



# Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report

Number Three

March 2014  
**Paul Nolan**



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## Data sources and acknowledgements

This report draws mainly on statistics that are in the public domain. Data sets from various government departments and public bodies in Northern Ireland have been used and, in order to provide a wider context, comparisons are made which draw upon figures produced by government departments and public bodies in England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland. Using this variety of sources means there is no standard model that applies across the different departments and jurisdictions. Many organisations have also changed the way in which they collect their data over the years, which means that in some cases it has not been possible to provide historical perspective on a consistent basis. For some indicators, only survey-based data is available. When interpreting statistics from survey data, such as the Labour Force Survey, it is worth bearing in mind that they are estimates associated with confidence intervals (ranges in which the true value is likely to lie). In other cases where official figures may not present the full picture, survey data is included because it may provide a more accurate estimate – thus, for example, findings from the Northern Ireland Crime Survey are included along with the official crime statistics from the PSNI.

The production of the report has been greatly assisted by the willing cooperation of many statisticians and public servants, particularly those from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, the PSNI and the various government departments. On occasion data tables have been drawn up in response to particular requests and such assistance has been invaluable. Thanks are also due to Dr Robin Wilson for his forensic editing skills, and to Ciaran Hughes for the skills and integrity he brought to the task of research assistance. Marc Steenson and Paul McDonnell from Three-Creative deserve great credit for their production skills and Paul is owed a special word of thanks for his work on creating the infographics for this third report.

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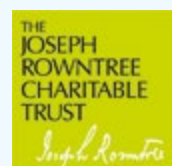
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# Foreword

This is the first time I have the privilege to introduce the Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report. Like most people who take an interest in the unfolding drama of Northern Ireland's journey to become a post-conflict society, I have found these annual reports to be a reliable benchmark to the process. In fact, they have become such an established source of information that it seems surprising there have only been two previous reports. It is so obviously a good idea to compile all the data in this way to provide a reminder of how far we have come, how far there is still to go and point to key lessons.

And it also has to be remembered that, however obvious the idea sounds now, this was not always the case. In fact, back in 2009 when the CRC first began to discuss it with the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, there was no model to draw on. Full credit then to those who first began to sketch out the idea, and in particular to the two Rowntree organisations who were prepared to back the idea with the resources needed to turn it into a reality.

The Community Relations Council and those who have worked on the report must be commended for it taking its place as an exemplar in peace monitoring, as one of many examples of innovative good practice that this region can bring to the world. Since the measurement of peace is a new field we were fortunate to have the range of experts who sat on the Advisory Board. They included some of the most distinguished academics and commentators to have published on Northern Ireland: Professor Jennifer Todd from UCD, and from Queen's University Professor Adrian Guelke, Professor Paddy Hillyard, and Professor Frank Gaffikin. They were joined by Professor Neil Gibson and Professor Gillian Robinson from the University of Ulster.

Not all members of the Advisory Board are academics – Kathryn Torney is a journalist with the online investigative platform, The Detail, and from the very beginning of the project the CRC personnel have been key. Former CEO, Duncan Morrow and the current CEO Jacqueline Irwin have brought their unrivalled knowledge of community relations. The Joseph Rowntree representatives brought a different frame of reference, and these perspectives together have given the reports the balance that comes from such a range of disciplines. Core support was provided by my predecessor, Tony McCusker, who did much to create an understanding of the value of the Peace Monitoring Report.

Finally, I must thank the author of the report, Paul Nolan, who over the last three years has brought energy, skills and commitment to the task of creating a dispassionate analysis of Northern Ireland politics and society. The result of all this commitment is contained in the pages that follow. I commend it to you.

