

## A Contribution to Rupert Taylor's Critique of Consociationalism in Northern Ireland

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**Abstract:** Political scientists John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary's liberal consociational model argues that a power-sharing political settlement can be effective in resolving ethnic conflict. Political scientist Rupert Taylor, by contrast, argues against McGarry and O'Leary's model, claiming that the liberal consociational arrangement does not address the underlying sectarianism which binds ethnic communities into two reified groups, reinforcing the subordination both between and within them. Specifically in terms of Northern Ireland, Taylor cites socio-economic deprivation as an instance of sectarianism; Irish Catholics are consistently found in subaltern, disadvantaged positions relative to their Protestant peers in terms of "rights, opportunities, and resources." By integrating economy-centred analytical approaches, this essay demonstrates that the economic dimension (particularly *capital* and its resulting class inequalities) has been structurally implicated in the Northern Ireland conflict, continually reinventing itself throughout history.

### Introduction:

Political scientists John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary's liberal consociational model argues that a power-sharing political settlement can be effective in resolving ethnic conflict. In formulating and supporting their position, they base their research on the case of Northern Ireland, and specifically on the success of the Good Friday agreements. The formula of power-sharing, "confederalization" (bringing together British and Irish governments in the region's politics), and a constitutionally-enshrined right to secession, they claim, has brokered a stable, fair, and democratic peace.<sup>1</sup> Political scientist Rupert Taylor, by contrast, argues against McGarry and O'Leary's model, claiming that the liberal consociational arrangement does not address the underlying sectarianism which binds ethnic communities into two reified groups, reinforcing the subordination both between and within them.<sup>2</sup> Specifically in terms of Northern Ireland, Taylor cites socio-economic deprivation as an instance of sectarianism; Irish Catholics are consistently found in subaltern, disadvantaged positions relative to their Protestant peers in terms of "rights, opportunities, and resources."<sup>3</sup>

However, Rupert Taylor's critique is only partially effective, because he fails to demonstrate the connection between socio-economic inequalities and ethno-national conflict. McGarry and O'Leary could respond to his criticism by countering that consociationalism is not meant to ameliorate socio-economic inequalities, but rather reduce ethnically-motivated violence (indeed, they do make this argument, when they address the critique that the Northern Ireland arrangement is unsustainable).<sup>4</sup> In that sense, the Good Friday agreements *have* been successful; the rate of violence has undeniably fallen. Nonetheless, Taylor's critique could be resurrected if the connection between the economy and ethno-national conflict can be shown. This essay will

<sup>1</sup> John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, "Power Shared after the Deaths of Thousands," in *Consociational Theory: McGarry and O'Leary and the Northern Ireland Conflict*, ed. Rupert Taylor (New York: Routledge, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Rupert Taylor, "The Injustice of a Consociational Solution to the Northern Ireland Problem," in *Consociational Theory: McGarry and O'Leary and the Northern Ireland Conflict*, ed. Rupert Taylor (New York: Routledge, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 310.

<sup>4</sup> McGarry and O'Leary, "Power Shared after the Deaths of Thousands," 51.

demonstrate that the economic dimension (particularly *capital* and its resulting class inequalities) has been structurally implicated in the Northern Ireland conflict, continually reinventing itself throughout history. Similarly, the recent trends of subsiding violence should be traced not to the liberal consociational political arrangement, but rather to the transformed requirements of capital in the age of globalization. The essay will be organized in the following way: after introducing the methodological approach, I will deal with British colonialism, the allocation of key resources in before the Troubles, and the civil rights movement. After proposing an alternative explanation for the current peace in Northern Ireland, I will consider McGarry and O’Leary’s counter-arguments, and conclude with a summary of my findings and their implications.

### **Methodology:**

Methodologically, I will attempt to integrate economy-centred analytical approaches – liberal economics and Marxist critical theory. The former provides an effective explanation of how deprivation affects violence, while the latter provides the necessary conceptual tools for understanding the key attributes of the modern economy – capital and class. However, the essay will not subscribe to economic determinism or reductionism, rejecting the assumption that the economic domain is a *sufficient* cause/ explanation for ethnic conflict. Neither will I go so far as to posit economic phenomena as a *necessary* ingredient of ethnic conflict, either generally or in terms of the Northern Ireland conflict. The paper will merely seek to demonstrate a place for economic analysis in ethnic conflict, contending that it has been *a* factor in generating ethnic conflict, at least in Northern Ireland.

