What Went Right in Northern Ireland?: An Analysis of Mediation Effectiveness and the Role of the Mediator in the Good Friday Agreement of 1998

by

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WHAT WENT RIGHT IN NORTHERN IRELAND?:

AN ANALYSIS OF MEDIATION EFFECTIVENESS AND THE ROLE OF THE

MEDIATOR IN THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT OF 1998

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George Mitchell, largely considered the key architect of the Northern Ireland peace process, has been lauded for his ability to find areas of compromise in a conflict that many deemed intractable and few expected to find lasting resolution until the Good Friday Agreement was signed in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in 1998. His success, where others had failed, therefore leads us to question "Why?" What conditions were created that convinced paramilitaries to engage politically? What factors influenced entrenched politicians to compromise, after years of flat refusal to do so? Was it Mitchell's skill as a mediator? Was it the final realization that thousands of civilians had died at the paramilitaries' hands? My research seeks to answer the question of what went right in Northern Ireland, focusing in particular on the period of the 1990s and the interface between the politicians and the paramilitary organizations.

Mitchell's greatest skills as a mediator were his patience and his ability to build trust and relationships on both sides of the divide; however, beyond his personal characteristics, Mitchell represented the sincere interest of the United States, which brought international attention and a sense of pressure to the talks. Additionally, regional factors, such as the changes in government at the national level following elections in both the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom, created a more open environment for the negotiations since each government was more amenable to compromise on key issues than its predecessor had been.

Therefore George Mitchell found himself in the unique position of addressing a conflict that had reached its stage of ripeness for negotiation and compromise: on the external political level, actors were in place who had both leeway and desire to make lasting changes; internally, paramilitary groups and their associated parties were finally being included in the process; and the simple fact of US involvement had increased momentum moving towards an agreement. Mitchell was able to take advantage of these favorable circumstances and the parties' faith in him and guide the negotiations to a resolution by imposing a deadline when the moment was right.

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As the story goes, a religious leader in Northern Ireland once spoke to a crowd, imploring them to look to the future. In response, a man yelled out, "To hell with the future, let's get on with the past!" During my time in Belfast, I had the privilege of meeting with politicians, community workers, and public service leaders who proved time and again that this sentiment is no longer the case. They took time out of their busy schedules to speak to me about the past, but after our interviews concluded, they went back to far more important work shaping the future of their country. I am very grateful to everyone who agreed to be interviewed for this project.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APNI Alliance Party of Northern Ireland

CIRA Continuity IRA

DUP Democratic Unionist Party

IICD Independent International Commission on Decommissioning

IRA Irish Republican Army

NICRA Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association

NIWC Northern Ireland Women's Coalition

OIRA Official IRA

PIRA Provisional IRA

PUP Progressive Unionist Party

SDLP Social Democratic and Labour Party

UDA Ulster Defence Association

UUP Ulster Unionist Party

UKUP United Kingdom Unionist Party

UVF Ulster Volunteer Force

UWC Ulster Workers' Council

N.B.: The Belfast Agreement is another name for the Good Friday Agreement.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

If I am rightly informed very great atrocities have been committed on both sides… a system of assassination, massacre, and plunder.

Wolfe Tone, 1798

Conflicts are created, conducted, and sustained by human beings. They can be ended by human beings.

George Mitchell

After twenty-five years of violent conflict, loyalist and republican paramilitaries in Northern Ireland called ceasefires in 1994. At the same time, United States President Bill Clinton began economic initiatives that increased US involvement in Northern Ireland and made clear his desire to negotiate a peace agreement among the warring factions. This confluence of events created a breathing space for politicians in Northern Ireland while simultaneously providing incentives for substantive talks to begin in earnest. As negotiators, these politicians needed to address the conflict on every level in order to agree upon what type of power-sharing government all sides could accept and what role the Republic of Ireland would play in the North. However, this would be no easy task.

It took almost four years after the ceasefires for an agreement to be reached. The issue of decommissioning (putting paramilitary weapons beyond use) and the involvement of Sinn Fein—a political party with links to the Irish Republican Army (IRA)—influenced the talks to the point that two unionist parties (the DUP and UKUP) left the table in protest over Sinn Fein's presence. The ceasefires did not always hold, but negotiators pressed on even in the face of political violence and sectarian killings. Even in the final days of negotiations, there was no sign or guarantee that the talks would succeed. But then the political parties of Northern Ireland and the British and Irish governments reached a compromise, and an acceptable solution for the many and various parties was agreed upon at last. Violence that had begat violence for centuries turned into a very fragile peace that strengthened in the years to come as the provisions of the Good Friday Agreement were put into place, decommissioning was completed in stages, and the power-sharing government became a functioning, autonomous body in Northern Ireland. Somewhere, something went right.

The simple explanation for the Good Friday Agreement is that George Mitchell, a representative of President Clinton, spent years working with the two sides and developing the principles that formed the basis of the agreement. Mitchell succeeded in brokering an agreement in a situation where frustration and failure marked earlier attempts to bring all sides together, including a failed attempt at mediation and negotiation in 1991-1992, and most notably, the collapse of a government put in place by the Sunningdale Agreement in 1974. Mitchell's success, where others had failed, therefore leads us to question "Why?" What conditions were created that convinced paramilitaries to engage politically? What factors influenced entrenched politicians to compromise, after years of refusal to do so? Was it Mitchell's skill as a mediator?

Was it the final realization that thousands of civilians had died at the paramilitaries' hands? Mediation—in the form of the Brooke/Mayhew talks—had been attempted as recently as 1992; why did those talks end in a stalemate but the 1998 ones succeed? My research seeks to answer the question of what went right in Northern Ireland, focusing in particular on the period of the 1990s and the interface between the politicians and the paramilitary organizations.

Although I began my research under the assumption that Mitchell was a deciding factor in the talks' success, after speaking with individuals who participated in the negotiations and studying current scholarship, I have amended my theory concerning Mitchell's role. Mitchell's greatest skills as a mediator were his patience and his ability to build trust and relationships on both sides of the divide; however, beyond his personal characteristics, Mitchell represented the sincere interest of the United States, which brought international attention and a sense of urgency to the talks since a major world power was now involved. Additionally, regional factors, such as the changes in government at the national level following elections in both the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom in 1997, created a more open environment for the negotiations since each government was more amenable to compromise on key issues than its predecessor had been—mainly because they were no longer inhibited by the demands of a key voting base. These changes in government helped bring about Sinn Fein's entrance into the talks—a necessary occurrence in order for any agreement reached to carry weight with the republican community. Additionally, the peace process that began with opposing paramilitaries' interaction in the prisons during the 1970s and 1980s had come to fruition: former prisoners had been released and were integrating into political parties—the Ulster Democratic Party and the Progressive Unionist Party—bringing with them a more tempered view of the other side and a desire to see that the relationships they had built with republican prisoners translated into change

outside the prison walls. Therefore George Mitchell found himself in the unique position of addressing a conflict that had reached its stage of ripeness for negotiation and compromise: on the external political level, actors were in place who had both leeway and desire to make lasting changes; internally, paramilitary groups and their associated parties were finally being included in the process; and the simple fact of US involvement had increased momentum moving towards an agreement. Mitchell was able to take advantage of these favorable circumstances and the parties' faith in him and guide the negotiations to a resolution in April 1998 by imposing a deadline when the moment was right.

This paper analyzes the influence that each of these factors had on the negotiation process, drawing from ripeness theory but mainly asking the question of how the components of mediation effectiveness—characteristics of the dispute, of the disputants, and of the mediator—played out in Northern Ireland. Analysis of data from my interviews with participants in the peace process demonstrates that George Mitchell's role, significant though it was, is nonetheless eclipsed by other factors: individual negotiators in Northern Ireland were the ones who ultimately made concessions and took risks, and the presence of external guarantors created an environment where mediation could be successful since it created more opportunities for agreement.

1.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT

To understand the evolution of mediation over a period of several decades in the complex conflict environment of Northern Ireland, it is essential to have a thorough understanding of the history of the region and the ways in which history has impacted the perceptions of those

involved in the conflict. Although the modern era that we call the Troubles only began in 1968, the roots of the conflict can be traced back a thousand years to the earliest clashes between the Irish and the conquering Normans who sought to expand their kingdom. The difference in a supposed ethnic ownership of the island—a contest of who was there first—has been used by both sides to justify their present-day claims (Dixon 7, 13). Such a contest cannot be won; instead, each side creates its own nationalist myths that serve only to alienate them from their counterparts and further complicate the relationship between the two groups on the island.

The history of Ireland is a history of violence. "Plantation" of English and Scottish settlers in the 16th and 17th centuries brought Protestants to the Catholic island and placed them in positions of power and wealth, who found themselves constantly in conflict with the native-born Catholic peasants. Although the two sides in the struggle for control of the island were later labeled according to their particular brand of Christianity, the war was not a religious one but a political one. The Catholics wanted "home rule," and then independence; the Protestants wanted Ireland to remain a part of the United Kingdom. The solution to the struggle, which came hundreds of years later in 1920, ended in satisfying neither side, for it divided the island into two. The British government responded to decades of cries for home rule and a bloody war of independence by partitioning the island in the Government of Ireland Act. Although it was framed as a "temporary" solution, the political system that the Act created in fact persisted for half a century (*Provos* 14). The largely Catholic southern two-thirds, which became an independent country three decades later, were given control over themselves. The northern third, however, remained part of the UK because it contained the counties with the highest concentration of Protestants. The Catholics who lived in Northern Ireland were left virtually

unrepresented in the sectarian state, subject to a powerful police force with a "military character," excluded from housing allocation by local councils, and suffering from an unemployment rate often double that of Protestants (McKittrick and McVea 11-12). When black Americans began the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, Catholics in Northern Ireland drew parallels with the systematic oppression they had faced since partitioning; they were joined by the few Protestants who felt similarly cut out of public life (40). They formed NICRA, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, which was "not a party but an umbrella group wide enough to embrace every anti-Unionist element in the land" (38). This group was responsible for "galvanis[ing] the Catholic community politically," which lead to marches and protests where Catholics demanded reforms of the voting system, the police force, and housing allocation (38).

Although historians differ concerning the exact start of the Troubles, we can generally say that the Troubles initially were a response to attacks on peaceful Catholic civil rights marchers, who like their American counterparts were sometimes subject to police brutality (41). The Irish Republican Army (IRA) responded violently to intimidation of the protesters and attacks on communities, namely the Bombay Street burnings in Belfast and the Battle of the Bogside in 1969, where hundreds were injured (54). Loyalist paramilitaries—who had begun the violence in two isolated attacks in 1965 but had since lay dormant—retaliated against the IRA's actions (49), foreshadowing the violence that would erupt in coming years. By early 1970, "in the backstreets both republicans and loyalists were readying themselves for future bouts of confrontation," and with the solidification of loyalist paramilitaries, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and Ulster Defence Association (UDA), a cycle of violence began that would dominate three decades of life in Northern Ireland (61).

1.1.1 Attempts at negotiation

This period of terror and bloodshed, called "the Troubles," lasted from 1969 to 1994. In the midst of the terrorist acts of both sides—which included killings both targeted and nonspecific—several attempts at negotiation occurred in each decade. The most notable of these was the Sunningdale Agreement of 1973, which was signed following a conference of government ministers from the United Kingdom and Ireland in addition to a select group of political leaders from Northern Ireland (95). These political leaders, however, included only members of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), and the Alliance Party—which is to say that no republicans were represented in the conference, as were none of the other unionist or loyalist political groups, including those groups with more concrete ties to the grassroots side.

For this reason, the people of Northern Ireland did not embrace the agreement, as the negotiators had hoped they would, and the Ulster Workers' Council (UWC) went on strike in May of 1974 to bring down Sunningdale (102). Virtually unheard of before the strike, the UWC was a group composed mainly of trade unionists "based in key industries with predominantly Protestant workforces," such as shipbuilding and electric power generation (102). The UWC's main objection was against the inclusion in the agreement of a Council of Ireland, which they viewed as a step toward Irish unification. This issue would not be resolved until the Good Friday Agreement, as the Republic of Ireland refused to amend its constitution to remove Articles 2 and 3, which lay claim to the entire island (McKittrick and McVea 196). The Irish government's steadfast refusal to revise its constitution even in the face of Sunningdale's impending downfall isolated even those

unionists who had previously supported the agreement and thus further contributed to its collapse (107).