**Peter Osborne**

*Chairperson*

Community Relations Council



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## Ten key points

### **1. The moral basis of the 1998 peace accord has evaporated**

Dr Richard Haass has warned that Northern Ireland can no longer be held up as a model of conflict resolution. The evidence he puts forward for that view – divided neighbourhoods and divided schools – is examined in this report. Despite some movement in terms of residential segregation and shared schooling, the fundamental divisions remain unchanged. Over 93 per cent of children are educated in separate schools, interface walls still divide communities and sectarian riots are accepted as routine annual events. Twenty years on from the first ceasefires the terms of trade have been set by deals and side-deals. These have prevented the return of large-scale violence but the model on offer from the top is peace without reconciliation. A culture of endless negotiation has become embedded and, without a vision of a shared society to sustain it, the peace process has lost the power to inspire.

### **2. The absence of trust has resulted in an absence of progress**

The Belfast Agreement put in place a system of mutual vetoes to ensure that one community could not be dominated by the other. The use of these vetoes has led to a silting up of the legislative programme of the Assembly. While useful co-operation takes place in its committees, the Northern Ireland Executive been unable to make progress on the key areas where a devolved parliament might show its worth. This does not just concern the intractable issues of flags, parades and dealing with the past. There has also been a failure to make progress on ‘bread and butter’ issues: health, welfare and education. The logjams have continued to build up. A stand-off on welfare reform is costing Northern Ireland £5 million per month, the Education and Skills Authority (first announced in 2006) still does not exist, failure to agree on education selection has allowed two versions of the ‘11+’ to co-exist, there has been no progress on an Irish Language Act and the project for a Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre has been jettisoned.

### **3. There has been some increase in polarisation**

The turbulence of the flags dispute generated an increase in sectarian acts. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive recorded a sharp increase to 411 in 2012/13 in the number of people intimidated out of their homes and accepted on to the Special Purchase of Evacuated Properties (SPED) scheme – up from 303 in 2011/12. Likewise, the Equality Commission has seen an

increase in harassment cases in the workplace. These increases have to be kept in perspective: there were fewer people accepted on to the SPED scheme than in 2005/06 (494) and workplaces did not experience the same upheavals as in the early 1990s when fair-employment legislation meant all flags and insignia had to be removed to create a neutral space – reflecting gradual acceptance since of the need for a working environment free from any displays of communal identity. The most recent evidence from the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey however suggests that the flags dispute has heightened the temperature, with a very sharp drop in Protestants and Catholics expressing a preference for mixed-religion workplaces and neighbourhoods, particularly among young people.

#### **4. A culture war is being talked into existence**

Among anti-agreement unionists there is now an acceptance that the Belfast Agreement has secured the constitutional position of Northern Ireland within the UK. The focus of concern is no longer about Northern Ireland being taken out of Britain, but of ‘Britishness’ being taken out of Northern Ireland. This is a concern that resonates within the wider body of unionism and the fear that there is a ‘culture war’ that will take away loyalist symbols and traditions informed much unionist behaviour during the year, including Orange Order speeches on 12 July. Yet there were more loyalist marches in 2013 (2,687) than ever and only 388 were contested. The number of marching bands (660) is also at an all-time high. Official recognition of and funding for Orange cultural themes and ‘Ulster-Scots’ are also at unprecedented levels. But talk of a culture war could become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

#### **5. The City of Culture year presented a different understanding of culture**

The UK City of Culture events in Derry-Londonderry presented a different possibility – culture as a means to overcome division. When it was launched there was considerable scepticism that a city with a nationalist political majority could reconcile itself to the ‘UK’ prefix or that cosmopolitan art forms would find an audience in a place on the periphery of the established circuit. Such fears were dispelled by the popularity of the programme, with its emphasis on outdoor participatory events, but perhaps the most heartening aspect of the year was the way the city was able to model a post-conflict society. One highlight was when the Apprentice Boys played their tunes at the Fleadh Cheoil; another was when the PSNI band was applauded as it made its way into the Guildhall Square. Ultimately the success of the year came down to the long-term vision of those in Derry City Council and civil-society organisations who saw concord as an achievable goal, showing how a generous majority can engender a generosity of spirit in return.

