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THIRD PARTIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND:
EXACERBATION OR AMELIORATION?

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THIRD PARTIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND: EXACERBATION OR AMELIORATION OF CONFLICT?

by

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Abstract

This paper critically evaluates previous third party efforts to impose a consociational power-sharing solution on the peoples of Northern Ireland. Instead, an original and dynamic community based Track II problem-solving linkage system proposes cooperation between Northern Ireland's grass-roots constituents and political elites. This is an attempt to create a mutual beneficial process linking psycho-cultural and structural dimensions by promoting understanding, tolerance, and the sharing of commonalities in belieFs, identity, and behaviors among groups involved in protracted conflict situations.

THIRD PARTIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND: EXACERBATION OR AMELIORATION OF CONFLICT?

1. Introduction

Tensions in Third World nation states have imploded since the end of the Cold War. While dramatic shifts in world power from geo-political to geo-economics have been well documented, few know about the rise in ethnic tensions in the post-Cold War period. Ethnic geo-political conflicts are intensifying: events escalate in divided societies daily, tensions implode in states in Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe, and various political cleavages have ignited local regional nationalisms, leading to violent conflict in states between central governments and separatist ethno-regional movements. There are hundreds of thousands of refugees who have fled war-torn, partitioned and segregated societies such as Rwanda, Bosnia, and the Kashmir.

The rise in ethnic conflicts is one of the critical avenues for scholarly research in the 1990s as the resurgence of micro-nationalism has compelled a drastic rethinking of the assumption that modernization and development would forge diverse ethnic groups into a single entity within the nation state. The renaissance of ethno-nationalism in Northern Ireland during the 1960s, for example, rejuvenated the development of separate ethno-territorial identities. However, the historic election of Nelson Mandela in South Africa and the recent peace accord signed between Israel and the

Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) suggested to the analyst of political events that Northern Ireland would be the next world trouble spot to be the focus of efforts to reach a democratic and peaceful settlement.

The "Framework for Peace" announced by the British Prime Minister (PM) John Major and his Irish counter-part Albert Reynolds last December, includes a promise of no change to the current constitutional position of Northern Ireland without approval of a majority of its citizens. This "Joint Declaration has been instrumental in getting the Provisional IRA leadership to declare a "complete cessation of military operations in Northern Ireland". However, the majority Protestant Unionist community has no idea of what is exactly contained within the "Framework for Peace." Unionists believe that the Provisional IRA has used violence to extract concessions from the British government on Northern Ireland's constitutional position within the United Kingdom (UK).

The Rev. Dr. Ian K. Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), has even gone as far as to accuse both governments of creating a "recipe for civil war" as the Provisional IRA has not declared a permanent cease-fire and the out-lawed Loyalist paramilitary groups have indicated that they will use violence to resist being "coerced or persuaded into an all Ireland." With the specter of a Loyalist back-lash still hanging over the very fragile cease-fire, both governments have served to alienate the Unionist population of

Northern Ireland. The conflict seems intractable and perpetuates itself because national and religious identity issues remain unsettled and are day-to-day concerns (Agnew, 1989; Northrup, 1989; Rose, 1971).

However, sectarian assassinations have increased to such an extent as to allow a "power-gap" to materialize. Does the current constitutional impasse and the war-weariness in the Province suggest that a problem-solving approach could very well succeed? Are both parties to the conflict willing and able to come to the table? This paper critically evaluates previous third-party efforts by the British and Irish governments to find a geo-political solution by imposing a consociational power-sharing solution on both nations in Northern Ireland. Events have recently de-escalated in Northern Ireland so that a new problem-solving approach must be considered in an effort to reach a lasting and just peace. Instead, I propose an original and dynamic community-based problem-solving linkage system between Northern Ireland's grassroots constituents and political elites. It is an attempt to create a mutually beneficial process promoting understanding, tolerance, and the sharing of commonalities in beliefs, identity, and behaviors among geo-political groups involved in protracted conflict situations. This will allow both communities to learn from each other and move from conflict regulation to the institutionalization of conflict (Bar-Siman-Tov, 1994).

2. Grass-Roots Problem-Solving Initiative

Efforts must be made to facilitate Protestants and Catholics working together at the local level, smoothly and productively, learning to accept and respect each others cultural differences thereby alleviating the potential for cultural misunderstanding which will promote a clean line of vision and sense of direction which is sensitive to each others cultural combinations. Efforts must be made to promote positive social attitudes and structural changes between and among both communities in Northern Ireland if improvements in inter-community relations are to develop. Protestants and Catholics must at least learn to interpret one anothers divergent ways of communicating similar messages.

In order to eradicate the causes of entrenched bigotry and sectarianism that exist in Northern Ireland a variety of various strata of contact and cooperation between people at the local and regional levels could counter-act the reluctance of both sides to "chat over the wall" or recognize kinship ties across the sectarian divide (See Sarah Nelson, 1984; and Rosemary Harris, 1972). For example, in Strasbourg, Nationalist and Unionist MEPs vote together on issues that effect the political and economic situation in Northern Ireland.

> Inter-group contact under the right conditions may reduce prejudice, not because it permits and encourages interpersonal friendships between members of different groups, but rather because it changes the nature and structure of the intergroup relation (McWhirter, 1983, 24).

Britain and the Republic are member states within the EU and signatories to the Maastricht treaty and are obliged to obey all directives from Strasbourg and Brussels. A European federation of decentralized and equal regions will erode the insular definition of cultural identity and place limits on absolute autonomy as the pooling of sovereignty ushers in an "erosion of frontiers" between member states and "has radical implications for future relations between the Republic, Northern Ireland and Great Britain," (p.8) "as a community of self-directing regions (relate) in a democratic and equal manner to the other regions of a federal Europe" (Kearney, 1988, 10).

Local regional identity and culture will begin to grow in importance as a European supra-national identity begins to supersede and transcend a national identity as more political attention will focus on Brussels rather than London or Dublin. For example, June 1991 saw the development of a Community Connections organization to develop cross-Border economic and community development between community groups in West Cavan and North Leitrim in the Irish Republic and West Fermanagh in Ulster. Jenny Hopkins from the Regional Policy Department of the European Commission stated that this is a part of a European Union initiative "to break down the unnecessary border mentality that sometimes occurs and is entirely in the spirit that the Commission wanted to see coming forward that of communities on borders working together for their region"

(The Impartial Reporter, 1991, 12).

Such a prospect of more regional autonomy will gradually erode the border between Northern and Southern Ireland and will also alleviate frontier tensions between Spain and France over the separatist Basque region as each region will be able to defend its sovereignty and independence against the entanglement of central government.

> Such a unity in diversity would help to fulfil the deepest ideals of the founding fathers of the European Community by removing one of the major causes of human conflict - the non-recognition, undervaluing, neglect and even elimination of the identity of peoples (Hume, 1988, 48).

