

**CONFLICT IN CITIES AND THE CONTESTED STATE**

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*Divided Cities/Contested States*

**Working Paper No. 22**

**Segregation Preferences of 16-year Olds  
in Northern Ireland.  
What Difference Does Urban Living Make?**

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## Editorial note

This working paper is an invited contribution. It relates to the *Conflict in Cities* research module 'Belfast's 'Peacelines' and Interface Areas'.

# **CONFLICT IN CITIES AND THE CONTESTED STATE**

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## **Biographical note**

Dirk Schubotz is Young Life and Times Director with ARK and is based in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work at Queen's University Belfast. He has undertaken research on a range of issues related to young people, such as mental and sexual health, community relations and education. Dirk is actively involved in promoting participatory research methods.

Paula Devine is Research Director of ARK and is based in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work at Queen's University Belfast. She is coordinator of the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey.

# Segregation preferences of 16-year olds in Northern Ireland. What difference does urban living make?

Dirk Schubotz and Paula Devine

## Abstract

It is often claimed that sectarian violence in the Northern Ireland conflict is specific to cities and thus arises out of urban living. The aim of this paper is to explore statistically what factors contribute to segregation preferences among young people living in rural and urban areas. Analysis was carried out on a pooled dataset comprising data from the 2005 to 2009 Young Life and Times (YLT) survey – an annual attitudes survey of 16 year olds. The findings show that religious and national identities are the strongest predictors of segregation preferences among 16-year olds, regardless of where they live and what background they have. The more religious respondents are and the more important their national and religious identity is to them, the more likely they are to prefer to live, work and go to school with people of their own kind. However, 16-year olds living in rural areas of Northern Ireland are more supportive of segregation than those living in more urban areas in all three aspects investigated: housing, workplace and schooling. This research highlights the need for government policy to take rurality into account. Nevertheless, the results also indicate that some variables significantly determine segregation preferences regardless of where respondents live, such as attendance of segregated schools, being female, or strength of national and religious identity. Consequently, policy initiatives should continue to address the effect of segregation, especially in relation to education, and future research exploring social class and gender is recommended. In conclusion, the perception of the violent ‘urban spaces’ and the ‘peaceful countryside’ has to be challenged.

**Keywords:** young people, segregation, urban, rural, identity

## Introduction

16-year olds living in Northern Ireland today can be seen as part of a generation growing up at a time when Northern Ireland’s society is slowly coming out of violent conflict. Those who are 16 today were born after the 1994 ceasefires, and so most have to relate to history books and the eye-witness accounts of their parents’ or grandparents’ generations to make up their mind about the Northern Ireland conflict. However, as recent riots, shootings and car bomb attacks have shown us, Northern Ireland’s violent past has not totally disappeared. Indeed, young people are still growing up in a society deeply divided along national and socio-religious lines in which ‘us’ and ‘them’ mentalities continue to persist.

ARK (Access, Research, Knowledge) is a joint resource between Queen's University Belfast and University of Ulster which facilitates easy access to social and political material on Northern Ireland. ARK maintains a suite of attitudinal surveys and has monitored attitudes to community relations and religious mixing in Northern Ireland for over a decade. Since 1998, the Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) survey has recorded the attitudes of adults aged 18 years or over living across Northern Ireland to a range of social policy issues. In addition, the Young Life and Times (YLT) survey asked 16 year olds living in Northern Ireland about the issues that affect them, and has been running since 2003. Regular updates on these attitudes have been published, relating to the adult population (Hughes and Donnelly, 2001 and 2003; McGinty, 2003 and 2004; Hayes, McAllister and Dowds, 2006; Muldoon et al., 2008) and young people (Devine and Schubotz, 2004; Schubotz and Devine, 2005; Schubotz and Robinson, 2006; Schubotz and McCartan et al., 2008). Comparisons of the attitudes of adults and young people have been useful, (for example, Fullerton, 2004) as the experiences of these groups can vary greatly. In particular, the opportunities for young people to extend their friendship groups beyond the immediate neighbourhood and school environment, which for the majority of young people are single-religion settings, can be limited. Adults, on the other hand, frequently mix in their workplace, which is likely to influence their attitudes. The lack of meaningful cross-community contact may have an impact upon the behaviour of some younger people and might be seen as one of the reasons why some young people get involved in rioting.

The purpose of this paper is to take previous data analysis one step further in order to explore statistically what factors contribute to segregation preferences among young people. In doing so, we will look at two specific aspects. **Firstly** we will compare 16-year olds' views with those of the adult population in Northern Ireland. **Secondly** we will investigate segregation preferences between 16-year olds living in rural and urban settings. We do this in order to address the claim that sectarian violence in the Northern Ireland conflict is something which is specific to cities and thus arises out of urban living.

The empirical findings are then related to theoretical concepts of social categorisation processes in order to explain how these continue to shape identities among a generation that has not experienced violence and sectarianism at its worst in Northern Ireland. We conclude our contribution with an outlook to how the Northern Ireland Peace Process and its associated policy frameworks deal with attitudes to segregation. Here we relate our findings to Karl

Mannheim's idea of 'communities of experience' described in his essays on the sociology of knowledge (1952).

### **Theoretical notions on the causes of segregation**

Within sociological and social psychological literature, three theories appear particularly relevant when explaining continued preferences for segregation.

Henry Tajfel's theory of social categorisation has previously been applied to the Northern Ireland context. According to Tajfel (1978 and 1982), people divide the social world they live in into two categories: 'us' and 'them', or '*ingroups*' and '*outgroups*'. Tajfel and his followers argue that humans do this because they are 'cognitive misers' by nature, that is, they can only consume a limited amount of information and therefore have to be selective in what information they deal with and absorb. As a consequence of this process, people develop social identities which distinguish them from others.