## **6. Failure lies in wait for young working-class Protestant males**

The educational under-achievement of a section of socially disadvantaged Protestant males is a seedbed for trouble. Using the standard measure of five 'good' GCSEs, Protestants boys with free-school-meal entitlement achieve less than any of the other main social groups in Northern Ireland and hover near the very bottom when compared with groups in England. By contrast, Catholic girls from Northern Ireland not on free-school-meal entitlement vie with the Chinese students at the top of the tree of educational attainment in England. The latest analysis by religion of the Labour Force Survey found that 24 per cent of Protestants aged 16 to 24 were unemployed, compared with 17 per cent of their Catholic counterparts. Young Protestant males were much in evidence in the hyper-masculine confrontations with the police during the year, and in the subsequent court cases.

## **7. Front line police have been the human shock absorbers for failures elsewhere**

Between 1 July and 28 August 2013 approximately 682 PSNI officers were injured in public order disturbances – one in ten. Of these, 51 required hospital treatment. Violence against the police has become once more accepted as part of life in Northern Ireland, whether in the form of an under-car booby trap bomb planted by dissident republicans, or street violence by loyalist protesters. Politicians may condemn it in the abstract but seldom challenge their own constituencies. Yet if the human consequence is experienced by the police, in political terms it is the rule of law which suffers.

## **8. The rebalancing of inequalities unbalances unionism**

Catholics still experience more economic and social disadvantage than Protestants. According to the Labour Force Survey they are more likely to be unemployed, according to the census they are more likely to be in poor health and, according to the Family Resources Survey, they out-score Protestants on almost every measure of social deprivation. But the rates of Catholic and Protestant participation in the labour market are now in line with population shares. Catholics predominate in higher-education institutions and this meritocratic advance is rebalancing the communal shares of professional and managerial occupations. The advance of the Catholic middle-class is evident in the religious-background data for more affluent housing areas. If viewed as a zero-sum game, these advances can be seen as a retreat among the Protestant population – the flags controversy acted as a lightning rod for such Protestant unease. As Belfast moved from being a majority Protestant city to a city where Catholics have the largest population share, the demographic change was experienced by some in terms of loss.

## **9. At grassroots level the reconciliation impulse remains strong**

The people of Northern Ireland escape sectarian identities as often as they are trapped by them. Much of what takes place in neighbourhoods defies stereotyped notions. In January 2014 an Irish-language centre was set up on the Newtownards Road, home of the flags dispute. The venue, the Skainos Centre, later participated in the Four Corners festival organised by the churches to bring the different parts of the city together. These small events often occur below the line of public visibility: the Shankill Women's Centre and women from the Falls Culturllann centre have collaborated over the past year and a half on an interface walk and a community festival to celebrate International Peace Day. Richard Haass and Meghan O'Sullivan may have become very familiar with the political intractability around Orange marches going past the Ardoyne shops, but one night just before Christmas they listened to a cross-community choir which had come together at the Ardoyne fire station to sing carols. Reconciliation continues to be stronger at the grass roots than at the top of society.

## **10. No one picks up the tab**

Failure in Northern Ireland comes cost-free. The whole society may pay, but not particular political actors. When the multi-party talks on flags, parades and dealing with the past ended in failure, none of the political parties had to pay a political price. When the policing costs for contested marches and events spiral into millions, the organisers never receive a bill. The disconnect between the gathering and spending of taxes means no one feels responsible for the shortfall in revenue caused by, for example, not introducing water charges or tuition fees. The 'marching season' cost £18.5 million in additional policing costs in 2013, compared with £4.1 million the previous year. The consequences have been felt at the sharp end of education and health, with the accident-and-emergency unit at the Royal Victoria hospital recurrently unable to cope with demand. Devolution, which was supposed to bring responsibility closer to local level, has failed to do so in Northern Ireland.

# INTRODUCTION

In July 2013 when Richard Haass agreed to accept the invitation to chair multi-party talks in Northern Ireland he said there was surprise in America about his new mission, as most people there thought the Northern Ireland problems had been solved a long time ago. In March 2014 when he addressed a sub-committee of the American Committee on Foreign Affairs he left no-one in any doubt that the problems are still very real. “If you walk down parts of Belfast, you are still confronted by concrete barriers separating communities. Upwards of what, 90% of the young people still go to divided, single tradition schools, neighbourhoods are still divided.” He also added an ominous warning, that if progress was not made on the key political issues then “violence, I fear, could very well re-emerge as a characteristic of daily life.” Dr Haass was expressing what has become the settled view in Washington, London and Dublin. The Northern Ireland peace process is seen to be in trouble.