3. Forum Formation: Principle Political Actors Involved

Irwin (1991) writes:

> Although it would be quite wrong to place the responsibility of reducing the level of conflict in Northern Ireland, or anywhere else, on the education system alone, I do wish to suggest that integrated education plays a very special role in this process, as it can change the character and weave of a community's social fabric, while other political and economic actions can only hope to reshape the social fabric that is given (p.91).

It would be naive to assume that integrated education on its own would heal the deep psycho-cultural wounds that permeate every level of society in Northern Ireland. A political process that attempts to change the political structure may prove a potentially useful foil to support perceptual changes in the psycho-cultural dimension. The political culture of Northern Ireland is usually surmised as being polarized along religious-nationalist lines. The traditional Protestant-

Catholic cleavage is buttressed by the underlying attachment of two distinct and separate nationalist identifications-- British and Irish. This separation is further accentuated by the fact that Ulster's political parties are almost solely bolstered by members of either one or the other religious community. The Official Unionist party (OUP) and Democratic Unionist party (DUP) are almost entirely dependent on Protestant support while the Socialist Democratic and Labor Party (SDLP) is almost exclusively Catholic. A small non-sectarian liberal Alliance party straddles the ethno-religious communal divide.

NATIONALIST/REPUBLICAN	MIDDLE-GROUND	UNIONIST/LOYALIST
* SDLP	* ALLIANCE	* OUP
* SINN FEIN		* DUP

The Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), and the Irish People's Liberation Army (IPLO) are the primary Republican paramilitary organizations that seek "to shake off British rule" and establish a 32 county socialist Republic. The Ulster Defence Association (UDA), the Protestant Action Force (PAF), the Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF), and the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) are the principal Loyalist paramilitary groups that wish to preserve the constitutional status of Northern Ireland against Catholic nationalists, who continually plot to usurp and overthrow the state.

REPUBLICAN PARAMILITARIES	LOYALIST PARAMILITARIES
* PIRA	* UDA
* INLA	* PAF
* IPLO	* UFF
	* UVF

4. Analysis and Assessment of the Dispute: Substance, Maturity, and Inter-Community Relations

The underlying reality in the case of Northern Ireland is the reproduction of the state. Northern Ireland's constitutional position serves to drive an ideological wedge between both communities.   Ideology   itself   is   a   reflection   and interpretation of reality and corresponds to what individuals, whether Catholic or Protestant, experience in their daily lives. Thus, rather than simply structuring experience it is shaped by it.   Catholics in Northern Ireland represent a threat to Protestants not merely economically but politically and religiously as well. It was this threat that shaped the ideology of Protestants, not the other way around.

There is also the danger of placing too much emphasis on the importance of fear, misunderstanding and the idea that continued contact can eventually ameliorate "those forces which drive each other apart" (Hunter, 1983, 53). This is because the underlying reality remains intact. In the first place, while Protestants and Catholics do hold exaggerated

fears of each other, this cannot be overcome while both communities remain divided over the legitimacy of the state. The Northern Ireland state was founded with Protestant opposition to a united Ireland. It generated support for the link with Britain and Protestants supported the Northern Ireland parliament (Stormont) for the maintenance of their economic system. But of equal if not greater importance was the desire to maintain political and religious freedom. Richard Rose (1971) concludes that the conflict in Northern Ireland is intractable precisely because it is not about economic issues but about non-bargainable issues of religion and nationality. "There is little scope for politicians to lead people along class lines" (Rose, 1971, 388).

There have been periods in the 1930s and 1960s, however, when the Protestant and Catholic working-classes have cooperated with each other as the border question decreased in significance. Consequently, there is scope and latitude to change the perception that politics in Ulster is a "zero-sum" rather than a "win-win" situation, if the constitutional question is firmly dealt with.

5. Designing the Mediation Process

Both communities in Northern Ireland have immensely powerful kinship, class, religious and residential ties which assist in forging a strong sense of solidarity within each respective community. The idea is to formulate a long-term intermediate

process that will promote frequent contact between members of both communities at all levels. British policy has failed to deal with the structural conflict as any intervention made has been surgical. Therefore, the conflict has continued, since the situation and incentives remain the same. "The British soldier on, maintaining a compromise which embitters nationalists without reassuring unionists. Like unionists and nationalists, they find themselves constrained to follow a policy which keeps the conflict alive," as the policies pursued and the psychological and political pressures undermine any movement towards social and political change (Whyte, 1981, 434).

The situation seems consummate for a dispute systems design. It would be an impossible task to eliminate the underlying religious, and psycho-cultural conflicts between Protestants and Catholics overnight as they are too deep-rooted. These social and cultural factors reflect the political structure. The goals of a dispute systems design will be, first of all, to identify the functions served by the power contests and secondly, to design a means of fulfilling those functions at lower cost to the parties. The aim is not to settle the conflict but to change the relationship between both groups.

Girvin (1986) writes that "agreement can only be achieved when the Nationalist and Unionist communities in Northern Ireland accept a particular and mutually agreeable

formula for the government of the area" (p.165). Consequently, there is a need to create conditions which will promote integrated education, devolved regional government and frequent contact situations among members of the populace. These structural and psycho-cultural incentives may eventually lead to the eventual dissolution of sectarianism, by promoting a program of affirmative action and accommodationist politics and by closely pursuing "intermediate objectives" or "proceeding by small steps" (Whyte, 1990, 237).

The OUP document The Way Forward (1984) proposes just that:

> The Ulster Unionist Party, in putting forward this document for discussion, is proposing a policy whereby reconciliation and participation of all sections of the community can be attempted **from the bottom up and not imposed from the top down.** The object is for all representatives to participate in government in those areas which affect citizens daily lives and concerning which the resolution of conflict may be more feasible than on those involving the future of Northern Ireland (p.3).

This will necessitate building a problem-solving relationship in which both sides will be assisted by interest-based negotiation in gradually moving towards a real internal agreement in Ulster over the constitutional crisis. The process will foster better relations and cooperation between both communities on the economic and political as well as the psycho-cultural spheres. It will also necessitate increasing both parties motivation, skills and resources. Problem-solving negotiation will give Protestants and Catholics a sense of control over the outcome and a substantial voice in

the process.   As Ury et al. (1988) contend: "Problem-solving

negotiation involves a great deal of mutual persuasion and

accommodation, and seeks a mutually satisfactory outcome" (p.

110).

6. Effects of Previous Intervention: Hillsborough Accord

Contrary to the expectations of optimistic savants, British

policy towards Northern Ireland has been an attempt to export

British ideas wholesale to a different cultural territory

instead of adapting a broad strategy to local conditions. The

immobility of the current Joint Declaration to instigate a

devolved power-sharing executive in Northern Ireland suggests

that it is now a particularly apt time to analyze its

precursor, and main driving force behind current efforts to

bring both parties to the table, the historic bi-lateral pact

signed between the British and Irish governments.   The

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Tom King stated in

the House of Commons after the internationally binding

bilateral Accord had been signed:

> Of course, no single agreement can solve all the
> problems of Northern Ireland, but our hope is that
> this agreement will provide a basis on which we can
> build greater co-operation and trust between the
> two communities, and between the United Kingdom and
> the Republic as well (House of Commons Minutes,
> 1985, 800).