According to this theory, the desire to enhance good feelings about the groups people belong to (*ingroups*) is intrinsic to human nature in order to ensure positive feelings about themselves. At the same time, groups that people do not feel they belong to (*outgroups*) are then seen more negatively. The desire to belong to a group also results in a misperception of both differences and similarities within groups and between groups. Within-group differences and between-group similarities are under-emphasised, whereas between-group differences and within-group similarities are overestimated. Social psychology has applied the concepts of stereotyping and prejudice to these processes. It is known that such negative feelings, stereotypes and prejudices often arise without any contact with members of the '*other*' groups, whilst group membership itself has been seen as indicative of the perceptions of the self (Muldoon and Trew, 2000; Zárate and Garzer, 2002). Thus, the ongoing socio-religious segregation and 'us-and-them' mentality in Northern Ireland can be explained by social categorisation processes and the human nature of social cognition. Related to this is Allport's much cited contact hypothesis (1954), according to which meaningful contact at equal status helps to reduce tensions and prejudices between groups experiencing conflict. In particular, the planned integrated education movement in Northern Ireland has used Allport's inter-group contact theory to support their case from very early on (Spencer, 1987).

Emile Durkheim's theory on the elementary forms of religious life (1965) sheds some light on the role of religion as a key marker of identity. According to Durkheim, religion provides a sense of the sacredness, a common destiny and identity linking past, present and future. He argues that sacred symbols and celebrations hold the communities together. Within these ceremonies, the past is 'represented for mere sake of representing it and fixing it more firmly in the mind' (1965) in order to confirm the group identity and unity.

Attempts have been made recently to mainstream and reinvent the two main Northern Irish cultural and religious celebrations - namely St. Patrick's Day as a festival for *all* Christians and 12<sup>th</sup> of July as 'Orange Fest'. For outsiders (such as tourists) who are strangers to the Northern Ireland conflict and not part of it, this strategy may have some appeal. However, beyond this, there has been little evidence for a change in ownership of these celebrations. The 12<sup>th</sup> of July is firmly embedded within the Protestant and Unionist community, whilst St. Patrick's Day is often perceived as being associated within the Catholic and Nationalist community (for example, Smyth and McKnight, 2010). Thus, as Durkheim would argue, their historical outlook confirms socio-religious allegiances.

In his 1997 book *Material Conflicts: Parades and Visual Displays in Northern Ireland*: Neil Jarman writes about the 'the endless parade':

*'While the loyal orders feel threatened by the demands to give up or change their traditions of parading, the nationalist community have readily asserted their own rights to parade. A little-publicised feature of the Troubles has been the way in which the nationalist community, and in particular the republican movement, have used public parades to assert their growing power and to extend their tradition of commemorations.'*  
(Source: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/parade/jarman.htm>)

Again, this can be seen as further validation of Durkheim's view that sacred celebrations and commemorations contribute to cohesion among a religious community.

The annual Young Life and Times (YLT) survey of 16-year olds itself provides empirical evidence about how young adults today still relate to these celebrations, how they and their

symbolisms are an important part of who they are, and what socio-religious group they belong to:

*'I prefer associating with my own religion as it is safer especially around 17th March and 12th July and also there would be less controversy on matters such as unification of Ireland, etc.'* (YLT respondent, 2004).

*'The Catholic community is always talking about compromise but yet they wish to stop all Protestant parades, which is part of our culture. Nobody is trying to stop the Catholic culture. Why is the Union Jack not allowed to be displayed? It's our national flag, yet it is not allowed to be seen, and yet a foreign flag like the tricolour is displayed everywhere.'* (YLT respondent, 2003).

The third social theory that we want to table here in order to contextualise our empirical research is Maurice Halbwachs' theory on collective memory (Coser, 1992). Halbwachs maintains that memorialising is a social process. Whilst only individuals have the capacity to contemplate the past, it is only with the help of other social actors that people can recall and situate their memories. This collective memory makes our individual recollections possible. Halbwachs argues that memory is not merely the sum of individual recollections among people in the same society, but rather a product of joint collective effort. Being a student of Durkheim, Halbwachs develops Durkheim's ideas of commemoration with regard to collective memory. Within the processes of collective memory, the past is not simply preserved, but rather it is *reconstructed* in terms of the present. Halbwachs' idea that we perceive the past only in terms of the present can aid our understanding of the ongoing socio-religious segregation in Northern Ireland. Significantly though, the same theory can be applied to argue that it is changes to the Northern Irish society today that are key to the diminishing of socio-religious segregation.

### **Northern Ireland Conflict – an Urban Issue?**

Whilst these theoretical approaches put little emphasis on the impact of the locations where people live on the development of their attitudes and views, violence in Northern Ireland has often been seen as a predominantly urban phenomenon. This can probably be explained by the fact that socio-religious segregation and sectarianism and its related violence have been

most *visible* in the two largest cities in Northern Ireland. One example for this is the so-called Interface violence. Interface areas<sup>1</sup> in Northern Ireland are often characterised by the poorest community relations and highest levels of sectarian tension, and are often considered to be an urban, territorial and estate-based or working class phenomenon (Byrne, 2005, Jarman, 2004, Donnelly, 2006; Radford et al., 2009). All of the Interface barriers identified by the Northern Ireland Office in 2003 were located in urban areas, and in Belfast in particular. However, according to Osborne (2008), the concept of Interfaces in rural areas is less well explored and defined. Osborne argues that rural Interfaces could have '*extremely localised physical features*' or could simply be characterised by '*a mindset that impacts on peoples' behaviour, social patterns or who they trust*' – a behaviour pattern which has evolved and has been reproduced over generations. Hence, '*the interface in a rural area is less about physical space and more directly about how people interface with each other.*' (p. 9).