The fact that this opinion is widely held does not, of itself, make it right. The evidence gathered in this report however suggests that on the issues outlined by Dr Haass, the facts are as he described them. Twenty years on from the paramilitary ceasefires, Northern Ireland remains a very deeply divided society. A fault line runs through education, housing and many other aspects of daily existence. These facts however do not provide the complete picture. There is another side to the balance sheet. In some ways huge progress has been made. Levels of violence are at their lowest for forty years. In the past year no British soldier has been killed, no police officer has been killed, no prison officer has been killed, and there was not one sectarian killing. In fact Northern Ireland is emerging as one of the safest places to live in these islands. And the progress to date is not just to do with the absence of violence. Throughout 2013 Derry-Londonderry presented a vision of what a post-conflict society might look like. Its year as City Of Culture provided a glimpse of the life-affirmative spirit that allowed culture to unite, rather than divide.

These two conflicting realities co-exist in Northern Ireland, and run alongside each other in ways that can be difficult to understand. How do we know which one is stronger? Is the peace process now set to backslide, or is there a positive momentum that can keep moving it forwards? The Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report was set up to provide a year-by-year, dispassionate analysis of the dynamics within the society, looking not just at the surface events but at the deeper stresses within the society. This year's edition covers a very complex set of dynamics and tries, as before, to balance out the positive and the negative.

## 1.1 The indicator framework<sup>1</sup>

How do we measure peace? When the Peace Monitoring project began in 2010 this was the first question that had to be faced. There were no obvious models. None of the large global observatories had devised an indicator framework that could be used to track the journey of a post –conflict society. And peace is too loose and baggy a concept to lend itself to easy measurement. The indicator framework therefore breaks it down into four domains, each of which is open to empirical testing year-on-year. These four domains, which provide the structure to this report, are:

### 1. The sense of safety

The simplest measure of how peaceful a society is comes from the sense of security experienced by the individual citizen. This has to be assessed in different contexts: the home, the neighbourhood, the workplace and in public space. Evidence comes from crime statistics, but on their own these can only describe what the father of peace studies, Johan Galtung, calls ‘negative peace’ – meaning just the absence of violence. Further insights have to be sought from attitude surveys and academic articles which explore the quality of lived experience.

### 2. Equality

The Troubles erupted against a backdrop of structural inequality in housing, employment and life chances between Protestants and Catholics. The 1998 Agreement emphasised equality as the core part of the settlement, and an Equality Commission followed soon after. In the past inequality was associated with discrimination; now it is the blind forces of the market that can shape the differential experiences of Protestants and Catholics, women and men and people from different ethnic backgrounds. Change is an inescapable part of the modern world, but has to be monitored to see if inequality gaps are opening up which could threaten the cohesion of the society.

### 3. Cohesion and sharing

A cohesive society is one where people feel they belong to what Benedict Anderson referred to as an ‘imagined community’ – that is, they recognise each other as their fellow citizens. This ideal balances the celebration of diversity and tolerance of others’ cultural practices with a commitment to sharing and solidarity. The annual monitor has to explore whether cultural practices are feeding a sense of hostility towards those from different backgrounds, or whether they are helping to create an open, pluralistic and inclusive society.

<sup>1</sup> A fuller explanation of the indicator framework and how it was devised can be found in the first Peace Monitoring Report, which can be accessed on the CRC website ([www.community-relations.org.uk](http://www.community-relations.org.uk)) An article on the same subject can be found in Shared Space journal, Issue 16, November 2012, also available on the CRC website.



#### 4. Political progress

Progress in this sense does not have to be measured against any particular constitutional destination, such as united Ireland or further integration with Britain. Instead it can be seen as the ability of political opponents to use dialogue to arrive at mutually satisfactory outcomes – or perhaps more realistically, what Henry Kissinger described as ‘balanced dissatisfactions’. The report therefore looks at the extent to which the political institutions set up by the Good Friday Agreement are performing this function.

