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Civil Society, Solidarity and Collective Action: Conflict-Related Displacement in Northern Ireland's Troubles, 1969-1974

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Abstract

This article examines the extraordinary stories of how thousands of active citizens and citizen groups forged sustained levels of collective action to coordinate and manage the evacuation and shelter of thousands forced from their homes and communities during Northern Irelands Troubles. Based on in-depth interviews, the articles originality resides in its unique insights into the first-hand narratives of fear, refuge, and movement caused by mass displacement that have hitherto been largely side-lined from the history of the Troubles. Furthermore, it argues that the herculean task of organising evacuations, journeys, and refuge centres by civil society had less to do with Putnam's pluralist concept of social capital and was instead rooted in ideals of solidarity, collective identity, and social action. In the case of Northern Ireland's mass displacement between 1969 and 1974, the solidarity and collective response of civic society was premised upon ethno-cultural ties and identities but also derived from a spectrum of critical perceptions of the state; perceptions ranging from inept at one end and outright complicit at the other.

Introduction

Instances of large-scale displacement[1] amid intense violence perfectly embody C. Wright Mills' contention regarding the intersection between private troubles and public issues. Though painful experiences of displacement are of course personal and individual, nevertheless, all disasters and significant moments of rupture are not only individual but invariably communal and sometimes national (Gilligan 2008). Social capital is consistently identified by some as the principal resource for disaster preparedness, with social connections and access to multiple forms of social capital deemed a critical component in recovery processes (Aldrich 2012). Moments of crisis undoubtedly present significant challenges and often harm, nevertheless, they also offer opportunities for persons to recognise their common predicaments, identities, needs, and interests, engendering a collective sense of 'us' which fuels the engine of collective action (Gilligan 2008). While theories of social capital assume that greater engagement by people in civil society activism necessitates greater community cohesion, in the case of Northern Ireland, civil society tended to align to ethno-religious identities thus providing the potential to exacerbate instability and division (Cochrane and Dunn 2002). Moreover, the prevalence of ethno-religious

identities furnished the 'social glue' that united many disparate persons and voluntary groups together to find common cause in the face of an inept, and in many instances, an unprotective state. Though the idea of an autonomous civil society that seeks to counter the centralised power of a state is not exceptional or unique to Northern Ireland, the unprecedented outbreak of violence and forced displacement in the early 1970s gave rise to a new form of communal power and sense of self-reliance, thus establishing a strong, enduring, and vibrant civic society that saw itself, and frequently acted as, a salient counterweight to the state. This article examines the extraordinary stories of how thousands of active citizens and citizen groups forged sustained levels of collective action to coordinate and manage the evacuation and shelter of thousands forced from their homes and communities from 1969 to 1974. The absence of faith in the ability and capacity of the Northern Ireland state to fulfil the needs and interests of those communities at the coalface of displacement engendered a strong sense of self-reliance. Existing civil society, such as the Orange Order, the Catholic Church, Trade Unions, tenants' associations, as well as well as the myriad of Citizens Defence Committees established in Catholic areas and vigilante and defence organisations in Protestant areas, assembled to coordinate and manage the evacuation and resettlement of thousands of citizens. The purpose of the article is two-fold; first, it's originality resides in its unique insights into the first-hand narratives of fear, movement, and refuge caused by mass displacement that have hitherto been largely side-lined from the history of the Troubles. And second, it argues that the herculean task of organising evacuations, journeys, and refuge centres by civil society had less to do with Putnam's pluralist concept of social capital and was instead rooted in ideals of solidarity, collective identity, and social action.

Context and Extent of Displacement

The armed conflict which engulfed Northern Ireland from 1969 until its peace accord of 1998, claimed over 3700 lives and injured over 22,000 people. The intensity of violence and chaos in the early years, coupled with the disparate forms of displacement, means it is not possible to put an exact figure on levels of forced movement (Shirlow, 2001)[2]. The task of quantifying movement is further complicated given that many did not liaise with the institutions of the state in Northern Ireland, particularly those from the Catholic community, and so any formal record will invariably be incomplete. However, the figures that do exist are sobering. The Scarman Tribunal that examined the violence of the 12th to 15th August 1969 stated that at least 3500 families were displaced during these tumultuous days (McCann 2019). From 1969 to 1973, between 30,000 and 60,000 people were forced to evacuate their home in Belfast, comprising 11.8% of the population (Darby and Morris, 1974). The city of Londonderry[3] saw the Protestant

population in the city's West Bank decrease from 8459 in 1971 to 1407 in 1991. In August 1969, hundreds of Catholic families were forced out in the town of Dungannon and in Derry City. During the same period, dozens of Protestants in Derrybeg in Newry were also forced out of their homes (Moffett et al. 2020). Between 1970 and 1974, the Catholic population in the town of Newtownabbey (just north of Belfast) had been reduced by 95% due to intimidation, with the number of Catholic children at school in Rathcoole having dwindled from 1000 to 350 during this time. In the same period, around a third of the Catholic population had departed Carrickfergus. Dozens of Protestant families were forced from the Suffolk area of West Belfast in July 1976, while on the border with the Republic of Ireland, hundreds of Protestant families fled South Armagh and Fermanagh because of killings and intimidation. Overall, the Protestant population along the border declined from 19% to 1% between 1971 and 1991, the period of the most intense violence and threat (Murtagh 1996). According to the Northern Ireland Census, although the overall population of Newry increased by 32% between 1971 and 2001, the Protestant community decreased by over 50%.

Despite the significance and extent of forced displacement during the Troubles, it has nevertheless constituted little more than a footnote or fleeting reference in most academic accounts. Some welcome and notable exceptions, however, have either explicitly incorporated displacement as part of their overall thematic analysis or in some instances, alluded to its importance. The role of housing, segregation, territoriality, and identity in the perpetuation of ethno-sectarian antagonisms is well established and remains a feature of Northern Irish life despite the advent of the 1998 peace accord (Boal 1969; Coyles 2017; Poole and Doherty 2010). Shirlow and Murtagh's (2006) ground-breaking examination of place and segregation in post-GFA Belfast, documented a distinct mutation from armed violence to everyday forms of sectarianism, and a range of direct consequences including deepening communal polarisation, social exclusion, fatalism, and economic truncation. Until very recently, John Darby's research on intimidation, violence, and housing in the early to mid-1970s and again in the mid-1980s was effectively the lone academic engagement with forced displacement. Although limited to the greater Belfast area only, nevertheless his 1974 (with Geoffrey Morris) and 1986 studies examined a variety of forms of intimidation, their cyclical patterns, the immediate effects on individuals and communities, the importance of housing shortages in patterns of resettlement, and the role of various agencies in dealing with intimidation and its consequences.