The Agreement, shrewdly drafted, cogently sets out the

current status of Northern Ireland as part of the Kingdom of

Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as previously defined by

successive British governments and indeed, by the British parliament, in Section one of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act of 1976. However, the Accord,

> refers to acceptance of the "current status" of Northern Ireland but this current status is nowhere defined. This is simply to ensure that the Agreement does not conflict with the Republic's juridical claim to sovereignty over Northern Ireland as defined in its constitution (Bew and Patterson, 1987, 42).

As accepted by the Irish Taoiseach (Prime Minister) and the British Prime Minister, Section A, Article 1 (a)(b) of the Agreement means that for the first time in history, an Irish government is prepared to recognize in an internationally binding agreement that, "Ireland would remain divided as long as Northern Unionists desired it to be" (Rolston, 1987, 68). The **legal implication** of this Accord must also be considered in relation to the provisions of the Constitution of Ireland. Article two of Bunnreacht na hEireann (Irish Constitution) declares the "National territory to consist, inter-alia, of the whole island of Ireland." Article three sets out the right of the Oireachtas (Irish Parliament) and government "to exercise jurisdiction over the whole of the territory." As O'Leary (1987) astutely points out:

> The Anglo-Irish Agreement does not represent the **de jure** abandonment of the Irish Republic's constitutional claim to Northern Ireland (but it does) represent the **de facto** abandonment of Irish unification as a policy goal of Fine Gael and the Irish Labour Party (and it) binds the Irish Republic to a constitutional mode of reunification which is known to be practically infeasible and therefore facilitates the end of the Nationalist monolith in the Republic's politics (pp. 6-7).

The Treaty, guaranteeing as it does that there will be **no change in the current status** (Constitution or otherwise) of Northern Ireland, save with the consent of the Unionist majority reflects in precise form, what has been called the "British guarantee" to the Unionists, and therefore, incorporates a clearly defined veto for the majority.

> The value of the British "guarantee" is also undermined by the doctrine of parliamentary sovereignty whereby no parliament can bind its successor. This fact is particularly important as the main opposition party at Westminster is committed to the reunification of Ireland (McGarry, 1988, 239).

For external guarantors to make a positive contribution to conflict resolution they must, paradoxically, either wield a phenomenal amount of power and responsibility or none at all. In other words, the guarantor must either have the willingness and ability to intervene to uphold whatever it has guaranteed or must be so weak and uninterested as to have no influence within the "ethnic frontier." Thus, the Anglo-Irish Agreement was an attempt to establish a framework to dragoon both sides into getting together to form some kind of devolved power-sharing executive and to guarantee Northern Ireland from British and Irish mainstream politics. Sovereignty was retained by one of the guarantors, Britain. This, in fact, has been a matter of debate since both the conclusion of the majority in the Kilbrandon Report (1984) and one of the models set out in the Forum Report (1984) was of joint sovereignty or **joint authority** between the British and Irish governments

thus, giving full recognition to the minority's nationalist aspirations rather than the "token" gesture of a **consultative** role as set out in the Hillsborough Accord. Bew and Patterson (1985) assert that:

> if Britain were finally to break with the policy of trying to secure Catholic support by holding out hopes of an Irish dimension with no substance to it, they would not only help to clarify the issues in a positive way, but also remove the uncertainty on which the Democratic Unionist party and the PIRA thrive (p. 133).

The snag in not implementing **joint sovereignty** or **condominium** is that it means that the Irish government has to have complete faith in the British government to impose what is agreed at conference level, and in this way can be seen by the Catholic community as playing a lesser role. However, given the Loyalist response to what was agreed, it could be argued that joint authority would have quickly proved totally unworkable. Certainly, some of the suggestions in Chapter 12 of the Kilbrandon inquiry seemed to be overly hopeful of Unionist co-operation in something which is probably not in their interests. Once involved the external guarantors may find it impossible to stop themselves being dragged into the conflict situation. This is what happened to Greece, Turkey, and Britain in the case of Cyprus after the collapse of the 1960 Constitution.

The Hillsborough Accord was registered with the **United Nations** and is a recognized Accord between two sovereign powers and as such it could not be reneged on without serious

consequences. The International Fund set up by the British and Irish governments received financial aid from the USA ($50 million), Canada ($10 million), New Zealand and the EC which has "locked the two Governments into the Agreement through the embarrassment they would suffer internationally if either repudiated what international opinion had endorsed with their encouragement" (Guelke, 1988, 162). However, what the British did not realize was that it clearly had the advantage over the Sunningdale Agreement of 1973, in that the Agreement would not easily be brought down by internal forces finding the institutions unworkable; they as guarantors "on the Unionist side" were and are not seen as such by Unionists. In other words, the relations between the Ulster-British to the British became so poor after the Accord that Britain is in no way perceived as their concrete guarantor. O'Malley (1983) neatly encapsulates this point: "None of the parties to the conflict trusts Britain, and with good cause. Because she will not declare herself, no one knows where she stands" (p. 254).

From the **Unionist perspective**, the whole process and the manner in which it was negotiated, has marked the beginning of the "sell-out" of their interests to the Free State government and as the thin end of a wedge down the "slippery slope" to Irish unification. Therefore, now more than ever Unionists feel that their backs are against the wall, their fear and feelings of insecurity and betrayal will ensure that they give "not an inch," which in turn undermines

their absolute trust in Westminster.   Mr. Neil Kinnock, the leader of the British Labor party, voiced his opinion on the Accord stating:

> The cause of this agreement would have been better served if she (Mrs. Thatcher) had taken the advice of my right honourable and learned friend, the member of Warley-West (Mr. Archer) and my honourable friend for Hammersmith (Mr. Sorley) last year when they asked her to try to spell out to the Unionist communities what there intentions were in developing the relationship with the Dublin government. That might not have assuaged all fears, it might not have silenced the shouts, but it would have been evidence of trust and consultation which could have provided an essential credential for the agreement now (House of Commons Minutes, 1985, 755).

The Thatcherite government tried to reassure the Unionists that the British Parliament would make all the final decisions for Northern Ireland.   The Parliamentary-under-secretary for Northern Ireland stated in the Commons:

> The fears of the Unionists are addressed by guarantees about the status of Northern Ireland and the recognition that at the moment there is no consent. British Ministers will have to make the decisions on matters affecting life North of the border, while it remains for Irish Ministers to take decisions affecting matters South of the border (House of Commons Minutes, 1985, 964).

