negatively associated with ideas about intergroup forgiveness. In contrast, this relationship did not hold for Catholic participants in that status as a self-perceived 'victim' or 'non-victim' did not influence views about intergroup forgiveness.

This relationship between denomination and intergroup forgiveness was also not unexpected given the suggestion in the literature that Catholics compared to Protestants have, as a group, been more tolerant toward outgroups in general, and that this extended to intergroup relations in Northern Ireland (Salters, 1970; Arthur, 1974; Russell, 1974; Fairleigh, 1975; Greer, 1985). The evidence we present in this study suggests that this greater tolerance on the part of Catholics in Northern Ireland also extends to intergroup forgiveness

There were however, no statistically significant associations between intergroup forgiveness and gender or social class or with psychological health (as measured by the GHQ).

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Appendix 1: Responses to individual questions on Direct and Indirect Victims Scales

Direct Victimisation	No		Yes		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Have you ever had to move house because of intimidation?	912	91.9	80	8.1	992	100
Has your home ever been damaged by a bomb?	941	94.8	52	5.2	993	100
Have you ever been injured due to a sectarian incident?	938	94.6	54	5.4	992	100

Indirect Victimisation	No		Yes		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Has a member of your family or a close friend in your community ever had to move house because of intimidation?	833	84.9	148	15.1	981	100
Has a member of your family's or a close friend's home ever been damaged by a bomb?	870	88.4	114	11.6	984	100
Has a member of your family or a close friend in your community ever been injured due to a sectarian incident?	759	77.4	221	22.6	980	100

Appendix 2: Complete list of events recalled as first memory from Northern Ireland in the last 50 years

COMPLETE LIST OF FIRST EVENT RECALLED BY 846 PARTICIPANTS

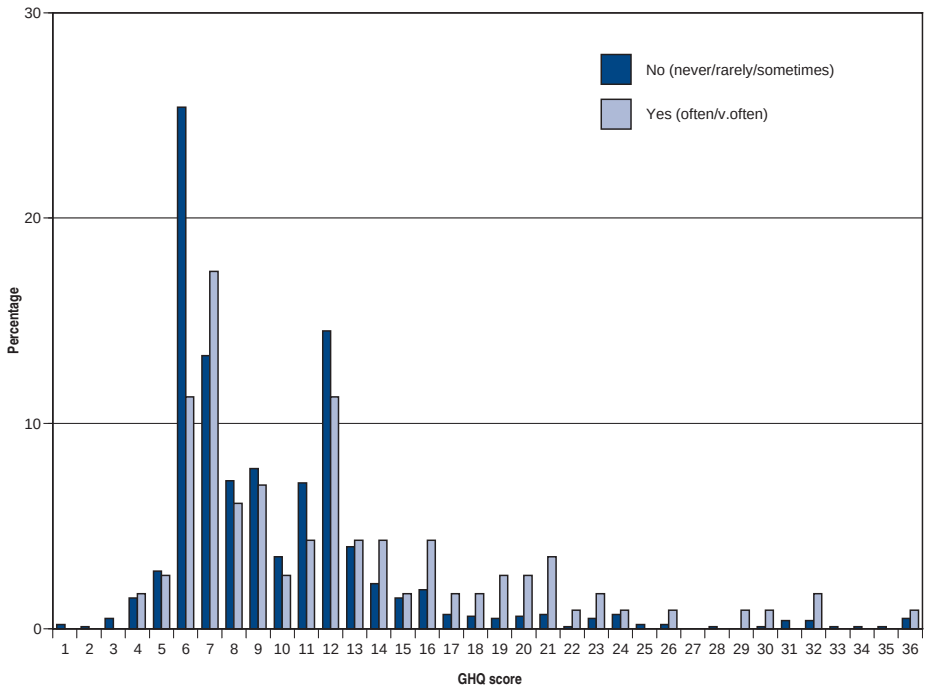
ABERCORN BOMB
ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT
ARMAGH REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY
ASSASSINATIONS
ATTITUDES HAVE CHANGED FOR THE WORSE
B SPECIALS (DISBANDMENT OF)
BABY BEING DUMPED IN LARNE
BAD STATE OF THE HEALTH SECTOR
BILL CLINTON VISIT
BLOODY FRIDAY
BLOODY SUNDAY
BLOODY SUNDAY PAYOUT
BOBBY SANDS: DEATH OF
BOMBAY STREET (BURNING OF)
BOMBING IN BELFAST
CARDINAL DALTON COMING TO DERRY
CASTOR BAR
CEASEFIRES
CHANGE IN LIFESTYLE
CHANGES IN POLITICS
CHINOOK DISASTER
CITY GRAVEYARD SHOOTINGS
CIVIL / HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT
COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND - INVESTMENT
CRIME / VANDALISM (TOO MUCH)
DARKLEY
DE LOREAN MOTOR COMPANY
DEATH OF 2 SOLDIERS IN WEST BELFAST
DIRECT RULE
DONEGAL ST BOMB
DRUMCREE / GARVAGHY ROAD SITUATION
DUNLOY: SHOOTING IN
DUPONT COMING TO MAYDOWN
EARLY RELEASE OF TERRORISTS / POLITICAL PRISONERS
ELDERLY BETTER LOOKED AFTER
ELECTIONS / REFERENDUM
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES (lack of)
ENNISKILLEN BOMB
EQUALITY BETWEEN PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS
FOOT AND MOUTH / BSE CRISES
FUNDING TO RESTRUCTURE
FUNERALS (SHOOTINGS AT)
GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT / BELFAST AGREEMENT
GREYSTEEL SHOOTING
HOSPITALS / MEDICAL SERVICES: IMPROVEMENTS IN
HOUSING / STANDARD OF LIVING (IMPROVEMENT OF)