More recently, a small but burgeoning body of work has begun to address the relative paucity of attention. The 1995 report 'All over the place' (Conroy, McKearney, and Oliver 2005) represented the first post-Troubles endeavour to explore the extent and impact of forced movement. Though highly informative, the report was limited due to the relatively small number of interviewees (thirty-two) and also in that it focuses excessively perhaps on former members of paramilitary organisations. Katherine Side's (2015, 2018) work included visual representations of displacement across a range of diverse outputs, while also examining the efficacy of 'Scheme for the Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings' (SPED). Recent interventions argue for the necessity to consider the harms and losses of displacement within scholarly and policy approaches to conflict transition (Browne and Asprooth-Jackson 2019; Gilmartin 2021), while schematic examinations of intimidation demonstrate the heterogenous ways in which fear and threats were communicated and interpreted as determinants of movement (Gilmartin 2022). Based on focus groups across a wide geographical spread, the 'No Longer Neighbours' report (Moffett et al. 2020) documented the sentiments of displacement, the impact of violence on land tenure, as well as housing and redress schemes during and after the conflict in Northern Ireland. The welcome and insightful contributions of these works signal the importance of displacement, and so, this article plays its part in adding to this burgeoning body of research.

Research Methods

The field research adopts an interpretivist methodological approach using semi-structured, narrative-based interviews with 67 persons conducted and transcribed by the author between April 2018 and September 2021. The interviews occurred in Belfast, Londonderry-Derry, Liverpool, Shannon, Fermanagh, Newry, Dundalk, and Dublin. Of the 67 interviewees, 39 were male and 28 were female. Thirty-nine self-identified as a Protestant or unionist, while 28 self-identified as Catholic or nationalist. Some interviewees requested that their identities be kept confidential and therefore in those instances, the article used pseudonyms. Methodological considerations within the field of refugee studies have led many to concur that qualitative interviewing, specifically narrative approaches, are an important and effective way of learning from refugees because it permits a fuller expression of refugee experiences in their own words. A narrative-based data collection method is grounded in the belief that meaning is ascribed through experiences, and furthermore that we can only know about other peoples' experiences from the expression they give to them (Eastmond 2007). While the politics of 'storytelling' is of course subjective and reflects perspectives and standpoints, its strengths reside in the ability of research participants to structure a narrative that signifies events and experiences in a particular order. In

the case of displacement, the use of personal testimony challenges erroneous assumptions regarding the homogeneity of experience among refugees, thus displacing generalized analytical accounts in favour of a more nuanced understanding of the diversity and complexities within those groups forcibly displaced. While memory is indeed about the past, perhaps its defining feature is its presentism (Misztal 2003). As an active and dynamic process, recalling and narrating past experiences is shaped and filtered by the present, and moreover, the content of what is recalled or not is situational and contingent on the audience and narrator and the power relationship between them. Testimonies of tumultuous and violent 'life experiences' such as forced displacement should therefore be considered constructions and products of active agents and 'experiencing subjects' seeking to make sense of violence and turbulent change, paying particular attention to the ways in which experience is framed and articulated (Eastmond 2007).

To transform the interview transcripts into meaningful data, I used an inductive thematic analysis approach using a grounded coding system, otherwise known as open coding (Strauss and Corbin 1990). Open coding essentially entails scanning each line of transcript, taking note of the essence of portions of data and seeking key events, critical events, and themes. Grounded theory research develops analytical categories and theories from the data rather than adhering to preceding concepts or theories; theory is derived from the data and meaning is achieved through reflection upon the data. In other words, it is a specific area of study in which the relevant concepts and theories subsequently emerge. Applying this technique and using NVivo coding software, I then employed a 'focused coding' where recurring codes were reviewed and forged into 'Nodes', that is, discernible themes and recurring patterns.

During methodological design, I envisaged several key ethical considerations, including issues of consent, power, confidentiality, trust, and rapport, harm and benefits, issues of representation and analysis, possible benefits, and, finally, the outcomes of the research. Despite the passage of time since their displacement, I was cognisant of latent or continuing forms of psychological and emotional harm derived from their displacement experiences. Another key concern is that displacement was embedded and often enveloped by other forms of violence, and so I was also mindful that displaced persons were likely to have been impacted by other forms of violence before, during, and after their forced movement. I adopted an iterative model of consent, which assumes that ethical agreement and truly informed consent can be best secured through a process of negotiation that develops a shared understanding of what is involved in the research process (MacKenzie and McDowell 2007). I utilised several strategies that sought to mitigate the

risks of emotional distress and increase the power and capacity of the interviewees. In most cases, contact with potential interviewees began with introductions and a general conversation regarding the purpose and objectives of the research through several mediums, including face-to-face meetings, phone calls, and/or email. Information sheets and broad research themes were also exchanged.

To reaffirm their capacity and participation, I sought to reduce perceptions of rigidity and formalities, and instead framed the interview processes as a mechanism and opportunity to 'share their story' of displacement as opposed to constituting a formalised, structured interview. While interviewees were aware that I would ask some questions during the interview, I foregrounded their control over the relaying of their stories and memories. The purpose of this process was, first, to establish trust and rapport between the researcher and potential interviewees and second, it functioned as a mechanism to allow potential interviewees to reflect and decide if they wished to contribute their story. In some cases, persons, or their immediate family members, decided that the risk of revisiting distressing memories would be too much and kindly declined the research invitation. In other instances, elderly persons were encouraged to have a family member present with them, typically a son or daughter. While some interviewees were emotional during the process, they insisted that the interviews continue, and their emotions be noted on the transcripts. As part of the informed consent process, research participants were offered the choice between anonymising their interview with a pseudonym or using their real identity. Given the neglect of forced displacement in accounts of the Troubles 64 of the 67 interviewees insisted I use their identity to ensure that their story and the story of the family was placed on a historical record. Following the interviews, many participants expressed a sense of relief and contentment that their stories were now on public record. Interviewees were consistently advised not to disclose any information that was potentially incriminating or would produce adverse outcomes. A risk assessment by the author and two university ethics committees concluded that using interviewee names and identities was 'low risk'.