The Agreement, however, by not allowing more scope for positive negotiations with the Nationalist minority has made the Unionist position more intransigent and "is a recipe for sectarian confrontation" (Bew and Patterson, 1987, 56). Their fears and feelings of insecurity and betrayal by the British government has ensured that they will give "not an inch." The Agreement has put an end to Protestant supremacy, but has

placed Protestant identity on an even par with Catholic identity. The Accord effectively ended any attempts at dialogue and mutual accommodation as a result of inducing these feelings in the Unionist bloc as "the liberals and the neanderthals make common cause" (Bew and Patterson, 1987, 45). Unionists perceive that the Accord is against their interests and, indeed, due to their lack of input, as unjust.

> The Hong Kong and Gibraltar cases are most obviously relevant to Unionist anxieties that the British government will seek to use the Anglo-Irish Agreement to lever the Province into a position where a majority can be induced to acquiesce in a united Ireland. Such anxieties tend to produce an accentuation of the sectarian divide as, in the last resort, the solidarity of the Protestant community is seen as the most reliable barrier to the construction of consent to a united Ireland (Guelke, 1988, 106).

Perhaps, one virtue of the Agreement is that it has made very clear that any return to Stormont-type rule is not a viable alternative. If the Accord is to allow a consociation type system to be set up there will have to be great changes in attitudes, changes which the external mediators (the British and Irish governments) seem not to be able to induce with either "sticks" or "carrots."

Interests based procedures such as problem-solving negotiation are non-existent in Northern Ireland. The procedures used either focus on rights such as **voluntary consociation** by the British government, or on power such as **coercive consociationalism** (O'Leary and McGarry, 1993). The Agreement "was designed to change the structure of the

incentives facing the elites of both blocs, to encourage elite autonomy within Northern Ireland's political parties, and, by shifting the political terrain, to allow the 'unthinkable' to be thought" (O'Leary, 1989, 580).

O'Leary (1987) claims that, "the Accord symbolically establishes the constitutional equality of the Northern Irish minority" (p.15). The problem with this international agreement however, seems to be that it was seen by part of the **nationalist community** as in their interest up to a point and was dismissed by Sinn Fein supporters as a "paper tiger." First of all, the Agreement did not made any concrete reforms in areas most affecting the nationalist community--the legal, security and economic structures. Bew and Patterson (1988) note: "Expectations have been raised in the nationalist community which have not been satisfied in part, because of the Agreement's focus on the symbolic and cultural basis of national alienation rather than the economic and material basis" (p. 81).

The RUC and the UDR were not reformed so as to be acceptable to nationalists. Attitudes to the security forces have been deeply ingrained in nationalist's minds. However, the initial clashes between ultra-Loyalists and the RUC, in the wake of the Agreement, made the RUC more acceptable to the minority, although probably because of the old philosophy which makes the whole Agreement agreeable, that is, "my enemy's enemy is my friend." This follows the trend of

previous British constitutional initiatives; reforms and concessions are much talked of but never implemented. It has done nothing substantial for Nationalists but has made the Unionist position more intransigent, inducing the feeling of "we will not give an inch" in Unionists, thereby worsening relations between the two communities.

From the Republic of Ireland's point of view, Dr. FitzGerald felt that the Agreement meant that for the first time the British government not only accepted the **Nationalist aspiration** to unity but would in the event of such an occurrence, assist in bringing it about. The recognition of the right of the people in the six counties to remain a part of the United Kingdom until a majority of the populace voted otherwise, was a fairly acceptable price to pay for a consultative role in the governing of Northern Ireland. "The Agreement clearly gives the Republic more than an advisory role in Northern Ireland although not an executive say. In effect, the Republic has gained a legal right, in international law, to be involved in determining central issues," (Girvin, 1986, 159) "if not power without responsibility, at least to influence without much responsibility" (Cox, 1987, 91).

A substantial and evolving **Irish dimension** was achieved, enough to satisfy the constitutional minority party--the SDLP. It must be pointed out that while public opinion in the Republic may aspire to unity, the citizens of the Irish

Republic are more concerned with bread and butter issues than with a financially worse off bankrupt united Ireland. Mair (1987) astutely writes:

> The emergence of a new nationalism (based around pragmatic economic self-respect) which derives its legitimacy from the 26-county state itself has necessarily eroded the ideological relevance of strictly irredentist nationalism, and although mainstream political rhetoric still pays obeisance to anti-partitionism, the demand for and commitment to Irish unity has lost much of its political appeal (p. 86).

Although the Agreement allowed for the setting up of a permanent mechanism--the **inter-governmental conference** (IGC) and a permanent secretariat, full responsibility for the decisions and administration of government remains with the United Kingdom (UK). Therefore, the Agreement has the advantage of insulating domestic politics in Britain and Ireland from Northern Ireland's "troubles," thereby,

> reducing the danger that opinion in either the UK mainland or the Republic will be **magnetised** by the protagonists in the conflict. In Britain's case this was strongly underlined by the failure of Unionist protests against the Agreement to evoke a sympathetic response. Indeed, the more violently Loyalists protested against the Agreement, the stronger was the desire of British opinion that the province be kept at arms length and the tighter the grip of the Agreement became (Guelke, 1988, 100).

The Irish government will be able to put forward views and proposals in the conference on stated aspects of Northern Ireland affairs, but matters pertaining to the administration of Northern Ireland, or the position of Nationalists there, remains in the hands of the British government. "The British government did not surrender their sovereignty over the North"

(Rolston, 1987, 67). According to the Accord, the government of the Irish Republic is representative of Northern Nationalists. But it has not given the South a new role because it has always been able to make its views on policy in the six counties known to the British government.

The important question is what influence, if any, can the Southern government really have on British policy-making in Northern Ireland? The British government was quite correct in reassuring Unionists that they will make all final decisions. "The British have sovereignty, but no territorial claim. The Irish have a territorial claim but no sovereignty" (Cox, 1987, 87).

How much influence, or how much pressure can the Republic's government bring to bear on Westminster when it does not have any financial backing to support its proposals? Britain holds the purse strings, therefore, ultimately decides policy. Rather than helping Nationalists, the Irish government's involvement has been perceived as helping to cement British rule in Northern Ireland, curbing British international embarrassment, promoting close cross-border security cooperation and in recognizing the legitimacy of Northern Ireland as part of the British Union. The Irish government· by its involvement in the inter-governmental conference is seen as condoning British policy and the Agreement has been dismissed as a paper-tiger by many Nationalists. The South has no real power to influence policy

decisions in Northern Ireland (See Bill Rolston, 1987, 70-75).

On the other hand, one could argue, that the Accord at last recognized that greater involvement of the Irish government in the enforcement of law against terrorist crimes could not be expected by the British government unless it was willing to allow the Republic to be involved to some degree in matters other than security which affect the welfare of the minority community in Northern Ireland. The Accord faces up to the fact that "without some kind of authority that depends on both the British and Irish governments, there will be no authority in Northern Ireland at all" (p. xiv) since "conflicting sovereignty claims to disputed nationality zones are inherently unresolvable" (Wright, 1988, 220).

