# Exploring Northern Ireland Identity

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# ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE
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Téma práce:    **Zkoumání identity Severních Irů**

Zásady pro vypracování:

Vysvětlete, co znamená pojem identita obecně.
Zabývejte se historickými událostmi, které měly vliv na identitu Severních Irů.
Zkoumejte, co znamenala identita pro jednotlivá náboženství (katolicismus a protestantismus) v Severním Irsku.
Zaměřte se na identitu Severních Irů ve 20. století.
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**Mitchell, Claire. Religion, Identity and Politics in Northern Ireland: Boundaries of Belonging and Belief. Hants: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006.**
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## ABSTRAKT

Má bakalářská práce se týká zkoumání identity Severních Irů. Nejprve vysvětluje, co znamená pojem identita obecně. Dále se zabývá historickými událostmi, které měly vliv na jejich identitu. Tato bakalářská práce také popisuje populární politická hnutí, jak vnímají identitu Severních Irů. Poté zkoumá, co znamenají jednotlivá náboženství (především katolicismus a protestantismus) v Severním Irsku pro identitu právě těchto obyvatel. Mimoto se zaměřuje na situaci v Severním Irsku ve 20. století. Také zjišťuje, jak to vypadá s identitou Severních Irů v současnosti, jestli je pro místní obyvatele stále důležitá a zda je neustále něčím ovlivňována. Kromě toho zmiňuje průzkumy, které se vztahovaly k identitě Severních Irů.

Klíčová slova:

Identita, Severní Irové, Severní Irsko, protestantismus, katolicismus, Nacionalisti, Unionisti, Loyalisti

## ABSTRACT

My bachelor thesis concerns exploring Northern Ireland identity. Firstly, it explains what the term identity means in general. It then deals with historical events that have had an influence on Northern Ireland identity. This bachelor thesis also describes popular political movements and their perception of Northern Ireland identity. It explores what individual religions (mainly Catholicism and Protestantism) in Northern Ireland mean for the identity of its inhabitants as well. Moreover it focuses on the situation of the 20th century in Northern Ireland, examines how Northern Ireland identity looks in today's society, determines if it is still important for local people and ascertains if there are any factors which consistently influence it. Furthermore this bachelor thesis mentions surveys which were related to Northern Ireland identity.

Keywords:

Identity, Northern Irish people, Northern Ireland, Protestantism, Catholicism, Nationalists, Unionists, Loyalists

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## INTRODUCTION

Identity – on one hand a simple and a brief word, on the other a complicated and problematic question of people's lives. Do people know the exact meaning of identity and what is involved in it? Are they able to describe or express their identity? It depends, but generally, people know what identity is but have problems formulating any sentence or definition of it. Moreover, it is hard to define identity for writers because each has his own formulation or description of identity and each of them perceives identity in a distinct way.

Is it possible for all people in a country to have the same identity? Each human must have some identity. But is a person allowed to have more than one? If so, how does he / she distinguish them? May he / she use them in the same situation or not? That is the reason why my bachelor thesis concentrates on the study and the explanation of identity on its first pages.

Northern Ireland belongs to and is a fundamental part of the United Kingdom. Do Northern Irish see advantages or disadvantages in the position of their state with respect to their identity? Are they unified in their opinions? How do they view it in contemporary time compared to previous periods? When focusing on Northern Ireland identity, is the issue of identity complicated or is it easy to explain and understand? Is it possible to influence it somehow? If so, which circumstances, which individuals / groups and which other things contributed to the affection of Northern Ireland identity? These are the essential questions whose answers my thesis attempts to find.

Because this is a very extensive topic, my bachelor thesis deals with exploring aspects influencing Northern Ireland identity from specific points of view, including history, politics and religion. Furthermore this thesis proves that these components were essential for Northern Ireland identity.

# 1   EXPLAINING THE TERM "IDENTITY"

Several definitions relevant to the term "identity" exist. The author Máiréad Nic Craith writes in her book that identity in general refers to "selected or inherited traits that define people or communities as certain kinds of individuals or groups." She defines a sense of identity as "an integral aspect of one's self-understanding which can be regarded as an opportunity simultaneously to experience continuity."[1] The concept of identity may concern a group of people as well as individuals (it is described as personal and collective identity). In fact group members tend to mark their group as one person. Identity has no preference; it encompasses aspects of both groups and individuals. On the other hand, a strong feeling of a single person with a particular group is just a sign of identity.[2] Christina Chimisso has the same standpoint with respect to identity. She agrees with the expressions of personal and collective identity and with the existence of identity in groups and identity in individuals as well. In her opinion, the group functions as a whole because it associates its members with shared experiences, actions and so on.[3] It is neither unusual nor strange that all members of groups are not uniform; on the contrary they generate one complex.

It is logical that people look to become members of a group because they feel stronger there and the group provides a certain level of support and help to them. It is possible that people can belong to more than one group; there is no requirement to join only one group. The groups may be of different sizes. The family is considered to be the smallest possible gathering a person can belong to, whereas bigger groups are local, regional or worldwide. However the leader of the group can abuse the situation because of his / her power and regard himself / herself as the owner of his / her members.[4] This is the negative result of an extreme pursuit of dominance. It is not always the case for each group to finish in this way but this possibility still exists so people should be cautious about their joining of groups.

Identity is a considerable part of each person. It has a large significance and reveals who we are and what our personality is. "The term identity suggests that something is identified (in other words that it is made or considered identical to someone else)." Moreover it gives responses to the following questions: "What are we?" "What makes us

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[1] M. N. Craith, *Culture and Identity Politics in Northern Ireland* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 5.
[2] Ibid., 7.
[3] Christina Chimisso, *Exploring European Identities* (Bath: The Bath Press, 2003), 13.
[4] Craith, *Culture and Identity Politics in Northern Ireland,* 8.

human?" "What makes me who I am?"[5] It does not simply include certain behaviours and acts, although thoughts, opinions or decision-making processes are to some extent particles of identity as well. Furthermore, people's identity manifests itself in their image, appearance, relationship to other people, attitudes, hobbies etc. Identity is developed throughout a person's lifetime, even though particular patterns are given to children from their parents. Children were not born with an identity but, most likely, they begin to unconsciously acquire it even during infancy.[6] Because parents represent a model for their children, they have been carrying this pattern with themselves for the rest of their life. That is a situation that influences identity a lot.

Identity is a fundamental element of history, society and, for example, culture. Some may claim that identity is a constant steady element, but that is not true. It is not persistent throughout history because it is constantly changing. These changes are caused by a number of factors: history (historical events), religion, people, politics, violence, geography etc. These factors are the aggregate which the identity cannot be made up without, so it has been proven that identity is not abstract; it has shape because of these interconnected elements. The term identity is used in different studies such as psychology, sociology, history, politics, as well as in ordinary conversation.[7] In addition in these times it often becomes a part of discussion. People love to analyze their identity, to compare it to others or to think about it, if it is good or not, if their values are right. They want to know what other people think about them, they desire to hear their friends' opinions, either how they perceive them or if they are acceptable friends. In general terms the question of identity is a topic highly discussed nowadays.

The modern world which we live in allows children to choose their identity. Children, for instance, are no longer required to have the same job as their parents. More than any time previously, a child's identity depends on their own free choice. A new freedom can be also seen in the cases of mothers who put priority not on child-bearing but on acquiring job qualifications and experience. Another example could be the freedom of homosexuals who started to reveal their identity without fear. Media have contributed to changing the

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[5] Chimisso, *Exploring European Identities,* 6.
[6] Ibid., 8.
[7] Ibid., 5.

perception of identity, and the progressive and fast pace of the current time plays an important role in it as well.

There are many dimensions of identity and consequently each person can have a large number of them. It can be seen in the following example: it is not surprising for the same person to be a man, an Irishman, a lawyer, a football fan, a Protestant, a father and a beloved husband, all at the same time. It is impossible for two people to be identical in all dimensions. Both can have families, be fathers, be Irish and be Protestants, but there may be the difference in their interests in the free time activities as well as in the occupation or job position (not a lawyer but a teacher, not a football fan but a player of chess). Something which has meaning for one individual does not have to have a meaning of the same value for others. Identity can be understood differently by its context. For example, the element of colour changes according to location: while a person, who has both black and white family roots is referred to as "black" in the United States of America, in South Africa he / she called "mixed race" and in Ghana identified as "white"![8]

Identity is not only connected with the context, it has also a relation to people. There is connection with dimensions of identity again. A man can be identified as a respected and strict person at work because he is a boss of a company and must run it in a successful way, but at the same time he takes on a completely different identity at home in front of his wife and children. Identity used in a family background is regarded as his true identity because he can behave as he normally would.[9] Obviously, there is no requirement or reason to play the same role at home as at work. It is natural for him to change dimensions of identity along with his position, social role, family relationships, people etc. It would be not functional to use the same identity in diverse situations. He denotes identity used in the home as true because his job position presupposes for him to have a proper level of behaviour, to make right suggestions so he must follow certain standards and rules.