### **Colonialism – the Plantation and Beyond:**

The Protestant settlement of Northern Ireland in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century represented a deliberate attempt at a colonial economy.<sup>5</sup> Upon examining the details, suffice it to say that the “Plantation,” as it was called, was motivated by a British land-grab in Ireland; vast territories were expropriated and enclosed in a proto-capitalist accumulation of sorts.<sup>6</sup> Englishmen and Scotsmen were settled by a joint-stock company based out of London.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the community was also intended to protect British geo-political interests on the conquered island and secure the subjugation of Catholics as second-class citizens.<sup>8</sup> In several respects they were successful – in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century they stalwartly campaigned against even a limited form of self-governance for the Irish, upholding the imperial vision.<sup>9</sup>

This legacy continued during the civil war and partition of Ireland in the early 1920’s. British-organized Protestant volunteer forces formed in the north fought against the IRA and freed up British regulars to fight in the south.<sup>10</sup> As a result of the war, Britain retained its hold on its Ulster possessions. The borders between Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State did not make demographic sense, and represented Britain’s aim to retain as much land as possible (territorially, roughly half of Northern Ireland had a Catholic majority).<sup>11</sup> This secured the most industrialized parts of the island for Britain, which had significant capital investment in the

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<sup>5</sup> P. Clayton, “Religion, Ethnicity, and Colonialism as Explanations of the Northern Ireland Conflict,” in *Rethinking Northern Ireland: Culture, Ideology, Colonialism*, ed. D. Miller (London: Longman, 1998), 11-14.

<sup>6</sup> Constantine Fitzgibbon, *Red Hand: The Ulster Colony* (London: Michael Joseph, 1971), 21.

<sup>7</sup> Gary MacEoin, *Northern Ireland: Captive of History* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1974), 120.

<sup>8</sup> Fitzgibbon, *Red Hand: The Ulster Colony*, 21

<sup>9</sup> Michael Farrell, “Northern Ireland - an Anti-Imperialist Struggle”, *The Socialist Register* 14 (1977): 71.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> MacEoin, *Northern Ireland: Captive of History*, 110.

region.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the retention of Northern Irish industry would weaken the Irish Free State and increase the chances that it would be economically dependent upon Britain.<sup>13</sup>

The fundamental question here is how British colonialism had affected the nature of Northern Irish society in the twentieth century. Several studies demonstrate that Northern Ireland can be seen as a colonial client state of sorts for Great Britain.<sup>14</sup> From the very start, the Plantation fomented a sort of psycho-social Protestant “settler mentality”, whereby class divisions became secondary to the greater goal of the survival of a community amongst the native Catholics.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the client state and its governing elites depended, curiously enough, not on the support of a minority (as in most scenarios of colonial domination), but rather on the Protestant majority. Local Protestant capital (which had achieved undisputed dominance in land, industry, and finance) fomented a cross-class alliance with Protestant workers.<sup>16</sup> For one thing, the political leadership embarked on a propaganda campaign to create a connection between Irish republicanism/ irredentism and Bolshevik socialism – neither being altogether popular amongst Protestants at the time of the Red Scare and later during the Cold War.<sup>17</sup> Far more important, however, was a political line aimed at fostering a broad-based cross-class community under the guise of a common ethnicity. As one Unionist song indicates:

Let not the poor man hate the rich.  
Nor rich on poor look down.  
But each join each true Protestant,  
For God and for the Crown.<sup>18</sup>

This manifested itself in a general populist political course in which the elite aimed at ‘buying-off’ Protestant workers at the expense of excluding Catholics, and in so-doing disrupting working-class unity.<sup>19</sup> This can be seen most clearly through the unequal allocation of key resources – housing and jobs.