In the **SDLP** opinion, it was the culmination of a campaign to have an Irish dimension recognized while simultaneously having the road to an internal devolved power-sharing government within the six counties re-established in order to reverse the political rise of Sinn Fein. As the leader of the SDLP, John Hume stated: "The conflict is not between Unionism and Nationalism, between Britain and Ireland, or still less, between Protestantism and Catholicism. It is a struggle between those who believe in the political process, and those who do not" (Arthur, 1986, 14).

The decrease in support for both PIRA and Sinn Fein were not a long term phenomenon as the initial popularity boost for the SDLP could not be sustained by empty promises

and no reforms. Rolston (1987), and Bew and Patterson (1987) note the failure of the Agreement to prop up the constitutional nationalism of the SDLP because it did not deliver a fraction of the benefits initially desired. Rolston (1987) writes: "The changes have been few, and those which have occurred have been presented by the British as having been planned prior to and/or independently of the Anglo-Irish process" (p. 74). There has been no change in the economic position of Nationalists, which decreased their faith in the Accord, and in the SDLP, damaging the SDLP's political career somewhat, but not enough to cause total disillusionment and a nationalist shift to Sinn Fein as the only alternative. Rolston (1987) on the other hand argues that,

> Sinn Fein's solid base in nationalist working-class communities is an important source of electoral support (and) this base in the community ensures Sinn Fein of a potential vote in excess of the militant Republican section of Northern nationalism. Some nationalists vote Sinn Fein because of its links with the IRA, while others can continue to vote Sinn Fein despite these links (p.65).

The failure of the Hillsborough Accord to achieve peace and reconciliation could only increase cynicism over the success of the 1991 **Brooke initiative** to set-up a devolved consociational arrangement in Northern Ireland.

Wright (1988) counsels that the bi-lateral Accord has "changed the situation irrevocably" in Ulster as it may permit the emergence of an internal legitimate power-sharing arrangement to gradually develop under the tutelage of both

the British and Irish governments.   Moxon-Browne· (1983) however, cautions against seeking a final settlement:

> There is a strong case for trying to create an atmosphere where the problems themselves either change, or become redefined. To seek a solution to the Northern Ireland problem is to pursue a mirage in the desert: a better ploy would be to irrigate the desert until the landscape looks more inviting (p.178).

7. *Previous Third Party Policy:Who Should the Third Party Be?*

What should the composition of a third party be and why? British policy since 1969 has undergone many changes in direction corresponding to changing British conceptions of the conflict.   One factor has remained consistent however, the continued reluctance of Britain to get involved fully or whole-heartedly in the Northern Ireland problem. The British government has tried consistently to extricate herself and failing this to decrease her involvement and costs. Therefore, in Northern Ireland, the "external" mediator, Britain, can be seen as the cause of the ethnic conflict and yet also the restraining factor that prevents an extreme escalation of the level of violence.

On the other hand, British policy since 1972 has done much to foster division and sectarian conflict, as it has been one long series of bungles, mistakes and miscalculations (Bew and Patterson, 1985).   It could correctly be described as being basically "crisis management", i.e., ad-hoc measures being introduced as the situation arose but without regard to

their long-term effects. The problem with British policy in Northern Ireland is that it has been an attempt to apply British solutions to an Irish problem. However, it has to be pointed out that British efforts "to do something in Ireland," will always be fraught with difficulties and any intervention she makes, as with the case of Cyprus, cannot be surgical, its effects are incalculable. Hence, it would appear that the external guarantor, once "locked into" the antagonism not only finds it difficult to unilaterally decide to "pull out" but is soon in a position in which the "ethnic leaders" are unable to bar him from intervening in the dispute.

British policy since the conception of the 'Ulster crisis' has done nothing to eradicate sectarianism and perhaps has made it even more severe; nor has policy assisted in changing the economic and structural inequalities between Catholics and Protestants. The legal and judicial process has not yet been reformed, the security forces have not become acceptable to the Nationalist community and the Agreement-- "direct rule with a green tinge"--has failed to decrease support for Sinn Fein and the PIRA. Britain has provided cosmetic concessions but no real reforms (Bew and Patterson, 1988, 78).

Therefore, external forces can come into play as either potential creators of some sort of "tranquility", preventing widespread communal violence by providing the glue to prevent complete social division, or catalysts for the spiral into

ultimate chaos. Of course, there are other, more "local" reasons why a situation of mutual hostility may be kept below the surface and not allowed to deteriorate beyond a certain point. For example, Esman, writing about Malay-Chinese relations in Malaysia states:

> The communities co-exist in a condition of precarious mutual deterrence or unstable equilibrium. Since each community is in a position both to defend itself and to inflict unacceptable damage on the other, there are strong incentives, particularly among leadership elements, to pursue policies of peaceful, if competitive co-existence and mutual, if competitive accommodation. Neither community, not withstanding the fantacies of their more chauvinistic members, is strong enough to expel or destroy the other without risking heavy punishment on itself (Boal and Douglas, 1982, 347).

The relationship described above can be held to exist in any state where one community is unable to completely subordinate the other without inflicting on itself unacceptable costs (Which is a reason to promote forms of mutual cooperation).

British policy since 1969 has been aptly summarized by Bew and Patterson (1985) when they contend that its effect has been "to manipulate and domesticate rather than transform or eradicate" (p. 177). Therefore, one can but question the sincerity of those involved in the policy-making process as actions are taken due to self-interests, and the pressures of international opinion rather than of genuine concern over the existing situation.

> As a result of the failure of successive British political initiatives, the British state came to appear less as a positive political presence within the province, standing above the centrifugal forces of sectarianism, than as a weak intermediary unable

to impose its will and too vulnerable to pressure
to seem neutral (Guelke, 1988, 107).

Therefore, the multiple guarantors/arbitrators, in this instance the British and Irish governments, have not ameliorated but have rather exacerbated sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland. Both governments do not fully understand the nature of the conflict or realize that a solution cannot be injected or transplanted from outside no matter how well meaning the intervenor. Hence, the values of both governments have not been effective in helping both communities resolve their disputes equitably and without violence. The move toward reconciliation must come from all parties within the Province. As the Loyalist paramilitary UDA assert in their Common Sense: Northern Ireland, An Agreed Process document of 1987:

> The (Anglo-Irish) Accord will not bring peace,
> stability nor reconciliation to Northern Ireland
> because it is a contract between two governments
> and not an agreement between those in the cockpit
> of the conflict - Ulster Protestants and Ulster
> Catholics (p. i).

8. The Third Party

As a result of the Single European Act and the Maastricht treaty, the sovereignty of each member state begins to disappear as the Council of Ministers possess the ultimate veto power in all EU matters. With the power of ultimate veto eliminated, no state will be in a position to delay EU legislation which will be binding on all parties. The

elimination of political borders will assist in decreasing the division between both communities over the legitimacy of the state.