Our identity depends on the identification of other people. "The unity of an individual identity, the essence of a person, the idea that someone seems always to be the selfsame individual, these are themselves social constructions, presented to others in particular

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[8] Craith, *Culture and Identity Politics in Northern Ireland*. 5.
[9] Ibid., 5-6.

circumstances for particular purposes."[10] A person's identity has various significances for other people. While for one person our identity means a lot, other individuals may hate it. There is no certainty that everyone will love it. It depends on the way how other people look at us rather than on our behavior, how we behave to them. Users of (currently popular) social networks incorporate this element into their identity, while others do not agree with it because they do not consider this to be true identity, whatever importance it may have for its users.

## 1.1    Cultural identity

The basic components of cultural identity are class, ethnicity, gender and race. Other influential component parts are history, geography, religion and language. Cultural identity is visible by its symbols, rituals, norms, traditions, values and habits. Cultural identity as well as culture is hard to define and impossible to shorten it into only one sentence. M. Nic Craith gave such a definition of culture: Culture is simply "a way of talking about collective identities." In broader concept it is a "pattern of meanings incorporated in symbolic forms, including actions, utterances and meaningful objects of various kinds with which people identify and through which they communicate with one another and share their beliefs."[11] On the other hand Brian J. Graha's definition of culture looks like this: Culture is "a notoriously elastic concept but is best regarded as a signifying system through which a social order is communicated, reproduced experienced and reproduced."[12]

Culture can refer to everything which people have created throughout history, not only material subjects, but also images, patterns, symbols, thoughts, and opinions. Cultural identity means that "the identification of one individual with a group consists (in more specific terms) of her / his identification with the culture of this group."[13]

Like identity in general, cultural identity seems to be steady because of historical traditions and customs. However, it has been changed a lot due to the changing of people.

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[10] Craith, *Culture and Identity Politics in Northern Ireland*. 6.
[11] Ibid., 2.
[12] B. J. Graha, *In Search of Ireland: A Cultural Geography* (London: Routledge, 1997), 2.
[13] Chimisso, *Exploring European Identities*, 14.

It has been developed throughout centuries and it cannot be the same everywhere. It follows that places are the sources of the differentiation.[14] In comparison with M. Nic Craith, Ch. Chimisso is somewhat skeptical about cultural identity. She mentions that in the same way that a particular identity was developed, it may also be destroyed and may disappear as time goes on. Her claim may be shown with the example of the advisor of the knight whose identity was meaningful during medieval times; nevertheless it would be foolish to state it in the twenty-first century. It might occur that identity which appears to be important for today's generation may seem ridiculous to generations in the future.[15]

Cultural identity influences the lives of people. It is associated mainly with ethnic and national groups, although cultural identities might also exist among other groups - for example, among homosexuals.[16]

## 1.2   Communal identity

Communal identity evolves and changes in addition to other identities. Community is very important for people, it means a lot to them. It is a guarantee of support and care for its members and it is a substantial element in states where there is unrest. History is a connective element of communities, but only for some of them. It can be seen in a community of family where we know that a lot of generations existed before us; however it is not visible in the internet community. Between communal identities there is a larger difference than for instance among cultural identities. Communal identities specifically differ in their boundaries and territories. Many boundaries are too strict, so they make a place difficult to live in.[17]

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[14] Craith, *Culture and Identity Politics in Northern Ireland*, 2.
[15] Chimisso,  *Exploring European Identities,* 29.
[16] Craith, *Culture and Identity Politics in Northern Ireland*. 4.
[17] Ibid., 9.

## 1.3    National identity

National identity is considered to be the most important type of identity. The writer Christina Chimisso emphasizes the existence of a nation and nationalism. In her opinion, both are elementary aspects coming under national identity. Furthermore, national identity is a fundamental sign of nationality. It is marked by events (especially historical) which have happened to particular nations, as well as and by language. Language and geography partially contribute to national identity. Additionally, the countryside is an influencing constituent of identity. It is "a symbolic representation of countries, almost invariably mentioned in national anthems."[18] Dana Arnold, another female author dealing with the issue of identity, also highlights connection between national identity and nationalism or nationhood. According to her it is national identity which helps people to comprehend the meaning of nationalism.[19]

There are differences in identities between people who come from or live in cities, towns or villages. National identity rests on the size of the nation and the state as well. In larger areas national identity is more powerful than in a small country. This type of identity became very relevant in the nineteenth century in Europe. It is not identical for all people; it can have a different value for each individual. Factors such as nationalism, xenophobia, or cosmopolitanism may play a big role in this consideration.

For example, when a woman is black and she has been living since her childhood in a country different from that of her birth, she may have to face racism throughout her life. Racists use the term "black identity" in this connection. They call her "black" only because of her appearance; they are not interested in revealing if she is "black" inside (by transferred meaning if she has negative qualities). The woman mentioned above will never forget her original identity, she may be successful in adapting to new cultural circumstances, she will gain new identities but the identity from her past remains. Racism does not only concern the colour of people but also concerns racism on the basis of the gender.[20] It can be seen mainly among men who sometimes dislike accepting women in higher job positions.

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[18] Chimisso, *Exploring European Identities*, 46.
[19] Dana Arnold, *Cultural Identities and the Aesthetics of Britishness* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 1.
[20] Chimisso, *Exploring European Identities,* 14.

## 1.4    Social identity

It is predictable that social relationships participate in social identity to a large degree. The society is an integral part of shaping social identity. People's opinions differ: some regard social identity as completely subject to social constructions, others take this as an independent element.[21] It depends on people what they will decide, and how they think of it. Furthermore humans are those who are best able to know way whether they are affected by social constructions or whether they are not susceptible to these constructions.

## 1.5    Religious identity

Religious identity is created by the attachments of people to religions. They are the most recognizable features of it.[22] "Religious ideas and symbols help constitute group identities, religious practices help construct community, religious beliefs can be politically silent and religious institutions are politically influential and provide structure to the boundary."[23] Religious identity is substantial for the faithful whereas it has little or no importance for the godless. If there are several religions in one country, tensions may occur between them which have an impact on people's religious identity. Religions do not have to accept the identities associated with other religions (because of their customs, traditions, views, thoughts etc). Religious identity sometimes causes civil and political problems within a state.

Religion is not purely the essential factor of religious identity. It is also conspicuous in cultural identity (primarily through referenced customs and traditions). Religious identity comprises both identity of person and identity of groups. It may seem that religion in becoming unpopular or disappearing in contemporary time, but that statement is not substantiated. On the other hand, the fact is that in the countryside people are more religious than in bigger cities.[24]

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[21] Chimisso, *Exploring European Identities,* 40.
[22] Ibid., 3.
[23] Claire Mitchell, *Religion, Identity and Politics in Northern Ireland: Boundaries of Belonging and Belief* (Hants: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 1.
[24] Chimisso, *Exploring European Identities,* 48.

Some scholars claim that it is not possible to be simultaneously religious and modern. In their opinion, people are more intellectual compared with previous times. They are pointing out that modern people do not believe in things which are not explicitly provable. Moreover some arguments state that somebody who lives only for religion is mentally disturbed; he / she cannot include himself / herself in normal life without reliance on God.[25] To sum it up, it depends on humans if they believe the claims mentioned above or not.

Religious identity appears to be the most stationary identity because of religious factors. Nonetheless these factors are not as steady as they should be. They are subject to changes as well as other basic features of identities. In the concrete these changes relate, for example, to social and political environment. Religion is more powerful than nationalism; this implies that religious identity has a bigger power than national identity. Moreover it has fundamentally influenced more people.[26]

Churches are institutions that provide the coherence with religious identity: they strengthen it. Moreover they are a device between religion and people. Religious symbols and signs are necessary means for the faithful but they do not have the same meaning.[27] It is dependent on their preferences. Somebody measures religious identity either by regular going to church, by marrying in church or by the baptism of a child in church etc. However they do not have to be the main indicators. In general terms, religious identity has become a problematic question in recent years.

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[25] Mitchell, *Religion, Identity and Politics in Northern Ireland,* IX.
[26] Ibid., 19.
[27] Ibid., 16.