Radford (2008) claims that social segregation in Northern Ireland has produced considerable fear and immobility in rural areas. A legacy of the conflict in rural areas (Fay et al., 1999; Templer and Radford, 2007) and the brutality and separatism in border areas, in particular, saw an entrenchment and polarisation of views that has left an inter-generational legacy of mistrust and intransigence of the 'other' (Boydell et al., 2007). Murphy (2008) explores this issue further, and notes that a number of observers have commented on the fact that rural areas in Northern Ireland, and the market towns that provide services to them, have experienced their share of political violence through the 'troubles' (Morrow et al., 2000; Fay, 2002). Indeed, division, sectarianism and community tension have been part of rural life for much longer (Harris, 1972). According to Morrow et al. (2000) '*less mobile property relationships and the continuity of family and community memory in rural communities mean that injuries in rural communities have additional depth and length*'.

It comes therefore as no surprise that in the Spring 2007 issue of *Network News*, the Director of the *RCN (Rural Community Network)* Roger O'Sullivan *emphasised the need to* acknowledge that sectarianism in the rural context manifests itself differently to urban areas. Hughes and Murphy (2008) outlined patterns of division within rural communities, which have experienced increased segregation in recent years. According to the authors, in rural areas

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<sup>1</sup> Interface areas are (predominantly) residential areas where a mainly or exclusively Catholic residential area geographically borders to a mainly or exclusively Protestant residential area. This border can be marked (e.g. by a 'Peace Line') or unmarked and invisible (e.g. divided by a bridge or a road).

*'manifestations of division are often more subtle than in urban communities, with sectarian interfaces reflected less in physical demarcation of territorial boundaries than in shared 'mental maps' of 'no go' areas, and business and recreational behaviour patterns, that serve to maintain and reinforce division' (p.4).*

## **Survey Data**

The data analysed in this paper come from the YLT survey (ARK, 2010), which is an annual survey undertaken by ARK, itself a joint initiative between Queen's University and the University of Ulster. Undertaken in its current format since 2003, the survey asks 16-year olds living in Northern Ireland about their opinions and experiences on a wide range of social issues that affect their lives. Using the Child Benefit Register as a sampling frame, all young people who celebrated their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday in February or March of the survey year are asked to take part. Respondents have the option of completing the questionnaire on paper, online or by phone. Whilst the range of issues covered in the survey varies year by year, YLT has consistently asked questions about relations between Catholics and Protestants, as well as attitude towards, and experiences of, religious mixing. In this way, YLT provides a useful vehicle with which to measure attitudes over time. Tables of results for all questions in the survey, broken down by sex and religion, are available on the YLT website ([www.ark.ac.uk/ylt](http://www.ark.ac.uk/ylt)), as well as the questionnaire, the dataset and full technical details.

Approximately 800 young people participate in the survey each year, with average response rates being 25%. Analysis undertaken by us shows that this response rate (which is the norm for a postal survey) has not impacted on the representativeness of the survey. Apart from a slight gender imbalance (in favour of females, which again is common in social research, rather than unique to YLT), the YLT survey compares well with official statistics with regard to respondents' background characteristics, such as educational, religious and ethnic background. In this paper we have pooled data from the most recent five years: 2005 to 2009. This expanded group of respondents (4,016 16-year-olds) provides us with a large enough sample to look at differences within sub groups.

The YLT survey is one of a suite of surveys undertaken by ARK, which also includes the Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) survey. This annual survey of adults aged 18 or over

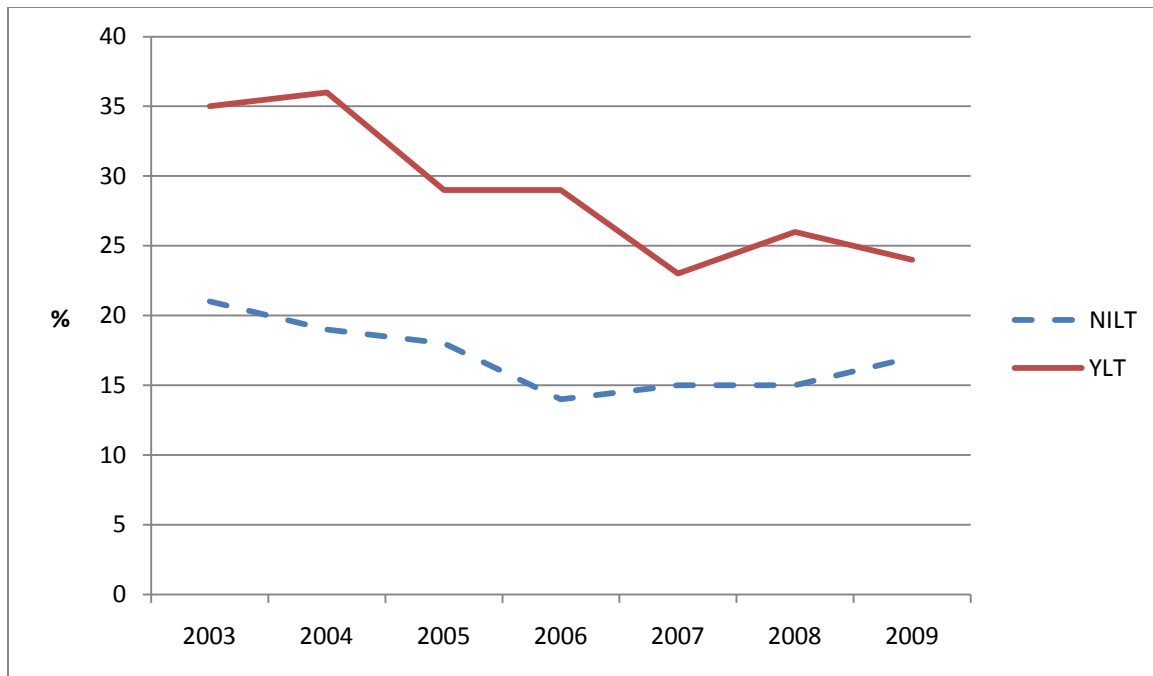
living in private households in Northern Ireland, records attitudes to a wide range of social policy issues, including community relations. Since NILT asks the same questions on integration preferences as YLT, it provides a useful comparative dimension to the views of 16-year olds, and their frequently voiced claim that their parent generation is 'caught up in the past'. NILT has been running since 1998, but since YLT is a much younger survey in its current format, comparisons made here relate to the survey years 2003-09.