Therefore, the Northern Ireland region will come more and more under the auspices of the Council of Ministers who will dictate policies and allocate budgets, etc. It is logical, therefore, for a mediation team to comprise of the three Northern Ireland MEPs--Jim Nicholson OUP, John Hume SDLP, Revd. Dr. Ian Paisley DUP--and four other members from the European parliament. Having four MEPs--two each from Belgian and the Netherlands--from outside of the Province will reinforce the legitimacy of the mediation team and prevent any opposition from the DUP or Sinn Fein. These "neutral" MEPs are familiar with the communal divisions and power-sharing mechanisms which led to successful political accommodation in their own respectful divided societies.

This mediation team will have the knowledge and ability therefore, to assist both parties in identifying the issues of importance to change the direction, mode and base of the dispute, and would be honest, objective and fair as to be acceptable to both parties. O'Leary (1989) has written:

> European arbitrators of interests in Northern Ireland are less likely to be regarded as enemies of either segment and greater European integration will make the differences between membership of the British and Irish states less salient over time. Such developments will not provide a panacea for Northern Ireland but will make consociation more rather than less feasible (p. 586).

Therefore, escalating conflict costs may ensure that

pressures to reach a problem-solving solution may be stronger. It would be the purpose of the European mediation team to facilitate this process.

8. In What Environment Should the Mediation Process Be Set?

This phase of the design process can be accomplished in three stages. First of all, the representatives of each political party should meet with the mediation team outside the Province every six months. This would allow for a more constructive negotiation and improve the prospects for success. Second, the interaction between these representatives and their "grass roots" based constituents at County Council level (local government) will allow for a strategically important input from the latter. The focus will be on an interests-based approach as it will "help parties identify which issues are of greater concern to one than to the other" (Ury et al., 1988, 13). Finally, Loyalist and Republican paramilitary organizations should meet on an informal basis. Their contribution will be vital as they possess the power to "pull-the-plug" on any type of negotiated settlement that they are not included in.

THIRD PARTY FACILITATOR

* Three MEPs from Northern Ireland and four MEPs from Belgium and the Netherlands.

PARTIES AT THE TABLE

NATIONALIST/REPUBLICAN	MIDDLE-GROUND	UNIONIST/LOYALIST
* SDLP	* ALLIANCE	* OUP
* SINN FEIN		* DUP

CLUSTER 1	CLUSTER 2
COUNTY COUNCIL	REPUBLICAN/LOYALIST PARAMILITARIES
* NATIONALIST/UNIONIST	* PIRA/INLA/IPLO
GRASS ROOTS REPRESENTATION	* UDA/PAC/UFF/UVF

9. Criteria Necessary for Intervention: Interests

What interests will be satisfied if a process is to be put in place which will allow a framework to develop a solution? Ulster Protestants and Ulster Catholics, first of all, have to be reassured that a problem-solving initiative will focus on their interests, decrease inter-community strife, violence and polarization, and allow the team of MEPs to act as facilitators and not arbitrators in this process. It is important that the parties concerned have confidence in the mediation team knowing that they will not be manipulated by external governmental intervention. Secondly, both the

British and Irish governments have to made aware (in view of their past history) that any involvement by either party will increase tensions and polarization, leading to a break-down in negotiation. Finally, the MEPs can learn much about conflict management through their involvement as third party mediator in facilitating both parties in Northern Ireland. The MEPs can use this knowledge in applying conflict management approaches to other ethno-territorial conflicts (Basque and Corsican) within the EU.

10. *Who Will Sit At The Table?*

Who are the parties that will sit at the table? Who will decide on the eligibility of the participants? The progressive UDA document <u>Common Sense</u> (1987) states:

> The increased exposure and examination of Southern Irish society has further increased disillusionment for Ulster Catholics in the prospect of a united Ireland. At the same time Ulster Protestants recognize the need for a reasonable and acceptable alternative to the Agreement. They recognize that it is not enough to simply say no (p.ii).

Therefore, a not insubstantial number of Unionists and Nationalists realize that any process for reconciliation must come from within Ulster. It is imperative therefore, that all social, political and paramilitary forces in Northern Ireland have an input into the agenda and all procedural matters. No segment of either population should be ineligible for participation as any likely outcome will effect the status and future of all Ulstermen and women. As Bradley (1988) astutely

observes, the first step in the "alligator analysis" is in "determining the parties who have power to make something happen and the parties with the power to block it, and (make) sure that all these parties are involved from the start" (p. 52).

The history of Northern Ireland has demonstrated that any one party has the ability to "take-down" any policy initiative that they are not a party to or which undermines their interests. The key, therefore, in this approach is to include all disputing parties that could contribute to or block this process.

11. *Party Representation*

It may be that the principal Unionist and Nationalist constitutional parties may not wish to sit at the table with Sinn Fein or any other paramilitary group who refuse to renounce violence and terrorism. However, Sinn Fein has argued that any movement towards the ending of sectarian conflict must come from grass-roots Protestant and Catholic workers. Sinn Fein has sought and received support from the left of the British Labor party to initiate a complete British withdrawal from Northern Ireland (see Bew and Patterson, 1985). Similarly, the Loyalist UDA have acknowledged that the pragmatic road to change must involve both traditions coming together to "co-determine the nature of their society; how it would be shaped, and how it would be governed" (Common Sense,

1987, 4).

It is important not to alienate the Republican and Loyalist paramilitary groups by denying the cogency and legitimacy of their political world view and, therefore, important contributions and input into the actual process.

A case could be made for allowing the British and Irish governments to have an observer role during the stages of negotiation. However, the Joint Declaration has clearly shown that any constitutional initiative which has involved either party in the last 21 years has failed dismally, escalating rather than de-escalating events. In order for the process to have any chance of success therefore, it would be wise to exclude both governments from the actual process. The British government retains sovereignty and holds the tenants of power.

SUMMARY

1. <u>Third party facilitator:</u> **TEAM OF SEVEN EURO. MEPs**

2. <u>Parties:</u> **NATIONALIST/REPUBLICAN** - SDLP and SINN FEIN;

        UNIONIST/LOYALIST - OUP and DUP;

        MIDDLE-GROUND - ALLIANCE PARTY.

3. <u>Clusters</u> **COUNTY COUNCILS** - GRASS-ROOTS BASED CONSTITUENTS;

        REPUBLICAN PARAMILITARIES - PIRA and INLA;

        LOYALIST PARAMILITARIES - UDA, PAC, UFF and UVF

12. *Setting/Forum*

Bercovitch (1984) contends that "the setting for intervention

must be physically apart from the location of the conflict" (p. 29). The setting must be neutral, informal and flexible so as not to favor either party. This will allow for the right psychological climate to develop which will decrease stress and tension, and permit both parties to explore a problem-solving interests based negotiation with fresh confidence as to its credibility.