Another attempt at settlement came in 1985 in the form of the Anglo-Irish Agreement that was negotiated by the British and Irish governments. It differed most significantly from the Sunningdale Agreement in that it did not include representation of the political parties in Northern Ireland. Since the new agreement again proposed a role for the Republic of Ireland in the affairs of Northern Ireland, it was harshly denounced by unionists and lambasted by their most vocal politician, Reverend Ian Paisley (165). One significant achievement of the agreement, however, was its establishment of the guarantee that Northern Ireland would not become a part of the Republic of Ireland unless a majority of its citizens voted in favor of the change (165). While unionists remained opposed to the Anglo-Irish Agreement, this particular principle paved the way for the Good Friday Agreement since it anticipated the eventual amendments to the Republic's constitution (renouncing that government's claim to Northern Ireland) that made it possible for more hard-line unionists to endorse the Good Friday Agreement.

Another attempt at negotiation came during the early 1990s in the form of the Brooke/Mayhew talks (182). The negotiations, named after the Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland who chaired these talks (Peter Brooke in 1991 and Sir Patrick Mayhew in 1992), had a makeup similar to that of the Sunningdale Conference: ministers from both the British and Irish governments were present, as were the SDLP, the UUP, the DUP, and the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (APNI) (CAIN Database). Again, there was no representation of republican or loyalist paramilitary groups, neither in person nor by proxy, which meant that a settlement—were it reached—would likely face the same kind of backlash as did the Sunningdale Agreement.

One important development that took place during the course of these proceedings was Peter Brooke's famous speech in November 1990 that asserted Britain had no "selfish strategic or economic interest" in Northern Ireland and would accept a United Ireland if it was the will of the people (Melaugh and Lynn 4).

The talks were terminated in November of 1992 when Secretary Mayhew determined that the negotiations had reached a stalemate (McKittrick and McVea 183). Despite the frustration and gridlock that had characterized the effort, there was one substantial result of the Brooke/Mayhew talks: they were the first to employ the three strand format that was to later characterize the talks chaired by George Mitchell (179). Strand One consisted of the internal affairs of Northern Ireland; Strand Two addressed the proposed North-South institutions and relationships on the island; and Strand Three dealt with the relationship between the British and Irish governments (179). The Brooke/Mayhew talks, while unsuccessful, laid the foundation for later dialogue and also exposed the parties to the possibility of a broader, more comprehensive settlement (McInnes 154).

1.2 POLITICAL PARTIES AND PARAMILITARY GROUPS

When discussing politics and conflict in Northern Ireland, the terms used to describe the different factions can sometimes be confusing. Unionists are those who desire that Northern Ireland remain part of the United Kingdom; they are typically Protestant, but not necessarily so (Dixon 13). There are many unionist political parties, including the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), and at the time of the talks, the United Kingdom

Unionist Party (UKUP), though it has since dissolved (15 - 16). Loyalism is the faction within unionism that advocates violence as a means to maintain the union with Great Britain. The Progressive Unionist Party (PUP) and the Ulster Democratic Party (UDP) are the political parties most closely associated with loyalism; their members include former paramilitaries who now embrace a peaceful process but who retain ties with active loyalist paramilitary organizations, such as the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), the Ulster Defense Association (UDA), and the Red Hand Commando (RHC) (16 - 17).

The counterpart to unionism is nationalism. Nationalists desire that the island of Ireland exist as a single nation independent from Great Britain (6 - 7). Nationalists are typically Catholic, and like unionism, there exists within nationalism a faction that supports violence to attain its goals. During the conflict, individuals who embraced this ideology were called republicans. The nationalist/republican community differs from unionism/loyalism in that it does not contain so many competing political parties and paramilitary organizations. The two main political parties are the SDLP and Sinn Fein (9 - 10). Sinn Fein exists on both sides of the border (in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland), and critics of republicanism have called it the political wing of the IRA, although it now officially distances itself from paramilitarism (12). Different factions of the IRA exist, but the one active at the time of the peace talks was the Provisional IRA, which is generally referred to as the IRA or the Provos. Former combatants of the Official IRA (a Marxist group that existed mainly in the 1960s and 1970s) and the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) were also involved in the talks, although their groups had essentially been defunct for decades (12). More recent offshoots of the IRA are

the Real IRA and the Continuity IRA, which formed mainly in protest of the peace talks (10 - 11).

Apart from Northern Ireland's two main groups of nationalism and unionism, there are also political parties that do not separate along these lines (17 - 18). The peace talks that resulted in the Good Friday Agreement included representatives from the Alliance Party, the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC), and the Labour Coalition (a group unrelated to the Labour Party of the United Kingdom) (Fearon 38). The NIWC was formed by female social and political leaders from both Catholic and Protestant backgrounds with the specific purpose of representing a women's agenda at the talks, since they saw scant support for their issues among the main political parties (3). The party dissolved a few years after the end of the talks.

2.0 NEGOTIATION AND MEDIATION: KEY THEORIES

An understanding of the peace process in Northern Ireland must begin with a solid foundation in conflict resolution theory. I. William Zartman and Jeffrey Rubin define negotiation as "joint decision making under conditions of conflict and uncertainty, in which divergent positions are combined into a single outcome" (12). Negotiation is one of many possible approaches to conflict management; its hallmarks are the use of resources, power, and perceptions. Asymmetry exists in all these dimensions, but negotiations are still possible between weak and strong parties, especially when perceptions of power are limited or the total amount of power in the system is low. In Northern Ireland, the shifting power dynamic whereby unionists felt threatened by the relationship between the British and Irish governments and by the talks between the British and the IRA exemplifies the potential for power changes to shape negotiations. This sense of threat stemmed from the fact that the British government "cared only that the parties agreed; for the most part, it did not care what they agreed to" (Horowitz 200). Unionists' loyalty was to the Crown, and not to the government, which they felt had largely abandoned them by not calling for guarantees of continued union.

Mediation, like negotiation, is a mode of social decision making, but unlike negotiation, it is a type of third party intervention. Mediation can be either helpful or harmful to the resolution of a conflict because mediators' motivations vary drastically. A mediator may use

mediation as a means of oppression or to prevent justice that acts against his own self-interests (Zartman and Touval 438, Tidwell 157). Parties who accept a mediator with these designs in mind do so without knowledge of a hidden agenda; they may be coerced into the mediation by the presence of external factors. More openly biased mediators are most commonly found outside of the Western tradition: in China, for example, the mediator's role includes taking sides and "suppress[ing] hostile feelings" while still being viewed as an independent—though not neutral—third party (Tidwell 152). On the international level, however, mediation is most often carried out in good faith and can be a defining and even transformative moment in the course of a peace process (157).

History plays a powerful role in mediation since the first step is often for the mediator to sit down separately with each side and learn their story of the conflict. This approach reveals important information about the parties' perceptions of the conflict and of each other, it demonstrates their "emotional commitment" to the dispute (158), and it allows the mediator to identify areas of common ground where there may be space to negotiate. History has had a profound influence on the conflict in Northern Ireland, to the point that each side has developed its own "myths" to explain their supposed superior claims to the island and perceived slights. In 1996 and 1997, during the fourteen months of talks prior to the entry of Sinn Fein in September 1997, Mitchell heard hours and hours of the history of the conflict according to each camp (Mitchell 85). Mitchell implemented no time limit in these discussions, much to the chagrin of many participants involved, who were frustrated and tired of hearing the same arguments time and again; however, these discussions' function was twofold. In addition to providing Mitchell with a thorough understanding of each side's view of the conflict and emotional involvement in

it, the process served as an airing of grievances. Substantive negotiations were possible later on because parties were satisfied that both Mitchell and their counterpart negotiators had heard and understood precisely where they were coming from. By contrast, before Sinn Fein's entrance into the negotiations, the parties could not proceed on issues of substance, and talks on format and structure often broke down into monologues from both sides.

A theory of mediation that is particularly apt when applied to Northern Ireland is the idea that a selection bias exists in conflicts where disputants choose to employ mediation. That is to say, at the point that parties are willing to accept mediation, the conflict has likely dragged on for many years and is almost "predispose[d] toward cooperation and compromise" (Zartman and Rubin 46). This predisposition accounts for the rather high success rate of mediation. In Northern Ireland, one might view the 1994 ceasefires as markers of combatants' weariness and desire for peace, which paved the way for the United States to slowly enter the picture as a mediator.

Ripeness theory, the brainchild of William Zartman, emphasizes precipices and plateaus as two criteria that can make a conflict "ripe" for mediation. A plateau is a mutually hurting stalemate, wherein parties have concluded that they cannot resolve the problem by themselves. According to Kirsten E. Schulze, the clearest demonstration of a ripe moment in Northern Ireland was the calling of ceasefires by loyalist and republican paramilitaries in 1994, although this instance was more accurately part of "a number of 'moments'… a process rather than a specific point in time" (304 – 305). A precipice is a "crisis bounded by a deadline" (Zartman and Touval 449). Mitchell created an artificial precipice by setting Good Friday as the deadline for a final settlement. However, this precipice came at the conclusion of the mediation and did

not precipitate it. That is not to say that the conflict was not ripe for mediation simply because the mediation was not initiated following a precipice, but merely to point out that it does not fit perfectly into Zartman's paradigm of ripeness theory. Nonetheless, the precipice Mitchell created did precede the mediation's success, so the theory is still relevant. Without a deadline, the talks may have continued aimlessly and eventually fizzled out as had their predecessors.

Also of note, but beyond the scope of my research, is the oft-debated subject of bargaining versus enforcement problems. Bargaining is the process whereby an agreement is reached; enforcement is the period during which the stipulations of the agreement are put into place. In the context of Northern Ireland, bargaining led to the Good Friday Agreement, and enforcement has been slow and is still incomplete. During the bargaining stage, the "shadow of the future," a theory developed by Robert Axelrod, likely played a role in that the parties involved in talks had the weight of previous negotiations—from Sunningdale to the more recent Brooke/Mayhew talks—at their backs, and they had full knowledge that similar negotiations might again take place in each new decade if the current talks were unsuccessful, as had happened in every decade of their adult lives. Given the political and geographic situation of Northern Ireland, the two groups would doubtlessly face a future of continued interaction whether or not the conflict was resolved. However, one stipulation of Axelrod's shadow of the future theory does not apply to the conflict in Northern Ireland, in that the players of the game—the individuals at the negotiating table—changed over time. Axelrod's theory stipulates that the same players must play the same game repeatedly over time in order for cooperation to become more likely (Stanger 115). In the context of the talks leading up to the Good Friday Agreement, however, the change of players was essential to its success. The inclusion of Sinn Fein and its loyalist counterparts (i.e. the PUP) made agreement possible where previously negotiations had

failed, since in the past these parties associated with paramilitary groups had been excluded. With the Good Friday Agreement, the violent elements of the conflict could potentially be resolved in concrete terms for the first time.

With regards to the enforcement stage of the Good Friday Agreement – which began in 1998 and continues into the present – momentum has been in short supply but enforcement has nonetheless achieved a certain steadiness. Zartman and Touval note that "a mediator's presence in the bargaining stage [may] reduce the danger of the adversary defecting in the implementation phase" (445). Thus, while it cannot be empirically tested, it is possible that George Mitchell and the United States' involvement in negotiating the Good Friday Agreement contributed to the steady gains that the peace process has made since—from the establishment of the power-sharing executive to increased decommissioning of weapons to the hopeful creation of all-Ireland institutions to come.

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW: CONFLICT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Current literature on the peace process in Northern Ireland generally approaches analysis from one of three perspectives. First is the role of the agreement design, i.e. the provisions included in a peace treaty, which play a significant role in the durability of peace. When the Good Friday Agreement is analyzed in this manner, it is usually in the context of many other such agreements as part of a statistical survey of their commonalities, looking specifically at the structure of the agreements and their scope. For example, Bell and O'Rourke seek to determine the prevalence of civil society provisions in peace agreements, using the Belfast Agreement's

stipulation of a Civil Forum as one of nearly four hundred sources. Their study, while inconclusive with regards to the success rate of peace agreements with civil society provisions, is nonetheless able to assert that the type of provision included in the Belfast Agreement is more "holistic" than those found in comparable peace agreements.

A second factor is the role of religion and ethnicity in peace duration. Svensson uses the Troubles as an example of conflict that aligns along religious lines but does not necessarily reflect religious devotion and does not include explicit religious demands on either side. A key finding of this study is that different religious identities have a positive effect and in fact give "the parties an *increased* chance of reaching a settlement [emphasis original]" (941); however settlement likelihood decreases if there is a religious component in the incompatibility of the two parties. Northern Ireland therefore benefitted from the differing religious identities but lack of religious contention among the parties.

A third categorization for existing literature on the peace process comprises analyses that focus on the human component; that is, the specific individuals involved in negotiations. Fullilove specifically identifies George Mitchell as one of Clinton's "most effective surrogates" when it comes to that administration's (sometimes criticized) reliance on special envoys to conduct diplomacy. Mitchell functioned at a level between diplomat and president in mediating a conflict that was both politically sensitive and "taxing" in its complexity (15). Fullilove cites Mitchell's experience in the Senate as essential preparation for the role he would play in Belfast.