### **Allocation of Key Resources – Housing and Employment:**

While the Unionist elites had gerrymandered electoral boundaries throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century to cut Catholic communities out of political representation, the distribution of housing and employment have been most important to Catholic grievances. Both were crucially linked to standards of living and chances for social mobility; political rights paled in comparison to the former’s importance. Public housing was a vital concern for Northern Ireland – its number of buildings had been reduced to 1919 levels due to German air-raids during the Second World War.<sup>20</sup> A mixture of housing trusts and public councils oversaw their allocation to families; both however, were characterized by an overall discrimination towards Catholics. In 1971, there was

<sup>12</sup> Farrell, “Northern Ireland - an Anti-Imperialist Struggle,” 71.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Paul Bew et al., *The State in Northern Ireland, 1921-72: Political Forces and Social Class* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979), 87-88.

<sup>15</sup> Clayton, “Religion, Ethnicity, and Colonialism as Explanations of the Northern Ireland Conflict,” 14-15.

<sup>16</sup> Joseph Ruane and Jennifer Todd, *The Dynamics of Conflict in Northern Ireland: Power, Conflict, and Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 157; Bew et al., *The State in Northern Ireland, 1921-72*, 49.

<sup>17</sup> Bew et al., *The State in Northern Ireland, 1921-72*, 84.

<sup>18</sup> Ronald Munk, “A Divided Working Class: Protestant and Catholic Workers in Northern Ireland,” *Labour, Capital, and Society* 13 (1980): 115.

<sup>19</sup> Bew et al., *The State in Northern Ireland, 1921-72*, 89.

<sup>20</sup> Bob Purdie, *Politics in the Streets: The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland* (Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 1990), 83.

an overall 12% bias in allocations against Catholics, with a number of glaring cases (for example, all but one of Enniskillen Borough Council's 179 houses went to Protestants).<sup>21</sup> Though this dynamic doubtless had somewhat to do with personal prejudices of housing council bureaucrats (decisions were made by vote in some councils), in several cases discrimination followed structural patterns. Sometimes housing allocation had to do with gerrymandering - Catholics were given housing only in electoral districts in which they would not upset the Protestant majority.<sup>22</sup> Generally, public housing tended to be built in key economic (i.e. industrial) areas, which was predominantly Protestant.<sup>23</sup> In such a way, it is not surprising that the issue of public housing was one of the foremost among the civil rights movement (discussed below); indeed, the first protests were held over an incident in which a 19-year old single Protestant woman (secretary to Unionist parliamentary candidate) was given priority over Catholic families with children.<sup>24</sup>

Even more importantly, Protestant capital also carried a policy of discriminatory hiring. This was based both on a both personal prejudice and a policy of exclusionary populism. Until the Troubles, there was a legal vacuum around the issue of non-sectarian employment, essentially resulting in free reign for the dominant Protestant capital, to which the government gave tacit consent. Thus, Sir Basil Brooke, who would later go on to serve for 20 years as Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, urged in 1934:

“I recommend those people who are Loyalists not to employ Roman Catholics, 99 per cent of whom are disloyal; I want you to remember one point in regard to the employment of people who are disloyal.... You are disenfranchising yourselves in that way.... You people who are employers have the ball at your feet.”<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, the practice of discriminatory hiring was also institutionalized through non-governmental social organizations (such as the Orange Order), which were the main providers of human resources services.<sup>26</sup> Based on sectarian lines, they allowed employers to hire workers from a set demographic pool (naturally, Protestant employers would work through Protestant organizations, and would hire Protestants). Consequently, discrimination in hiring practices was very effective, and resulted in both higher levels of unemployment for Catholics, and a stratified distribution of better-paying, qualified jobs. Thus, at the outbreak of the Troubles in 1971, overall Catholic male unemployment stood at 17.7%, three times higher than that of Protestants.<sup>27</sup> One report by the Fair Employment Agency summed up job type distribution: “the modal Protestant is a skilled manual worker whereas the modal Roman Catholic male is unskilled.”<sup>28</sup> Even with the fair employment clauses of the Constitution Act of 1973 and subsequent legislation, the trend was not quickly reversed. In 1978, unemployment stood at 50% and over in Nationalist areas, compared to the Northern Ireland average of 18%.<sup>29</sup> All this could

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 84-85.

<sup>22</sup> Simon Prince, *Northern Ireland's '68: Civil Rights, Global Revolt, and the Origins of the Troubles* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007), 80-81.

<sup>23</sup> Purdie, *Politics in the Streets*, 83-84.

<sup>24</sup> Paul Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 79-80.