Theorising Civil Society and Collective Action

Civil society is often characterised as the space in between individuals and the state which is populated by a range of groups, associations and communities and is typically associated with stronger levels of democracy via the empowerment of sub-state actors and institutions (Little 2004). In situations where a benign relationship between state and society exists, civil society is framed as a site of recognising and mediating a plurality of competing needs and interests,

therefore constituting an essential component to a modern, health democracy. Social capital theory has been widely used to examine how particular individuals and groups mobilize resources within intra and inter-community relationships, with many identifying social capital as a principal resource for disaster preparedness and response (Aldrich 2012). Although the idea of social capital has a relatively long history, Robert Putnam's (2000) work demonstrated the saliency of social capital as a form of reciprocity and trust arising from a range of social networks seeking to exercise control over political, social, and economic issues. Putnam's three typologies of social capital: bonding, bridging, and linking are of particular interest. In consideration of the first two, Putnam notes that: 'Bonding capital is good for under-girding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity ... Bridging networks, by contrast, are better for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion ...' Bonding social capital constitutes a kind of 'sociological superglue', whereas bridging social capital provides a 'sociological WD-40' that lubricates connections between people from different groups, backgrounds, and networks (Putnam 2000: 22-24). Bonding capital refers to instances when people who are similar to each other work together to facilitate strong and supportive community relationships (Marlowe 2017). For theorists such as Putnam, the value of social capital generated in relationship to associational life is because they become a significant source of democratic control over the state's resources and capacities. The pluralist underpinnings of such standpoints pivot on assumptions regarding the relatively stable and mutually reinforcing relationship between a vibrant civil society comprising of competing needs and interests on the one hand, and the role of the responsive state as key arbitrator on the other.

By its own logic, social capital theory suggests that an abundance of social capital leads to enhanced relationships between citizens and elected political representative and therefore paves the way for greater levels of participatory democracy. Achelson and Milofsky (2008) suggest that such approaches pay insufficient attention to the dynamic nature of the relationship between civil society and democracy. While social capital sometimes plays an important role involving citizens in the processes of government policy making and passage of legislation, at other times civil society organizations may be excluded from these processes and, in fact, work as a competitor to the institutions of government represented by elected politicians (Acheson and Milofsky 2008: 64). Social capital analysis, according to Tarrow, has more relevance and impact on voluntary associations as opposed to social movements. The former depends on steady membership participation, sustained activities within institutions while the latter is more periodic, rapidly organised mass gatherings and small-scale direct actions, all of which do not require day-

to-day membership or participation (Tarrow 1998: 133). The primary point of departure between liberal pluralists that stress social capital and social movement scholars that focus on networks is that the former envisages a reciprocal and cohesive working relationship between the state and civil society while the latter's analysis highlights the conflictual encounters whereby civil society organisations challenges the state via radical change not consensus. Furthermore, Putnam's approach is also criticised for either ignoring or misunderstanding structural inequalities and the contested role of the state (Acheson and Milofsky 2008; Little 2004; Portes 2014) – this is particularly the case with the Catholic community in Northern Ireland but also pertinent to working-class Protestant communities who suffered economic hardships equal to their counterparts in the Catholic community. Acheson and Milofsky (2008) contend that social movement theories regarding solidarity, resource mobilisation and political opportunity structures offer a more nuanced understanding of the fluctuating patterns of mobilisation among civil society. Unlike pluralist approaches that neglect the role of the state, collective action in any situation is varied and contextual, and therefore, it is the structures and cultures of a given state that shape collective grievances, and thus influences the likelihood of mobilisation and its various manifestations.

As challengers to or defending of existing authority, social movements consist of purposive actors that collectively challenge an authority (system of authority) in an attempt to bring about social change (Della Porta and Diani 2006). Tarrow's analysis contends that changes in political opportunities and constraints create the most important incentives for initiating new phases of contention. These opportunities are dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for collective action by affecting people's expectations for success or failure, and therefore there is a need to be attentive to the conditions for mobilization (Tarrow 1998: 19). Contentious politics, that being occurrences when ordinary people join forces in confrontation with elites, institutions, or opponents, is triggered when changing political opportunities and constraints create incentives for social actors who lack resources on their own. When backed by dense social networks and galvanised by culturally resonant, action-orientated symbols, contentious politics leads to sustained interaction with opponents (ibid 1998: 10).

Notwithstanding the importance of political opportunities and social networks, the transformation of individuals into social actors requires a common consciousness via the construction of a shared collective identity (Melucci 1985). Instrumentalist approaches to human action in times of armed conflict tend to stress the rational actor engaging in a cost-benefit

appraisal of a given situation before deciding whether to act on behalf of others. Others, however, reject the idea of humans as solely benefit maximisers as sociologically unrealistic, and instead highlight the importance of emotional and moral ties, particularly within the crucible of ethno-national violent conflict where many individuals develop strong networks of micro-solidarity which motivate different forms of collective action (Malešević 2022: 129). All ethno-national groups draw upon emotional discourses and symbolism whereby the symbolic kinship of the nation produce real emotional bonds and moral allegiances generated in the micro-interactions of face-to-face networks of solidarity and social cohesion (Malešević 2022). Collective identities arise from the social relationships between persons in which shared definitions and understandings of the predicaments they find themselves in are created, negotiated, and reproduced (Edwards 2014:141). This shared understanding of a situation involves three key elements central to the creation of a movement; a shared sense of who the challengers are, who the opponents are, and what is at stake in this struggle (Edwards 2014: 141). Furthermore, leaders of collective movements can only mobilise when they tap more deep-rooted feelings of solidarity or identity, whereby participants recognise their common interests (Tarrow 1998: 6).

While scholars of social movements focus much of their analyses on resource mobilisation, networks, political opportunity and structures, solidarity is increasingly utilised as a useful concept for understanding processes of group formation and collective action from both a theoretical and policy perspective, particularly within processes of ethnic formation (Lamb 2013). Though solidarity remains a rather opaque term (Panter-Brick 2021), it is typically defined by three key features: standing together in the face of risk or threats; expressing support for each other's interests; and sharing values and willingness to join forces in collective action (Dawson and Verweij 2012: 1). Defining social solidarity as 'the feeling of reciprocal sympathy and responsibility among members of a group which promotes mutual support', (Wilde 2007: 171), Hunt and Benford (2004) make an important distinction between internal and external solidarity. Internal solidarity takes place in relation to a group to which one belongs, while external solidarity is directed towards an external collective. Consequently, internal solidarity is motivated, at least in part, by self-interest, as the achievement of the collective aim is expected to result in a bettering of one's position. External solidarity requires empathy, as one needs to relate to the position of the aggrieved group before contributing one's private resources to their cause. Scholz's (2008) work on solidarity makes an important distinction between civic solidarity and political solidarity. The former concerns relations between citizens within a political state and the

obligations a state has to provide certain resources or protections against vulnerabilities based on the 'social bond of citizenship' (Scholz 2008: 27) and implies a reciprocal commitment to social rights, including social security, access to health care, and workers' rights. The latter, political solidarity, involves radical forms of action precipitated by individual conscience, commitment, group responsibility, and collective identity'. Political solidarity signifies a collective response to a particular threat or form of violence that engenders a situation of injustice, oppression, or social vulnerability (Scholz 2008). In deeply divided societies such as Northern Ireland, extensive networks of trust and reciprocity are derived overwhelmingly from perpetual inter-communal antagonisms and a profound mistrust of the state and government institutions (Cochrane and Dunne 2002; Leonard 2004). Therefore, social movement theory and the idea of solidarity and collective action offers a more realistic explanatory framework for understanding the actions of those at the coalface of Northern Ireland's mass displacement and refugees in the early 1970s.