In the first part of our analysis we focus on segregation preferences generally and compare the views of the 16-year olds with those of the adult population. In the second part of this paper we compare the segregation preferences of 16-year old living in the cities with those who live in more rural environments.

### **Preferences for segregation**

From the onset of the NILT and YLT surveys, each year respondents have been asked if they would prefer to live in a religiously-mixed neighbourhood, work in a religiously-mixed workplace and send their children to religiously-mixed schools. As evident in Figure 1, a minority of respondents to both surveys are in favour of living in segregated areas, and this proportion has fallen since 2003. However, one key finding is that the preference for segregated neighbourhoods among NILT respondents has been consistently lower than among the young people participating in the YLT survey – the figures in 2009 were 17 percent and 24 percent respectively.

**Figure 1: *If you had a choice, would you prefer to live in a neighbourhood with people of only your own religion, or in a mixed-religion neighbourhood? - % saying 'own religion neighbourhood'***



A very similar pattern emerges in relation to workplace and education. Whilst ten percent of YLT respondents in 2009 were in favour of own-religion workplaces, a slightly smaller proportion (6%) of NILT respondents was too. In relation to sending a child to a mixed-religion school, support for segregation was much higher for both surveys, although still with lower levels of support amongst NILT respondents compared with YLT respondents (32% and 40% respectively). Whilst we do not deal further with possible reasons for this much stronger support for segregated schooling in this paper, one explanation is offered by Loughran (1987) who discusses the rationale of religious education, especially Catholic education.

Overall, these figures indicate that young people living in Northern Ireland are less supportive of integrated housing, workplaces and education. Some of the differences in the level of support for integration between survey respondents could be due to the way that the surveys are carried out. The YLT survey is a self-completion survey, with the majority of respondents completing a paper questionnaire. Within NILT, however, the questions are asked in a face-to-face interview, which is likely to increase the potential for respondents to give more socially acceptable responses. Nevertheless, this social desirability bias is unlikely to explain why 16-year olds, who have no direct experience of the worst periods of Northern Ireland's

violent history, have a more pessimistic outlook on community relations and are more in favour of religious segregation than their parent and grandparent generation who have lived through the decades of the 'Troubles'.

The two quotes below from two respondents to the 2009 YLT survey provide evidence that young people put the blame on these more negative responses on the shoulders of their elders:

*'I don't feel that the damage that has been caused in Northern Ireland as a result of sectarianism will ever be repaired. Parents are teaching children to follow in their sectarian footsteps and I feel that this will continue to happen for many years to come. (Not that I want this to happen.)'*

*'People are still bitter about the past, and at the end of the day no-one can change those people's views, but they should try to move on for the sake of the young people of the new generation.'*

## **Factors determining depositions of segregation**

In this section of our paper we try to establish what factors, statistically, contribute to segregation preferences. In a **first stage**, we create a scale that counts respondents' segregation preferences in three areas: neighbourhood, workplace and school. In a **second stage**, using a statistical procedure known as multiple regression analysis, we then try to identify a set of variables which predict levels of support for segregation. We use 'hierarchical' or 'sequential' regression, during which explanatory or 'independent' variables are entered in steps or blocks. At each step, each variable (or set of variables) is assessed for how much it adds to the prediction of the variable we are exploring (referred to as the 'dependent' variable), after the variables within the previous step have been controlled for (Pallant, 2005). We selected variables because previous research had identified them as being important in relation to support for segregation, or because we felt that they might be analytically useful. For example, analysis of YLT data had previously found that respondents who are neither Catholic nor Protestant, and those attending integrated schools or cross-community projects are most likely

to prefer mixed-religion environments (Schubotz and Devine, 2005; Schubotz and Robinson, 2006). **In a third stage** we then focus specifically on the issue of rurality in our analysis.

### *Scalar variable of segregation preference*

The scalar variable of segregation preference created by us ranged from a value of 0 (that is, the respondent did not support segregation in any of the areas) to 3 (that is, the respondent supported segregation in all three areas): see Table 1 for the frequency distribution. The scale was statistically reliable (Cronbach's alpha=0.7, which is within the acceptable range of values).