One article in particular bridges these forms of analysis by combining a focus on George Mitchell with an analysis of his approach to the negotiation process and how it impacted the final agreement. Curran and Sebenius' "The Mediator as Coalition Builder" credits Mitchell with

innovative strategies of process, issues, and timing that enabled him to create a "coalition of the center," drawing the more centrist-minded parties together and isolating extremes, such as the DUP, which eventually chose to withdraw from the talks, thus making agreement significantly more probable. Mitchell's process strategy consisted of spending almost the entirety of the talks focusing on procedure instead of substance; he also leaned heavily on the principle of sufficient consensus, employing it in almost every dispute, even the most trivial. Although this meant that efficiency was often sacrificed, in the end it made possible the essential "coalition of the center" because it was these very parties that had learned to work together in the early stages of the talks.

On the issues side, Mitchell made the wise decision to separate decommissioning from the other issues and used the "Three Strands" approach to streamline negotiations. This strategy aided coalition building because the repackaged status of decommissioning allowed centrist unionist parties to remain in the talks. Mitchell's timing strategy contributed to creating the coalition of the center because his initial approach of "'as long as it takes'… opened channels between the parties to construct the basis of a working relationship" (29). Then when the period of the democratic mandate was coming to an end, Mitchell was able to capitalize on the credibility he had cultivated, "deploy[ing] it in one final gesture" to bring the negotiations to a long-awaited settlement (29).

These articles, representative of the larger body of research in mediation and conflict resolution, include the Northern Ireland peace process in their analyses but do not focus on it specifically (save the latter). By limiting their scope—for example, by isolating the figure of George Mitchell, or by analyzing the conflict in terms of its least contentious division (religion)—the authors downplay the complexity of the conflict and the intricate dealings that were necessary in order for an agreement to be reached. In fact, peace and conflict literature in

the decade following the signing of the Good Friday Agreement features surprisingly few articles that address its success. I have nonetheless identified three articles that analyze either the peace process or the agreement and lend a majority of their analysis to the conflict in Northern Ireland. These articles fall into the three categories mentioned above and may therefore be considered the most prominent views on the subject.

2.1.1 Environmental components

Horowitz attempts to identify the "special conditions" that made the Good Friday Agreement possible. He asserts that the case of Northern Ireland is a "glaring exception" to the typically asymmetric outcomes of most negotiated peace settlements, which reflect the differing preferences of parties. By contrast, the Good Friday Agreement "produced institutions that are intended to be clearly and consistently consociational" (193). However, these institutions[1] may actually hinder democratic processes; Horowitz goes so far as to suggest that they violate the United Kingdom's nondiscrimination policies in their effect on centrist parties such as the Alliance Party.

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[1] Consociationalism, first introduced by Arend Lijphart, is the most common form of power-sharing government. In 1975, Lijphart proposed an idea of political accommodation for Northern Ireland, calling it an invitation for "the 'disloyal opposition' to share power" (99). He noted three favorable conditions: the small population, the explicit cleavages, and the presence of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland as external actors able to influence events in Northern Ireland and push the parties toward cooperation. Other aspects of the conflict, however, lead Lijphart to conclude that consociationalism would be "theoretically possible but unworkable in Northern Ireland" (105); these factors were the lack of a multiple balance of power, the lack of support for a coalition form of government, and the lack of national solidarity. The most significant change in these "lacking" factors from 1975 to 1998 was with regards to support for coalition government: the idea had been incorporated into the Anglo-Irish Agreement and was implicit in the "Strands" of the Brooke-Mayhew talks.

Although the author is clearly critical of consociationalism, there is nonetheless significant evidence supporting this form of government as a solution to violent conflict because "the ability of power-sharing institutions to balance power among groups is initially likely to be the critical factor for stabilizing the peace" (Hartzell and Hoddie 320). Beyond this early benefit, power-sharing governments are also more inclined to foster long-term stability because groups' "interactions at the political center" will lead them to develop new methods of conflict management as their relationship grows (320). Since the British government had attempted to introduce power-sharing in Northern Ireland as early as 1972 and multiple times thereafter, the Good Friday Agreement negotiations were focused more on what form power-sharing should take rather than questioning whether it should be included at all ("Consociational and Civic Society…" 333). Whereas previous attempts at implementing such a government were unsuccessful, the power-sharing executive outlined by the Good Friday Agreement succeeded because in structuring it, negotiators decided to combine "the participatory grassroots approach of the 1990s" with "elite power-sharing from 1985" to create an institution that is "inclusionary, holistic, and visionary" (333).

According to Horowitz, possible explanations for this unprecedented arrangement achieved by the Good Friday Agreement include the argument that demographic changes have transformed Northern Ireland into a society that is no longer composed of a majority group versus a minority group but is instead heterogeneous in its composition; or that the conflict, along with opposing sides' views of each other, has "softened"; or that the outcome was in fact not negotiated but instead either planned or imposed.

After expanding upon and investigating each of these individual claims, Horowitz concludes that the most valid explanation of the agreement's success comes from "the

microenvironment of the negotiation and the macroenvironment of the whole history of attempts to mediate the conflict" (205). The three most prominent factors responsible for this confluence of events are the political apprehension that increased in the unionist camp in the 1990s, the bilateral component of the talks, and the history of attempts to create a power-sharing government, which demonstrated clearly what arrangements could be considered feasible and what arrangements should be thoroughly abandoned. This final component is what Horowitz calls "the entailments of history"—the heritage of every previous attempt at a negotiated settlement. Although he does not downplay the significance of the Good Friday Agreement, he does emphasize its singularity, noting that a similar situation is unlikely ever to be replicated. He further discourages any possible attempts at replication by adding the caveat that the constitutional outcome of the agreement has sometimes proved a hindrance to political evolution.

2.1.2 External guarantors

Byrne analyzes the success of the Good Friday Agreement by contrasting it with an unsuccessful mediation – the attempted mediation of the conflict in Cyprus by United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan in 2004. He finds similarities in the histories of the two conflicts—both sprung from a partitioning of the respective islands following a civil war—and in the format of the negotiations. In both Cyprus and Northern Ireland, an interested primary mediator served as chairman. Primary mediators are inherently biased because they have a stake in the outcome; it is this interest that causes them to intervene in the first place. In spite of their

bias, however, primary mediators are generally more effective that what Byrne calls "the neutral, weak, and impartial… mediator" ("The Roles of…" 152) because they have the ability to threaten participants if necessary and to use their own resources and sway to make a deal more attractive to the parties involved.

Another key similarity between the two peace processes is the presence of what Byrne calls "external ethnoguarantors." In Northern Ireland, the external ethnoguarantors were the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. They had significant interests in the resolution of the conflict, not only because of its regional relevance but also because of the common national identity and perceived shared values that linked nationalists to the Republic and unionists to the United Kingdom. The actions of external ethnoguarantors[2] can heavily influence the peace process by either stabilizing the conflict or agitating ethnic tensions. In Cyprus, the Greek and Turkish governments refused to work together and therefore contributed to the intractability of the conflict. By contrast, after the Anglo-Irish Accord of 1985, the British and Irish governments played a more collaborative role in the conflict in Northern Ireland.

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[2] According to Barbara Walter, third-party guarantors can lend credibility to a negotiated settlement and "ensure that the payoffs from cheating on a[n]… agreement no longer exceed the payoffs from faithfully executing its terms" (340). She establishes three conditions for making guarantees credible. First, the guarantor state "must have a self-interest in upholding its promise": in the case of Northern Ireland, this interest was the external governments' desire for political and economic stability, combined with their shared histories with the disputants. Second, the outside party "must be willing to use force if necessary," which the British government had demonstrated in past decades (for example, on Bloody Sunday), but in the 1990s demonstrations of force were more limited to the political sphere. The third condition is for intervening states to "be able to signal resolve" through "costly signals." Since Walter's analysis relates to post-civil war settlements, this condition is less applicable in the case of Northern Ireland, especially in light of the fact that terrorist acts committed by the paramilitaries had significantly decreased in frequency by the time that the Good Friday Agreement negotiations were underway.

Byrne makes a similar observation to that of Horowitz in his recommendation that external ethnoguarantors consider both the micro and macro issues that created the conflict in their attempts to resolve it. Proposed solutions should similarly address the conflict on multiple levels and in a wide range—including the government structure, participation of nongovernmental organizations, and social welfare institutions. Byrne's main finding is that since the ethnoguarantors must be in cooperation in order to achieve the goals, it is therefore the responsibility of the primary mediator to bring about such cooperation—essentially, to address the problem not on the level of the disputants but on that of the outside counterparts. The primary mediator uses its resources to build trust and affect the external actors, so that they in turn become mediators of the conflict and impose a mutually beneficent solution. Although the United States was not responsible for the cooperation that developed between the British and Irish governments, President Clinton's provision of "external and economic political influence and resources" (166) served as an incentive to bring both disputants and their corresponding ethnoguarantors to the table.

2.1.3 Analysis of individuals

Smyth focuses on the individuals involved in the peace process, as opposed to its structural makeup. He places John Hume of the Social Democratic and Labor Party (SDLP) in a position of significance since he advocated nonviolence and shared government for nearly three decades before the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. Like Horowitz, he also cites the historical attempts at negotiated settlements as examples of confidence building that served as a

foundation for the final agreement; and like Byrne, he highlights the role of the United States in creating economic incentives.

Key figures of the peace process were not limited to politicians; the clergy also played a significant role, especially in the 1980s, when priests such as Father Alec Reid functioned as the go-betweens for the governments' negotiations with the IRA. He lent legitimacy to Gerry Adams' professed desire for peace, which paved the way for the Hume-Adams talks and Sinn Fein's eventual involvement in the peace process.

In the context of strictly the Good Friday Agreement negotiations, Smyth identifies Tony Blair, Bertie Ahern, George Mitchell, and Bill Clinton as the important figures that influenced the process. This analysis again echoes Byrne's emphasis on external ethnoguarantors. Smyth also notes that loyalist negotiators—specifically Billy Hutchinson and David Ervine—were not disciples of Ian Paisley and demonstrated an atypical acceptance of the Republic's economic prosperity. While this last point is not developed further, it demonstrates the shift in the composition of the negotiating teams which—like the changing external political environment—played a significant role in the evolution of the talks.

In reviewing the literature that focuses on the conflict in Northern Ireland and the Good Friday Agreement, it is important to consider George Mitchell's own views on the peace process and the role he played. Mitchell identifies an overwhelming atmosphere of pessimism during the entirety of the negotiations, even up until the final days before the agreement was signed (165). While not a setback per se, the environment reflects the negative side of a common history, in that it established a pattern of failure that in some ways was an additional stumbling block to overcome.

In his memoir of the negotiations, *Making Peace*, Mitchell alludes to the individual-level ramifications of the talks' success by noting that some leaders' "political futures… were on the line" (174) with regards to the final outcome. This calls to mind the argument that glory and prestige and the specter of the Nobel Peace Prize might have swayed negotiators to persevere when otherwise they may have given up; however, Mitchell's reference is to voters' possible response had the talks failed after such a significant investment of time and political energy.

In summation, current literature analyzing the success of the Good Friday Agreement focuses on 1) the legacy of previous attempts at negotiation, which provided a common ground to participants; 2) the presence of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland at the negotiating table, along with the political changes taking place in their respective governments toward the end of the talks; and 3) the political and economic influence of the United States as exercised through President Clinton and George Mitchell. Aspects of the process that are not sufficiently addressed in the literature include the effects of the interaction with South African leaders—notably Nelson Mandela—that came at a crucial juncture, and the format of the talks as laid out by George Mitchell.

2.2 MEDIATION EFFECTIVENESS

In analyzing cases of international mediation to determine its effectiveness, researchers typically focus their analysis on the characteristics of the dispute, the characteristics of the disputants, and the characteristics of the mediator. The dispute is viewed in terms of its issues, its intensity, and its duration at the time of intervention (Bercovitch and Langley 675-676). The disputants are

viewed in terms of their identity, power within the international system, and power relative to each other (Bercovitch 746-747). The mediator is also viewed in terms of identity and characteristics—based not only on what he is, but also on how the disputants perceive him (749-750). These three components can help a mediator to determine if his involvement is likely to help bring the conflict to a stable resolution, and they may help him modify or examine his behavior and interactions.