Mass Evacuations: Mobilisation & Coordination

Although sectarian violence and displacement were perennial features of life in the North before and after partition in 1921 (and remain so to this day, despite the 1998 peace accord), the outbreak of ethno-sectarian violence during the late summer of 1969 gave rise to a refugee crisis that, at the time, represented the largest involuntary movement of a population in Europe since the end of the Second World War. Unlike previous periodical outbursts of inter-communal violence and mass movement in the 1920s and 1930s, the deliberate targeting of homes, streets, and communities for demographic purposes was not an ephemeral outburst confined to August 1969. While thousands of displaced Catholics crossed the border into the Republic of Ireland, particularly during the years 1969 to 1974, and hundreds of Protestants evacuated to Liverpool and Glasgow, the 30 years of armed conflict also generated considerable levels of internal displacement[4] whereby people increasingly fled their homes and sought safety within their own ethno-religious group and residential areas.[5] Undoubtedly, the violence and instability brought about in the early years of the Troubles provided what social movement scholars term the 'political opportunity' within working-class Catholic communities for grassroots collective action, thus giving expression to a community 'in revolt' and reflecting a historically strong communal, self-help tradition (Bean 2011: 165). Within working-class Catholic communities, the participatory ethos and political activist culture derived from a collective sense of historical powerlessness at the hands of the state and deprived of rights going back centuries (Cassidy 2005). The relatively lower levels of activism within the Protestant working class in Northern Ireland perhaps stemmed from a view of the government as the official agent of its interests, and

therefore to see the defence of that government as fundamental to its identity and material well-being (Cassidy 2008). Although professing a profound loyalty to the Northern Ireland state, nevertheless, Protestant interviewees in this research expressed similar sentiments regarding the failure, inability, or ineptness of the state to protect against intimidation or assist in the harrowing and sometimes perilous process of flight of Protestants from hostile areas and territories.

Prior to the outbreak of political violence in August 1969, community and civil society activism was vibrant and widespread, embodied in Tenants Associations, Belfast Voluntary Welfare Society, Trade Unions, and various forms of local Co-Ops. Though many advocates of strong civil society see it as a powerful antidote to war and political violence (Kaldor 2012), the predominance of communalism and political division can manifest in bad or uncivil society (Brewer 2010; Little 2004). Northern Ireland, like most regions enmeshed in political violence and division was and remains characterised by a thriving civil society sector but one that is scarred by tensions and divisions along traditional communal lines (Little 2004).[6] The early 1970s saw the emergence of powerful community action groups; by 1975, Griffiths (1975) identified 500 community action groups, which he saw as a measure of the dislocation of the fabric of society in Northern Ireland, due to the conflict and its consequences. The rapid growth of community action in this period was a direct response to the urgency of need and a partial breakdown in the statutory provision of health, education, and housing services (McCarron 2006). Many of the organisations involved in the evacuations of those displaced, and management of the refuge centres were ad hoc bodies that had only recently developed, often in relation to a specific local concern. They generally had no written constitution or other formal rules: they often had only a loosely defined structure, and a dramatically fluctuating membership. All these features did not help to facilitate long-term planning, but they were well suited to dealing with a complex and rapidly evolving situation concerning the early episodes of mass displacement (Gilligan 2008). Unlike the State ministries and agencies that were centralised organisations completely 'detached' from the lived experience of violence and displacement, community groups were based in the locality where the disaster was being experienced and so were on hand to deal with the immediacy of the problems as they arose. Furthermore, the personnel of these organizations often had intimate knowledge of local issues and of where resources could be accessed and distributed (ibid).

The initial mobilisation of civil society in August 1969 were less concerned with ideas regarding a deliberate rejection or challenge to the state and instead were motivated and sustained by an altruistic spirit, communal solidarity, and sense of collective purpose concerned with the safety and well-being of clearly demarcated communities. Cognitive framing of an issue is central in understanding the emergence of collective action; inscribing grievances in overall frames that identify an injustice, attribute the responsibility for it to others, and propose solutions to it is a central activity of social movements. Furthermore, injustices are given an emotional valence aimed at converting passivity into action; emotions such as love, solidarity, loyalty, anger tend to result in greater levels of mobilisation in comparison to 'devitalising' emotions such as resignation, despair, or depression (Tarrow 1998: 111-112). Indicative of the historical legacy of forced movement, many respondents expressed the importance of locating the displacement of the Troubles, particularly the years of 1969 to 1974 within the wider historical narrative of forced population movements that constituted a perennial feature of life long before partition and the creation of the Northern Ireland state. Michael McCann contends that the mass burnings of Catholic homes in 1969 was a re-run of previous patterns of inter-communal tensions, and that August 1969 was simply "the state and loyalist response to the demands of Civil Rights – uppity fenians that needed to be put back in their place". Michael Liggett has lived all his life in Ardoyne, and like many other interviewees from that part of the city, the mass displacements in that community were not interpreted as a discrete starting point for violence, but as another event on a continuum of fear, violence, and vulnerability for Ardoyne:

> "So this run of burnings in '69 and early 70s is [sic] just another fucking re-run of whole years and years. So, it's not like Syria which just erupted – 'where did this come from?' - but this conflict, especially around Ardoyne, has to be set against the context of fear; constant fear…since the 1860s. You see where I live, in Ardoyne and the Bone and places like that, they have been subject to displacement since the 1920s and I have records and photos. Sure, the whole of Ardoyne in the 1920s and 1930s was based on displacement. When Catholics were burnt out of Lisburn they all came to Ardoyne. So, the Bone was all burnt in the 1920s…then in the 1930s the docks were all burnt…Catholics moved out of streets off the Shankill."

Danny Morrison presented a similar historical analysis and framing of the seismic burnings and movement in August 1969:

"You have to look at this in the historical sense…you have to take into consideration working class housing for Catholics in the 19th century [in Belfast] because at subsequent periods, not for economic reasons but for political reasons, these areas were consistently attacked… these attacks were political attacks. It was done to exert power; to exert authority and of course it was scientifically applied post-1921 where they got rid of proportional representation and you have to also consider the discrimination in housing. So the act of attacking peoples' homes was nothing new. Personally, my grandparents were put out of their house twice, once at Partition [1921] and again in the 1930s."