HUNGER STRIKES
INTEGRATED SCHOOLS
INTERNMENT
IRA CEASEFIRE: BREAKING OF
JOEY DUNLOP: DEATH OF
KINGSMILL MASSACRE
LA MON HOUSE: BOMB:
LORD BROOKBOROUGH: DEATH OF
LOUGH NEAGH SHOOTINGS IN LURGAN AT
LOUGHINISLAND KILLINGS
MARTIN MCGUINNESS BECOMING EDUCATION MINISTER
MASS SAID IN ENGLISH
MILLENNIUM CELEBRATIONS
MORE PEOPLE IN WORK
NARROW WATER MASSACRE
NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (INTRODUCTION OF)
NOBEL PEACE PRIZE: JOHN HUME AND DAVID TRIMBLE WINNING THE
NORTHERN IRELAND EXECUTIVE / ASSEMBLY
OLD WOMAN BEING SEXUALLY ASSAULTED
OMAGH: BOMB:
OPENING OF LOCAL LIBRARY
ORANGE ORDER (WEAKENING OF THE)
OXFORD BUS STATION BOMB
PAPAL VISIT TO IRELAND
PARADES / MARCHES / 12TH JULY
PEACE PROCESS: PEACE
PETROL BOMBINGS
PLANE COMING DOWN IN HILLMAN ST. DURING THE WAR
POLITICAL PROBLEMS (ESCALATION OF)
QUINN DEATHS: 3 CHILDREN KILLED IN PETROL BOMBING
RECOGNITION OF POLITICAL PARTIES
RELAXATION IN CUSTOMS
RIOTING
ROADS / TRANSPORT: IMPROVEMENTS IN
ROSEMARY NELSON: MURDER OF
ROYAL VISIT(S)
SHANKILL BOMB
SHANKILL BUTCHERS
SHORTS DEVELOPMENT OF VERTICAL TAKEOFF PLANE
SINN FEIN IN GOVERNMENT
SINN FEIN IN PEACE TALKS
SPORTING EVENTS
STORMONT (COLLAPSE OF)
SUNNINGDALE AGREEMENT
TERRORISTS BEING ALLOWED IN GOVERNMENT
TROUBLES
TROUBLES IN 1969
UDR: REFORMED THE
UNIONIST WORKERS STRIKE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Appendix 3: Northern Irish events recalled by at least 10 people

NORTHERN IRISH EVENTS/ CHANGES MENTIONED BY AT LEAST 10 PEOPLE	N	%
GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT / BELFAST AGREEMENT	154	18.2
THE TROUBLES (unspecified)	147	17.4
OMAGH BOMB	109	12.9
PEACE / CEASEFIRES (unspecified)	59	7.0
PEACE PROCESS (unspecified)	56	6.6
NORTHERN IRELAND EXECUTIVE / ASSEMBLY	32	3.8
ENNISKILLEN BOMB	28	3.3
BLOODY SUNDAY	22	2.6
BILL CLINTON VISIT	22	2.6
HUNGER STRIKES	21	2.5
DRUMCREE / GARVAGHY ROAD SITUATION	16	1.9
CIVIL / HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT	15	1.8
SPORTING EVENTS	10	1.2

Appendix 4: Distribution of GHQ scores for 'Victims' and 'Non-victims'



Total GHQ scores: 'Victims' and 'non-victims'

Appendix 5: Survey Technical Report

RES

Background to the Northern Ireland Social Omnibus Survey

In October 2000 Research and Evaluation Services were commissioned by the University of Ulster to undertake a survey on public attitudes to issues associated with community relations and the 'troubles' in Northern Ireland. The survey was carried out as part of RES' March 2001 edition of the Northern Ireland Social Omnibus Survey.

Fieldwork

All interviews were conducted during the period 7 April 2001 to 31 May 2001. Interviewing was carried out by social survey interviewers employed by Research and Evaluation Services. All fieldworkers attended a briefing session focusing on the content and structure of the questionnaire used. This briefing session was conducted by RES' senior management. All interviews were conducted in the respondent's home. Interviewers made up to a maximum of four follow up calls before the person identified in the sample was deemed non-obtainable. The average length of time taken to complete interviews was 50 minutes. An individually signed letter was sent to each individual in the sample before interviewers called. The letter explained why the survey was being carried out as well as the range of topics the survey would address. Interviewers also carried a copy of the letter to each interview. All interviewers carried RES identification cards.