<sup>25</sup> Landon Hancock, “Northern Ireland: Troubles Brewing,” CAIN Archive, *University of Ulster*, accessed Nov. 11, 2011, <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/landon.htm>.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> The Portland Trust, *Economics in Peacemaking: Lessons from Northern Ireland* (London: Portland Trust, 2007), 7.

<sup>28</sup> Munk, “A Divided Working Class,” 115.

<sup>29</sup> Ronald Munk, “Marxism and Northern Ireland,” in *Review of Radical Political Economics* 13 (1981): 59.

not have led to anything but Catholic dissatisfaction with Protestant exclusionism and ethnic tensions between the two groups.

The unfair and discriminatory allocation of resources, though principally in the interest of the Protestant economic elite, need not be seen as an entirely top-down phenomenon. On the contrary, the Protestant working-class received tangible benefits from the exclusionary populism, and actively sought to further their sectarian privileges. Thus, for example, in 1920, Protestant shipyard workers set up (albeit management-approved) “Vigilance Committees” which made sure that Catholics would not be hired. Obviously, this meant less competition for jobs amongst Protestants. In general, as economist Geoff Bell noted, the Protestant working class “suffered a great deal from the economic and social conditions of their 'Ulster', but the fact that they have not suffered to the degree that others have [i.e. Catholics] has bred a politics amongst them which seeks to maintain the different levels of suffering.”<sup>30</sup>

### **Civil Rights:**

The official start of the Northern Ireland conflict – “The Troubles”, a period especially high inter-communal violence – is typically traced back to failure of the civil rights movement of the late 1960’s, part of a general social upheaval in the Western world. As pointed out above, several issues in resource allocation – importantly, public housing, employment, and political rights were disproportionately balanced towards the Protestant community. As such, the overwhelming majority of civil rights protesters were Catholic. However, their grievances were phrased as secular goals which had little to do with Irish irredentism or ethnic claims. Given the nature of Northern Irish client state, however, they were interpreted by local authorities and extreme Protestant groups as compromising the established status quo of Protestant dominance in political and economic affairs, resulting in a violent backlash against the civilian protester. In such a way, the two trajectories outlined above overlapped to create the situation which led to the Troubles.

Almost immediately following the outburst in 1968, the Northern Ireland government cracked down on Catholic activists; in the summer of 1969, for example, 1505 of Belfast’s 28, 616 Catholic families were forcibly “evacuated”.<sup>31</sup> Police brutality increased, and loyalist paramilitaries such as the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and Ulster Volunteer Force (UDF) were formed, which carried out shooting, intimidation, and (sometimes) provocations against the Catholic communities.<sup>32</sup> In the face of this, the Catholic community solidified on ethnic grounds even as protests radicalized and turned to rioting. While only a fraction of Catholics directly supported violence against authorities or Protestant civilians, the overwhelming majority most certainly did not support the brutal state reprisals, all the more because they were frequently imposed on the community at large.<sup>33</sup> As one Catholic woman expressed her opinion of (Catholic) rioters: “‘hooligans you can call them... and hooligans some of them certainly are; but they are *our* hooligans.”<sup>34</sup>

While the London government instituted direct rule over Northern Ireland, under the guise of impartiality and peace-making, their actions clearly reflected a sectarian bias in favour of their client state and the Protestant community. Laws such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act

<sup>30</sup> Munk, “A Divided Working Class,” 120.

<sup>31</sup> Bew et al., *The State in Northern Ireland, 1921-72*, 172.

<sup>32</sup> Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, 5.

<sup>33</sup> Eammon McCann, *War and an Irish Town* (London: Pluto Press, 1980), 79.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 79.

“introduced detention without trial, deportation and the widespread harassment of political activists”.<sup>35</sup> The British army was deployed to Northern Ireland as a stabilizing force in the gathering uncertainty – a repetition of its activity in the early 1920’s and in the mid-1930’s.<sup>36</sup> However, its favouritism towards the Unionists on the one hand, and “communal punishment” of Catholics through curfews, CS gas, and pre-emptive internment only exacerbated the situation.<sup>37</sup> The so-called Bloody Sunday incident of January 30, 1972 epitomized this dynamic – British troops fired on peaceful (Catholic) civilian protesters, killing thirteen and wounding another fourteen.<sup>38</sup>