While many accounts of the Troubles bookend their narratives with discrete starting dates and end-points, for those living in working-class communities that suffered the worst of displacement, feelings of vulnerability, fear, and the potential threat of attack were a deep-seated and present feature of their everyday lives. Leading loyalist, John McKeague of the Shankill Defence Association testified to the Scarman Tribunal that he assisted the movement of Protestants from parts of Hooker Street in Ardoyne, while "encouraging" Catholic families to move out of Protestant streets in southern parts of Ardoyne. Ciaran Groan states that in the aftermath of the attacks on Ardoyne in August 1969, he spent several hours using his work van to bring those who had lost their homes to relatives living in west Belfast (McKee 2020: 99). Many of those displaced by the mass burnings of 1969 fled with only the clothes they were wearing, losing most and in many instances all furniture and possessions. Many of these were ferried by cars, lorries, and vans either to school halls and church halls in the Falls Road area of West Belfast or to relatives in other parts of the city. Hugh Ferrin lived in the Bone area of North Belfast and witnessed and experienced displacement on several occasions.

"In August '69, there was like a mass evacuation, so a few local lads hijacked a van on the Cliftonville Road and drove it up to the Bone and the bus was filled with women and children and they were taken up to St Gerard's up on the Antrim Road which had about 150 rooms; we were all piled up there as things got worse. Now there were some who completely upped sticks and left and were gone, completely gone and never came back again. Houses were all damaged and of course, the Bone area was a little [Catholic] enclave surrounded by Loyalist areas, so it was always under siege; always a battle…in 1972 to be honest when a lot of Protestant families moved out of the Ballybone; I remember the vans coming up and filling up the vans, and then the houses, the empty houses were set on fire as they left. I think it was the UDA that did that."

Those fleeing their homes were often first directed towards a local make-shift refuge centre such as a school or community hall, before being evacuated from the area totally. 'Anna' and her then young family were displaced from their Belfast homes on three occasions during the early years of the Troubles. Her recollection is that the Red Cross, the local Citizens Defence Committee, and the Catholic Church were instrumental in the evacuation and resettlement programs.

> "Well there was a committee here at the time, Citizens Defence; now it wasn't political just ordinary men and women. So, they organised all that [evacuation]. They were handing out bread and milk at the school….and then the buses arrived and there were medical people on the bus too, nurses and that. I remember one nurse, Fidelma and I knew her well and she was looking after me because I was pregnant. But she was assigned to that bus by her daddy who was involved in the Committee and very active in residents' group."

At the height of the Troubles in 1971 and 1972, thousands of civilians were evacuated to places of safety, often amidst highly dangerous circumstances. Some moved within not only the state but in some instances, resettled in housing a short distance from their original home while others travelled hundreds of miles to other parts of Ireland and Britain, and beyond. Nevertheless, one constant thread of commonality was the centrality of civil society, community groups and families to the evacuation and refuge of tens of thousands. Although much of the research here concerns urban and suburban setting, rural residential segregation and division also mirrored that of urban settings with significant levels of residential and social segregation (Murtagh 1996). While not seeking to diminish the importance of home and place in the urban setting, for those in rural settings, displacement had greater significance and consequence where historical ties between ethnic identity, kinship and place were strong, particularly among Protestants close to the border (Donnan 2005). Among rural farmers, displacement had three major implications; first, the loss of a home (often a multigeneration household); second, the loss of livelihood and income; and finally, the loss of lineage to a homestead going back generations. John McClure was born and reared on a small family farm in the village of Garrison in Fermanagh; the family farm ran to the border with Co. Leitrim. From late 1971 onwards, John and his family were increasingly targeted by the IRA, including several bomb attacks, and they reluctantly fled their home in March 1972. Many Protestants in the borderlands viewed and understood these attacks and killings as part of an IRA strategy to drive Protestants away from the border and create 'buffer' or 'liberated zones' (Patterson 2013). John and his son Richard vividly described the

sadness and anger when the decision was made to seek safety in a new home elsewhere in Fermanagh. Richard, like so many interviewees across this research, was scathing in his appraisal of the inactions of the state and cognizant of the support and solidarity of those within the local Protestant community:

> "the government done absolutely nothing for us; the people father worked with in the UDR collected enough money for the price of a washing machine, through like a benevolent fund and that was it. There was no help at all from the government. And I remember when we were leaving, it was fellas that you [father] worked with in the UDR that arrived with trucks and that to help move furniture. So absolutely no recognition from the government to say that you've been put out of your home; nothing like a rented house or suitable house here for you."

John added: "nobody has the right to put anybody out of their house and the British Government had a duty to protect us and they didn't." Similarly, the movement of Protestants from New Barnsley and Moyard over to Highfield and Glencairn in 1969 and 1970 typically involved the borrowing of milk floats, vans, and flatpack lorries from Protestants in other parts of the city. Protestants forced from Ardoyne in August 1971 were also evacuated by lorries and hijacked buses that came from the Shankill and Woodvale Roads (Mulvenna 2016). Ken Heffernon recalled the ad-hoc and chaotic scenes as hundreds of Protestants fled their Ardoyne home in August 1971:

> "There was [sic] no police and there was shooting come up from the bottom of the street. So people knew that there were empty flats in Ballysillan and the boy in the lorry took me up there and said to this guy 'is there any flats left' and he brought me round the corner and showed me this maisonette in Ballysillan Avenue and he kicked the door in. Now it was empty, but he said 'move your furniture in there'. Now it wasn't the greatest of places to be in but you couldn't pick and choose, that's for sure."

According to Gareth Mulvenna, it was the nascent networks of loyalist paramilitaries that were instrumental in the movement of Protestant families during this period, with many working-class loyalists directing, coordinating, or assisting the movement of Protestant families across Belfast. Many of these were either members of paramilitaries at the time or would go onto to join them at later dates. It is important to stress that displacement cannot be discretely detached from the

intense violence of rioting, shooting, and bomb attacks occurring during these tumultuous events; in many instances, intimidation, fear, and displacement were intertwined and overlapped with the wider violence that characterised the Troubles. The testimonies here, however, demonstrate the centrality of a core, communal identity and culture, coupled with powerful, shared historical narratives of fear and attack, as the basis for civil society's response to the displacement crisis.

Refuge Centres

The primacy of the state and sovereignty within prevailing categorisations of forced movement invariably foregrounds 'refugees', those who have crossed an internationally recognised border (as opposed to those who remained within the state and became nominally known as Internally Displaced Persons). Consequently, much of the public attention with regards to displacement during the Troubles has tended to focus on those who crossed into the Republic. While refugee camps there were resourced by both the state and citizen-led programmes (examined in detail below), the fate of those 'internally displaced' rested overwhelmingly upon the altruism and collectivism of civil society within their own ethnic community. Forced movement, particularly acute forms of mass displacement synonymous with the early years of the Troubles, presented a host of needs and demands, both short-term and long-term. However, the immediate target for resources and energies was the provision of shelter and food, in the form of large church and school halls, transformed into make-shift accommodation and holding centres, established as interim and pragmatic solutions to the urgency of the crisis. The increase in conflict-related violence and the breakdown of the state, threw people onto their own resources, and forced them in many cases to run their own areas and relief programs. Some housing committees charged with organising refuge centres, such as that in Ballymurphy, formed women's corps who organized the collection of food, clothing, bedding, medicines, communications, and transport for the relief operation at various school and church halls (De Baroid 2000). Many interviewees confirmed that some local corporations in the North provided bedding and blankets but not food or any monetary type of welfare payment to those who were now effectively homeless.