# 2   HISTORICAL EVENTS INFLUENCING IDENTITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

In Northern Ireland there are historical circumstances which have meant a lot for the identity of people, they have affected it in some way. Here is a survey of influential events for Northern Irish identity:

## 2.1   The Plantation

The Plantation was an event occurring in 1606 when Scottish settlers were planted in the area of Ulster.[28] A majority of them were Scottish Presbyterians taken aboard into Londonderry (later renamed Derry) by English clerks. A select land placed in Londonderry was assigned to them.[29] English and Scottish so called "undertakers" had formed the society there, which was established in terms of Protestantism, laws and agriculture.[30] The term Plantation indicates the settlement of Protestant people in Northern Ireland. English planters had built up a barricade in Derry with a view to demonstrate Protestant dominance over Catholic people. This barricade also helped William of Orange, a Dutch ruler, who had been attacked by King James II of England because James had planned to gain the throne back from William. Catholics wanted to have their city too, so they established Bogside which became the chief district for Catholics.[31]

This historical event was very favourable. After the finishing of the Plantation some people started to move into the city of Ulster where they endeavoured to intensify Northern Irish identity. They were interested especially in communal identity. Land was then divided between Catholics and Protestants: whilst Catholics obtained highlands that were quite unproductive, Protestants were given lowlands that were very fertile.[32] The consequences of the Plantation caused problems early on between Catholics and Protestants. Crucially, it was caused by a disparity between them. The society of Northern Ireland had the biggest

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[28] Mark Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 2.
[29] R. C. Cottrell, *Northern Ireland and England – The Troubles: Arbitrary Borders, Political Boundaries in World History* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2005), 2.
[30] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction,* 2.
[31] Cottrell, *Northern Ireland and England – The Troubles,* 2.
[32] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction,* 2.

contribution to the problematic situation because Protestants were more privileged such as during the Plantation when they acquired more land of better quality. It was consistent that Catholics did not want to put up with their position, so they fought for more acknowledgements.

## 2.2    Religious wars

Identity of the Northern Irish was stigmatized by religious wars (from the perspective of historical events). Because King Charles I was not successful during the war, he became afraid of the Parliament (because it was highly puritanical, which means very Protestant) and its governance. Catholic Ireland was against the Parliament so since 1641 Ireland had been protesting and preparing uprisings which were then followed by attacks on the people of Ulster (signs of future Irish nationalism were appearing there). Much evidence has proven that they were very cruel and unnecessarily bloody (for instance the massacre of Protestants at Portadown is known from that time). This had irritated a lot of Protestants not only in Northern Ireland but throughout the British Isles. In the late 1640s the only aim of Oliver Cromwell was revenge.[33] He was also concerned with the execution of King Charles I. After several years the land of Catholics had come into the hands of Protestants for the next hundreds of years though few Catholics had gained it back. During this period people in Northern Ireland faced famine and plague.[34]

It is apparent here that the dissatisfaction of Catholic people accumulated, especially because of the occupation of Protestants into highly important posts and their influence in many spheres. The results from this situation were to organize uprisings which resulted in the exasperation of Protestants and which ended in a massacre. Additionally, Catholic members lost their ground and most of them were not able to reclaim the land.

During the Glorious Revolution in 1689, when there was a dethronement of James II, a Catholic man who had ruled only three years since 1685, and his replacement by the Dutch William of Orange, a new owner of the throne, Ulster was the centre of several battles. It

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[33] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction,* 3-4.
[34] Cottrell, *Northern Ireland and England – The Troubles,* 19.

can be said that the situation of Ulster city was not better than in previous periods.[35] It was accompanied by a large amount of emigration: James escaped to Ireland because he inclined to Catholicism, so he hoped to be accepted there.[36] Others were Protestant people from Ulster who escaped to Londonderry because there were no good conditions for them to stay and live in Ulster. In these times the idea of patriotism appeared and became powerful enough for Irish (primarily Ulster) Catholics during the eighteenth century.[37]

As stated previously, James tried, unsuccessfully, to reclaim his throne, with the support of Irish Catholics. These efforts escalated at the Battle of the Boyne where William overcame James.[38] William of Orange was popular with English gentry which aided him. Even though James was overthrown, Irish Protestants were unsure of their position[39] because the war was ended with the Treaty of Limerick which should have guaranteed better handling with Catholic people. Afterwards, the penal laws were issued by the Parliament.[40] The proof of the tendency of the Parliament to limit the authority of Catholics in Ireland can be seen in the preamble to An Act to Prevent the Further Growth of Popery (1703). Through the penal laws, the Parliament aimed for the restriction of the social and political rights of rich Catholic people,[41] in conjunction with the ownership of land. Other acts were focused on the deprivation of Catholics of their religious convictions, the prohibition of parents from sending their children to Catholic schools, pushing Catholic priests away from Northern Ireland and to disallow Catholics from entering the army.[42] Although it appeared that the Treaty of Limerick might provide the basis of improvements in the Catholics' state of affairs – which is indeed what the Protestants in Northern Ireland feared – the limitations placed on Catholics by the penal laws kept this from occurring.

In summary, these religious wars pitted the two major religious groups in Northern Ireland against each other. Apparently, Protestants were more forceful; they were bigger achievers at that time and held more power. Although Catholics were striving to advance their conditions, the attempt was unsuccessful.

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[35] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction,* 3-4.
[36] Cottrell, *Northern Ireland and England – The Troubles,* 19.
[37] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction*, 4.
[38] Cottrell, *Northern Ireland and England – The Troubles,*19.
[39] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction*, 5.
[40] Cottrell, *Northern Ireland and England – The Troubles,*19.
[41] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction*, 5.
[42] Cottrell, *Northern Ireland and England – The Troubles*, 20.

## 2.3    Civil war of the 1790s and following years

One of the consequences of the religious wars was the establishment of new political organisations. For example, the United Irishmen, a revolutionary organization, was set up in 1791. At first, it aimed to look for new ideas however after a short period of the time the organization was developed in the prospective of Nationalist Republicans. In consisted mainly of Protestant people who believed that Northern Ireland should break up the alliance with Britain, which was a leader of the European revolution at that time. The 1790s were years of crisis. For instance, in Ulster, there was a struggle among Catholic and Protestant land workers. Each of them wanted to gain as much land as was possible. It led to the Peep O'Day Boys, a Protestant movement of farmers.  In the year of 1795, the Peep O'Day Boys was pushed away by the Loyal Orange Institution (also known as Orange Order, and its members as Orangemen), military and anti-Catholic organisation named after King William of Orange.

Despite the fact that Orange Order was based on political ideas, it attracted members of the gentry and the government as well. They prepared a campaign which was launched against "disloyalists" (they were Catholics and Presbyterians). Catholics reacted to it and arranged Defenders on the basis of original Catholic ideas linked with revolutionary rhetoric.[43] A great deal of Catholics had to leave their homes because of Orange Order so they associated themselves with the organisation of United Irishmen.[44] The conflict changed its continuance and the United Irishmen organization had to face the repression from the government.[45] The ending of the 18th century was in token of Orange Order and the organization of United Irishmen, both of which were main participants of events, occurred during this period. While Orange Order attracted Protestants, United Irishmen organization was connected with both religious groups - during its first years, there were Protestants members of United Irishmen but it later became refuge for Catholics.

In 1800 the Act of Union was created with the contribution of British Prime Minister William Pitt to resolve the problematic situation of previous years. Its outcome was the birth of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Furthermore, within a decade,

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[43] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction*, 6-7.
[44] Cottrell, *Northern Ireland and England – The Troubles,* 21.
[45] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction,* 7.

the Irish Parliament was dissolved and its government was merged into the British Parliament. This consolidation had impact on Northern Ireland because it did not want to become a constituent of the United Kingdom. Orange Order was banned in the year of 1825 because it was considered threatening by the British Parliament (this institution was recreated in the year of 1886).[46] Apparently, Britain had attempted to intervene in the circumstances of Northern Ireland had developed. Its attempts were in the form of the creation of the United Kingdom, the association of the Irish Parliament with the British one and the dissolution of Orange Order.

During the years mentioned above, the religious identity of people in Northern Ireland was not impaired (even though it seemed possible) but it was only reconstructed. Nevertheless the national identity of Northern Irish inhabitants became stronger. Protestants throughout the British Isles were revolting against Northern Irish nationalism.[47]

In 1828 Daniel O'Connell, the lawyer who created the Irish Catholic Association, focused on the equality of Irish people, became a representative of the Parliament. Because he was a Catholic, he endeavoured to gain freedom for Catholics in the area of politics. His followers called him a "Liberator" because he organised a lot of gatherings in order to abolish the Act of Union. His activities were a huge threat for the British government, which charged him with conspiracy and imprisoned him, although this accusation was annulled and he was released by the House of Lords. Within this context the popularity of O'Connell in Ireland became much higher. British Prime Minister agreed with the reforms in Ireland but O'Connell did not believe his promises. The year of 1845 brought approximately one million deaths caused by the existence of potato famine and consequent illnesses. Because the British government did not attempted to solve these problems, large numbers of people emigrated to countries like the United States, Canada, or Australia. A described period meant the breakdown of the British government as well as of Queen Victoria. Consequently, the numbers of Catholic supporters of the British royal family were reduced.[48]

In 1868 William Ewart Gladstone was elected Liberal Prime Minister. Gladstone promised to improve conditions in Ireland. Initially, he attempted to dissolve the Church of

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[46] Cottrell, *Northern Ireland and England – The Troubles*, 22.
[47] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction*, 30.
[48] Cottrell, *Northern Ireland and England – The Troubles*, 22-23.