**Table 1: Number of areas within which respondent prefers segregation**

	%	
	YLT	NILT
0	51	69
1	24	19
2	15	9
3	10	4

One half of respondents were not supportive of segregation at all, with a further quarter supporting segregation in only one situation. Conversely, one in ten respondents were supportive of segregation in all three areas. For comparative purposes, this scale was also calculated for NILT respondents, and we found that over two thirds of these respondents did not support segregation in any situation, again confirming that 16-year olds, overall, are more favourably disposed towards segregation than their adult counterparts. The following logistic regression analysis conducted by us was exploratory, hence we included an extensive range of independent variables, namely:

1. Whether the respondent was male or female;
2. Whether the respondent had always lived in Northern Ireland;
3. The financial background of the respondent's family;
4. Whether the respondent lived in an urban area or not;
5. Whether the respondent thought that they would be in further education in two years' time;
6. The type of school that the respondent attended (grammar, secondary or integrated);
7. Whether the respondent attended a religiously-segregated school;

8. Whether the respondent lived in a religiously-segregated neighbourhood;
9. Whether the respondent said that they belonged to a religious community;
10. The importance of religious identity to the respondent;
11. The importance to national identity to the respondent.

Two types of output are presented here. Firstly, Table 2 shows the value of  $R^2$  (the coefficient of determination), which provides a measure of how well the independent variables can predict the dependent variable (in this case, the segregation scale). If the  $R^2$  value is multiplied by 100, this figure represents the percentage of the variation in the dependent variable.

**Table 2: Blocks of independent variables and resultant change in  $R^2$**

	$R^2$	Change in $R^2$
1 Background	0.029	
2 Where respondent lives (reference group is city)	0.037	0.008
3 School (type and further education attendance)	0.062	0.025
4 Segregated school	0.105	0.043
5 Segregated neighbourhood	0.145	0.04
6 Religious background	0.195	0.05
7 Importance of national identity	0.251	0.056
8 Importance of religious identity	0.286	0.035

The first block of variables related to the background characteristics of the respondent, namely their sex, if they had always lived in Northern Ireland, if they lived in an urban area, and whether their family was financially well off. The  $R^2$  value is low, and only represents 2.9 per cent of the variation in the segregation scale.

The second block relates to where the respondent lives and the inclusion of these variables does not result in a large change in  $R^2$ . However, the change in  $R^2$  is three times larger once the type of school and the anticipation of participation in further education is included. The inclusion of the fourth block (whether or not the respondent attended a religiously-mixed school) results in even larger increase in  $R^2$ . However, the largest changes in

R<sup>2</sup> are associated with the religious background and importance of national identity to the respondent, whilst the importance of religious identity does not play quite such a large role in predicting support for segregation.

In summary, then, Table 2 indicates that whilst demographic variables (including where the respondent lives) do not play a large part in predicting differences in the segregation scale, religious background, importance of national identity and experience of segregated school do.

Table 3 presents the standardised beta coefficients for each of these significant variables in each block within this analysis, and this is an indication of the level of effect that each independent variable has on the dependent variable. A negative coefficient means lower levels of support for segregation.

**Table 3: Standardised beta coefficients and level of significance**

	Blocks of variables included in the regression analysis							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Year of survey	-.046*	-.048*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Female	-.141***	-.137***	-.121***	-.123***	-.108***	-.118***	-.086***	-.085***
Not always lived in NI	-.078***	-.071***	-.061**	-.060**	-.054**	-.036*	-.036*	
Live in rural area		.086***	.085**	.069**	.081**	.070**	.072**	.056*
Further education in 2 years			.092***	-.085***	-.075***	-.069**	-.069***	-.071***
Attend secondary school			.062**	-	-	-	-	-
Attend another type of school			.092***	-	-	-	-	-
Segregated school				.226***	.199***	.154***	.140***	.126***
Segregated area					.203***	.172***	.162***	.164***

Member of Catholic community						.310***	.200***	.144***
Member of Protestant community						.312***	.234***	.191***
National identity important							.252***	.178***
Religious identity important								.214***

\* p< 0.5 \*\* p< 0.01 \*\*\* p<0.001

In block 1, being female or having lived outside Northern Ireland are all associated with lower levels of support for segregation. In addition, the year of the survey is significant, suggesting that support for segregation has decreased since 2005, although this ceases to be statistically significant once other variables are include in block 3 onwards. The results in block 2 suggest that respondents living in rural areas are more supportive of segregation than those living in cities or their outskirts, and this continues to be the case for the rest of the analysis. Education variables in block 3 are also significant, with respondents intending to participate in further education in two years time being less supportive of segregation, whilst those attending secondary schools are more supportive than those attending grammar schools. Future participation in further education continues to be statistically significant for the rest of the analysis. However, the type of school attended is not significant once the experience of attending a segregated school is taken into account.

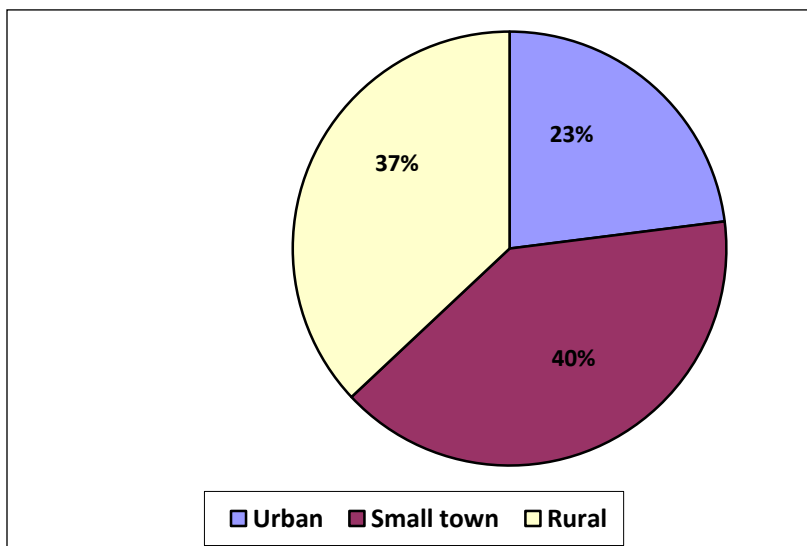
The variables included in block 4 and 5 indicate that the experience of segregation – both in school and neighbourhood – is strongly associated with higher levels of support for segregation, and this continues throughout the analysis. At the same time, the size of the effect of the demographic variables is decreased (as evidenced by the smaller coefficients). Membership of the Catholic or Protestant community is also associated with support for segregation, and the effect of demographic variables continues to wane. However, once variables associated with strength of identity are taken into account in blocks 7 and 8, the effect of membership of Catholic or Protestant community decreases. Consequently, in block 8, we see that the experience of segregation, membership of communities and strength of identity are strongly associated with support for segregation. Thus, respondents who say that their national