2.2.1 Characteristics of the dispute

A dispute's nature and characteristics are generally considered the most important factors in predicting mediation success: Marvin Ott (quoted in Bercovitch and Langley) observed that "the success or failure of mediation is largely determined by the nature of the dispute, with the characteristics and tactics of the mediator marginal at best" (676). Accordingly, the issues of the dispute are at the center of this most important component; they are analyzed in terms of their substance and in terms of their number and complexity. Bercovitch and Langley suggest territory, ideology, security, independence, resources, and "other" as a reliably comprehensive categorization of the issues' substance. They also differentiate between tangible and intangible issues, noting wisely that "intangible issues usually reflect matters of beliefs and principles" and "as such they may be more difficult to discuss or mediate" (677). Regarding the matter of complexity, they find that a negative correlation exists between increasing complexity of the issues and likelihood of a successful mediation. However, the authors also lend credence to an opposing viewpoint developed by Raiffa and by Lax and Sebenius, who stipulate that increased complexity provides "greater opportunities for tradeoffs"; this would suggest that in such cases, management of the issues may determine whether their effect on the mediation is beneficial or

detrimental (677). Bercovitch and Langley's empirical findings indicate that dispute complexity "also appears to be incompatible with successful mediation" (689).

The issue of dispute intensity suffers from difficulties of definition and operationalization, since comprehensive categories such as "severity of prior conflict" and "intensity of feeling" (proposed by Kressel and Pruitt as quoted in Bercovitch and Langley 675) cannot be easily quantified. For this reason, Bercovitch and Langley employ a simple determinant: number of fatalities. However, I would suggest amending this measure to reflect the differences between a conflict that has suffered a thousand fatalities in one year versus a thousand fatalities in twenty years, since this is a more accurate interpretation of "intensity." Nonetheless, the authors' results show a direct and negative relationship between high fatalities and mediation success (688).

Differing opinions exist concerning the duration of a dispute at the time of intervention. The authors cite theorists who believe that "mediation should be attempted early in the dispute, before positions become fixed, attitudes harden, and an escalating cycle becomes entrenched" (676). However, they lend credence to the idea that there may be an increased likelihood for mediation success later in the conflict, "when costs have become intolerable and both parties realize that they may lose too much by continuing their dispute" (676). Their findings support the link between protracted conflict and unsuccessful resolution, but only when the duration variable is paired with high fatalities and increased complexity (689).

2.2.2 Characteristics of the disputants

Bercovitch, in an article authored separately from his collaborator above, examines attributes of both the disputants and the mediator that are key in analyzing mediation effectiveness. One

necessary characteristic of the disputants is for each side to have "well-defined identities"; otherwise the conflict will not lend itself easily to mediation. Additionally, the adversaries should be "the legitimate spokesmen for their parties," and as representatives they should have the "power or authority to take decisions or make concessions" (746).

Bercovitch also identifies state power as a determinant of mediation's likely outcome: small or medium powers—typically states that "receive or depend on external help"—are generally the only cases where mediation can be successful (746). Although his research was conducted before the end of the Cold War, the idea that superpowers will not acquiesce to mediation efforts—or at least will not participate past a point where they foresee no substantial gains as a result—is still relevant in today's international system.

Finally, power disparity between the two parties decreases mediation effectiveness, such that disputants whose powers are more evenly matched are more likely to benefit from international mediation. According to Bercovitch, the main reason for this effect is the fact that "the stronger adversary would not be prepared to countenance any concessions or compromise proposals" (747). He references previous research that indicated almost no impact by mediation between disputants with a high level of power disparity.

2.2.3 Characteristics of the mediator

Since mediation is a "voluntary process," it is essential that the mediator is trusted by the disputants and that the disputants are inclined to cooperate with him or her. For this to happen, the mediator "must be perceived as independent and impartial" (749). The more positive a perception the adversaries have of the mediator, the more likely they are to participate actively in the process, and the more likely it is that the mediation will be a success.

Additionally, the mediator's resources are an important source of leverage that can influence the course of mediation. These resources can be physical, financial, or informational; for example, a mediator who is acting on behalf of a country may make promises of monetary support to encourage the parties to reach a favorable outcome, or more incrementally, to advance individual steps of the mediation like modifying positions or making concessions (749-750).

The mediator also needs to have a thorough understanding of international conflict and needs to be skilled at techniques of conflict management, and he or she should be fluent in the intricacies of the particular conflict he is mediating: the issues at stake, the conflict's history, and the parties' positions and relationship. Bercovitch references Wehr's requirements concerning conflict management techniques, which include active listening, a sense of timing, procedural skills such as chairing meetings, and crisis management (750). "Personal attributes" that he considers necessary for a successful international mediator include empathy, stamina, patience, and a sense of humor (750).

Mediators must also be able to overcome the issue of bias, which relates to their credibility. If disputants believe that the mediator favors the other side, they have little reason to put their trust in him. According to Kydd, however, a thoroughly unbiased mediator "who is simply interested in minimizing the probability of war" may still not be trusted by the disputants because they see that he has an incentive to lie about information he has concerning the other side's chance of aggression so as to coerce a settlement (598). Therefore disputants are more likely to find a mediator credible if they believe that he is on their side or at least shares their policy preferences. Kydd notes (as did Byrne in reference to both Cyprus and Northern Ireland—see pages 21 and 22) that mediators can be divided into two groups: weak and impartial neutral mediators and powerful principal mediators who are interested or biased. Surprisingly,

such bias "is seen as acceptable [and] perhaps inevitable" (599). Mediators who are able to manage this delicate aspect of their role are more likely to find that their mediation has been effective.

2.3 MEDIATION EFFECTIVENESS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Some scholars are divided concerning the definition of mediation, believing that there should be "boundaries between mediation, conciliation, facilitation, good offices, shuttle-diplomacy, and fact-finding" (Bercovitch and Langley 671). However, a definition of mediation so pure as to remove the aforementioned behaviors from its scope would shrink the field of study almost to nonexistence. Bercovitch and Langley note that in reality, the process of mediation may include any or all of these behaviors; the case of Northern Ireland and the example of George Mitchell provide ample evidence of not only the breadth of mediation activities but also the evolution of the process. What started as economic initiatives on behalf of President Clinton in 1995 progressed to facilitation in the early stages of the talks and finally a more distilled form of mediation as the talks reached their apex going into 1998. Just as the example of Northern Ireland illustrates the different pathways of mediation, its components can be viewed through the "dispute—disputants—mediator" paradigm to determine why and how mediation was effective in this instance.

2.3.1 Characteristics of the dispute in Northern Ireland

The issues at stake in the talks leading to the Good Friday Agreement reflect three of the categories established by Bercovitch and Langley: ideology, security, and independence. I have purposefully not included their category of "territory" because this component of the dispute was an issue of independence, not a question of land ownership as is found in Cyprus and Israel/Palestine. In fact, some commentators posit that Mitchell's recent failure in brokering a Middle East peace was in part due to the existence of territorial contention, which he had not encountered in Northern Ireland, and which contributed greatly to the conflict's intractability. Had the conflict in Northern Ireland included a dispute over resettlement and the right to return, it would have taken a significantly different shape and the entire mediated agreement would have been much more difficult to accomplish. Therefore "independence" in this instance refers to the constitutional status of Northern Ireland: whether it would remain a part of the United Kingdom, or unite with the Republic of Ireland, as Article 2 of the Irish constitution laid claim to "the whole island of Ireland" ("Constitution of Ireland (original text)"). This issue was resolved following and pursuant to the Good Friday Agreement by the Irish government agreeing to amend this article of its constitution to express a desire for future union but a commitment to maintaining its parliamentary boundaries ("Bunreacht na hÉireann Constitution of Ireland" 9). Additionally, the British and Irish governments pledged to respect the desire of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland, leaving room for the possibility that the island may someday unite ("Good Friday Agreement").

The security issue revolved mainly around decommissioning of weapons, which had long been a bone of contention concerning Sinn Fein's entrance to the talks. The British government publicly refused to talk to Sinn Fein until decommissioning began, despite the fact that the IRA

had called a ceasefire (Melaugh). Once Sinn Fein entered talks (following a renewed ceasefire and their signing of the Mitchell Principles), substantive negotiations began that included a long-term proposal for decommissioning of weapons. The final decision reached in the Good Friday Agreement committed parties to "decommissioning of all paramilitary arms within two years following endorsement" ("Good Friday Agreement"). Therefore the security issue was not only a hallmark of the conflict but also an essential component of the peace process itself. Although progress was slow following the signing of the agreement—the IRA did not fully decommission until more than seven years later, and some loyalist groups took even longer—the process was considered officially complete in February 2010 when the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning was dissolved (Melaugh).

Security in the Northern Ireland context also included a reduction of the number of British troops deployed in the country, a condition to which the British government agreed, promising to take measures "appropriate to and compatible with a normal peaceful society" ("Good Friday Agreement"). Security as it related to policing was also resolved in the agreement, which seized "the opportunity for a new beginning to policing in Northern Ireland with a police service capable of attracting and sustaining support from the community as a whole" ("Good Friday Agreement"). It is important to note that these were mostly tangible issues: decommissioned weapons and fewer deployed troops are visible signs of goodwill on both sides of the divide, which in theory may be negotiated numerically. While policing issues were less tangible as they relate to structure of the police force and the fostering of support within the community, they could nonetheless be negotiated because they came as part of a package wherein both sides had made compromises and seen gains.

Ideology, as its name suggests, was an intangible issue and therefore much more difficult to reconcile. The claims that both nationalists and unionists laid to the island were based on romanticized versions of their histories that neither party was likely to relinquish, and although gains had been made in the prisons regarding the relationship between loyalist and republican paramilitaries, there were still factions within each community that maintained a negative view of the other side. In the end, there was no attempt made to mediate these differences. By focusing on the more tangible issues, the parties paved the way for a future where hostile feelings would have a chance to dissipate and community organizations dedicated to conflict transformation could work to bridge the divides.

Bercovitch and Langley's quantitative research on how the nature of the dispute affects mediation outcomes is a log-linear analysis that required them to develop discrete variables to quantify issue complexity, intensity, and duration at time of intervention. Issue complexity is either "one or two issues" or "three or more issues"; intensity is "100 – 1000 fatalities" or "1000+ fatalities"; and duration at time of intervention is "0 – 12 months" or "13 or more months." (682). In all of these categories, Northern Ireland falls into the upper bound. Beyond the issues detailed above, the questions of devolution, prisoner release, and North-South institutions were also debated, bringing its issue count up to at least six. From 1969 until the end of 1997, the total number of fatalities was 3,582; of note, however is the fact that the most recent 1,000 fatalities had occurred over a period of fifteen years, which calls to mind the question of its "intensity" (McKittrick and McVea 327). A more immediate comparison may be the conflict in Syria: more people were killed in Syria in the first two and a half months of 2012 than in forty

years of conflict in Northern Ireland[3]. For this reason, I would argue that the intensity of the conflict preceding the Good Friday Agreement was actually relatively low and therefore a condition that made mediation more likely to succeed.

Duration at the time of intervention easily exceeds Bercovitch and Langley's dividing line of one year. Some debate exists concerning the exact start of the Troubles: while some historians place it in 1965 with the re-formation of the UVF, others cite Austin Currie's squatting demonstration in 1968 as the "spark that ignited the bonfire," and still others call the Battle of the Bogside in 1969 the true beginning of the Troubles (McKittrick and McVea 40). Regardless of the precise beginning, it is unquestionable that the conflict had dragged on for at least thirty years by the time agreement was reached in April 1998. Beyond this particular incarnation of the struggle, however, one must consider the animosity of years past upon which it was built: not only the conflict at the beginning of the 20th century (namely, the Irish War of Independence and the Easter Rising), but also going back centuries to the Irish Rebellion in 1798—two hundred years before the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. Such a perspective gives an even greater sense of the sheer weight of history that the parties and their mediator had to overcome in order to reach a settlement. It makes the fact of the Good Friday Agreement that much more astonishing.

Thus the nature of the dispute in Northern Ireland fell into several categories that would quantitatively make it seem impossible to resolve: complex issues, high fatalities when measured following Bercovitch and Langley's parameters, and a long history whose magnitude bore heavily on the conflict's intractability. The decision to focus on tangible issues gave the

[3] Even controlling for the fact that Syria has a larger population than the island of Ireland (20 million compared to 6.5 million, or three times the size), the difference in intensity is still enormous.

mediation a better chance of success than Bercovitch and Langley's model would have otherwise predicted. Indeed, if analysis is limited solely to the dispute, then the tangibility of issues would seem to be the only variable that can explain the Good Friday Agreement's success.