Ireland, claiming that it could not be the official institution because it was only followed by a small number of Ireland's inhabitants. This surprised and unsettle the Irish Protestant elite who began to feel uncertain about the future of the Union.

In 1870 the Home Government Association was established by Isaac Butt, a Protestant lawyer who aimed for peace between the Union and Irish Nationalists. Some Protestant people accepted and acknowledge this organisation but some of them, especially Ulster Protestants, had doubts about it. In the year of 1873 the Home Rule League, focused mainly on elections, replaced the Association. Butt achieved the sympathy of Catholics because of his acts included the reformations and the foundation of the university for Catholic people.[49] On one hand the intention of Home Rule League (also called Home Rule Party) was to establish home rule for Ireland but on the other hand to strive for the preservation and the reinforcement of the Union of Great Britain and Ireland. In 1886 the first Home Rule bill was introduced by Prime Minister Gladstone. Its failure resulted from its refusal by Ulster Protestants; moreover it caused the rebirth of Orange Order. Gladstone did not give up, he was determined to solve the matter of home rule in Ireland once for all thus he proposed the second Home Rule bill in the year of 1893 but this bill was also an unsuccessful because it was not approved in the House of Lords.[50]

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[49] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction*, 15.
[50] Ibid., 16-17.

# 3   IDENTITY AND THE SITUATION OF THE 20TH CENTURY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The twentieth century in Northern Ireland brought many problems leading to several struggles and other incidents because of the maintenance of Irish nationalism, more concretely, national identity. Irish nationalism insisted on secularism. Nationalism in Northern Ireland seemed to be a historical feature but that is not completely true. The fact is that religion was more valuable. It was a century of Irish crisis. [51]

## 3.1   First half of the 20th century

In 1905 the Ulster Unionist Council was founded to represent ideas of unionism. Unionists tried to strengthen a united Northern Ireland; they promoted it through the British Parliament where they had their representation. Unionists classified themselves as anti-Catholics because they were Protestants, while, by contrast, Nationalists were members of Catholicism. There were also fights between Loyalists and Republicans. Whilst Catholics were followers of Republicans, Protestants were Loyalists. With respect to numbers, Unionists exceeded Nationalists and Protestants were more numerous than Catholics throughout the twentieth century.[52] In the year of 1920 the Government of Ireland Act came into being. Its objective was to create two separated parliaments. One parliament was created for counties of Northern Ireland where more Protestant people resided, while a different parliament had to provide the legislation and the administration for the others. This decision was justified by the Government of the United Kingdom which stated that "if Protestants and Catholics could not live together in a unitary state, it would be better if they were given separate administrations."[53]

In the following years, the situation changed completely. For completeness's sake figures of Catholic people were heightened, to express it in numbers, it was 18 per cent of Catholics between 1926 and 1961. An overall enhancement of population was only 13 per

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[51] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction*, preface
[52] Ibid., 17.
[53] John Magee, *Northern Ireland: Crisis and Conflict* (London: Routledge, 1974), 3.

cent.[54] The first years of the 20th century meant success for Catholic people for the first time. Having compared the first and the second decade of the twentieth century and having realized that there was no large distance between these periods, surprisingly, that was enough for huge changes between Catholics and Protestants. Catholics completely gained control over the next years. As it was featured, it was primarily evoked by an immense expansion of their numbers. In addition, conditions for living were much better for them.

In the year of 1953 de Valera, an Irish premier, even proclaimed that Northern Ireland was a nation of Catholics, because of the growth in the Catholic population. Catholic people started to have more advantages than they ever had. For example, attention was paid to their living situation so they were allowed to live in public housing. In 1964 George Elliott, a chairman of Housing Committee, declared that "it is only common-sense, after all, that a Unionist Council is not going to put those people who are going to vote against them at the next election into houses."[55] As Unionists took pride in their post, they monitored it. The Ireland Act, presented in 1949 in the Republic of Ireland, had also covered Northern Ireland because the Act brought a right to the self-determination for Northern Irish inhabitants. Catholics were not satisfied with Protestant workers so they originated to associate themselves with Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP). An enormous growth of Catholics came in the late 1950s. The possibility that Unionists would lose Belfast appeared.[56]

The years of the beginning of the twentieth century had shown the competition between two identities, namely those of Protestants and Catholics. Both of them desired to prove that their identity was better than identity of the others. The first half of the twentieth century brought changes, particularly to Catholics. Their position with regards to the state was improved, finally, they achieved a better reputation, Protestant people stopped being assured of their post and they even became afraid of the Catholics' increasing numbers.

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[54] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction*, 43.
[55] Ibid., 41.
[56] Ibid., 48.

## 3.2    Critical years of the 1960s

In the 1960s Unionists were afraid of another wave of Catholic immigrants coming and building up a Nationalist majority which would result in less political control for the Unionists. In the year of 1965, Lieutenant Colonel D. C. Liddle, a vice-chairman of the Ulster Unionist Council, alerted that "unless young Unionists applied themselves to education in another ten or fifteen years' time we will have lost control of all the executive positions – Post Office, Civil Service and local government."[57] Terence O'Neill, who was elected Prime Minister in 1963, believed that he would be able to destroy sectarian politics by dividing Catholic ideas from nationalism. In the year of 1969 he manifested that "implicit in his doctrine is the faith that total fairness towards Catholicism can be productive not only of peace, which is essential, but for a material measure of support of the British connection."[58] The pronouncement of Prime Minister was caused by the British government's pressure on O'Neill and the Northern Irish government. The requirement of the United Kingdom was to prepare reforms for Catholic people in Northern Ireland. Whilst Unionists did not approve it, Prime Minister started to think about it.[59]

Subsequently, O'Neill tried to organize "civic weeks" that were community festivals. Their goal should have been the reinforcement of communal identity in Northern Ireland however his attempt was not a kind of success because Catholics rejected it and even they felt cheated by it. "The People's Democracy, a radical civil rights organization, in early 1969 angrily denounced his false picture of a happily integrated community rollicking in a prosperous Unionist paradise as a gimmick designed to entice the entire community into the Unionist fold."[60] It enraged both radical and moderate Catholics who believed that reform was necessary and that visiting Catholic school and civic weeks as well were not sufficient.

In spite of the fact that Unionists were talking everywhere about a new period of the pacification of communities and returning the original status to communal identity of Northern Ireland, Catholics did not believe Unionists and they adverted to their systematic discriminatory acts. The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA), a new non-

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[57] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction*, 47.
[58] Ibid., 49.
[59] John Magee, *Northern Ireland,* 13.
[60] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction,* 49.

political association, was founded in these times. Its purpose was to bring an end to the discrimination over all Northern Ireland. Some Catholic people demonstrated their willingness to yield their nationalist ambitions; some did not consent and insisted on them.[61] In Bradby's and Hundt's book, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association is referred to as "an organisation that advanced a set of liberal non-sectarian equality demands with little recourse to traditional Republican narratives of a united Ireland." According to both writers, NICRA was inspired by the American Civil Rights movement.[62]

Despite the attempts of activists, they did not succeed and did not gain inhabitants of Northern Ireland to their side because the Irish did not believe them. A revolutionary change happened when Royal Ulster Constabulary officers aggressively dissipated a civil rights march occurring in the city of Derry – an extremely brutal and cruel event which became infamous through photographs. Moreover the Catholic and nationalist city of Bogside was burned. It resulted in a revolution lasting for fifty days, during which a civil rights demonstration appeared several times. Catholics reacted in this way because of their empathy with Bogside. Police forces made an effort to prevent the demonstration from spreading but its endeavours were hopeless.

In critical moments, B-Specials, a special police force dominated by Protestants, were used to end unrest. One B-Special, who later became a member of paramilitary loyalist group, recalled: "In our area we did more or less as we liked...knew all the Catholics and kept close watch on them. Sometimes some of the lads gave them a roughing up – I am not saying that went on a lot but the politicians never complained them."[63] B-Specials made an achievement during this rebellion but they were not able to improve public order. Thus more powerful detachments of police were sent out. They could not resolve the situation by peaceful means so they began using violence against large numbers of marchers. Terence O'Neill and his cabinet were charged with reforms to improve this situation. His suggestion involved "fairer allocation of housing, an impartial ombudsman to investigate complaints against the government and an end to company votes in council elections."[64] Unfortunately, it was not as successful as it was intended to be. Catholics did not like this

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[61] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction,* 50-51.
[62] Hannah Bradby and G. L. Hundt, *Global Perspectives on War, Gender and Health*: *The Sociology, and Anthropology of Suffering* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), 54.
[63] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction*, 50-51.
[64] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction*, 52.

plan; in their opinion, it would once again work to the Unionists' benefit. Consequently, unrest continued.