### 1.2 The limitations of the research

The Peace Monitoring Report aims to present an evidence-based approach to peace and conflict in Northern Ireland but some humility is in order. The first caveat concerns the reliability of the data. The various sources produce statistics of varying reliability. This is no reflection on their honesty or integrity: in some areas of human experience it is very difficult to establish clear facts. Apart from the Census that takes place every ten years and collects information from every household, most official statistics are based on sample surveys. The precision of the numbers, sometimes presented down to the second or third decimal point, suggests an exactitude that simply is not there. The unemployment figures, for instance, studied carefully each month, are based on asking a sample of the population about their personal circumstances and work. The Labour Force Survey is careful to point out that the findings are open to sampling error but the final figures are nonetheless accepted in the public domain as simple fact.

Crime poses even more of a problem. The widespread perception that police figures for recorded crime are inaccurate is not one the police choose to protest. It is accepted by the Police Service of Northern Ireland and all other forces that the official statistics do not cover those crimes which, for whatever reason, are not reported. For this reason, another set of figures is produced by the Crime Survey for England and Wales and its regional counterpart, the Northern Ireland Crime Survey, and here respondents are asked about their experience of crime, including those crimes they did not report to the police. But criminologists point out that this still excludes ‘victimless’ crimes like tax or corporate fraud and therefore skews the figures towards a law-and-order view of how crime is to be understood.

The Peace Monitoring Report approaches this uncertainty by indicating where the data may not be as robust as they appear and by spreading the net wide to capture as many sources as possible. If each dataset may only provide part of the picture, the 154 charts and tables together provide a much larger composite and the volume of data and diversity of sources narrow the margin of error.

# BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

## 1.1 The Economy

Northern Ireland has a weak economy. Its dependence upon a low-skills / low-pay equilibrium and its high rate of economic inactivity mean that it has never been able to generate sufficient tax income to cover its expenditure. The latest figures on the Net Fiscal Balance, released by the Department of Finance and Personnel in November 2012, showed aggregate public expenditure of £23.2 billion, while tax revenues were only £12.7 billion. This left a gap of £10.5 billion covered by the Treasury and usually referred to in Northern Ireland as the British subvention – a fiscal deficit per head of £5,850, compared with an average of £2,454 across the UK.

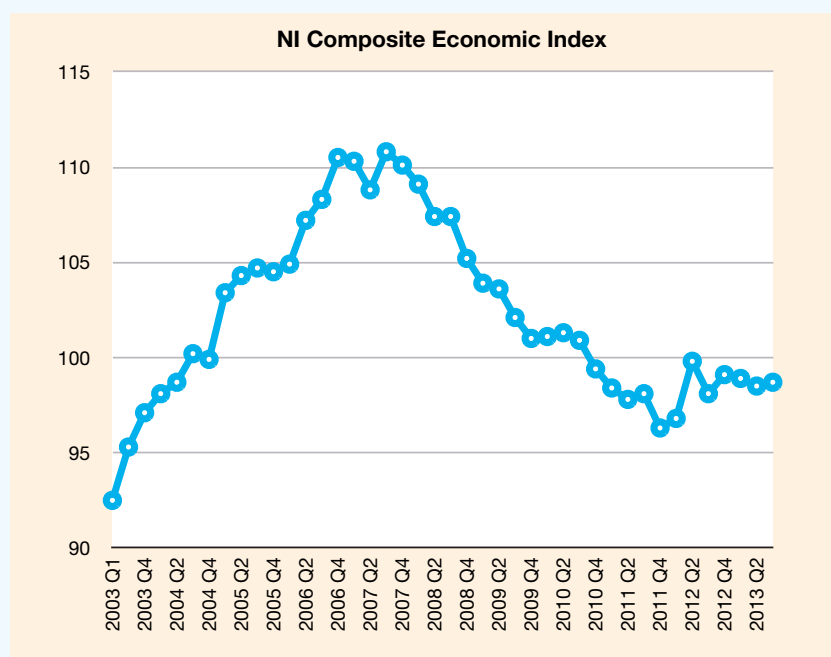
The restructuring of the UK economy does make such comparison misleading. Increasingly there are two economies, one based in London and the south-east of England and the other comprising the rest of the UK – including regions like Northern Ireland and the north-east and north-west of England with economies that require large fiscal transfers from the Treasury. During the boom from 1997 to 2006, London and the south-east were responsible for 37 per cent of the growth of UK output. Since the crash of 2007, however, their share has rocketed to 48 per cent. (Guardian, 23 October 2013). A report by the Resolution Foundation showed that of all regions Northern Ireland suffered worst during the recession: its gross value added per head fell in the five years from the crash in 2008 through to 2013 by 10 per cent.