2.3.2 Characteristics of the disputants in Northern Ireland

Bercovitch and Langley's qualification for "well-defined identities" between parties involved in an international mediation is well met in the unionists and nationalists in Northern Ireland (746). As explained above, unionists and loyalists are in favor of continued union with the United Kingdom, and nationalists and republicans are in favor of a United Ireland. While division exists within these groups—for example, the more working class PUP, which aligns more with loyalism than unionism, or Sinn Fein which is thoroughly republican and therefore associated with the IRA, despite its attempts to create distance in recent years—each side on the whole advocated for a clear set of issues and represented a defined population on the island (Dixon 12).

Since the delegates had been democratically elected through a system that ensured the top ten parties would be represented, it goes without saying that all of the negotiators were able to act as their parties' legitimate spokespeople (Mitchell 43). In fact, party leaders such as David Trimble, John Hume, Ian Paisley, David Ervine, and much later Gerry Adams were actually the representatives at the talks table, so they unquestionably had the power that Bercovitch and Langley find necessary for those in such a position to be effective. One possible constraint of their democratic election, however, was the fact that as elected politicians, their chances at future reelection depended to some extent on their actions during the negotiations. This may have limited their ability to make concessions or be seen in favor of certain issues if such actions

would have displeased the voting base. However, they would have been equally at risk politically if they were unable to come to an agreement at all.

Although many politicians participated in the talks, it was John Hume and David Trimble who were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1998, "for their efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in Northern Ireland" ("The Nobel…" 1). John Hume, the SDLP leader, had been one of the earliest advocates for negotiation and had proposed "three relationships" that evolved into the three Strands of the Brooke/Mayhew talks and later the Good Friday Agreement (Mitchell 14). He was "an eloquent, charismatic Irishman with a Ghandi-like faith in nonviolence" (Smyth 79) who the Nobel Committee chose to recognize for precisely these qualities, calling him "the clearest and most consistent" Northern Ireland politician working towards peace ("The Nobel…" 1). David Trimble, the UUP leader, was recognized for what the committee called "great political courage" in light of his actions in early 1998 when he chose to make concessions that solidified the possibility of a peace agreement (1). Although Hume and Trimble represented the two largest parties and therefore had great effect in their respective communities, their success depended upon the smaller parties' ability to mobilize the extremes, and the Good Friday Agreement could not have been accomplished with these two men alone.

In terms of power, the parties within Northern Ireland were in an ideal position for mediation to be effective, since their country of less than two million people was by no means a superpower. Although a slight power disparity existed between the two sides—illustrated most clearly perhaps by the fact that Catholics made up only 38% of the population in 1991, the most recent census year before the talks—it was in part corrected by the structure of representation. Although a unionist party, the UUP, received the highest percentage of votes, the nationalist group the SDLP received the second highest vote count, followed by the DUP, and then the

republican party Sinn Fein, so that representation was distributed more evenly among these parties and was also able to include non-aligned parties such as Alliance and the Labour Coalition (43 – 44). Therefore the power disparity that existed was not significant enough to impede mediation or give the greater power less incentive to participate in the talks: the unionists did not feel that such negotiations held no possible benefit for them.

2.3.3 Characteristics of the mediator in Northern Ireland

George Mitchell was not the only individual who served in a mediating capacity during the talks that resulted in the Good Friday Agreement. John de Chastelain, a retired Canadian general, and Harri Holkeri, a former Finnish prime minister, served along with Mitchell as joint chairmen of the talks. In fact, according to SDLP politician Mark Durkan, "Perhaps even more than George Mitchell, [Holkeri] encouraged the parties to think more, listen better and talk further with each other" (Martin 2). However, George Mitchell is generally viewed as the mediator of the talks because he was the most prominent and was the representative of the United States, whose position in the international system easily eclipsed that of Canada and Finland. Important to note is the fact that Mitchell was by no means the only American involved in the peace process. He frequently traveled back to the United States for family and political obligations, so he relied heavily on the U.S. Consulate General in Belfast to maintain and support his work when he was out of the country (Mitchell 78). Successive Consul Generals Kathleen Stephens and Ky Fort, along with Mitchell's staff members Martha Pope, David Angell, and David Pozorski, to name a few, played a significant role in the negotiations, particularly in working to assure that the talks did not lose momentum while Mitchell was gone (Mitchell 38, Williams 12).

Mitchell's ability to present himself to the parties as an impartial, independent mediator was somewhat of a feat, at least to the degree that the unionists accepted him. Since he himself came from a Catholic family and was ethnically Irish on his (adoptive) father's side, there was initial suspicion regarding his ability to remain neutral in the negotiations; it did not help matters that the president he represented, Bill Clinton, proudly claimed to be of Irish descent. However, he was able to overcome these preconceptions because by the time he was in an official capacity as "chairman of the talks," he had already been involved in Northern Ireland for several years and had interacted during his time as Special Envoy with many of the same individuals who were at the talks table. Two unionist parties, the DUP and UKUP refused to accept Mitchell as the chairman at the outset and in fact attempted to block his entry to the talks, but since these were the two parties who eventually exited the talks in 1997, their opposition was not particularly surprising and does not merit much analysis (Mitchell 49). It may be noted, however, that for more than a year before their walkout, they accepted Mitchell and the other chairmen and participated in the process, so their perception of him may have in fact become more favorable during that time.

Mitchell's skills as a mediator were in great part due to his experience in the Senate. He had been Senate Majority Leader for six years prior to his involvement in Northern Ireland, and during this time and the nine years of his Senate career that preceded it, he was involved in many high-profile pieces of legislation that involved not only negotiation between parties but also within his own Democratic party. It was in this context that he perfected many of the characteristics that would later make him an ideal candidate to serve as talks chairman and listen to unionists, nationalists, loyalists, and republicans air their grievances, complain, and make accusations, as "talks about talks" made little progress and were often brought to a standstill.

These characteristics match up well against those highlighted by Bercovitch: patience, a sense of humor, approachability, and skills such as active listening and chairing a meeting.

2.4 SUNNINGDALE: NOT GOOD FRIDAY

Some critics of the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement agree with the SDLP politician Seamus Mallon, who famously observed that the Good Friday Agreement was simply "Sunningdale for slow learners" (Muray 1). In other words, what was agreed to in 1998 was exactly what was on the table in 1973, and the changes that took place at the political and paramilitary levels had no effect on the vastly different outcomes and aftermaths of these separate negotiations. This statement makes a sweeping generalization that oversimplifies the intricacies of the two agreements. The conflict was not ripe for mediation in 1973 because key events – such as the peace process that began in the prisons – had not yet taken place, and the parties had very different views of themselves and of each other than they did twenty-five years later. The "series of moments" that Schulze argues were essential to making the conflict ripe had not yet taken place, so the likelihood of a settlement taking root in an environment that did not want it and was not prepared for it was extremely low (305).

The most conspicuous difference between the two agreements is the composition of the parties. Interestingly, Sunningdale and Good Friday exemplify the two types of democratic interethnic conciliation that Horowitz discusses. The first method is for parties willing to compromise to join together and in doing so to "fend off the uncompromising extremes" (193). The Sunningdale Agreement involved the SDLP, the UUP, and the Alliance Party; however, the

"uncompromising extremes" proved incapable of being fended off, and in fact succeeded in bringing about the agreement's collapse (Wolff 1). The second approach to interethnic conciliation is to include the extremes and therefore "sap the conflict of its vitality" (Horowitz 193). In this way, extreme groups are guaranteed to benefit from the settlement because they have played a role in negotiating it. Horowitz notes that this second method is more difficult because "it is premised on a desire to put the conflict to rest, if not to end it altogether" (193). Therefore even in the best-case scenario, Sunningdale could never have been more than a temporary solution to a problem much deeper than the agreement's scope. It would be naïve to think that the armed struggle would quietly step back in deference to a political arrangement in which the combatants had had no say. The idea that the Good Friday Agreement was essentially on offer in 1973 seriously downplays the significance of its scope and its unique position in negotiation history. The agreement represented significant concessions and enshrined principles important to both sides; nationalists received a guarantee of self-determination for Northern Ireland, and unionists accepted a set of "complex voting procedures" specifically designed to ensure that "no decision can be made without their consent" (Wolff 2). Perhaps most significant was the fact that the agreement represented the concentrated and earnest efforts of all parties; unlike Sunningdale, it was not the decision of a few being thrust on the many, but rather a collective and collaborative effort that hinted of the kind of government it aspired to create.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODS

My primary research was conducted in the form of one-on-one interviews with current and former politicians, community workers, and former paramilitaries during the summer of 2011 in Belfast, Northern Ireland. In total, I interviewed ten individuals for approximately one hour each. Like the population of Northern Ireland, my interview sample contained more unionists/loyalists than nationalists/republicans: four and three, respectively, in addition to two subjects from nonaligned parties (the NIWC and the Labour Coalition) and a community worker whose focus is on paramilitary members on both sides of the divide. I also met with but did not formally interview a number of other individuals, including a former member of the Ulster Defense Association.

My method for determining whom to interview began by simply contacting individuals recommended to me by my research advisor at the time, Tony Novosel. Since he had spent many years studying the conflict and teaching about the Troubles and had been invited on numerous occasions to speak to groups of former paramilitary members, he had developed friendships with individuals on both sides of the conflict. He initially put me in contact with three individuals, all of whom were members of their parties' negotiating teams during the talks, and one of whom who had been her party's representative at the negotiating table. I started my interviews with these three individuals as a way of getting my foot in the door, and at the conclusion of each interview, I asked for recommendations of others from any political party

who might be willing to talk to me. Being able to say in a phone call or email, "[Previous interviewee] of the Progressive Unionist Party suggested that I talk to you"—essentially, name-dropping—was an effective tactic for finding more interview subjects and making contact more immediately[4].

Apart from this method, I also emailed political parties directly, explaining my research and requesting an interview with anyone who had played a part in the talks leading up to the Good Friday Agreement. I was successful in arranging interviews with representatives of the SDLP and DUP in this manner; when I contacted the Alliance Party, however, my emails and phone messages went without response, and I was unfortunately never able to obtain an interview with any of their members. My attempts to contact former Alliance Party politicians who now work in the private sector were also unsuccessful. Since I was able to interview representatives of the two other non-aligned parties (the NIWC and the Labour Coalition), however, I feel that the non-unionist and non-nationalist viewpoints are sufficiently represented in my sample. I was also unable to make contact with any members of the now-defunct United Kingdom Unionist Party, but since the party left the talks in protest at the entrance of Sinn Fein in September 1997 and did not return, I do not consider this particular deficiency to be at all a threat to the credibility and comprehensiveness of my research.

A final tactic that I employed in contacting potential interview subjects was used only to make contact with a former leader of the Labour Coalition. Through Internet research of archived news stories, I was able to identify the former politician as a current pub owner, and I

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[4] The obvious bias in such a method is that my interview subjects would tend to recommend like-minded people, which would create more similarities within my interview pool than a random sample would give. However, these recommendations account for only one or two of the actual interviews that I obtained, and based on the data, any tendency for similarity in preferences seems to have been overruled by differing political ideologies.

made an appointment to interview him by merely calling the pub and explaining my research and desire to include nonaligned parties such as his own. This interview was the only one arranged through direct contact, with no political party or friend-of-a-friend as intermediary. Additionally, it was one of two interviews wherein the subject was not only a member of his or her party's negotiating team but was in fact the party's main representative at the talks (the other being my interview with the NIWC leader).

Because my interview subjects were public office holders and respected community figures with busy schedules, another hindrance to gaining access to the ideal interviewees was simply the matter of their limited availability. Interviews arranged by the party were more likely to put me in touch with the party member with the most open schedule—or as was the case with Sinn Fein, with the public relations officer. My Sinn Fein interview was by far the most disappointing and the least productive, for although the subject was a longtime republican and former internee, he was able to offer little comment on the substance of the Good Friday negotiations. Beyond this limitation, however, was the simple fact of his unwavering adhesion to the party line. While such lack of nuanced response was discouraging at the time, I was later told that even a Sinn Fein member who had been directly involved in the talks would have likely given nearly identical responses, as the "party line" mentality is pervasive in the group's dealings with news organizations and the public. Nonetheless, this interview represents an unfortunate hole in my research; since the inclusion of Sinn Fein at the negotiating table was a hotly debated topic and a contributing factor to the talks' success, my research would have benefitted from hearing the viewpoint of a Sinn Fein negotiator who could speak honestly and authoritatively about his team's experience of entering the negotiations so late in the game.