The site itself is very important as it must be neutral, comfortable and spacious as to lead to a situational balance of power. A luxury hotel in Brussels would be most appropriate for the MEPs and members of the political parties; the Loyalist and Republican paramilitaries can use the offices of the Students Union at Queen's University; while the spatial features of the local County Council offices will comfortably facilitate the interaction of grass-roots based constituents. The milieu will be arranged so as to maximize proximity, and side by side seating is deemed more preferable to the conventional face to face seating. It is surmised that each individual party will sit together. Depending on the size of the participating group, no form of identification is necessary. Finally, writing material will be provided.

13. *Time/ Timing*

When should each conference take place? How often should they meet? Is there an optimum time for settlement? Both parties should decide when and how often the main conferences and any

other clusters should meet.   However, the first conference

should meet before Christmas--a neutral and non-symbolic event

in Northern Ireland.   Both disputing parties should not be

rushed through the stages of mediation.   It is important

therefore, that the third party be responsive to the needs and

wishes of both groups.

14. *The Process*

How do we get the parties to the table, get them to buy into

the forum and accept one another's participation?   Bew and

Patterson (1988) argue that, "any constitutional shell which

might reduce the divisions in Ulster ought to be considered

seriously" (p. 80).   Before the process could begin, the

British and Irish Governments would have to implement the

following eight policy proposals as an incentive package to

get all parties to sit at the table:

> The UDAs Common Sense document of 1987 proposes: **1)**
> A devolved power-sharing executive instead of the
> Hillsborough Accord which is designed to avoid the
> institutionalisation of sectarian divisions by
> allocating seats to Stormont (Parliament) in
> proportion to the number of votes cast for each
> individual party in the Province.
>
> **2)** A Bill of Rights, a Supreme Court charged with
> the upholding the Constitution and the rights of
> each individual and the institution of referenda
> would contribute to peaceful change despite strong
> sub-cultural segmentation in the political system.
>
> **3)** A Constitution to be implemented by a two-third
> majority in a referendum would eradicate sectarian
> divisions and center political cleavages around
> class and socio-economic issues as the enactment of
> a Constitution for Northern Ireland would "remove
> the   Constitutional   uncertainty"   of   Northern

Ireland's position within the United Kingdom.

These policies would allow Protestants and Catholics to agree together on a set of Constitutional laws "which would lay the foundations on which to build a new progressive democracy" and a transcendent Ulster identity (p. 2). <u>Common Sense</u> concludes:

> The fact that Northern Ireland's "status" within the United Kingdom could not be changed without the consent of at least two-thirds of those voting in a referendum would raise the siege on "Ulster Protestants" and create a new atmosphere of security and stability conducive to reconciliation and political development. A Northern Ireland existing by consent would remove the need to constantly defend the psychological borders (p. 8).

The following points must also be included by both governments if we are to have a lasting and just peace between both communities in Northern Ireland:

> **4)** The Anglo-Irish Agreement and the Inter-Governmental Conference are to be suspended, the irredentist Articles 2 and 3 of the Republic's Constitution amended and the "border poll" is to be reintroduced as a demonstration of "good will" and incentive for Unionists to forge a "deal" with the Nationalist minority. It is the "over determination of democratic and reformist objectives by Nationalist objectives that undermines liberal and accommodationist currents within Unionism" (Bew and Patterson, 1987, 46).

> **5)** Power-sharing to be introduced in local government (County Council) with the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) ultimately deciding policy if consensus is not met on any particular issue by both traditions. This move would also provide a caveat--promoting cooperation in both non-political and political spheres between local communities at grass-roots level.

As O'Donnell (1977) astutely points out:

> The mutual stereotypes show that a new framework is possible, that there is every reason for each side

to see itself and the other as component, good and worthwhile. The name of the game can be changed from competition to cooperation, when the participants attempt to achieve the same goal (p. 155).

6) New Grant incentives to be introduced by the Northern Ireland Minister of Education to finance more integrated schools. "Whilst coercive educational integration would be foolish, and no attempt should be made to close schools, the available selective incentives to concentrate minds should be manipulated" (O'Leary, 1987, 35).

7) "Although the European Parliament and Commission have been insisting on the importance of regional participation since 1982, arguing that 'top down' government does not work and wastes money, the Irish and British governments have refused to take any real initiative" (Kearney, 1988, 17). Therefore, a regionally devolved power-sharing government in Stormont would build upon present local initiatives such as the Brookfield Business Coop ·in Belfast and the North West Centre for Development in Derry which operates at grass-roots community level and is funded by the International Irish Fund. Local community projects "spring up at community level, encourage a real sense of participatory democracy and then, ideally, interconnect with other community projects in Europe or elsewhere in the world" (Kearney, 1988, 12). Capital will be used from the EU Social and Regional funds to promote economic growth at the local and regional level to eradicate the material disadvantage of working-class Catholics and Protestants and alleviate the economic imbalance between both groups.

8) Encourage bilateral link-ups, and exchanges between universities, schools, cities and cultural institutions in other regions within the EU, whose rich plurality of cultures will bridge and enrich both cultures and traditions in Northern Ireland. The Minister of Education should also encourage efforts to integrate staff and teacher training colleges. Also the installation of satellite dishes in the schools would allow school children to break into the global world and out of their own culture, preventing encapsulation and isolation by exposing children to new perspectives.

15. *The Structure*

How the mediating team will deal with both parties is very crucial to the whole process. It is imperative to involve all social and political actors in the diagnosis and design of the problem-solving interest-based negotiation process, "not only to tap their valuable ideas and knowledge but also to organize support for change and to defuse opposition" (Ury et al., 1988, 133). The failure of the Hillsborough Accord and the current Joint Declaration to instill cooperation between both communities and a devolved power-sharing executive provides the necessary motivation for both disputing parties to try new procedures. By involving all the parties in the design process, the third party will advance its credibility, enhancing the probability of having an approved outcome.

In order to open a "pipeline" between the formal structure of the mediating team and all the relevant participating parties, an informal or parallel structure will be set-up in order to channel information up and down, through the hierarchy; as change taking place at the grass-roots level needs to be communicated to the center. "Accordion planning" will allow "all of the parties (that will be) affected by the decision to work together throughout each of the phases, (to) constantly return to their own organizational bases to be assured of continual support" (Laue, 1988, 54).

At grass-roots level, the County Council in each district will assist in organizing the ideas and opinions of

constituents, transmitting them via the political parties and the paramilitary organizations to the third party mediation team. The Loyalist and Republican paramilitary groups similarly, can communicate their thoughts and ideas directly to both the County Council cluster and the political parties seated at the table. This will allow for creativity in deciding the agenda, schedule and time-frame for negotiations to be implemented. As Bercovitch (1984) notes: "The more informal and directive procedures are content-oriented and related to defining positions, changing the issue structure, and influencing motivation" (p. 109).