During the recession NI's decline in gross value added was greater than any other UK region			
	2008	2011	% drop
Northern Ireland	£17,910	£16,130	-10.0
Scotland	£21,650	£20,010	-7.6
Yorkshire & Humber	£18,960	£17,560	-7.4
East of England	£21,050	£19,660	-6.6
London	£39,650	£37,230	-6.1
West midlands	£18,450	£17,430	-5.5
South-west	£20,100	£19,020	-5.4
North-east	£16,990	£16,090	-5.3
East midlands	£18,360	£17,450	-4.9
North-west	£19,340	£18,440	-4.7
South-east	£24,000	£23,220	-3.3
Wales	£15,870	£15,400	-3.0

Source: The Resolution Foundation, 'The State of Living Standards', February 2014

GVA measures the contribution to the economy of each producer, industry or sector and in the absence of a regional Gross Domestic Product figure is commonly substituted. Even then, regional GVA figures are only published 11 months after the end of the year and so the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has derived an experimental quarterly Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index (NICEI). As of February 2014 this remains 9 per cent below its peak in the second quarter of 2007. This compares unfavourably with UK GDP, which by 2013 was just 2 per cent below its 2008 high. Having experienced the worst recession, Northern Ireland is lagging in recovery too.

Chart 2: Peaks and troughs: the NI economy 2003-13



Source: NISRA Economics Bulletin, January 2014

## The size of the public sector

Successive secretaries of state, Labour as well as Conservative, have drawn attention to the size of Northern Ireland's public sector in relation to the private sector. In some commentaries a picture is painted of a Soviet-style economy in which everyone is working for the government. A useful perspective was given by the Office for National Statistics in a paper entitled *Subregional Analysis of Public and Private Sector Employment* (2011). This showed very little variation in the distribution of public-sector employment across the UK:

*"This is not a surprising result. Many jobs in the public sector are in health, education or public administration and these jobs are likely to be spread relatively evenly across the country in order to serve local populations. By contrast, there are a number of private sector occupations in which firms are not required to locate adjacent to their customers and this gives them a freedom to choose where in Britain (or elsewhere) they wish to locate."*

In other words, when there is a very high ratio of public- to private-sector employment this is often to do with the small size of the private sector. London has a high concentration of private-sector investment; Northern Ireland does not.

### Green shoots?

The year 2013 did offer some indicators of regional economic recovery:

- The number claiming unemployment benefits fell for thirteen consecutive months to March 2014 (Labour Force Survey).
- The fall in house prices gave way to a small upturn: the NISRA Northern Ireland Residential Property Price Index showed a 4 per cent increase in 2013.
- There was a 5 per cent drop in house repossessions recorded by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service in the year to September.

The Department of the Environment reported that new private car registrations in July-September were 15 per cent up on the corresponding period in 2012.

The Quarterly Employment Survey, published in December, showed that employment increased by 1.2 per cent in the year to September.

The Consumer Confidence Index from Danske Bank was at its highest in the fourth quarter was at since 2008, when first published.

Output in Northern Ireland has begun a long, slow recovery from a very low point.. As the Northern Ireland Composite Index shows, the economy has merely returned to the level of 2004, while the peak in the third quarter of 2007 now looks like an Everest.