or their religious identity is important to them are more likely to be less supportive of segregation. Importantly, though, the message especially pertinent to the focus of this paper is that living in a rural area is associated with higher levels of support for segregation than those living in a large city or its outskirts.

*Effects of rurality on segregation preferences.*

The next step for this paper is to run this analysis separately for the types of area that respondents live in. As part of the question battery on their background, respondents are asked each year to describe the place where they live using a five-way classification (a big city; suburbs or outskirts of a big city; small city or town; country village; a farm or home in the country). We have grouped these responses into a smaller number of groups. In order to achieve a more nuanced reflection of urban and rural living, we created a three-way classification (Figure 2). The first group - which we have defined as being 'urban' - were identified by combining those respondents who said that they lived in a big city or the suburbs or outskirts of a big city (23%). 'Small town' respondents accounted for 40 percent of respondents, whilst 'rural' respondents (ie those who lived in either a country village, on a farm or in a home in the country) made up 37 percent of respondents.

**Figure 2: Three-way classification of where respondents live**



On a descriptive level, we found that respondents living in rural areas were more supportive of segregation, as Table 4 shows. The differences were significant in relation to a preference for segregated schooling.

**Table 4: Support for segregation in ...**

	%			
	Urban	Small town	Rural	All
<b>Neighbourhoods</b>	26	24	30	27
<b>Workplaces</b>	11	12	15	13
<b>Schools</b>	39	38	49	42

At this descriptive level, we have shown repeatedly in the past that negative attitudes to integration and mixing are closely related to respondents' personal experiences of segregation. As shown in Table 5, two thirds of 16-year olds (67%) still live in segregated areas, that is, they say they live somewhere that is mostly or nearly all Protestant or Catholic. Respondents living in urban areas were more likely than those in other areas, and particularly those living in a small town, to live in segregated neighbourhoods. In relation to attendance at integrated or segregated schools, the difference between areas is less obvious, although rural respondents are the group most likely to experience segregation, which, again, to some extent is a result of an absence of choice. In any case, this reflects the contention that rural communities in Northern Ireland have become increasingly segregated in recent years (Hughes and Murphy, 2008) and is confounded by findings from Maguire and Shirlow (2004) in rural mid-Ulster, that *'many small communities appear to be single identity 'islands' spatially separated from those of the 'other' persuasion'* (p. 71).

**Table 5: Experience of segregation in ...**

	%			
	Urban	Small town	Rural	All
<b>Neighbourhoods</b>	71	65	68	67
<b>Schools</b>	86	86	90	87

In relation to the scale of segregation preferences we have created, Table 6 shows that more than one half of respondents living in small towns (55%) and urban areas (51%) were not supportive of segregation at all, compared with a much lower proportion of respondents living in rural areas (43%), and these differences are statistically significant.

**Table 6: Number of arenas within which respondent prefers segregation**

	%			
	Urban	Small town	Rural	All
0	51	55	43	50
1	24	21	25	23
2	15	13	17	15
3	11	12	15	13

Table 7 shows the results for the stepwise multiple regression analysis run separately for respondents in urban, small-town or rural settings, and indicates that the pattern of change in  $R^2$  is different for each group. The type of school respondents attend is a stronger factor for segregation preferences among those living in large cities and in small towns rather than those living in rural settings. Attending a segregated school has a stronger association with a preference for segregation among respondents living in large cities and their outskirts, than for those in small towns and rural areas, whilst the reverse is true in relation to living in a segregated neighbourhood and religious background. The largest change in  $R^2$  is different for each type of area. Thus, attending a segregation, closely followed by importance of national identity, is results is the largest change in  $R^2$  among urban residents, whilst for those living in small towns, it is religious background, and it is importance of national identity for respondents living in rural areas. Nevertheless, Table 6 also indicates that the regression model has explained approximately 28% of the variance for respondents, regardless of the type of area within which they live.

**Table 7: Blocks of independent variables and resultant change in R<sup>2</sup>, by urban/rural**

	Urban		Small town		Rural	
	R <sup>2</sup>	Change in R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>	Change in R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>	Change in R <sup>2</sup>
1 Background	0.037		0.029		0.023	
2 School (type and further education attendance)	0.077	0.04	0.068	0.039	0.038	0.015
3 Segregated school	0.133	0.056	0.104	0.036	0.075	0.037
4 Segregated neighbourhood	0.154	0.021	0.148	0.044	0.123	0.048
5 Religious background	0.192	0.038	0.207	0.059	0.173	0.05
6 Importance of national identity	0.247	0.055	0.248	0.041	0.248	0.075
7 Importance of religious identity	0.277	0.030	0.287	0.039	0.285	0.037