Another limiting factor in my research was simply the existence of time constraints. I was able to travel to Northern Ireland to conduct interviews because it was summer break; similarly, it was vacation time in Northern Ireland as well. More than once I was given a recommendation to talk to a politician or former paramilitary member but would then find out that that person was out of town or otherwise unavailable. With more time, I may have gained a few more interviews; however, some of my subjects who promised to refer me to one of their colleagues at the end of our interview were completely out of touch after I left their offices, in spite of my follow-up emails and unanswered calls. My interviewee from Sinn Fein, for example, seemed to realize that his experience was not as relevant to my research as that of other members of his party who were more politically active during the 1990s would have been, so he told me he would set up a time for me to meet with one or two more Sinn Fein members. Nevertheless, I was unable to get in touch with him again afterwards, and the more promising interview went unachieved for the remainder of my time in Belfast. Therefore some of the weaknesses in my subject pool can be attributed not only to the issue of timing and time constraints but also to the fact that I was an American undergraduate researcher—i.e., not a constituent, and also not an established academician or member of the press whose request for an interview would have held any clout.

Because I obtained an exempt approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) on my study protocol, my interviews were all conducted under a mandatory condition of anonymity. Although my subjects were informed of the guarantee of anonymity in the consent form I provided, none of them desired or required it and spoke to me just as they would have if I were to be identifying them and associating their interview material with their names. Nonetheless, I

am still unable to name the individuals whom I interviewed, but will instead identify them based on the party or organization with which they are associated.

3.1 INTERVIEW DATA

The questions I posed to my interview subjects came from a list of twenty-five questions that the IRB had approved in advance (see Appendix B). I asked each interviewee between fifteen and twenty questions, so I was able to tailor the interviews to each subject's experience. Since my focus is on mediation and the role of George Mitchell as the mediator, I asked the interviewees if Mitchell played as active a role in the negotiations as was reported in the media. I also asked questions pertaining to their personal opinion of the talks: the strong points, the weak points, the stumbling blocks, and if there had been a moment of definite victory. I talked to them about strategy in negotiating and their frustrations with the leadership and fellow negotiators.

I also asked how external factors affected the course of the talks. For example: in his memoir of the negotiations, *Making Peace*, Mitchell pays particular attention to the events of late 1997, when governmental changes took place in Britain and in Ireland and when Sinn Fein was able to enter talks. When Tony Blair's Labour party won a majority of the votes, the new prime minister seized the opportunity to play a more accommodating role in the negotiations (Mitchell 100). Previously, Prime Minister John Major's government had depended on the support of unionists in Northern Ireland and therefore could not politically afford to upset this key base by

accepting or proffering a constitutional arrangement that did not satisfy unionists' demands. Because Blair had "a degree of freedom… that Major never enjoyed," he was able to reassure unionists that the British government was still on their side while reaching out to nationalists and signaling that their concerns would be addressed as well (101). While this theory as an explanation of the Good Friday Agreement's success is present to some degree in most analyses – for example Horowitz (206) – it is George Mitchell who seems to set the most store by it. I wanted to know if those involved in the talks viewed the internal politics of Great Britain as having such a significant role, or if there were other factors Mitchell had ignored.

3.1.1 Progressive Unionist Party community worker

I had generally positive responses to my questions about George Mitchell. I interviewed a former life prisoner who had been involved in a loyalist paramilitary and later was a part of the PUP's negotiating team, and he said that he was supportive when he heard Mitchell's name floating around as a possible chairman of the talks. He had a favorable view of Mitchell, having met him once before, and he made specific mention of the fact that Mitchell's ethnic background is in part Lebanese. Although he did not elaborate on this fact, I interpreted it as a nod to the conflict in Lebanon: Mitchell was aware of the intricacies that any ethnic conflict entails and understood that there would be no true areas of black and white. While many Irish and British see Americans as having a "hurry up and fix it" kind of attitude, Mitchell's knowledge of the conflict in Lebanon gave them confidence that he would give their situation equal weight and circumspection and not try to impose a quick and unsuitable solution.

In addition to mentioning Mitchell's past, my first interview subject also listed Mitchell's future aspirations as one of the reasons that he had confidence in him as a potential talks chairman. At the time that the decision was being made, in 1995 and 1996, Mitchell had retired from the Senate, where he had been the majority leader, and had made it known that he was hoping to be named the next Commissioner of Baseball. This last part seemed to be key, since it meant that Mitchell's interest in Ireland had nothing to do with furthering his political career. He had his own ambitions and obligations separate from the peace talks, so he would not let them drag on endlessly as had happened in the past.

The downside of having Mitchell as the chairman, according to the interviewee, was that he "bowed down to the bullies" and did not always require a consensus. Since the PUP is one of the smaller political parties, consensus requirements would have improved their relative power at the negotiating table. Still, the interviewee said, "[Mitchell] got there in the end" —in other words, despite the methods used or the particular emotions that PUP negotiators may have experienced at the time, in the end they were content with the outcome and satisfied to have chosen Mitchell as chairman of the talks.

3.1.2 Progressive Unionist Party politician

I interviewed another member of the PUP, a female politician who unlike the previous interviewee was never part of a paramilitary organization. Early in the interview, before I had begun the section of questions pertaining to Mitchell, I asked, "From what you saw at the talks, was there anyone who stood out in the negotiations?" She responded, "I suppose apart from David Ervine and Gusty Spence [two PUP leaders] and their ability to look into the future, and their early desire to have Sinn Fein in the talks, which was rejected by other unionists […],

probably Senator George Mitchell and his team of staff." She later elaborated, saying that Mitchell "was in a very unique position within the negotiations, in that he was talking to all sides […] he was talking to the ten parties that were involved in the negotiations because many of the parties wouldn't talk to each other. And he had that 'bird's eye view,' if you like, of the positions that every party was in [….] He would of probably been the first person to realize where the areas of agreement were." At first, it seems that the interviewee is simply defining the role of a mediator and not commenting on aspects of Mitchell's personality or experience that made him the ideal mediator for the situation. However, considering that one of the classic problems of mediation is the fact that the mediator is perceived as biased, often by both sides, and is sometimes even denied access, it does in fact say much about Mitchell's capabilities to note that he embodied these characteristics of a mediator and did so unimpeachably.

The interviewee described Mitchell as a "very patient man […] and also a very committed individual of the highest integrity." Many of the people I interviewed commented on Mitchell's incredible patience, as he was able to listen to hours of arguments that made little progress as the negotiators simple rehashed the same complaints that they had been making against each other for years. The fact that he did not try to rush the process but instead let all sides finally say whatever had been weighing on their chests for years allowed all sides to feel as if they had been heard and cleared the way for substantive discussions. She said that Mitchell's decision to set a deadline[5] in the weeks before the agreement was reached was the big push necessary for its eventual success.

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[5] On Wednesday, March 25, the independent chairmen (Mitchell, Holkeri, and de Chastelain) announced an "absolute, inflexible deadline" of midnight on Thursday, April 9 (Mitchell 145 - 146).

3.1.3 Northern Ireland Women's Coalition

Although the NIWC ceased to exist in 2006, I was able to talk to one of its founding members, a woman who had been NIWC's representative at the negotiating table. She told me that initial Northern Irish misgivings about George Mitchell included the concern that he may have ties to the CIA and therefore would not be someone to whom negotiators could openly reveal information without worry. They soon realized, however, that Mitchell's presence in the talks was a rare instance of the United States' getting involved in an international conflict "for the right reasons."

The interviewee then said, "But he came with a brilliant woman who you will not be asking me about because she's not in your list and has been forgotten, which is Martha Pope [….] And she was his right hand woman, and to me she was as good as he was." Since the interview subject had founded the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition and had taught women's studies at the university level, noticing a woman's role in the talks can be seen as a product of her training and education—especially since there were so few women involved. Even so, without the support of his staff, Mitchell would have been constrained in dealing with the multitude of problems that arose on a daily basis, so Martha Pope is certainly representative of the strength of Mitchell's entire team, as well as his ability to delegate.

Her criticism of Mitchell was that he was often flying back and forth between Belfast and Washington, D.C., so it was sometimes difficult to talk with him directly, since even when he was in Belfast he would be jetlagged. She said, "I'm glad the agreement wasn't named after him [as had been considered] because it wasn't his agreement—it was the parties' agreement, and the governments', and I think it would have taken away from it if it hadn't been." She also said that the lack of structure during the talks (negotiators were not timed and were given a free

rein in speaking, sometimes for hours on end) was a frustration for her and others at the table; this was an area perhaps in which Mitchell's celebrated patience was somewhat less beneficial than in other aspects of the negotiations. Overall, she had a much more restrained opinion of Mitchell than did others to whom I spoke, yet she still recognized him as someone of integrity and a key figure in the talks.

3.1.4 Labour Coalition

I also was able to interview a former member of the Labour Coalition, who like my NIWC interviewee was not only a member of the negotiating team but was also his party's direct representative at the talks table. He expressed an enormous amount of admiration for George Mitchell and the "tremendous job" he did in Northern Ireland. His immediate response to my question "Who do you think was the most important individual involved in the talks?" was "George Mitchell" without a beat. He said, "I think it was largely the man's character and his makeup as a person, as a human being. He was very easy, very relaxed [….] He treated everyone with respect and listened to what they had to say. So George Mitchell was the man that really made the talks." Later, he firmly asserted, "The success, or outcome of the talks, or if you can call it a success—was down to George." Overall, his opinion of the talks was more positive than some of my other interview subjects, which perhaps explains his glowing view of George Mitchell. Like others, however, he admitted the sometimes-frustrating lack of time limits for speaking at the negotiating table, but put less of the blame for it on George Mitchell's attempts for accommodation.

My interview subject also lauded Mitchell's implementation of a deadline as an effective tool for spurring action and bringing parties to a final agreement. He said that the real and most

urgent desire for a settlement came in January 1998 after returning from the holiday break, during which a loyalist prisoner had been killed. According to my interviewee, this event pushed negotiators to take advantage of their unique opportunity because it showed them that a return to violence might be on the horizon, in which case their attempts at settlement would have less popular support. He said there was a palpable "steely determination" for resolution when talks recommenced. Mitchell made the most of this prevailing sentiment by setting a deadline that forced the parties to make substantive concessions in order for an agreement to be reached before the entire process had a chance to unravel. Following Zartman's definition of a precipice as a "crisis bounded by a deadline," the prisoner's murder was a key factor in creating an environment of crisis and leading Mitchell to set the deadline for a mediated settlement.

One significant insight that I gained from this interview was the influence of a trip to South Africa arranged by the American government toward the end of the talks. According to my interviewee, Nelson Mandela "made a major contribution" at a very key juncture because David Trimble had "always seem a bit detached from the talks," but Mandela was able to "have a tremendous influence on him… [afterwards] Trimble seemed to blossom, seemed to change his whole attitude, his whole approach to the talks." In a 2001 speech, Trimble reflected on this meeting, but downplayed it as simply "helpful," saying that "when it came to our own process, we actually didn't follow those examples, those particular procedures, but what I did find was that the insights into how they did things were helpful" (Trimble 8). Nonetheless, it is possible that when Trimble, the final holdout, gave his assent on the afternoon of April 10 – hours past the agreed-upon deadline – he may have had the meeting with Mandela in mind. Mitchell characterized that moment thusly: "[Trimble] saw the opportunity to end a long and biter conflict, and he did not want to go down in the history books as the man who let it pass" (180).

Additionally, my interview subject said that Mandela served as an example of compassion and reconciliation, since despite being imprisoned for nearly three decades, he had no animosity for his opponents. Mandela emphasized the "give-and-take" nature of negotiations, and his influence likely contributed to some of the concessions that parties finally acquiesced to as the talks reached their end.

Unfortunately, this interview was the very last one I conducted, just a day before I was scheduled to return to the United States; otherwise I would have asked my other interview subjects if they had a similar opinion of the effect of the South Africa trip on moving negotiators in Northern Ireland toward a final agreement. While some analyses of the Good Friday Agreement have made mention of the fact that "resolution of conflicts in the Middle East and South Africa created an international climate that made the resolution of the conflict in Northern Ireland 'far more likely'" (Cox, quoted in Dixon "Rethinking…" 411), there is very little perspective on the direct influence that meetings with South African leaders had on shaping the peace process.

3.1.5 Social Democratic and Labour Party

My interviewee from the Social Democratic and Labour Party—the nationalist party—pointed out the fact that "it became apparent prior to President Clinton's election that he was interested" in finding a solution to the conflict in Northern Ireland. However, there was some cynicism in Northern Ireland concerning whether or not his interest was genuine or merely an empty campaign promise to Irish Catholics in the United States. After the election, however, "it became very clear that he wanted to help… in a very special way." According to the interviewee, Clinton made it clear through the US Consul General in Belfast, through speeches

that he himself made, and through his appointment of George Mitchell as Special Envoy that his intentions were genuine; in this way, he slowly built the parties' trust and placed the United States—and George Mitchell—in a position to mediate the conflict when the moment was right.