### The stubborn problems

Certain problems in the regional economy remain so persistent they have come to define it:

**Low productivity** GVA per hour worked in Northern Ireland was 82.8 per cent of the UK average over the past year, the weakest of the UK regions. Northern Ireland relies much more on low-productivity sectors like agriculture.

**Low wages** Linked to low productivity are low wages. Earnings in 2013 remained 88 per cent of the UK average. According to the February 2014 Economic Commentary from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, full-time workers in Northern Ireland have the lowest median gross weekly earnings of the 12 UK regions.

**Low economic activity** The economic inactivity rate of 27.2 per cent in December 2013 was as ever significantly above the UK average of 22.2 per cent and again the highest of the UK regions.

**Low living standards** Living standards in Northern Ireland have consistently been below the UK average. The ONS regional GVA figures for 2013 show Northern Ireland with the third lowest living standards in the UK, just ahead of Wales and the north-east of England.

For Northern Ireland to make the step change to an innovative economy, significantly greater commitment to research and development would be required. A report commissioned by NISP CONNECT estimated that the knowledge economy in the region had grown by 20 per cent between 2009 and 2012, thanks to increased investment by government, business and the universities. But other regions are growing their knowledge-based businesses much more quickly from a much higher base.

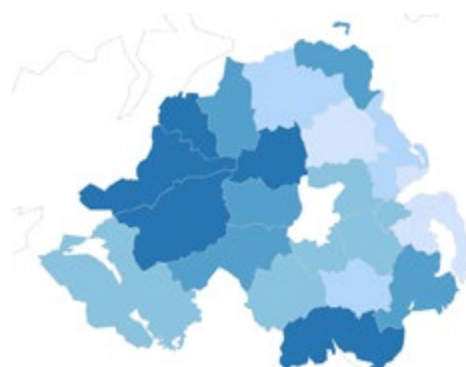
## 1.2 Demography

Initial data from the 2011 census were released in December 2012. The headline result was the narrowing of the gap between Catholics (45.1 per cent) and Protestants (48.4 per cent).

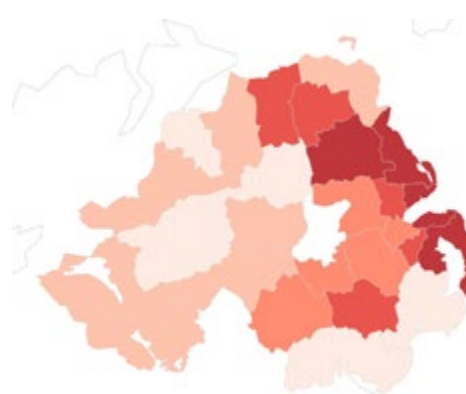
Staged releases over the past year have allowed key trends to be identified. While Protestants predominate in the older age cohorts, Catholics prevail in the younger: In 2011, 52 per cent of usual residents who were or had been brought up Catholic were under 35, compared with 40 per cent of those who belonged to or had been brought up Protestant. NISRA has estimated that 95,000 Protestants and 46,000 Catholics died between 2001 and 2011, while there were 89,000 Protestant and 118,000 Catholic births. Catholics are in the majority in all age cohorts up to and including 35-39. In the very youngest, 0-4 years, the Catholic proportion was 12.9 percentage points higher than for Protestants in 2011, whereas among those aged 65 and over, 64 per cent belonged to or had been brought up in Protestant denominations, only 34 per cent Catholic.