**Table 8: Standardised beta coefficients and level of significance, by urban/rural**

<b>Large city</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Female	-.139***	-.135**	- .144***	-.134***	-.142***	-.121**	-.117**
Not always lived in NI	-.092*						
Family well off	-.084*						
Further education in 2 years		-.112*	-.111*	-.105*	-.088*	-.094*	-.096*
Secondary school		.137**					
Segregated school			- .255***	-.226***	.182***	.166***	.151***
Segregated area				-.154**	.126**	.122**	.122**
Member of Catholic community					.281***	.177**	.142*
Member of Protestant community					.267***	.200***	.166**
National identity important						.249***	.194***
Religious identity important							.188***
<b>Small town</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Female	-.140***	-.123***	- .119***	-.100**	-.108***	-.082**	-.078**
Not always lived in NI	-.077*	-.064*	-.066*	-.060*			
Further education in 2 years		-.115**	-.098**	-.086**	-.074**	-.076*	-.072*
Secondary school		.072*		.067*			
Other type of school		-.119***					

Segregated school			- .212***	.188***	.148***	.136***	.118***
Segregated area				.214***	.180***	.161***	.166***
Member of Catholic community					.293***	.205***	.154***
Member of Protestant community					.310***	.243***	.206***
National identity important						.218***	.137***
Religious identity important							.223***
<b>Rural</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Female	-.133***	-.119***	- .118***	-.105***	-.115***	-.068*	-.072*
Attend other type of school		-.114**					
Segregated school			- .212***	-.194***	.142***	.126***	.118***
Segregated area				-.219***	.192***	.186***	.188***
Member of Catholic community					.352***	.208***	.124*
Member of Protestant community					.357***	.255***	.192***
National identity important						.294***	.206***
Religious identity important							.227***

\* p< 0.5 \*\* p< 0.01 \*\*\* p<0.001

Table 8 indicates that some variables are statistically significant regardless of where the respondent lives, namely, being female, whether the school is segregated, membership of a religion, importance of national identity and importance of religious identity. This matches the pattern found in previous research (Devine and Schubotz, 2010).

At the same time, there is some variation depending on where respondents lived. Living outside Northern Ireland and a respondents' intention to attend further education once he or she is 18 years of age are associated with lower levels of support for segregation, but this is only the case for respondents who lived in a small town or in a large city. Religious identity has less of an effect for those living in large cities and their outskirts than for those in small towns or rural areas. For those living in large cities, attendance of a segregated school has more of an effect on the prediction of support for segregation than living in a segregated area, whilst the reverse is true for those living in small towns or rural areas.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

Our findings show that religious and national identities are the strongest predictors of segregation preferences among 16-year olds, regardless of where they live and what background they have. In other words, the more religious respondents are and the more important their national and religious identity is to them, the more likely they are to prefer to live, work and go to school with people of their own kind. However, our analysis also revealed that it is 16-year olds living in rural areas of Northern Ireland rather than its cities and outskirts that are more supportive of segregation in all three aspects investigated: housing, workplace and schooling. On a descriptive level, this finding might have been interpreted as an artefact of the higher levels of segregation that rural respondents experience – in particular segregation in schools, which we know from our previous research quoted above is related to more negative attitudes towards religious and ethnic mixing. However, the multiple regression analyses conducted by us now provides us with statistical evidence that rurality itself is an independent factor that contributes to segregation preferences, although the effect size is reduced once other variables (such as attending a segregated school, or strength of national identity) are taken into account.

Overall, our analysis can be seen as clear evidence for what Tajfel calls 'social categorisation processes' in Northern Ireland. The overlapping finding that perceived membership of the Protestant and Catholic communities are also strongly related to a preference of segregation strengthen our view that Tajfel's theory is a suitable vehicle to explain socio-religious segregation.

The belonging to these communities is characterised by largely separated life worlds, such as segregated housing, segregated schooling, different rituals and commemorations, such as parades, festivals and celebrations, as mentioned above. These not only connect contemporary communities to the past, but, as Halbwachs would say, 'reconstruct' the segregated present using historical events and commemorative symbolisms, as Jarman demonstrated for Northern Ireland. This phenomenon of *Verzuiling* – or pillarisation of society - (Lijphart, 1969 and 1977) has also been seen as the reason for the ongoing conflict in Northern Ireland. McGarry and O'Leary (1990) argue that it is this failure of political elites to seek and find a compromise which has proliferated and prolonged the Northern Ireland conflict. Whilst Northern Ireland has now had a working power-sharing government for more than one legislative period, the most common criticism of the government has been that the two main parties have avoided to tackle the issue of a shared society due to the differences in opinion. Thus, under the surface, McGarry's and O'Leary's views on the elite's failure to compromise remain intact.

Allport would find validation of his contact hypothesis in our finding that those attending segregated schools and those living in segregated neighbourhoods are more likely to support segregated settings. This also confirms our previous work in which we argued that those with meaningful contact experiences, either through planned integrated schools or cross-community projects, are more likely to support religious mixing.

The fact that the importance of religious identity is the main predictor of segregation preferences would also confirm Durkheim's view of the importance of religion in collective memory processes.

Although both belonging to the Catholic and Protestant community were significant predictors of segregation preferences, the predictive power of belonging to a Protestant community was somewhat stronger. Five years ago we reported YLT findings that seemed to

suggest that young Protestants were disillusioned with the Peace Process in Northern Ireland (Schubotz and Devine, 2005). The strong identification of young Protestants with their community and their subsequent segregation preferences shown in Table 7 could be interpreted as evidence for continued discontent.