Given the relative lack of state or international humanitarian support, the establishment of temporary shelters, typically within large school and church halls required significant levels of coordination, leadership, and resources. Within the Catholic community, many refuge centres were organised and coordinated by the Catholic Church, and the newly established Citizens Defence Committee and Relief Committees. Marie McNally (nee Keenan) recalled:

"A place on Balkans St was set up for those displaced. I was brought up to St. Theresa's [school] on the Glen Road and all I had was a blanket. I didn't sleep during the night, because during the night they were bringing people in who were displaced and that and I was helping with them and so I slept during the day. After six weeks we were moved into a house on the Glen Road, and it was a bungalow, no doors, no windows, no water, no toilets or anything at all so we fixed blankets on the windows to try and keep the cold out."

Interviewees described the refuge centres as places of safety and chaos, with many centres brimming with wardrobes, chairs, tables, sofas, and other belongings, often with family names scribed onto the sides or underneath. In some centres, the Welfare Authority provided food as well as 'health personnel', who alongside Red Cross volunteers, checked the safety and hygiene of the centres and the well-being of evacuees. During the introduction of Internment in August 1971, Butler Street School in Ardoyne was used as a temporary refuge centre, acting as a 'displacement camp' (McKee 2020: 106), and essentially a holding centre prior to evacuation to the Republic. Sean Murray recalled:

"There was the Central Defence Committee, and they had a headquarters below the Falls Library. Now there were a few old republicans involved such as Jim Sullivan but mainly just ordinary people, and the Catholic Church who played a huge role because all the schools were Catholic so it was a coming together that 'we have to do something about this here', all these homeless people because many were left with what they were standing in; they literally ran for their lives and lost everything in their homes. We went to Beechmount and stayed with relatives there in Cavendish Street. There were people in St Paul's Hall, a large hall on Hawthorn Street and they put on food, mattresses covering the whole floor and then they opened up the schools in Andytown and then they built temporary dwellings, chalets on the Whiterock [Road]."

While some left these centres after relatively shorts stays, relocating to the Republic, Britain or to relatively 'safer' parts of Northern Ireland, others endured harsh conditions for months while waiting on the rebuilding of destroyed homes or the allocation of new homes by the state. Hundreds of families who were initially housed in schools were later transferred to prefabricated buildings, many of them in sub-standard condition, thus adding to the anxieties of those who lost their homes.

The running of refuge centres was based entirely on the voluntary participation and contributions of citizens. The relative inaction of the RUC, and subsequently the British army, either through lack of resources or willingness was compounded by the lack of a coordinated evacuation and resettlement response from the Northern Ireland government and local city corporations.[7] Experiences within Protestant communities however, tended to reflect a hybrid form of mobilisation with regards to evacuation and refuge, with clear instances of state interjection, typically in the form of police assistance and the provision of clothing and bedding at make-shift refuge centres. Although Protestants had to primarily rely on their own civil society organisations to evacuate, there were certainly instances where the RUC were central to moving Protestant families safely out of hostile neighbourhoods. Accounts from those coordinating a refuge centre for Protestants in the Grosvenor Hall in June 1970 reported that the 'RUC were most helpful', proving excellent security for the Hall. In the escalating violence of late June 1970, hundreds of Protestants, mainly from New Barnsley and Moyard took refuge at a designated centre in the Grosvenor Hall, coordinated and overseen by Methodist minister R. D. Eric Gallagher, who drafted meticulous notes on the centres operations. Associations such as the Scouts, the Girls and Boys Brigade provided camp beds and bedding material. Unlike refuge centres in Catholic communities, archival documents reveal that Protestant refuge centres recorded a degree of coordination between statutory authorities, voluntary organisations and church units. Daily visits by Belfast's Welfare officials as well as various Stormont government ministers and the Lord Mayor were also recorded, and particularly valued for boosting the morale of volunteers and refugees. The refuge centres were of course ad hoc, informal and a wholly irregular form of accommodation and living. Due to the volume of people in makeshift dormitories in large halls, interviewees also recalled much sleeplessness, noise, fear, anxiety and of course, waiting. While some were among extended family, neighbours, and friends, often the centres contained disparate groups of persons unknown to one another but who had a shared bond of experiencing violent upheaval.

Buses, Boats, and Trains: Seeking Refuge Outside Northern Ireland

While numerous interviewees described scenarios whereby the Northern Ireland state offered financial incentives for families to permanently relocate to Britain and Australia in the early 1970s,[8] the state is otherwise conspicuously absent in the processes of movement and resettlement. While the mass evacuation of Protestant refugees to Liverpool and Glasgow was devised and conducted almost exclusively by members of the Loyal Orders, civil society and the

state in the Republic of Ireland coalesced in a show of unprecedented solidarity with northern nationalists between 1969 and 1974, providing temporary refuge and shelter, monetary contributions, and successful repatriation to the North. In the immediate aftermath of the violence and displacement of August 1969, a National Relief Fund Coordinating Committee was established by the Irish Government in Dublin, while the non-state National Solidarity Committee, established by republicans, facilitated support and donations from left-wing organisations, cultural activists, and trade unions. Civil society in the Republic responded with thousands of citizens offering their homes as refuge for the 'stricken brethren' while a host of civil society organisations such as the Irish Countrywomen's Association, National Farmers' association and branches of the GAA collected money, food, and clothes right across the state (Hanley 2018). In the early years of the conflict, temporary shelter and accommodation was provided by the Irish Army across a variety of locations. According to Irish Government Department of Defence records, the Irish army 'accommodated and fed' 720 refugees in 1969, and 1558 in 1970. Approximately 9,800 refugees were 'handled' by the Irish state agencies in July and August 1972 (National Archives of Ireland 1973). From 1971 onwards however, Government records convey their growing concern at the increasing numbers of refugees arriving into the South, so much so, that Irish Army camps alone were considered to be unable to accommodate the unprecedented numbers. In the Summer of 1971, the Irish Government called upon Local Authorities to assist them in addressing the refugee crisis and archival records indicate that "the state is dependent to a very major extent on the goodwill and Christian charity of religious communities, many of whom place their homes, boarding schools, colleges, etc. at the disposal of Local Authorities" (National Archives of Ireland 1973: 5). As the flow of refugees across the border developed into an annual occurrence that could be anticipated and planned for, state and civil society in the Republic coalesced to engineer a more suitable and long-term solution via the dispersal and distribution of refugees across myriad sites including private homes, hospitals, community halls, religious homes and institutions, with a much-diminished role for the Irish military.