Given the actions of the Northern Irish authorities, Unionist paramilitaries, and especially British troops, the conflict began to *look* more and more like one of ethnic oppression towards the Catholic Irish.<sup>39</sup> Even though the economic side of the conflict became obscured, it persisted into the Troubles. The connection between unemployment and violence, for instance, remained an underlying issue. For example, in the early 1970’s, British servicemen, unable to apprehend people during a riot, picked up people from the Unemployment Exchange and testified against them.<sup>40</sup> But this dynamic was based on more than mere stereotypes: the Glover Report of 1978, commissioned for British military, found that most IRA fighters came from the lowest working-class groups most vulnerable to unemployment.<sup>41</sup> The fact that the civil rights movement veered towards ethnic nationalism instead of cross-community socialism may not have been due only to the sectarianism of the Northern Ireland state. Socialist activist Eamonn McCann, for instance, cites the weakness of the working class movement and its inability to provide a suitable alternative. Its goals sounded far off and utopian:

“What the rioters wanted now more than anything else was action. Building a thirty-two-county movement based on the working class sounded a very long-term project. The imperialists were down at the street corner. At every meeting someone would ask... when the guns were going to be handed out.”<sup>42</sup>

Thus, major underlying motives of the civil rights movement were economic. The onset of the Troubles transformed the conflict, but it also remained rooted in the economic factors – most violence came from ghettos and underprivileged groups.

### **Peace in Northern Ireland – An Alternative View:**

As early as 1978, with the publication of Belinda Probert’s study *Beyond Orange and Green*, economics-oriented analysts (often Marxist) have been predicting the end of the conflict for economic reasons. In short, the realities of capital in the era of globalization have radically changed ‘the rules of the game’. Britain’s position towards Northern Ireland is no longer that of an imperial power; if anything, it seeks to divest itself of the growing economic burden.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Farrell, “Northern Ireland - an Anti-Imperialist Struggle,” 80.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 72.

<sup>37</sup> Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, 113.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 112-113.

<sup>39</sup> McCann, *War and an Irish Town*, 83.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 81.

<sup>41</sup> Portland Trust, *Economics in Peacemaking*, 8.

<sup>42</sup> McCann, *War and an Irish Town*, 84.

<sup>43</sup> “Northern Ireland: Devolution of Power and Potential for Violence,” STANFOR Global Intelligence, last modified January 29, 2010, accessed December 3, 2011,

[http://www.stratfor.com/memberships/153305/analysis/20100129\\_northern\\_ireland\\_devolution\\_power\\_and\\_potential\\_violence](http://www.stratfor.com/memberships/153305/analysis/20100129_northern_ireland_devolution_power_and_potential_violence).

Likewise, local economic and political elites no longer needed to resort to a populist economic exclusionism. The latter, in many ways, was heavily tied to protectionism and Keynesianism – both these policies have proven to be unviable, and have been rolled back in favour of free-trade globalization.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, the policy of discrimination in the allocation of resources and jobs, as the past 30 years have demonstrated, has led only to violence, which in the long run resulted in economic stagnation and conditions unfavourable to investment. Also, the role of local Protestant capital in the economy has fallen in proportion to that of international capital, which had no structural or private reasons for discriminatory practices. Thus, in a number of ways, peace in Northern Ireland conflict can also be explained in economic terms.

### **Objections – Rose, McGarry and O’Leary:**

In 1971, sociologist Richard Rose carried out an extensive opinion poll of Northern Irish society. One of the main findings of his study was to show how little class position affected political preferences. Almost all Catholics, rich or poor, were Republicans, almost all Protestants, likewise, were Unionist.<sup>45</sup> This study was deemed an effective and conclusive empirical demonstration of the fallaciousness of economic/ class analyses of the conflict. Political scientists John McGarry and Brendan O’Leary’s criticism of Marxist interpretation is similar, but is fundamentally misplaced. They state that “if the conflict was significantly about class, it would, despite what Marxists imply, be less violently revolutionary and counter-revolutionary because class conflict is much more manageable than national conflict.”<sup>46</sup> In essence, they are making the claim that class/ economic analysis is invalid, because the conflict doesn’t play out like a class/ economic conflict. But that is precisely the point of class and economic analysis in the first place – not only to extract the latent economic side of the equation, but to show why it has *not* played out like typical class conflicts. The above analysis has shown that the Northern Ireland conflict has an economically-generated facet to it, but has, due to exclusionary populism, suffered from a *low* level of class consciousness – hence the Troubles (as opposed to, say, a socialist revolution, or a powerful cross-communal unionism). Thus, the economic dimension has played out in a distorted way. Indeed, the political motivation of Marxist analysts (who are also often activists on the side) has been to raise the level of workers’ class-consciousness in order to transform the economically-rooted but distorted ethnic conflict into one played out as a genuine class conflict (which would yield concrete social improvements and ameliorate conditions for workers).