In response to my question regarding the most important individuals in the talks, the SDLP politician pointed to David Trimble on the unionist side and Seamus Mallon—who he cited as more important than John Hume—on the nationalist side (and additionally named three of Mallon's deputies as essential figures who supported him during the talks). When I asked about David Ervine—after having heard his name in response to this question from two previous interviewees—he responded with a heavy "no," modifying it only by saying, "Ervine was there, yes of course he had his significance, [but] the negotiations were between Mallon and Trimble." In terms of an external influence, he said that "the person who really banged heads together and brought the talks to a successful conclusion was Tony Blair, along with Bertie Ahern… [through] a mixture of flattery and threat, [saying], 'If you want to go down in history as the greatest Irishman or Ulsterman ever, sign this agreement. If you don't sign it, then this is a disaster for your people and a disaster for Northern Ireland.'" Pressure from these leaders was an important factor in the final hours of negotiation; as Mitchell notes, a letter from Blair to Trimble promising continued support after the agreement was in place helped the UUP solidify its acquiescence (179).

From an SDLP perspective, therefore, it was the external ethnoguarantors who were primarily responsible for the talks' success. It is interesting to note that in identifying British Prime Minister Tony Blair as the key agent of this change, my interview subject is praising the unionists' ethnoguarantor, mentioning his own (Irish Taioseach Bertie Ahern) almost as an aside. One possible explanation for this is the fact that the British government had more say in the

matter, so Blair was in a greater position of power relative to Ahern, and the fact that the British government had long been involved in more secret dealings with republicans, so their word carried weight with both sides in a way that Ahern could not hope to influence unionists or loyalists.

This particular interview was one of the few in which the subject of George Mitchell's influence did not initially arise from comments that the interviewee made; instead, I was the one to ask about the role that Mitchell played. Nonetheless, my interviewee said his party was "delighted" when they heard that Mitchell would chair the talks, "because we wanted an independent chair." Whereas some members of loyalist parties may have merely accepted Mitchell without being particularly enthusiastic about it, the nationalists were in fact thoroughly pleased with his selection and already convinced of Mitchell's independence and impartiality. Like most of my interview subjects, this SDLP politician commented on Mitchell's patience, adding that he was skillful, "smooth," diplomatic, kind, who "knew how to conduct political negotiations" and was "an honest broker carrying out a difficult task." Essentially, Mitchell had all the personal attributes of a mediator that Bercovitch deems necessary and additionally met the important requirement of being skilled at conflict management.

When I asked about Mitchell's ability to be unbiased, the interviewee replied, "*Un*biased? Well I think he was biased but not obviously biased, you know? He was biased in favor of trying to get a proper settlement here… [but] he didn't 'enter the arena,' he didn't favor one side over another." This observation contradicts to some degree the ideas put forth by Kydd, who posits that an unbiased mediator will not be seen as credible because they will nonetheless be biased in favor of a settlement. However, the distinction here is that Mitchell's role was not "to tell each side that their opponent has high resolve and will fight unless they receive a concession," as

Kydd says an unbiased mediator will do (598). Participants in the talks knew that Mitchell—and indeed all facilitators, including the British and Irish governments—was in favor of a settlement; this fact was implicit in the very structure of the negotiations. Because Mitchell was not providing the kind of information that would lead the parties to doubt his motives and because the talks themselves reflected that resolution was being sought, his "unbiased bias" did not inhibit his ability to serve as the conflict's mediator.

The interviewee's statement would seemingly contradict another of Kydd's observations: that "only a mediator who is effectively 'on your side' will be believed if [he] counsels restraint [because] a mediator who shares your policy preferences to some extent could be trusted" (598). At least from the perspective of the SDLP, Mitchell did not favor one side over the other and therefore shared nationalist policy preferences no more than he shared those of unionists. However, in this case it is the nature of the dispute that makes a difference. Although the conflict was indeed a long and bitter one, its intensity, if defined as deaths divided by years of conflict, was relatively low. While the conflicts that Kydd analyzed were intense in the sense of their immediacy (for example the 1982 Falklands crisis), the long relationship between the parties in Northern Ireland was actually beneficial in this case. The parties had enough information about each other's abilities and positions that Mitchell did not need to serve as a go-between to provide more, so he did not need to portray himself to each side as favoring it over the other as long as he did not seem to favor its opponent. Also worth noting is the fact that in the two cases Kydd examined (the United States' mediation in the Falklands and Russia's mediation involving Serbia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization), it was the mediator's attitude towards the weaker party that mattered most: in the Falklands, US Secretary of State Haig's bias against Argentina led to the mediation's collapse, but Russia's bias in favor of Serbia

led to a successful mediation. Since the SDLP, as a nationalist party, was part of the smaller and weaker side in Northern Ireland, their perception of the mediator—as articulated by my interviewee—is commensurately significant.

3.1.6 Democratic Unionist Party

I made contact with the Democratic Unionist Party by emailing the party offices at Stormont and was limited to interviewing only the party member that their publicity office put me in contact with. Interestingly, the politician that they selected for me to interview had actually been a member of the Ulster Unionist Party during the talks and had been elected to the Northern Ireland Forum as a UUP member. It was not until several years after the Good Friday Agreement was signed that he made the switch and became a member of the DUP. However, I consider his viewpoint valuable nonetheless because unlike his then-colleagues in the UUP, he did not support the agreement and was openly critical of his party's leader, David Trimble. He even campaigned against the Good Friday Agreement in the referendum that followed its acceptance by the parties, which places him more in the mindset of a DUP politician than most UUP members would have been.

Early on in this interview, this subject brought up the "high level of controversy" within the unionist camp surrounding Mitchell's appointment as chairman. He said that it cast some doubts on the guarantee of "free and fair negotiations" because there was talk that the British and Irish governments "had an endgame solution in mind from the start" and that George Mitchell had potentially "simply been brought in to facilitate that." He mentioned that there was also "a degree of suspicion in these things" because Irish America was "seen as very much on one side

of the equation," so unionists worried that Mitchell may in some way have to appease this external group and may not be able to be as neutral as he claimed.

I also asked about the significance and effectiveness of the Mitchell Principles, the set of rules that George Mitchell drafted and that parties had to agree to at the outset of the talks as a sort of common framework for their negotiations. My interviewee said that while there would not likely be anyone who could argue with the principles themselves, their application was less unimpeachable, since there were "clear breaches" which resulted in "some level of sanction, but the sanction was relatively minor" and unsuited to the offense. His comments reflect the frustration that hard-line unionists had with the involvement of Sinn Fein. Seemingly small frustrations, built up over time, may have contributed to further dissatisfaction with the talks and therefore less amenability in the minds of those negotiators.

With regards to Mitchell's role, my interviewee said that the former senator was in fact more of an "outward façade" and not fundamentally crucial to the agreement the way that the parties and—"to a lesser extent"—the governments were. To illustrate this point, he said, "If his plane had gone down in the middle of the Atlantic six months before the agreement, clearly there would have been somebody who could have stepped in and reached the end result," predicting that there would have been few substantive changes in an agreement negotiated in Mitchell's absence because he was "irrelevant" in terms of major decision-making. He asserted that decision-making with a view toward overall strategic objectives was more essential to the structure of the final agreement than any one person, and certainly more than any facilitator, maintaining that mediation in the form of "going to the other side, making some suggestions, compromise language" was not a significant factor in the peace process. This viewpoint

downplays the role of the mediator and instead puts the focus on individual parties where bilateral and trilateral negotiations were taking place.

This interviewee also mentioned a key dynamic with regards to the composition of the talks. He said that the UUP was in an interesting predicament where it actually had a "certain level of dependence" on the loyalist parties, so that even if the mainstream unionist parties were steadfastly against some provision (for example, prisoner releases) and in a position of power to contest it, they nonetheless from time to time had to bend to the demands of loyalist parties in order to ensure their cooperation on other issues. So while the obvious division in the Northern Ireland peace process pits unionists/loyalists against nationalists/republicans, the socioeconomic stratification of the parties actually creates a more complicated environment for multi-stranded negotiations. The ability of a mainstream party to make concessions on two levels and across many issues suggests a greater degree of flexibility than their rhetoric would otherwise make apparent.

The existence of these more subtle divisions hearkens Putnam's two-level game theory, which posits that governments have to negotiate with domestic groups at the national level while simultaneously working at the international level to "maximize their own ability to satisfy domestic pressures" by minimizing "the adverse consequences of foreign developments" (434). Since the negotiations leading to the Good Friday Agreement were not international (despite the presence of Great Britain and Ireland as guarantors), the argument cannot be applied with absolute parallels; for example, all "developments" as a result of the negotiations would be domestic, regardless. Also significant is the fact that in the context of Northern Ireland, what would be considered "domestic groups" in Putnam's theory were the working-class political parties who also had a place at the negotiating table. In the model, these groups have no say in

what happens at the international level beyond their ability to pressure the government, whereas loyalist parties could not only pressure unionists to meet their demands but also had a voice within the negotiations themselves. Adding to these inconsistencies is the fact that Putnam's theory shows that an international agreement is more likely when there are more possible agreement outcomes that would be accepted by domestic constituents (437). In the context of Northern Ireland, however, the opposite held: concessions made between unionists and loyalists had a better chance of making it into the final agreement than did issues on which there would have be unilateral unionist/loyalist support.

3.1.7 Ulster Unionist Party

My interviewee from the UUP had had more exposure to American efforts to play a role in the Northern Ireland peace process as he had been involved in some of the earliest economic initiatives at the beginning of President Clinton's time in office. He was the only interview subject to mention the "Four Horsemen" – the name given to Governor Hugh Carey, Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill, and Senators Ted Kennedy and Daniel Patrick Moynihan – as having a significant influence by putting pressure on Irish Americans to renounce violence (O'Clery 1). According to the interviewee, "It had always been assumed that the United States was pro-Irish nationalism." However, Bill Clinton "made American policy more neutral, and that allowed people like me to engage with the United States government because they were no longer a hostile force but they were actually a force that could be seen as people who were prepared to help both sides…. It was a big shift in policy." In other words, before George Mitchell was even on the scene, policy changes in the United States had already begun to make the nation—and therefore its representatives—more attractive to unionist leaders as a potential mediator.

When asked about the key individuals in the talks, my interviewee said that "a lot of people would say George Mitchell," and that while he personally was a "great admirer" of Mitchell's, he felt that David Trimble, his party's leader, "took an enormous amount of responsibility on his shoulders [and] took a lot of the abuse." Additionally, he cited the leaders of the British and Irish governments, Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern, but set much more store by Ahern, noting his dedication to the process for returning quickly to the talks following the death of his mother because he knew it was "a critical point." Even more important was the fact that "he made a major concession to unionists, which having not been made, there would have been no deal"—that concession being his willingness to relax his government's stance on Strand Two, knowing that the UUP would not agree to the draft as it originally stood. In contrast to his high praise of Ahern, my interview subject glazed over Tony Blair's role by simply saying, "And, in fairness, Blair played his part." This treatment calls to mind the unionists' displeasure with the British government for its seeming abandonment of their populace; the UUP would likely have been even less pleased with Blair than they had been with Major, considering the relatively leeway Blair had in choosing whether or not to heed unionists' concerns.

Concerning the choice of George Mitchell as the mediator, this interviewee, like the PUP community worker I interviewed, also commented on Mitchell's Lebanese background as evidence that he understood how things worked in "a very divided part of the world." Additionally, he noted that Mitchell's time in the Senate signaled that "he knew instinctively that to get a deal, you had to give as well as get." He commented on Mitchell's "standing" and "gravitas," which calls to mind the fact that in addition to the significance US involvement brought to the proceedings, the presence of an important American leader made them even more noteworthy.

This interviewee also noted that events since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement had only reinforced his view that Mitchell was the best choice for mediator, that his role was not exaggerated after the fact, and that he was "critical" to the process. With regards to the Mitchell Principles, he gave a brief analysis of them as a "skeleton" that only existed because negotiations "needed to hang on something," adding that past the early stages, the principles did not play a significant role. He noted that Mitchell's greatest stumbling block came towards the end of the process when he produced a draft that the unionist parties would have been unable to accept; this, according to my interviewee, was evidence of the British and Irish governments having too much influence over Mitchell and his colleagues. While he accepted that Mitchell's imposition of the deadline had a favorable outcome in the end, he nonetheless characterized it as a bit of a gamble, noting that it could have just as easily had disastrous results.

Significantly, my interviewee pointed out that the constant refrain characterizing the talks as the last chance for peace had been heard at every other attempt at negotiation and that in fact there was no sense of an impending success when the talks commenced. However, many of those involved in the talks were aware that it was likely their *generation's* last chance to reach a settlement, and that knowledge may have pushed them to take advantage of the opportunity before them.