A state of affairs culminated in a long march of radicals from Belfast to Derry. Its purpose was to weaken a post of the government. The march took place in the areas of Protestant people where Loyalists and also members of B-Special units charged at marchers. Luckily, nobody was killed. Afterwards radicals promised to stop arranging demonstrations. On the other hand members of the Unionist Party were angry because of abortive attempts of Terence O'Neill and his colleagues at reform. Thus he called new elections where he won but not many Catholics voted for him despite his wants. In the following years the numbers of the Loyalists began to grow so Unionists became afraid, but unnecessarily.[65]

A described period of the 1960s had finished by the fact that there was a restriction of discrimination however Protestant unionism had the superiority henceforth which meant that signs of identity – national symbols, holidays etc. were adapted to unionism. Catholic people were trying to change conditions in Northern Ireland however it had no effect. Then they felt dishonoured and their identity was debilitated but nationalism and national identity was still important enough for Catholics. Their nationalism did not have the sympathy of Britain, or in particular the British army.[66]

The 1960s were critical years mainly because of several protests, marches, fighting and struggling with a great deal of blood. It was no exception that police were called in to help but sometimes it was afield. The objective of these years was to persuade Catholics not to support ideas of nationalism. This was the aim of O'Neill's unsuccessful attempts at reform. On the other hand, at that time, nationalism was not as strong as unionism that had the most control over the state of Northern Ireland.

## 3.3    Following years of the 20th century

Between the end of the year of 1969 and the year of 1970 Loyalists were those who showed initiative. The situation in Northern Ireland and problems with identity also persisted.

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[65] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction*, 52-53.
[66] Ibid., 54.

Protestant people threatened Catholics which was the reason why the police monitored it and were prepared to intervene against them. In spite of police's attempts, Protestants succeeded in driving out Catholics from their homes. The most dramatic situation occurred in the capital of Belfast between 1969 and 1972. Everything happened repeatedly in order to agitate Catholics and to destroy their nationalist convictions and feelings of identity. It stopped Catholics from believing Unionists once and for all.[67] Here it can be seen that the circumstances in Northern Ireland did not improve during the second half of the twentieth century. The limitation of Catholic feelings of nationalism was still in progress as it began in previous years. Protestants were capable of doing anything to intimidate Catholics; expectantly, they chosen Belfast for the centre of their attacks because of its status as the capital.

With the view to resist them, Catholics organized a paramilitary organisation, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA). During this period of time the British army became involved in the dispute which influenced all of Northern Ireland and declared war on Irish Republicans. M. Mulholland alludes about the IRA and he shows that it was lampooned by its opponents. For example, the words, "I Ran Away" was drawn on several Irish buildings.[68] The Irish Republican Army was based on the thoughts and ideas of Irish nationalism and their national identity. The IRA viewed itself as "the army of the people"[69] but people perceived it as "the armed wing of a minority political party."[70] For comparison, the writer J. Magee describes the Irish Republican Army as "the guerrilla movement" which was based on its own ideology and oppression as well. He compares it with the existence of Fenians, acting in 1858, which was the organisation focused itself on the division of Great Britain and Ireland. This organisation was willing to use any means to achieve its accomplishment.[71] From citations used above, it is obvious that the rise of the Irish Republican Army was accompanied by a division of society: those who criticised it and who were against it, and those who relied upon it and for whom it was the only source of protection during the cruel times.

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[67] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction,* 62.
[68] Ibid., 64.
[69] Ibid., 71.
[70] Ibid., 112.
[71] John Magee, *Northern Ireland,* 23.

One of the primary notions of Republicans was to win independence of Northern Ireland from Great Britain. Their requirement included that: "British government recognise publicly that it is the right of the people of Ireland acting as a unit to decide the future of Ireland."[72] The Catholic community believed that a change of frontiers would bring a victory to them. It ended with a failure - no separation happened. Great Britain declared "that Northern Ireland will remain part of the United Kingdom for as long as that is the wish of a majority of its people."[73]

Although Republicans wanted to persuade Unionists to aim for the independence too, inevitably, Unionists had an opposite view in contrast to Republicans because they did not share their nationalist feelings of identity. "Though republicanism was, ideologically, non-sectarian and democratic, it would be idle to deny the religious passions that often underlay it."[74] This image was promoted by the fact that generalities supporting Republicanism were Catholics. Republicans considered militant fights to be the basis of the preservation of nationalism. Their slogan said: "For those who understand, no explanation is necessary, for those who do not understand, no explanation is possible."[75]

The majority of members of the Provisional Irish Republican Army were young men in their early twenties, coming from jobless families of working-class backgrounds. They came into the army per request of their families which had a final decision about it. The boys felt it their obligation and duty to their families. The IRA's demands for qualities of new people encompassed the leading and manipulative facilities. After several years, Northern Ireland Army was thought to be a terroristic organisation.[76] It is incomprehensible why families were willing to send their sons to join the IRA. However, it is evidence of how people were destroyed by problems, by a complicated situation and by relations in the society, and that they wanted to do everything to improve it, regardless if it involved the sacrifice of their family members. Possibly, they did not realize this or they felt it was their obligation.

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[72] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction*, 85.
[73] Ibid., 94.
[74] Ibid., 70.
[75] Ibid., 108.
[76] Ibid., 72.

In the year of 1973 there was a gathering of the governments of Britain, southern Ireland, and Northern Ireland. Such a meeting had not been held since 1925. Moreover there was the formation of a Council of Ireland which was comprised of ministers and whose task was to stand for the interests of both Irish governments. Some people claimed that the Council of Ireland was "the vehicle that would trundle Unionists into a united Ireland."[77] It finished with the overthrowing of the Council in 1974. Then there was a strike started by Loyalists - specifically by the Ulster Worker's Council. The 1980s were in token of hunger strikes which consequently made success for Republicans.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement was signed in 1986; it was a consensus between the British and Irish governments. It was created in order to set up cooperation between them and to keep the situation in Northern Ireland under control. Furthermore it was "an international treaty registered at the United Nations."[78] Because of it Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference came into existence which was located in the capital of Belfast. Its purpose was to offer services for both the English and Irish. Protestants viewed its placement in Belfast as an effort to make this city more Republican. Not all Northern Irish people agreed with the rise of the Agreement. A majority of them, particularly Unionists, did not like it. On the other hand, Catholics hoped for the extension of recognition of their national identity by means of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Unionists started to exclaim because of the Agreement but Great Britain has missed out it.[79] This situation resulted in a mass rebellion from the side of Unionists. This action transformed nothing so Unionists lost, their power and their position as well was not so strong, Margaret Thatcher was successful in elections and the Anglo-Irish Agreement was effective for other years. In the 1990s the Ulster Democratic Party with the Ulster Unionist Council and the Popular Unionist Party were established.[80]

Another author, who dealt with the operations of IRA within the scope of this period, was Alan O'Day. Similarly to Mulholland, O'Day described the attacks of the IRA. Even though it appeared that IRA planned to finish its violent campaign, which it even declared, it was followed by several other offences, resulted in injuries. The Irish Republican Army

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[77] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction*, 96.
[78] Ibid., 117-118.
[79] Ibid., 118-119.
[80] Ibid., 122.

justified these attacks as leading to the merger of Northern Ireland.[81] From the paragraphs described above, it might be said that the circumstance in the state of Northern Ireland was not much better. Difficulties were continuing, the main cause of them was the origin of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and subsequent Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference. As was typical in this period in Northern Ireland, it classified people into supporters and opponents. This encompassed Protestants and Catholics as well as Republicans and Unionists.

These years had catastrophic consequences in people's lives. The year of 1972 was the worst year with respect to the number of deaths. Since the origin of the Irish Republican Army to the year of 1998, 1,800 people were killed by the IRA. Members of the British army and Protestant civilians were the main victims of the IRA's attacks. Not only were the IRA involved in the killings, but also Loyalists killed a lot of people, primarily Catholics, the British army and other representatives of the government. The highest amount of casualties was identified in Belfast.[82] The last several decades of the twentieth century were full of violence, aggression and cruelty which lead to great losses of people's lives. On the other hand the presumption that the Irish Republican Army (considered by many people to be a terrorist organization) was responsible for all deaths is a mistake.