Sampling Frame

The survey was designed to yield a representative sample of men and women aged 18 and over living in Northern Ireland. The 2000 Register of Electors was used as the sampling frame. The register is inclusive of all individuals nominated on Electoral Registration forms returned in September 1999. The register is compiled on a Local Government District (LGD) basis of which there are 26 in Northern Ireland. As registration as an elector is now compulsory, there is every reason to believe that the listing is accurate, especially as the register is updated annually.

Sampling Design

The survey was implemented using a probability based stratified random sample utilising probability proportionate to size (PPS). The rationale governing this choice of design was to ensure coverage, on a probability proportionate to size (PPS) basis across the 26 LGDs. From each of the 26 LGDs electoral wards were randomly selected (10 in Belfast and 2 in each of the other 25 LGDs). From each of the selected electoral wards, individuals were selected by means of a Simple

Random Sample. The survey aimed to generate an achieved sample of 1000. Taking account of the level of non contactable individuals a wastage rate of 35% was considered likely. To account for this 50% more individuals were drawn from each LGD than the required number of interviews. To minimise the scope of sampling from within the sample by interviewers at LGD level, additional individuals were only provided to interviewers in small lots when their original allocation had failed to provide the required number of interviews. In total 1585 individuals' names and addresses were issued.

Response Rate

Table 32 shows the response rate for the survey. Table 33 shows the reason for non achievement of interviews with individuals drawn in the sample. In total 1585 addresses were issued to obtain 1000 interviews, yielding an effective response rate of 63%.

Table 32 Response Rate.

Total Interviews Obtained	**Addresses Allocated**	**Response Rate**
1000	1,585	63%

Table 33 Breakdown of Unused Cases.

	N	**%**
Interviews	1000	63
Refused	354	22
Sick/Elderly/Infirm	72	5
Unobtainables	159	10
Total Issued	1585	100

Sampling Error and Confidence Intervals

Table 34 sets out sampling errors and confidence intervals at the 95% confidence level. The sampling errors assume a simple random sample (SRS) design. It is acknowledged that the stratified nature of the sample has produced a design effect (DEFT) although the magnitude of the DEFT on sampling error is likely to be negligible.

Examples of Sampling Error

The use of sampling errors and confidence intervals is best illustrated by means of an example from the survey. The sample estimated the proportion of Protestants in the Northern Ireland population to be 48%. Therefore assuming a SRS design, the margin of error at the 95% confidence level is ± 3% (Table 34). In other words we can be 95% confident that the true proportion of Protestants in the Northern Ireland population (18+) is within the range 45% to 51%. Indeed the margin of error for all sample estimates is within the parameters of ± 3%.

Table 34 Sampling Errors and Confidence Intervals for Key Variables.

		% p	Standard Error of p (%)	95% Confidence Interval	
Age	18 - 24	16	1.16	14	18
	25 - 44	35	1.50	32	38
	45 - 64	30	1.44	27	33
	65 - 74	12	1.02	10	14
	75+	7	0.80	5	9
Sex	Male	42	1.56	39	45
	Female	58	1.56	55	61
Marital Status	Married/ Cohabiting	48	1.47	45	51
	Single	32	1.57	29	35
	Widow/Div/Sep	19	1.24	17	21
Religion	Protestant	48	1.57	45	51
	Roman Catholic	41	1.55	38	44
	None	3	0.54	2	4
	Other	2	0.44	1	3
	Refused	5	0.69	4	6

Representativeness of the Survey

Table 35 gives an indication of the representativeness of the sample. With some exceptions the characteristics of the sample are broadly similar to those generated by the Northern Ireland adult population as measured by the 1991 Census.

Table 35 Comparison of some of the key variables with the 1991 Northern Ireland Census.

		% NISOS	% 1991 Census	% Difference
Age	18-24	16	15	(1%)
	25 - 44	35	39	(4%)
	45 - 64	30	28	(2%)
	65 - 74	12	11	(1%)
	75+	7	7	(0%)
Sex	Male	42	48	(6%)
	Female	58	52	(6%)
Marital Status	Married/ Cohabiting	48	59	(11%)
	Single	32	28	(4%)
	Wid/Div/Sep	19	12	(7%)
Religion	Roman Catholic	41	38	(3%)
	Protestant	48	50	(2%)
	None	3	4	(1%)
	Other	2	0	(2%)
	Refused	5	7	(2%)

Other Publications

A series of other publications may be obtained from Statistics and Research Branch, Northern Ireland Office, Massey House, Stoney Road, Belfast. The series includes:

THE COURT OF APPEAL IN NORTHERN IRELAND
STATISTICS & RESEARCH BULLETIN 1/95

THE USE OF THE FINE IN NORTHERN IRELAND
STATISTICS & RESEARCH BULLETIN 2/95

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SEXUAL OFFENDING IN NORTHERN IRELAND
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ISBN 1 903686 11 3