The initial refugees of August 1969 were met by an assortment of organisations and institutions including the Irish Army, the Order of Malta, An Garda Siochanna, and the Irish Red Cross, among others. Though many of these initial refugee centres were housed within Irish Army camps, the Irish Red Cross was the primary conduit of providing all aspects of care and assistance including food, clothing and footwear, medicine, first aid, bedding, baby foods, disinfectants, washing machines, personal toilet requisites, as well as small allowances for adults

and pocket money for children. Despite the passage of over 50 years in some instances, many interviewees vividly recalled their journeys to and experiences within refugee camps in the Republic. Geraldine Nelson and her brother Joe lived in Strathroy Park in Ardoyne and were evacuated as the violence in the district intensified, particularly in and around Internment in August 1971:

> "We were taken on a train to Gormanston and we arrived there at night and were met with officials. Then the next day we were moved to Cork, into an Army camp there. It was a big compound where they put a huge pile of turf right in the middle of it; across from that was a huge dinner hall and round the back of that, there were soldiers there peeling all the potatoes by hand and so we were in there with people from Ardoyne, the Bone, the Whiterock. So, we were all put into these huts, army huts with all these different families and it was just all full of beds…bunk beds and single beds."

As the months and years of the conflict passed, Irish army camps gradually became solely 'processing' or holding centres for Catholic refugees from the North, before being dispersed among civil society groups across the Republic. Often the locations were school and community halls, persons' homes, and in some instances old convents and other institutions. Patricia McGuigan's family who were displaced from their North Belfast home on several occasions from 1971 onwards recalled her evacuation to Carlow:

> "I remember getting there and it was like a countryside town, and there were people all there taking us off the buses, take us into this community centre or church hall, so lemonade and biscuits and then a mattress to lie on and then we were up the next morning early, onto the convent. The first one was like cubical holes, small ones and the nuns were very strict. You had to be asleep at a certain time every night. But you had your own wee space and that…there was five or six beds to a room and so they could put families into a room. I can just remember being in lovely places, good people. The first night that we were in Carlow a businessman owned a shoe shop and took all us kids and bought us new sandals for the summer – brand new shoes. People were brilliant."

While food provisions and bedding were provided in all refugee centres, there was nevertheless little or no opportunity for active participation by refugees in terms of preparing food or having any input into how their needs and interests were being addressed. The lack of adequate and

appropriate accommodation was consistently highlighted by those interviewees housed at various army camps and religious and health-care institutions. While they were and remain incredibly grateful for the support and sanctuary, facilities and host sites were wholly inappropriate for those fleeing conflict. Furthermore, categories of 'hosts' and 'guests' are imbued with hierarchies of power and social relations and have individual and social implications for those assigned to them (Brun 2003). Many recalled a tension between feelings of relief on the one hand but also a sense that those displaced were solely contingent on the kindness and empathy of others. After 1971, certainly there is much evidence indicating an increasingly less-welcome environment in some parts of the Republic, characterised by reductive stereotypes and negative attitudes towards those seeking refuge. While the generous and accommodating roles and processes afforded by the Irish Government in 1969, 1970 and 1971 are not in doubt, unquestionably by 1972, state documents reveal a discernible reconsideration of 'northern refugees' by the Irish State, recasting some of them as 'burdens', 'ingrates', and 'potential subversive threats' rather than those deserving of aid and assistance.

One of the most remarkable, but little-known part of Northern Ireland's displacement, concerns the evacuation of hundreds of Protestant refugees from various parts of Belfast to Liverpool and Glasgow in 1971. The Belfast Protestant Relief Committee arranged for over 1,000 Protestant women and children, primarily from East Belfast to travel by specially commissioned boats to Scotland where they were offered refuge by the Orange Order. Women and children were also hosted by private families in the Liverpool area under the auspices of the Liverpool Loyal Institutions. While the eventual mass evacuation to Liverpool and Glasgow in 1971 was a spontaneous reaction to the intensity of violence in the aftermath of Internment, nevertheless, mass evacuation plans for Protestants were already devised and in place for some time preceding this. By the Summer of 1971 the Orange Order in Liverpool and Glasgow had devised detailed plans for the mass evacuation of Protestants from vulnerable parts of Belfast, with many local lodges raising funds and securing local accommodation for the anticipated mass exile. Records from meetings of local Orange Lodges at the time indicate that an 'Ulster Distress Fund' or 'Ulster Relief Fund' for 'our Ulster brethren' was in existence with the specific purpose of providing monetary assistance and if needs be, emergency refuge and accommodation for Protestants and the increasing likelihood of a need to accommodate 'Ulster Evacuees'.

On 10th August 1971, many residents of the Protestant Springmartin estate were evacuated to the nearby Black Mountain Primary School, where British soldiers were also billeted. Given the

deteriorating security situation and the fact that many Protestant refuge centres across Belfast were now at full capacity, a decision was made to activate the plans devised by the Loyal Orders and evacuate Protestants across the Irish Sea to pre-arranged refuge centres and families in Glasgow and Liverpool. 'Robert', a member of the Orange Order in Belfast at the time, was involved in some of the tentative efforts to arrange the transfer to Scotland and recalled that the "Orange Order had lined up boats, fishing boats mainly, to bring people over, and at the time, there was this idea that this could develop into a major civil war and they were arranging boats over to Scotland from Larne". Elsie Doyle, a member of the Orange Order in Liverpool recalled watching the news footage of Protestant families fleeing their homes during the introduction of internment in 1971. Elsie, her husband, and father-in-law Joe set sail for Belfast the following night with the full backing of the Orange Order in Liverpool.[9] The purpose of the trip was to transfer by boat as many Protestant families from Belfast across the Irish Sea to Liverpool to provide safety and refuge. Arrangements were made with the Belfast Steamship Company and within twelve hours of their arrival, the first boat of Protestant evacuees set sail for Liverpool where the local lodges had organised halls packed with food, blankets, prams as well as ensuring the presence of medical people and social services. The first 120 evacuees, overwhelmingly children and women, were taken to the Orange Hall in South Hill Road, Toxteth and to the Southern Area Memorial Social Club where they were fed and distributed to houses and accommodation from local Orange Order members. Elsie and her husband repeated boat trips across the Irish Sea continuously for the next three days and nights bringing back hundreds more evacuees, from Springmartin, the Oldpark area, Ardoyne, as well as Cupar Street and other parts of west Belfast. Thoroughly exhausted after three days and nights of sailing, other member of the local Orange institutions continued with the sea crossings bring back more and more evacuees. Some of those who crossed the Irish sea to Liverpool stayed several weeks; others stayed on for months.