The Irish Republican Army did not meet with success in trying to create a political strategy which people were willing to believe in. On the other hand Catholics were thankful to IRA for their militant protection. This era did not end in total peace, however IRA's forces were a bit weakened as was Loyalists' aggression. Margaret Thatcher, British Prime Minister, summarized attempts during these with the following words: "A unified Ireland was one solution – that is out. A second solution was a confederation of the two States – that is out. A third solution was joint authority – that is out."[83] Such her formulation was caused by the attack of the Irish Republican Army on the British city of Brighton during a meeting of the Conservative Party. A few representatives died and several of them were wounded during this meeting. Fortunately, Margaret Thatcher

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[81] Alan O'Day, *Political Violence in Northern Ireland: Conflict and Conflict Resolution* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1997), 1.
[82] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction*, 76.
[83] Ibid., 116.

escaped without injuries but remained under threat by the IRA for the next few years. Thatcher reacted by strengthening security forces.[84]

To sum it up, the last years of the twentieth century still did not produced positive results which would lead to a total reform of problematic questions in Northern Ireland. Although attempts continued to be made, for example in the form of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, problems were on-going. Everything which was proposed was not agreed to by all Northern Irish society; it divided people and caused more troubles.

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[84] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction*, 128.

# 4   LOYALISM, NATIONALISM, UNIONISM AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF NORTHERN IRELAND IDENTITY

In Northern Ireland there are three kinds of important political movements which affected the identity of Northern Irish people: loyalism, unionism and nationalism. Each of them had different opinions of Northern Irish identity. Each of them perceived it in different ways, and each tried to influence it somehow. These were the most powerful political movements during the twentieth century.

## 4.1   Loyalists

Loyalists primarily performed similar views as Protestants during the period of the time when there was a possibility that Republicans would win. They acquired a high percentage of the Northern Irish population. The violence was classed with their practices over their existence, thus Loyalists were sometimes considered to be the sectarians. Their violence was often caused by drinking alcohol. They were unable to promote Northern Ireland identity by peaceful means. There are affirmative proofs, coming from the era of the Troubles, that Loyalists used non-legal forces to achieve their aims.

Mark Mulholland states in his book that Loyalist members are inclined to the traditions of Unionists.[85] Graham Spencer in his work agrees with this. He claims that loyalism is even more violent and aggressive than unionism; it is a worse variation of unionism with respect to cruelty. Moreover he compares it to paramilitarism which is a movement known for its high level of brutality towards people. Loyalists rehabilitate their acts and behaviour by the efforts to the preservation of the Union of Northern Ireland with Great Britain (here is a cohesion with Unionist images).[86] They rate this as a significant constituent for Northern Ireland identity; according to them, its identity would be not so powerful without belonging to the United Kingdom. Apparently authors recognize the association of Loyalists with Unionist concepts, with their influence, but each of them regards them in a

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[85] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction*, 86.
[86] Graham Spencer, *The State of Loyalism in Norhtern Ireland* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 3.

distinct way. It is obvious that G. Spencer is more critical towards them; he depicts Loyalists in a more negative way.

Murals of Loyalists were very valuable for them, especially for the comprehension of Northern Irish identity, they meant something special and sacred. Paintings were important belongings to their murals. Their values were changed along with people who had ruled Northern Ireland, thus sometimes there were huge numbers of murals but sometimes their amount was restricted. During the Republicans' rule, the tradition of Loyalist mural paintings was restored in a large extent, reflecting the acts of the Irish Republican Army, coming from the period of hunger strikes in the year of 1981, and also militarism of Republicans. Since 1990s paintings have not been so aggressive because of the peace process. Some of them were preserved for contemporary times and they serve as an attraction for tourists.[87]

Loyalists are often marked as Evangelicans and men who are not able to live without a gun. It is visible in their slogan "For God and Ulster" (coming from the early 20th century) that they are interested in religious beliefs as well as the maintenance of national British identity which they prefer over Northern Irish identity, as stated earlier. However first Loyalists were focused on patriotism and nationalism.[88] It is possible to say that in the previous times Loyalists shared ideas with Nationalists and their insight into Northern Ireland identity was set on a similar basis. Later on, the situation of Loyalists and their views changed. They began asserting different viewpoints than Nationalists and preferred the Union and British identity. Loyalists state that everything they do, the way they do it or the resources which they use for it, comes from God. They are satisfied that God agrees with their actions. Based on their opinion, they think that God knows that all that they do is for well-being of people and their identity.

Peter Shirlow and Mark McGovern, writers and university lecturers, introduce another motto which became important for Loyalists. The slogan is "We are the People". Loyalists declare that this motto signifies a sense of identity and an attachment to Protestant religion, namely it refers to Ulster Protestant inhabitants. It shows who they are and what their identity looks like. It means that Loyalists are unified; they support themselves and stand

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[87] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction*, 110-111.
[88] Spencer, *The State of Loyalism in Northern Ireland,* 29.

by each other. The slogan was connected with Loyalists through the ages and it was revived in modern times. It helped them in the years of the conflict to function as a whole and to survive. Additionally, it was used throughout a large number of historical events.[89] The goal of Loyalists was to remind the people who they are as well as to demonstrate how they were powerful and integrated. These ordinary words create something like a graven image for Loyalists. This statement can be confirmed because Loyalists are pressing for knowing this phrase and having it in people's mind so they write and draw it in all possible places throughout Northern Ireland; they say it on each occasion regardless of whether it is a formal or a private action. To sum it up, they are totally attached to this sentence; they could not imagine their life without the driving force of the slogan. The lives of too many Loyalists are connected to the meaning of these words.

## 4.2   Unionists

Unionists regard themselves as anti-Catholics because of their stance in opposition to Catholicism. In spite of their attitude to Catholicism, potentially, there is small number of Unionists who are members of the Catholic religion.[90] Unionists declare themselves to be British people, and their argument includes the fact that Northern Ireland belongs to and helps constitute the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Some Unionists proclaim that they are men / women of Ulster.[91] From a certain point of view, it can be regarded as complicated because Ulster is a part of the Irish Republic too so there is a possibility of conflict with Northern Ireland identity.

From a political perspective, the main interest of Unionists is the strengthening of the Union and relations with Great Britain. "It may also encompass a number of other dimensions: cultural (linked to notions of British identity), religious (the preservation of the Protestant religion and the Protestant settlement in the Union), supremacist (epitomized

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[89] Mark McGovern and Peter Shirlow. *Who are "the People"? : Unionism, Protestantism and Loyalism in Northern Ireland* (London: Pluto Press, 1997), 1-2.
[90] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction,* 46.
[91] Rosemary Sales, *Women divided: Gender, Religion and Politics in Northern Ireland* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 3.

in the slogan "we are the people") or progressive (emphasizing economic ties and links to the British labour and trade union movement)."[92]

Unionism impressed other people, such as some members of Marxism (primarily people belonging to British and Irish Communist Organization), who associated themselves with the views of Unionists. The attitude of Unionists towards Catholicism differed throughout ages. While original Unionism considered Catholics to be the enemies of a society who should have been aware that their identity is not as important as identity of Protestant people, a new generation of Unionists thinks of themselves as the members of Great Britain, a multicultural country, who are residents of it with equal rights in comparison with others. Contemporary Unionists view Catholic identity as their option but not as identity of a Northern Irish nation (to be concrete, as national identity of Northern Ireland) because the Protestant identity has a bigger meaning for them.[93] It is visible from the illustration that the attitude of Unionists to Catholics and their views to identity is currently more positive than it has been in previous times, but there are still some doubts and rejections of Catholic opinions. Based on the convictions of Unionists, Catholics are not a significant part of Northern Ireland identity.

## 4.3    Nationalists

Nationalists are unyielding in their perception of the national identity of Northern Irish people in contrast to Unionists. Nationalists prefer a united Ireland and they classify themselves as Irish with Irish identity. A lot of them strive for the recognition of Northern Ireland as a separate state because they would like to emphasize its uniqueness.[94] They declare that Northern Ireland inclusion into the United Kingdom and its ordering in present time is not democratic and there is no probability of any reform.[95] Most of those who are inclined towards nationalism, toward its thoughts about identity and toward its aspirations

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[92] Sales, *Women divived*, 47.
[93] Ibid., 47.
[94] Ibid., 3-4.
[95] Ibid., 46.

are Catholics. Furthermore the feminists of Northern Ireland support the Nationalists.[96] Nationalists had mainly fought against Unionists, and there was a high competition between them because each of them tried to support their own ideas and thoughts. The problem is that Nationalists as well as Unionists perceive identity of Northern Ireland people differently. That was the result of their struggle.