3.1.8 Sinn Fein

As previously noted, the representative of Sinn Fein who was assigned to be my interview subject had less of an insider's view of the negotiations than did my other interviewees since he was not part of his party's negotiating team. He was, however, able to offer a few key insights regarding Sinn Fein's perspective on the peace process.

One interesting aspect of this perspective was his lauding of Bill Clinton as an essential contributor to the success of negotiations, where other interviewees had focused on George Mitchell. Within the first few minutes of our interview, he mentioned Bill Clinton at least half a dozen times, saying, "I don't think the Good Friday Agreement would have been signed without Bill Clinton's help and involvement, [and] I don't think the peace process would have been strengthened without Bill Clinton's direct involvement." Key to this assertion was the fact that Clinton granted Gerry Adams a visa to visit the United States; this "trigger moment" meant that Adams was able to meet with American representatives who promised support for negotiations. When Adams returned to Ireland, his time spent in America was seen as a "huge influence" in terms of how he viewed the peace process.

Two leaders closer to home were also key components of the peace process according to my interview subject. He said that although the IRA ceasefire had been called during Prime Minister John Major's time in office, its breakdown was caused in part by the lack of an encouraging relationship with the British government at that time. According to the interviewee, "it takes Tony Blair… [for] things to really begin to change [and for] a second ceasefire to be called by the IRA." Beginning with the renewed ceasefire, "that process of change speeds up [because of] the measure Tony Blair takes during his first term as Prime Minister… including the release of political prisoners." This particular issue—the release of political prisoners—was an important issue for both loyalist and republican paramilitaries, and Blair's acquiescence to it demonstrated his administration's intents to accommodate more than just the demands of the center.

In response to my question regarding the most significant individuals in the peace process, the interviewee said, "From the republican point of view, without Gerry Adams and

Martin McGuinness, we could not be where we are today. We couldn't have had the Good Friday Agreement, we couldn't have had the ceasefires… Adams was pivotal, a crucial person." He went on to add that "it would be wrong just to single Gerry out because [SDLP politician] John Hume was also very important, as was [former Taoiseach] Albert Reynolds, and Bill Clinton." Finally, he said "I think also in fairness to David Trimble, he was the unionist leader at the time who signed the Good Friday Agreement." However, the interviewee gave no qualification beyond that—that Trimble had simply signed the agreement, not that he had made important concessions at a crucial moment or even the fact that he had stood up to Ian Paisley. All in all, the Sinn Fein interviewee's analysis of the process focused very heavily on his own party's role, and only slightly more broadly on the role of the nationalist SDLP.

The interviewee characterized Mitchell, as had many others, as having an "unbelievable capacity for patience" who ensured that all parties felt "part of the game plan." Additionally he was "well-read and well-briefed" with regards to the situation in Northern Ireland but was practical in addition to having scholarly knowledge. The interviewee found it "strangely enough" that Mitchell was "well-liked by all of the political parties at the time"; this qualification overlooks the fact that the DUP and UKUP were opposed to Mitchell, but since they exited the talks upon Sinn Fein's arrival, my interview subject would have had little occasion to notice this relationship.

The interviewee also considered Mitchell essential to the talks—not only because of his role in the "details of the negotiations" but also because of how he influenced their mood and their momentum. Even after the agreement had been reached, Mitchell continued his involvement in the process by encouraging the parties to implement the measures they had agreed upon.

4.0 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

We have considered several main theories in relation to the conflict in Northern Ireland. Most noteworthy among these is the theory of mediation effectiveness, as developed by Bercovitch and Langley; however, Axelrod's "shadow of the future," Zartman's ripeness theory, and differing viewpoints concerning the role and power of the mediator have also informed the ideas of this paper. For the most part, my findings reinforce the significance that the characteristics of the mediator play in the theory of mediation effectiveness. When "mediator" is defined as solely George Mitchell, he most certainly satisfies the stipulation of being independent, informed, empathetic, and patient—identified as such both in the literature and by my interviewees. However, while the theory notes that mediators with ample resources available to be offered as rewards are more likely to be successful in their efforts, Mitchell for the most part had no such leverage. The governments of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, however, could offer more concrete economic incentives, and thanks to the dynamism of their roles as external guarantors, they sometimes functioned in a mediating capacity. Thus it is when the definition of "mediator" is expanded that the Northern Ireland peace process becomes a clearer representation of the theory of mediation effectiveness.

In light of the comments made by several of my interviewees, Axelrod's "shadow of the future" theory seems particularly apt. The long relationship between the parties and their history of interaction had demonstrated to the negotiators that regardless of the particularities of any

agreement, they were faced with the prospect of a long relationship whose success depended upon their current actions. Moreover, the fact that it was the politicians' last chance for glory—as articulated by my UUP interviewee, and emphasized most famously by Tony Blair—also played a role in pushing them towards agreement.

Zartman's ripeness theory concerning precipices and plateaus is applicable in the context of Northern Ireland because of the plateau of the loyalist and republican ceasefires of 1994 and the precipice Mitchell created in announcing a deadline towards the end of negotiations. Several of my interviewees identified the ceasefires as having been a "watershed" event wherein the possibility of a negotiated settlement became increasingly likely. The Labour Coalition politician with whom I spoke also emphasized the importance of the loyalist prisoner's murder at the end of 1997. Because of this event, Mitchell was able to impose his deadline, since negotiators well knew that such a highly emotional occurrence could prove deadly for the talks' momentum. The applicability of ripeness theory in this context also highlights Mitchell's raw skill as a mediator: had he not been able to recognize the ripe moments and maneuver issues of timing and process in just the right way, we would not be able to retroactively look back and say that the situation in Northern Ireland was indeed ripe.

There exists a variety of theories concerning the role of the mediator and the utility of impartiality versus the utility of bias, with researchers sometimes sharply divided concerning what type of bias is desirable and in whose favor this bias should be. Mitchell, however, can be said to exhibit both the utility of impartiality as well as that of bias. While he was unbiased with regards to the parties, he was—as my SDLP interviewee noted—biased in favor of a solution. Although the impartial mediator is typically seen as weak, and the partial mediator strong, Mitchell's particular brand of partiality and impartiality gave him an advantage that is somewhat

unique in negotiation history. His impartiality with regards to the parties was essential in maintaining their trust and cultivating relationships that would give him relative power, while his partiality in favor of a final agreement gave him the strength to persevere and see the process through to its successful resolution.

4.1 CONCLUSION

The success of the 1996-1998 talks in bringing together mainstream and grassroots political parties from both sides of the conflict in Northern Ireland and seeing them through to a comprehensive agreement cannot be attributed to just one factor, nor even a few factors. Likewise, the success of the agreement—qualified by the completion of decommissioning and the stability of the power-sharing government—stems from a myriad of contributions as well.

Compared to its failed predecessors, three differences come to light regarding the Good Friday Agreement: it was the first time that the more extreme factions were included (Sinn Fein and the loyalist parties), it was the first time that negotiations could be said to be representative of the entire population, and it was the first time that an external mediator whom all parties largely viewed as unbiased had been brought to bear on the situation. In terms of the historical evolution of the conflict, the talks leading to the Good Friday Agreement came *after* the peace process had begun in the prisons—after former paramilitary members had begun to learn about political processes and engage bilaterally while still incarcerated. Additionally, at this point, Britain's desire to maintain its hold on Northern Ireland had been clearly articulated to no longer exist, first by Peter Brooke in 1990 and again in the Downing Street Declaration of 1993, which asserted that the British government had "no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern

Ireland" ("Joint Declaration 1993" 1). In terms of the external political environment, a crucial change in both the British and Irish governments ensured that they could focus on measures needed for the agreement's success without worrying about how it would affect their constituents' voting behavior. Finally, the involvement of the United States, the world's superpower, put a spotlight on the negotiations that increased the pressure for a successful resolution, and the appointment of George Mitchell as chair provided an individual who could see the talks through to the end.

While Mitchell was doubtlessly the right choice to serve as talks chairman, he was by no means the only choice, and his role in relation to the abovementioned factors was in fact rather small. He was more of an institution than an individual, for he represented the United States and the genuine long-standing interests of President Bill Clinton. Moreover, he was one of three chairmen, and he relied on his American staff members in Belfast who had more direct interaction with the talks than Mitchell did. Apart from his status as Clinton's representative, Mitchell's key characteristics were his personal qualities of patience and respect and his significant negotiation experience that came from years of work in the United States Senate. Despite these attributes, however, his involvement in the talks was not without problems: by failing to create time limits for discussion, he contributed to some of the smaller parties' frustration with the process, and his lauded Mitchell Principles did not fare so well when the time came for their application in the course of negotiations. In fact, they created some friction when parties violated or were viewed as having violated the principles and then were not censured for it—for example, when the Alliance Party charged four of the unionist parties with violating the fourth principle and their accusations "were simply disregarded" (Mitchell 72, 75).

Mitchell's most important contribution to the negotiations was his imposition of a deadline by which an agreement had to be reached. His previous experience in Congress gave him the ability to recognize when the moment was right—when the external political environment had shifted to a more accommodating stance, and more crucially, when the resolve of those within the talks had been galvanized by recent events after being shown a glimpse of how their two years' of work could quickly come undone. Mitchell seized this moment and used it to spur negotiators onward. While he may not have fulfilled the traditional concept of a mediator who isolates two sides and acts as a go-between, his final assertion of a deadline nonetheless brought the talks to a negotiated agreement at last, and moreover, it was an agreement has proved tenable in the fourteen years since its signing.

This confluence of events and Mitchell's actions demonstrate the difficulty that confronts a mediator of a conflict deemed "intractable." The success of these talks cannot be attributed to one individual—not Mitchell, not David Trimble, not Tony Blair. The sole actions of one man did not change the course of the Northern Ireland peace process. A favorable environment has to exist, and the desire for resolution must come not only from the political level but from the grassroots level as well. However, at the point that these conditions are in place, it is then that individuals have the opportunity to make decisions that reach far beyond themselves and their era. Mitchell knew this, as did others involved in the talks, and they made the choices that resulted in a peace agreement at last and the chance for Northern Ireland to determine its own future.

APPENDIX A

THE MITCHELL PRINCIPLES

[Governments and parties affirm their commitment]

To democratic and exclusively peaceful means of resolving political issues;

To the total disarmament of all paramilitary organisations;

To agree that such disarmament must be verifiable to the satisfaction of an independent commission;

To renounce for themselves, and to oppose any effort by others, to use force, or threaten to use force, to influence the course or the outcome of all-party negotiations;

To agree to abide by the terms of any agreement reached in all-party negotiations and to resort to democratic and exclusively peaceful methods in trying to alter any aspect of that outcome with which they may disagree; and,

To urge that "punishment" killings and beatings stop and to take effective steps to prevent such actions.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When do you remember first hearing about Bill Clinton/the US becoming interested in mediating or facilitating talks?
2. What do you think was the single most important step in bringing about the ceasefires?
3. Who in your opinion was the most important individual involved in the talks?
4. When do you remember first hearing about George Mitchell?
5. What, if any, were your initial impressions of him? What was your knowledge/impression of US involvement both in this period and earlier?
6. Was Mitchell a subject of popular discussion? When?
7. What do you think was the role of the media in shaping the opposing sides' views of each other? Of George Mitchell? Of the talks themselves?
8. What was your opinion before the agreement and what is your opinion now of the role Mitchell played?
9. What was the importance of the Mitchell Principles?
10. Do you think the Good Friday Agreement could have been negotiated without him? Why or why not?
11. Would there have been an agreement without Mitchell's involvement? If he had not been involved, what would it have looked like?
12. What differences were there between Mitchell/the talks chairmen, and the chairman of the Forum?
13. What was the most important step in moving the parties toward an agreement?
14. Can you cite a particular event (post-1994) that you saw as a "watershed"?
15. Did you ever talk to others about the ceasefires and/or the peace talks?
16. Did you ever notice a shift in tone
    a. In the way people viewed the paramilitaries, or involving Sinn Fein in the talks?
    b. In the popular perception of George Mitchell?
    c. In the popular perception of the US?
17. Do you, personally, remember a point where your view of the negotiations changed?
18. From your point of view, what were the strong points of the talks leading up to the Good Friday Agreement? The weak points? What parts of the agreement could have been improved upon?

19. What in the talks would you have done differently?
20. Who do you think were key players who might have been ignored or downplayed?
21. There were many problems and milestones in the talks. What events both inside and outside the talks were important in the outcome of the talks?
22. To what extent do you agree with the comment that the Good Friday Agreement was "Sunningdale for slow learners"?

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