Louise Sewell's Liverpool family were heavily involved in the rehousing of Protestant refugees from Belfast. Like many of those involved, Louise's family had strong connections with Protestant communities in Northern Ireland, as well as family ties to places such as the Shankill Road and Woodvale area. According to Louise, "Belfast was in my Dad's blood…and when the Troubles erupted, he was in the middle of it, always going back and forth to Belfast". His prominent role in rehousing Protestant evacuees stemmed from a concern that "Protestants were being attacked and burnt from their homes." Thelma Worthington was one of several people actively involved with the Liverpool Loyal Orders resettlement of Protestant evacuees

who came to Liverpool from Belfast. Thelma similarly described her actions as motivated by "a concern for the Protestant people… when the Troubles really kicked off, the [Protestant] houses were being burned and being ethnic [sic] cleansed." She described a flurry of activity by scores of volunteers who worked tirelessly prior to and during the hosting of Protestant evacuees.

> "There were a core of people who did the fundraising. I was part of the fundraising and worked in the old Provincial Hall where we did all the fundraising; all the unsung heroes, the quiet ones that didn't stand out…that did all the work and raised the funds…through bring and buy sales, raffles, chase the bottle. And so we would sit around and knit things like baby's clothing and that's how the funds were raised. And so it was all really well organised without someone having to say 'right you do this and you do that…' We also had a nursing corps if you like so we all learned how to practice wrapping bandages and all that."

The research evidence suggests that civil society in Northern Ireland, Liverpool, and the Republic of Ireland provided a conduit for mobilising collective action within very defined communities that shared a broad common identity, history, and purpose. The belief in a kinship bestowed by a common ethno-national identity among disparate groups working with refugees at various locations were undoubtedly motivated by empathy, solidarity, and opportunity. While the (il)legitimacy of the state is unquestionably a feature within working-class Catholic communities, the locus of power and authority with regards to evacuation and resettlement in both communities resided overwhelmingly in civil society, individuals, and families, thus offering a form of relative stability and safety against the febrile background of fear and violence. The high status bestowed on many persons and organisations directly involved in refuge, flight, and evacuations stemmed from a sense that civil society was rising to the communal needs, and interests of those caught in such dire and immediate circumstances.

Conclusion

Proponents of social capital such as Putnam contend that an abundance of social capital - that being social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness derived from connections between people – will lead to a vibrant and active civil society capable of exerting power and influence over the state. While such theorists frame their ideas and arguments within what could be termed stable, liberal democratic states that command legitimacy, the assumptions underpinning ideas of social capital are limited in their explanatory capacity when applied to

societies of ethno-religious division or where the legitimacy of the state is questioned by a significant portion of the population. Using Northern Ireland's remarkable story of mass displacement as a case-study, this article argued that ideas of solidarity within defined ethnic groups and social movement theories of political opportunity provides a more robust theoretical framework to examine such seismic events and actions. Though scholarly approaches to ethnicity are diverse and contested, nevertheless, a commonality among many is the importance of emotional attachment to processes of ethnic group-making, identity, and collective action; mythologies of a common ancestry, kinship and history create a 'moral community', characterised by reciprocity, trust, and a sense of solidarity (Demmers 2016: 43). While suggestions of ethnic groups as static, timeless, and solidified by unchanging boundaries have been thoroughly disproven, the evidence contained in this article demonstrates the salience of ethnic group identity in the interpretation, meanings, and framing of displacement as a historical and recurring feature in their everyday lives. In the case of Northern Ireland's Displacement, the solidarity and collective response of civic society was premised upon ethno-cultural ties and identities but also derived from a spectrum of critical perceptions of the state; perceptions ranging from inept at one end and outright complicit at the other.

Notes

[1] I define displacement as a social process involving the communication of intimidation, fear, and threats, or the perception of intimidation and threats, which provokes either an immediate or long-term sense of insecurity and vulnerability that compels an involuntary flight, either permanently or temporarily, for the purpose of securing refuge and safety.

[2] Forced displacement was not unique to the Troubles but in fact is a historical feature at the very root of division in Ireland. More than any other historical event, the Ulster plantation in early seventeenth century copper fastened the tenacious links between land, identity, and power. Ethno-sectarian violence and forced displacement was recorded throughout the 1800s and again during the partition of Ireland in 1921 and the early years following the creation of the Northern Ireland state.

[3] Although the city council changed its name from Londonderry City Council to Derry City Council in 1984, (after a change in council boundaries in 2015, it is now Derry City & Strabane District Council) the official title of the city remains Londonderry. Broadly, Protestant interviewees referred to the city as Londonderry while Catholics used Derry. To reflect this diversity, the article uses both terms.

[4] International law makes a distinction between refugees as those who cross an international, sovereign border to escape war and persecution, and IDPs as those seeking refuge but remain within their country or state of origin.

[5] Forced displacement caused profound demographic changes and effectively signified the end of mixed residential housing in many working-class districts across Northern Ireland as well as in rural hinterlands close to the border, thus creating unprecedented levels of residential segregation, demarcated territories, and enclaves. The existence of homogenous communities was central to solidifying and mobilising collective identities and interpretations of violence, which were particularly favourable to the growth of militant republicanism and loyalism, leading to the unprecedented direct involvement of the British Army and RUC personnel in social housing policy from the mid-1970s onwards (Coyles 2017). Ironically, the creation of homogenous ethno-religious communities also made them more vulnerable to gun and bomb attack.

[6] As is the case with all armed violence, Northern Ireland was a highly gendered conflict. It is therefore important to note that the concept of civil society and collective action are highly gendered. Northern Ireland was and largely remains a male-dominated and patriarchal society and therefore much of the collective social action during displacement was enacted by men. In many instances it was women and children who were evacuated while 'the men' were expected to stay behind to defend and protect their respective areas and coordinate evacuations and refuge.

[7] Despite the unprecedented numbers involved in displacement, particularly from 1969 to 1974, the Northern Ireland state did not establish any state-led body or agency to coordinate, assist, or monitor the forced movement of thousands of citizens. State documents reveal frustration and concern by the Irish Government at the time regarding the absence of state-led body concerning refugees in the North to liaise with.

[8] With increased violence in 1971, the Northern Ireland government established the 'Emergency Relief Scheme' where those intimidated from their homes could apply for assistance in permanently relocated to Britain. Successful applicants needed to prove they had secured both employment and accommodation in Britain (Darby and Morris 1974).

[9] While the Orange Order is understandably synonymous with Ireland, the Order have lodges in Britain, Canada, the United States, Australia and Ghana. Liverpool is the headquarters of the Orange Institution in England and reflects the large influx of Irish Protestants as well as Catholics into the city in the 1800s in search of employment. The first Orange Lodge in the city dates to the early 1800s with its first 12th of July parade occurring in 1819.

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