Rosemary Sales claims in her book that Northern Irish nationalism may be divided according to several components. A basic division is created between civic and ethnic nationalism. Civic nationalism stands for the equality and the recognition of all inhabitants in Northern Ireland. This was epitomized by the United Irishmen Movement. Ethnic nationalism, however, underlines ethnicity as the main element contributing to equal citizenship. It also encompasses the support of Northern Irish rights.[97] There are many typologies of nationalism but the one described above seems to be the most common. Apparently, both kinds of nationalism deal with the element of equality but ethnic nationalism underlines ethnicity, in the process of an equal recognition, in a higher way than civic nationalism.

Desmond M. Clarke together with Charles Jones permits the dimensions of nationalism in Northern Ireland as does Rosemary Sales. They also add that nationalism is not dead in contemporary times; furthermore nationalism has an impact on people. If they do not acknowledge it, it would be extremely difficult to understand and solve the problems of a presence and to live in such a hectic period of time, thus it depends on people if they are inclined towards nationalism and its perception of identity.[98]

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[96] Sales, *Women divided*, 56.
[97] Ibid., 56.
[98] D. M. Clarke and Charles Jones, *The Rights of Nations: Nations and Nationalism in a Changing World* (Cornwall: MPG Books Ltd., 1999), 1.

# 5   IDENTITY AND RELIGION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

## 5.1   Position of religion in Northern Irish society and its impact on identity

Religion in Northern Ireland is quite a delicate matter. It is recommended that religion should not be discussed during official and formal occasions because it would be a difficult question and it would trouble people.

Claire Mitchell proves it in her book where she describes that when she wanted to acquire information about religion in Northern Ireland, its relation to identity etc., she was not allowed to do it in public but in a private way, for instance in a personal setting. Thus she carried out research during, for example, a taxi ride. On the other hand she indicated that once people are satisfied that nobody else will hear them, they are willing to provide data and their opinions about Northern Irish religion and identity. It is logical that people must show their attitude towards it, because it is not possible to live in Northern Ireland and not be aware of the struggles between the two most common religions in Northern Ireland: Catholicism and Protestantism.[99] Questions of religion concerns each Irish person, its problem is hidden inside of too many people. In spite of this fact, some people try not to worry about it, not to suppose it but it is inconvenient because it touches all of them in the state of Northern Ireland. The matter of interest is that for some people, there is no difficulty to confide to anybody with his / her standpoint although some have problems with it.

In C. Mitchell's book, she mentions her disappointment with the fact that even though Northern Irish people claim that even they are not regular churchgoers or they do not adhere to any religion, religion shill has a large impact on their lives. Initially, she believed that it was possible to convert identity easily however she discovered that this is not the case in Northern Ireland because its religion does not allow this change. According to her, people are forced to wear masks, and their identity is often suppressed. Additionally, she finds it hard to live in such a country. It is easier to be a part of the aggregate than to stand

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[99] Mitchell, *Religion, Identity and Politics in Northern Ireland*, IX.

out from the crowd.[100] It appears that the writer takes notice of the bad effects of religion on the identity of Irish citizens over any positive effects it may have. First of all, it may be evoked by her staying there lasting for several years where she gained a lot of experience, stemming from talking to different people, and after that she formed her point of view.

## 5.2   Protestantism and Catholicism in Northern Ireland

As stated previously, identity in Northern Ireland is mainly influenced by the religions of Catholicism and Protestantism. Throughout history, it was more advantageous for people to classify themselves as a member of the Protestant religion than as a Catholic because Protestants were more numerous than Catholics, they owned more property and they had more rights in society as well.

Fights and conflicts in Northern Ireland have started between the two religions since this time. The problem was that each religion was established on a different basis and had different priorities. That is the reason why Northern Ireland is referred to as a divided society or a nation with a divided identity. While Protestants assert that they belong to Great Britain and that British identity is more familiar to them, Catholics, in their opinion, have Irish identity. Whether or not an Irish Protestant or Catholic is actively religious, the meaning of their religious identity will remain the same for him / her. Moreover people rarely take an intense dislike to religion.[101] Divisions are primarily visible in everyday life, in everyday situations. It continues to influence children as well as their parents. It is necessary to say that it must be hard to live in a state with such a divided society where two religions, which are so powerful, exist.

It is worthwhile to remember that most Catholics are adherents to Nationalism whereas Protestants classify themselves as Loyalists or Unionists. Those, who appreciate Loyalism, are devoted to its slogan "We are the People" as well as Loyalists. The writer Peter Shirlow quotes the newspaper Chicago Tribune as saying that "Protestants are less humorous than their Catholic counterparts. They are sombre and hard-working. They feel British and deny

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[100] Mitchell, *Religion, Identity and Politics in Northern Ireland,* IX.
[101] Ibid., 4.

their Irish past and future."[102] For men out of Northern Ireland the word "the people" seems to be an ordinary expression describing humans but that is not true for Protestants as they either see something important hidden in it or something which is highly valuable. The obsession connected to this motto causes troubles for them in day-to-day life because they are considered to be sectarians by other people. It is unambiguous that Protestants are impacted by their religion in larger extent than Catholics which is why a lot of people find it incomprehensible. On the other hand they are still successful in obtaining new members.

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[102] McGovern and Shirlow. *Who are "the People"?, 4.*

# 6 SURVEYS RELATED TO NORTHERN IRELAND IDENTITY

This chapter deals with the three surveys carried out in Northern Ireland between the periods of the 1960s – 1980s and the 1990s – 2000s. These surveys are described in the books of authors, included R. Rose, E. M. Browne, J. Whyte, E. Cairns, M. D. Roe and A. Trench. Each survey was aimed on different questions but they had in common that everything was related to Northern Ireland identity. They brought standpoints of Northern Irish people towards their identity.

## 6.1 Surveys of 1960s – 1980s

During this era the three authors, R. Rose, E. Moxon-Browne and J. Whyte, presented in their books outcomes coming from the surveys of 1968, 1978 and 1986. About 1,300 Northern Irish people responded to their surveys. While Rose's survey was carried out only few months before the outbreak of the Troubles, Moxon-Browne's survey was done 10 years after Rose's one. In this time the historical event of the Troubles was in progress and it was still powerful and influential as well.

Rose mentions that in only 5% of Northern Irish marriages, brides and grooms were members of different religion, politics, identity etc. Ten years later, the survey of Moxon-Browne showed identical figures and in the survey of 1986 the number of such marriages even dipped to 4%. These results made visible the power of belonging to the same group and sharing a uniform identity in Northern Ireland. The reason of barricades between people, which brought out these low numbers, was discussed. Some people thought that it was caused either by poverty, by social status, or by an attachment to politics and Orange Order. On the other hand Whyte does not agree with this statement, he claims that the most influential components were education and primarily endogamy. Another writer, J. Harris, agrees that endogamy is an important factor.

An assertion that Protestants indicate that they have British identity whereas Catholics regard themselves as Irish was confirmed in all three years. Only a few claimed the otherwise. It is a matter of interest that in the year of 1968 there was no striking difference between Protestants who marked themselves as Irish and those who designated their identity as British. To express it in numbers, while 39% Protestants felt British, 20% Protestant people identified themselves as Irish. This small distinction has started to

increase since the beginning of the Troubles and following conflicts. The biggest contrast was seen in 1978 when the Irish Republican Army (especially its campaign) was strong and prepared attacks upon Protestant members. In that period only 8% of the Protestant population was inclined towards Irish identity. The IRA may be the main factor of such a huge decline. The survey of 1968 as well as of 1978 did not show anybody who described their identity as Northern Irish. In the survey of 1986 some members of this type of identity had appeared.[103]

## 6.2   Survey of 1997

Ed Cairns and Michael D. Roe presented in their book a survey, carried out in the year of 1997. Around 120 pupils from the age of 6 to the age of 12 belonged among these respondents. They came from different types of schools, social classes, villages / towns / cities, and from locations where violent struggles had occurred as well as those where they had not. The target of the research was not to show the typical Northern Irish child but rather the wide variety of Northern Irish people.

It was aimed at the opinions of pupils, how they took notice of history and their influence on Northern Ireland identity. The results demonstrated that children were agreed on the importance of history. A girl, who was 6 years old, claimed: "I'm very interested in olden day stuff, and it's interesting to go back, to go that far back...because it feels like you're going back and you're actually walking in those day streets, like in a time machine." For comparison, a boy at the age of 8 stated: "I think it's interesting because I like hearing about old people and how they lived and how they made houses and things like that." Then the questions of research concerned enquiring about the sources of knowledge of history. Their responses included: "Archaeologists find things from the past that tell us lots of things about it" or "People find remains, that and they started to study, and they started to find out what kind of life they had, the way they made their things."[104]

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[103] Fionnuala McKenna, "National Identity in Northern Ireland by Edward Moxon-Browne (1991), in, Social Attitudes in Northern Ireland: The First Report," CAIN Web Service,
http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/research/nisas/rep1c2.htm  (accessed March 10, 2011).
[104] E. R. Cairns and  M. D. Roe, *The Role of Memory in Ethnic Conflict* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 114-115.