16. Strategy

What are the goals and objectives that we wish to accomplish? For instance, Bercovitch (1984) contends that the objective of third party intervention is to "facilitate communication, exploration and problem-solving" (p. 25). John Burton (1989), on the other hand, suggests that a solution to a conflict that involves universal needs and deeply held values as being attainable only by a "deeply analytical problem-solving process whereby the parties come to recognize their own needs, as well as those of the other party, and realize that traditional power-oriented solutions are ineffective in reconciling them" (Reed, 1989, 17).

First of all, it is necessary to get the disputing parties to use interests-based negotiation; by putting the

focus on interests instead of rights or power. This will lead to a reduced level in communal violence, bigotry and entrenched sectarianism. It will be necessary to build an "incentive package" for both sides into the framework, i.e., the free-flow of monopoly capital investments and Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) into Ulster, the suspension of the Accord and special security policies, and modification of Articles 2 and 3 of Bunnreacht na hEireann among others. The mediating team will also encourage and facilitate any form of cultural, sporting and educational contact that will decrease segregation and increase opportunities for social interaction.

It might also be plausible to propose some ideas to both parties (if required to do so)--such as the creativity and innovation of the referendum which permits cross-cutting cleavages and shifting alliances on issues to contribute to peaceful change despite sub-cultural segmentation in the body politic. The third party facilitator will also engage each community to analyze the conflict from its own perspective. This interplay between the conflict and the design will be value-laden and constructive, enabling the weakest party to empower itself. Attention will also be spent in providing rights and power "loop-backs" and "back-up" procedures. Time will also be put aside to provide the motivation, skills and resources necessary to make all the procedures work.

These objectives will provide the necessary communication link which allow the disputing parties to recognize the value

of alternatives and assist them in building a relative power symmetry. Consequently, a dispute systems design is a logical course of action to pursue in the Northern Ireland case because it is,

> an analytical problem-solving process in which parties or their representatives are helped to resolve their disputes by trained third parties (which allows parties to) jointly develop agreements which satisfy their basic needs and values and, therefore, are durable and require no external enforcement (Bassett, 1989, 15).

17. Costs and Resources

Who will ultimately pay? It is the designer's job to assess how long the various procedures will take and how much money will be consumed throughout the whole process. In this instance it is necessary for the third party (EU parliament) to foot the bill as a good will gesture to the people of Northern Ireland. The eventual successful implementation of a devolved power-sharing arrangement which contributes to democratic conflict resolution and accommodation between both traditions in Ulster can be engaged in other EU regions where other ethno-territorial conflicts exist.

What type of resources will ensure the ultimate success of entry? The intervenor shall have to provide the relevant staff and time resources if a successful outcome is to be accomplished. Secondly, the proximity of the EU will ensure that neither disputing party will view the mediating team as a non-constructive mediator thereby, lowering access barriers.

Finally, the objectivity, fairness and impartiality of the intervenor has to be communicated to both "camps" to build trust, therefore, it is necessary "to persuade the disputing parties that the intervenor has something to contribute to the existing dispute resolution process" (Murray, 1984, 612).

18. *Critique -- Feasibility and Ethical Criteria*

What would be the likely reaction of all the major actors embroiled in the conflict? The greatest opposition to such a venture perhaps would come from the "die-hard" elements within the PIRA and Sinn Fein, some of the ultra-Loyalists in the DUP, and some fringe extremist "break-away" elements within Loyalist paramilitary organizations. These groups would probably contend that conflict mediation is the partisan and biased entry of a third party which seeks to pacify and neutralize the Republican and Loyalist movements by focusing on interests thereby, treating the symptoms and not the causes of the Northern Ireland conflict--territorial and ethnic identity. In this process, these organizations would only be coopted by the EU establishment.

They would probably also assert that mediation and problem-solving designs are purely an American phenomenon which ties together an American view of democracy, participation and no conflict, and cannot be applicable, therefore, to the distinct and separate cultures that co-exist in Northern Ireland. Finally, these extremists would most

probably asseverate that democracy is a technical problem of how to make people participate in the system. A conflict management intervention would assist the political system (British/Irish or EU) in making these groups participate in and support that political system, which may actually be contrary to their goals, aspirations and policies.

However, I firmly believe that the problems posed by extremists in Sinn Fein, the DUP, and Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries could be dealt with by a political system that is well founded and internationally acceptable.

Secondly, as in the case of Cyprus, the possibility of one community in Northern Ireland deciding to "go-it-alone" is not feasible, nor is the possibility of external powers detaching themselves from the situation. The Loyalist community could not expect the Irish government to sit idly by while it declared a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), and any intervention by the Irish government on "British soil" would clearly constitute a situation in which Britain could not easily "wash her hands" of the problem. The SDLP has worked very hard with the Irish government for an Irish dimension and the resulting Anglo-Irish Accord, and may not wish to relinquish such a role in the proceedings especially, as Articles 2 and 3 of Bunnreacht na hEireann lay claim to the whole island of Ireland.

As previously demonstrated, both the British and Irish governments are grossly uninformed about the situation in

Northern Ireland but also over their overview of how a political problem develops, from where it develops and how to solve the issue. The policies of both governments seem to be constantly and consistently inspired by events in Northern Ireland.

The nature of the intervention from concerned outsiders already embroiled in the conflict (both governments) offers only a political panacea irrelevant to the major surgery required if the people of the Province are ever to achieve a society in which they can contribute, and to which they all wish to contribute. Clearly, those who would have most to gain from a problem-solving initiative would be the moderates within both communities and so, not surprisingly, it is they who will remain the most important force in the progression towards a solution.

A problem-solving interests-based negotiation process (without the involvement of either government) would allow the Protestant community to work creatively with their Catholic counter-parts, as the mis-understanding and lack of sensitivity from both governments would be removed from the scenario. The grass-roots based constituents would contribute important information through their political representatives and paramilitary organizations to the mediating team. All of the political parties in Northern Ireland would indeed welcome such a constructive approach from an exogeneous actor that understands and is sympathetic to the nature of the conflict

and the people involved in the inter-communal strife. Their main bone of contention however, would be in allowing any organization to sit at the table that has not renounced violence and terrorism.

19. *Conclusions*

Some form of settlement can be arranged between all of the internal forces within Northern Ireland, as long as the external guarantors (the British and Irish governments) are not part of the mediating process. The conflict in Ulster is deep-rooted however, an impartial third party facilitating team can support each community in solving its basic needs-- economic and industrial development, employment, integrated education, cooperation and frequent contact in the socio- cultural arena. These policy suggestions are not prescriptions and are put forward most tentatively. As Akenson (1973) comments: "It is easy for an outsider to criticise the Ulster situation, but when he realises the complexity of the regions problems, he also recognises that to propound any simple solution would be arrogance" (1973, 193).

The third party will not place either community in a weak or zero-sum position vis-a-vis the other, as the active participation of all parties in analyzing, designing and implementing an effective design process will endow both communities to empower themselves. A good outcome and a good process will be one in which all parties and forces cooperate

with, and learn to trust and respect each other.

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