### **Summary of Findings, Implications:**

In such a way, this essay has demonstrated that the economic question has been structurally implicated in the Northern Ireland conflict. Northern Ireland, since the Ulster Plantation, has served as a colonial client state for the British – the interests of its Protestant elite coincided with those of Britain. In order to retain control, the local elite resorted to an exclusionary populism which created a cross-class alliance of Protestants at the expense of and disadvantage to Catholics. The latter were discriminated against in several ways, most notably in resource allocation of public housing and employment. This sparked Catholic discontent in the form of the Civil Rights movement, which demanded socio-economic parity. While the conflict

<sup>44</sup> Bew et al., *The State in Northern Ireland, 1921-72*, 91.

<sup>45</sup> Richard Rose, *Governing Without Consensus: An Irish Perspective* (London : Faber and Faber Ltd., 1971).

<sup>46</sup> John McGarry and Brendan O’Leary, *Explaining Northern Ireland: Broken Images* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995) 166-7.

was transformed into an ethnic one, its underlying causes remained economic. Consequently, peace in Northern Ireland can be traced to changing nature of capitalist economy in the age of globalization, not to the power-sharing political arrangement. This study therefore aids Taylor's critique of McGarry and O'Leary's liberal consociational model, demonstrating that economic element has always been present in the Northern Ireland conflict; its resolution has been more a function of changing, globalizing economy than of top-down political arrangements.

The above study yields important implications in several respects. In terms of Northern Ireland, it gives clout to Taylor's insistence on a social transformationist approach and emphasizes the need for positive social security programs aimed at reducing socio-economic disparity. After all, the latter continue to play a part in the violence which, as much as it has declined, remains a reality that must be further ameliorated. Moreover, there is no guarantee that large-scale ethnic violence won't break out once again, particularly if the base conditions – socio-economic inequalities – are still present. While it is beyond the scope of this essay to speculate as to the form future economic transformations will take, there is no guarantee that capital will maintain an interest in sustainable peace and stability. For example, political activist Naomi Klein has argued for the existence of a rising trend of capitalist enterprises benefiting from crises and disasters, particularly the associated arms and security contracts, post-conflict management, and the implosion of the public sector.<sup>47</sup> However that may be, it is sufficient to note that even a slight decrease in the stability of international investment capital during the 2008 financial crisis immediately correlated with heightened levels of cross-community violence.<sup>48</sup>

More generally, the above study shows the deeper complexity of ethnic conflict – in this case, because of its relation to economic questions of capital and class. It is therefore necessary to escape a reified conception of two internally homogenous ethnic groups, which, as Walker Connor would have it, “when the chips are down, effectively [command] men's loyalty, overriding the claims both of lesser communities within it and those which... potentially enfold it within a still greater society.”<sup>49</sup> Rather, a more nuanced approach should be taken, in the vein of political scientist Bruce Gilley. He states that the concept of ethnic conflict is not useful unless we dig deeper – “when the six countries that share [a river] fight over its use, this is not ‘ethnic conflict’ merely because all sides are ethnically distinct”.<sup>50</sup> Thus, the practical and theoretical implications of this paper have demonstrated that underlying economic causal factors of ethnic conflict should be interrogated and addressed in order to build a better, more sustainable peace, both in Northern Ireland and the greater world.

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<sup>47</sup> Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2007).

<sup>48</sup> “Northern Ireland: Devolution of Power and Potential for Violence.”

<sup>49</sup> Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994), 107.

<sup>50</sup> Bruce Gilley, “Against the Concept of Ethnic Conflict,” *Third World Quarterly* 25 (2004): 1156.



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