## 6.3 Surveys of 1990s – 2000s

The writer Alan Trench mentioned in his book the results coming from several researches which were organized by British Social Attitudes survey and Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey. These surveys took place regularly from 1996 till 2001. Each of them was focused on the attitudes of Northern Irish inhabitants towards the situation of Northern Ireland as a constituent part of the United Kingdom. The authors of researches wanted to find out if the people of Northern Ireland were satisfied with the position of their state or if they would prefer separation. Outcomes have shown that Northern Irish attitudes about this point were changing. In the first years of the research a large number of people preferred the independence of Northern Ireland, particularly Catholics. On the other hand in the 21st century more and more inhabitants voted for the maintenance of the current situation, even Catholics. To express it in numbers, one in three Catholic people declared their support for this statement.[105]

Another area of the questionnaire involved the issue of national identity in Northern Ireland. The results of the surveys were identical to the research from the 1960s until the 1980s as stated previously. Catholics identified themselves as Irish whereas Protestants were inclined towards British identity. Catholic percentages have been similar for several years. For illustration, in the year of 1996, 57% said they belonged to Irish identity, in 2000 it was 59%. On the contrary, the figures of Protestants within the range of 5 years were slightly different. While 59% Protestant people asserted they were British during 1996, in 2000 it had risen to 72%. A number of Catholics who felt rather British or of Protestants who identified themselves rather Irish did not exceed 10% in any year of the survey.[106]

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[105] Alan Trench, *The State of the Nations 2001: The Second Year of Devolution in the United Kingdom* (Thorverton: Imprint Academic, 2001), 227.
[106] Ibid., 239.

# 7   IDENTITY IN CONTEMPORARY AND FUTURE NORTHERN IRELAND

In contemporary Northern Ireland there are still ethnic problems which have the influence on its identity. The problem of Northern Ireland is that people cannot create a collective identity. Their opinions are very different. They struggle between themselves, they contest, and they would like to enforce only their thoughts, without respecting the creations and contributions of other people. Their aim is to compete with others in being the best in everything: it concerns things in both personal and social life. Common identity is not a big value for them; they prefer individualism in all spheres of life. There are still some humans who are trying to preserve ideas of shared identity. It means a lot for them, but it will be a question of time if they are successful or not. The future is uncertain.

Neither unionists nor nationalists are as powerful as they have been in previous times. Not many people believe in the separation of Northern Ireland from Great Britain, not even Nationalists, who were the main supporters of this idea in past times.[107] Everything will depend on the new members of the population, if they choose to live and promote their identities in a peaceful way, or if they return, as before, to fighting. Also, politics and social relations will have a contribution in the following years. Politics is a very influential factor because members of political parties use manipulative skills and they acknowledge only their own opinions.

Northern Ireland will never be a state of one shared identity, it is impossible there. Time will tell if it is feasible to live in a country with more identities (Catholic and Protestant identities belong among the strongest one) in peace, without aggression. The Northern Irish difficulty is that its identities are completely different. Protestants as well as Catholics would like to generate Northern Irish national identity in their way. Whether there is an appreciation of both of them by the same measurement, it will help the state of affairs in Northern Ireland. The perception of identity might give a hand to a Northern Irish individual as well as to manipulate with him / her and destroy his / her personality forever. The contemporary era appears to be quite peaceful; hopefully, it would go on in this way or become even better.[108]

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[107] Mulholland, *Northern Ireland – A Very Short Introduction,* 152-153.
[108] Cottrell, *Northern Ireland and England – The Troubles,* 114.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of my bachelor thesis was to explore Northern Ireland identity. As stated previously in introduction, this thesis is focused especially on the affairs influencing identity of Northern Irish people, concretely, what had or still has impact on their identity, from the aspects of history, politics and religion.

In my bachelor thesis it was proved that first of all the affection of Northern Ireland identity had dated to old times because it was influenced by the historical events. This bachelor thesis describes three of them: the event of the Plantation, religious wars and the Civil war. The consequences of the Plantation of 1606, when Scottish settlers were taken to the Ulster area by English clerks, showed that it reinforced Northern Ireland identity, especially a communal one. In these times the difficulties between Protestants and Catholics already appeared. Primarily, they were caused by an unequal division of land when Protestants were favoured and they received more fertile ground than Catholics. The period of religious wars brought struggles between the two most powerful religious groups in Northern Ireland – Catholicism and Protestantism. Protestant people were more successful and socially advantaged during that time which made Catholics determined to fight for their recognition and better conditions. Unfortunately, they did not achieve great results because they were limited by the establishment of strict Penal laws. Moreover ideas of nationalism and patriotism were visible during those times which became strong enough for the future. The last historical event my bachelor thesis concentrated on was the Civil war of 1790s. These were the years of the crisis. Two organisations whose adherents were diversified came into the existence – Orange Order and United Irishmen. Whilst Orange Order attracted Protestants, the prevailing members of United Irishmen were Catholic people. Thus it was a source of many disputes. Identity in Northern Ireland seemed to be weakened but this presumption was not confirmed because nationalism and national identity was strong enough at that era.

The events of the twentieth century contributed to Northern Irish identity as well. Because the situation was very difficult in this period, accompanied by lot of fighting, struggling, attacking etc. which related to the national identity of Northern Irish people, it is divided into three parts: the first half of the twentieth century, the critical years of the 1960s and the following years of the twentieth century. During the first years of the twentieth century, the Protestant position was a little bit debilitated because they started to be afraid of Catholics whose population was rapidly increasing. This was the first time the

living situations of Catholics improved, for example. There was a lot of rivalry between identities of Catholics and Protestants. The state of affairs was intensified during the 1960s because there were a number of attacks between the two religious groups mentioned above. Everything arose from the Catholics' strong feeling of nationalism against which Protestants revolted. Prime Minister O'Neill along with his government tried to ameliorate the circumstances in Northern Ireland but he failed because Catholic people did not believe his promises. He was also striving to persuade Catholics to give up nationalist ideas, but unsuccessfully. Moreover the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association was established in order to fight discrimination, but its attempts were not as successful as it had hoped. Despite strong Catholic nationalism, Protestant Unionists held power at that time and had the greatest influence on identity. The following years, unfortunately, did not bring a solution to the problematic questions in Northern Ireland. Protestant aggression against Catholics and their nationalism increased, often with deadly results. The most violent actions occurred in the capital of Belfast. To protect them, Catholics organized the Provisional Irish Republican Army. With its creation, fights continued and it divided Northern Ireland society into opponents and followers. To sum it up, the circumstances of the twentieth century were really difficult for identity of Northern Irish people.

Another factor having a high measure of influence on Northern Ireland identity was politics, that is to say the Northern Irish political movements of nationalism, loyalism and unionism. Their views and perceptions of Northern Ireland identity were completely distinct. It might be said that the conviction of Unionists and Loyalists concerning Northern Ireland identity is similar. Both of them declare that belonging of Northern Ireland to the Union is sufficient. Additionally, according to them, in the case of separation, the identity of Northern Irish citizens would be weakened or even destroyed. If compared, loyalism uses more aggressive tactics for expressing its opinions and influencing people. On the contrary, Nationalists stand for the division of Northern Ireland from Great Britain; they regard a contemporary position of Northern Ireland as a destructive feature of identity. Unionists and Loyalists are followed mainly by Protestants whereas Nationalists are supported by Catholics. While in the opinion of Loyalists and Unionists, Northern Irish should mark themselves as British, Nationalists claim that the identity of Northern Irish has to be Irish.

My bachelor thesis reveals that the most powerful feature affecting identity in Northern Ireland is religion – Catholicism and Protestantism. Expectantly, in this

connection the state of Northern Ireland is considered to be the country of divided society as well as identity. These divergences are visible in all areas of life in Northern Ireland and throughout generations because everything is segregated for Catholics and for Protestants. Even though some people do not want to be stigmatized by religion, it is impossible in Northern Ireland to avoid it because religion plays an important role in the society of Northern Ireland and in identity. Each religion has strong demands for its members. It is not possible for humans in Northern Ireland to stop belonging to one religion and transform themselves and their beliefs to another.

In contemporary times, impact of religions as well as the conflicts between individual religions is obvious. It is not as problematic as in the past but unrest still appears. There are struggles between Catholic and Protestant identities. They are striving to prove that their identity is better than that of others. In the end it must be claimed that Northern Ireland will never be a state of only one identity. Moreover the identity of individuals prevails over the identity of large groups. It will be a question of the time if the situation remains the same or if some changes occur. To summarize, the matter of identity in Northern Ireland was and still is a very complicated topic.

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