Whilst neither of these findings is groundbreaking, few - if any - publications have so far provided more nuanced quantitative evidence for the association between the experience of socio-religious segregation and segregation preferences. It is clear from our data collected at least 9 years after the ceasefire that mechanisms of social categorisation processes still operate in Northern Ireland, and it is equally clear that religion remains one of the key markers of identity.

There is, however, also reason to suggest that identity preferences are changing. In 2009, almost one third (30%) of 16-year olds respondents to the YLT survey identified as being Northern Irish. This figure is similar to the NILT survey (27%), and this can certainly be seen as a growth of allegiances beyond the traditional British-Irish national identity divide. Thus, a positive feature of the past 15 years is that there has been space for people to identify with non-traditional identities. Evidence for optimism also exists, as reported elsewhere (NCB NI and ARK/YLT, 2010): whilst 16-year olds may hold more negative views on community relations than their adult counterparts, YLT respondents have more favourable views than NILT respondents with regard to minority ethnic groups.

With regard to the differences in segregation preferences between 16-year olds in urban and non-urban settings, our research suggests that the higher visibility and concentration of violence and conflict in large settlements – for example the Interface violence discussed above - must not be mistaken for more negative attitudes generally. In fact, it seems that urban living is capable of producing greater contrasts in lifestyles and attitudes than rural living is. One could argue that this can be partially attributed to a lack of opportunity and choice in rural settings, as well as more a more geographically-dispersed population.

In a document showcasing PEACE-funded projects and initiatives the Rural Development Council and the Rural Community Network (2008) address this issue of the shortage of opportunity for socio-religious mixing: They state:

*'Rural areas in Northern Ireland are in the most part single identity. For many living within these areas there is little or no opportunity for interaction with people from the other main tradition in Northern Ireland and therefore the prospect of increasing knowledge and understanding of the different cultural backgrounds present in the region. It has been recognised that a necessary part of the process of capacity and confidence building in divided regions is to fund community activity among single identity groups. However for a growing number of community groups the challenge lies in taking the next step towards a more inclusive society as many of these groups are unable to move forward without help, encouragement and reassurance.'* (p. 18)

In relation to this we agree with an argument made by Hughes and Murphy (2008). They highlight that although a range of equality legislations have been implemented in Northern Ireland during the last 35 years, none of these legislations refers to rural-urban differences. For example, Section 75 affords protection against discrimination on several grounds, e.g. political views and religious persuasions, sexual orientation, race, disability, gender, age and responsibility to dependents – but not discrimination on grounds of rurality. Yet, according to Hughes and Murphy, there is evidence that rural areas have suffered differentially from policy decisions and commitments under equality of opportunity that have not been '*rural proofed*', as they put it.

However, despite all this, we must not forget that the analysis of the YLT survey results also serves as a reminder that we should not over-exaggerate the differences in attitudes between 16-year olds in urban and rural settings. As the statistical analysis showed, some variables significantly determine segregation preferences regardless of where respondents live, such as attendance of segregated schools, being female, or strength of national and religious identity. In fact, as we have shown the experience of segregated schooling and religious and national identity are much stronger predictors of segregation preferences than a rural upbringing. Thus our previous calls for policy initiatives to address the effect of segregation in Northern Ireland remain in place, especially in relation to education. Cross-community schemes in schools – whether through formal integration or more formalised long-term contacts of single-religion schools – remain the most likely long-term means to contribute to more positive attitudes towards socio-religious mixing and integration. What also remains, however, is the insight that the perception of the violent 'urban spaces' and the 'peaceful countryside' has to be challenged.

It is also useful to acknowledge the importance of socio-demographic variables to the topic of this paper, since the impact of the conflict has not been felt evenly across the population. Whilst the majority of literature has focused on Catholics and Protestants, differences between social classes have been less recognised, and the varying experiences of men and women have tended to be ignored (Bairner, 1999). Social class is pervasive throughout our society, and sectarian divisions are very much shaped by class differences (Breen and Devine, 1999). In other words, relatively disadvantaged working-class areas are significantly more likely to be segregated than middle class areas (Shirlow, 2001). Within our analysis, we have used family financial background as a proxy variable for class. Whilst this particular variable was not statistically significant associated with segregation preferences, other related variables were, namely attendance at a secondary school, and participation in further education, which themselves are strongly associated with social class. An important follow-on from this paper would be further analysis focusing on social class, such as an exploration of the interaction effects with rural/urban indicators.

Previous research has shown that men are more likely to be associated with violence than women are, both as victims and perpetrators. The Cost of the Troubles Survey (Fay et al., 1999) indicated that 3,279 males and 322 females were killed during the conflict. Bairner (1999) contends that the form of hegemonic masculinity constructed in Ireland has encouraged male violence, and that this was an important element in the persistence of terrorist violence in Northern Ireland, even after the cease-fires. Such experiences of violence (both low and high level violence) may help explain the higher preference for segregation shown by young men in our analysis. The traditional pattern of single-sex schools in Northern Ireland is likely to contribute to the maintenance of such patterns, although this form of segregation is becoming less common. Nevertheless, a further exploration of gender and segregation preferences is relevant, especially in post-conflict times.

In summary then, without a doubt, Northern Ireland has changed over recent years and has become a more multi-cultural and diverse society. So far it remains unclear how this will impact on collective memories and integration preferences. Karl Mannheim (1952) argues that age cohorts form 'communities of experience' and 'frame groups' whose common experiences lead to similar dispositions and world views. No one will doubt that from the post-ceasefire era has emerged a generation with quite distinct experiences that differentiate them from their parent cohort who have grown up in a much more violent, and culturally homogeneous,

Northern Ireland. Perhaps we need to be just a little bit more patient with this post-ceasefire generation.

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