Chart 3: Spatial distribution

Catholic population 2011



Protestant population 2011

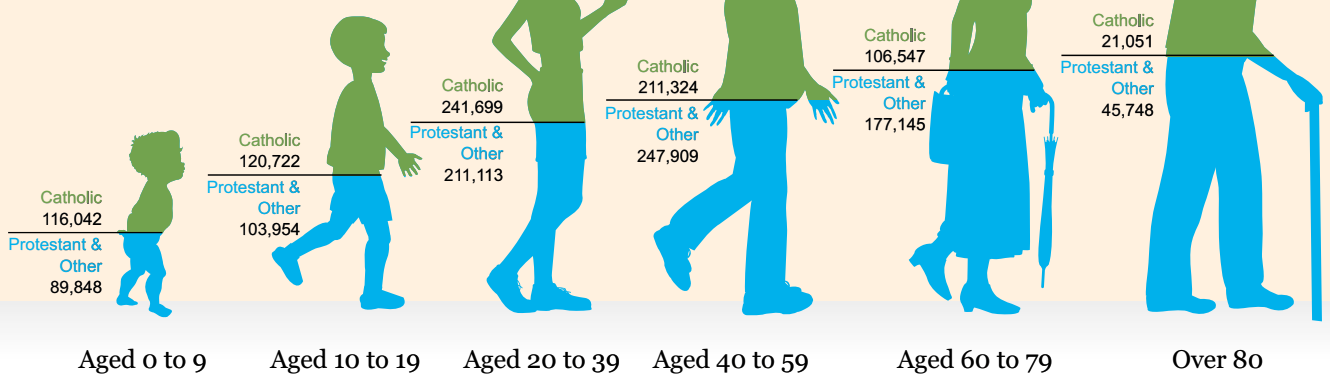


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### Religious background: a comparison between 2001 and 2011

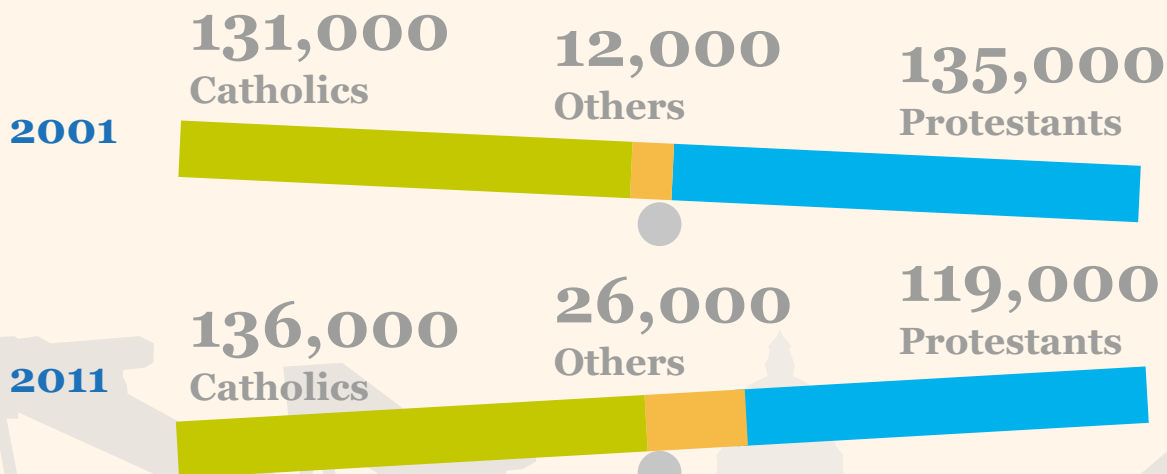
Religion (or religion brought up in)	Census 2001		Census 2011		Change (%)
	Number	%	Number	%	
Protestant and other Christian	895,377	53.1	875,717	48.4	-2.2
Catholic	737,412	43.8	817,385	45.1	10.8
Other religions	6,569	0.4	16,592	0.9	152.6
None	45,909	2.7	101,169	5.6	120.4

## Religious breakdown by age cohorts



Catholics predominate in the west, north-west and south of Northern Ireland and in the district council areas Newry & Mourne (79 per cent), Derry (75 per cent), Omagh (70 per cent) and Magherafelt (66 per cent). Protestants are heavily represented in the east, north-east and Greater Belfast and so in Carrickfergus (79 per cent), Ards (77 per cent), North Down (73 per cent) and Castlereagh (68 per cent). The east-west divide has become more pronounced but the significant changes in 2001-11 were in the east, where a rise in the Catholic population was accompanied by Protestant decline. In Belfast, Catholics now account for

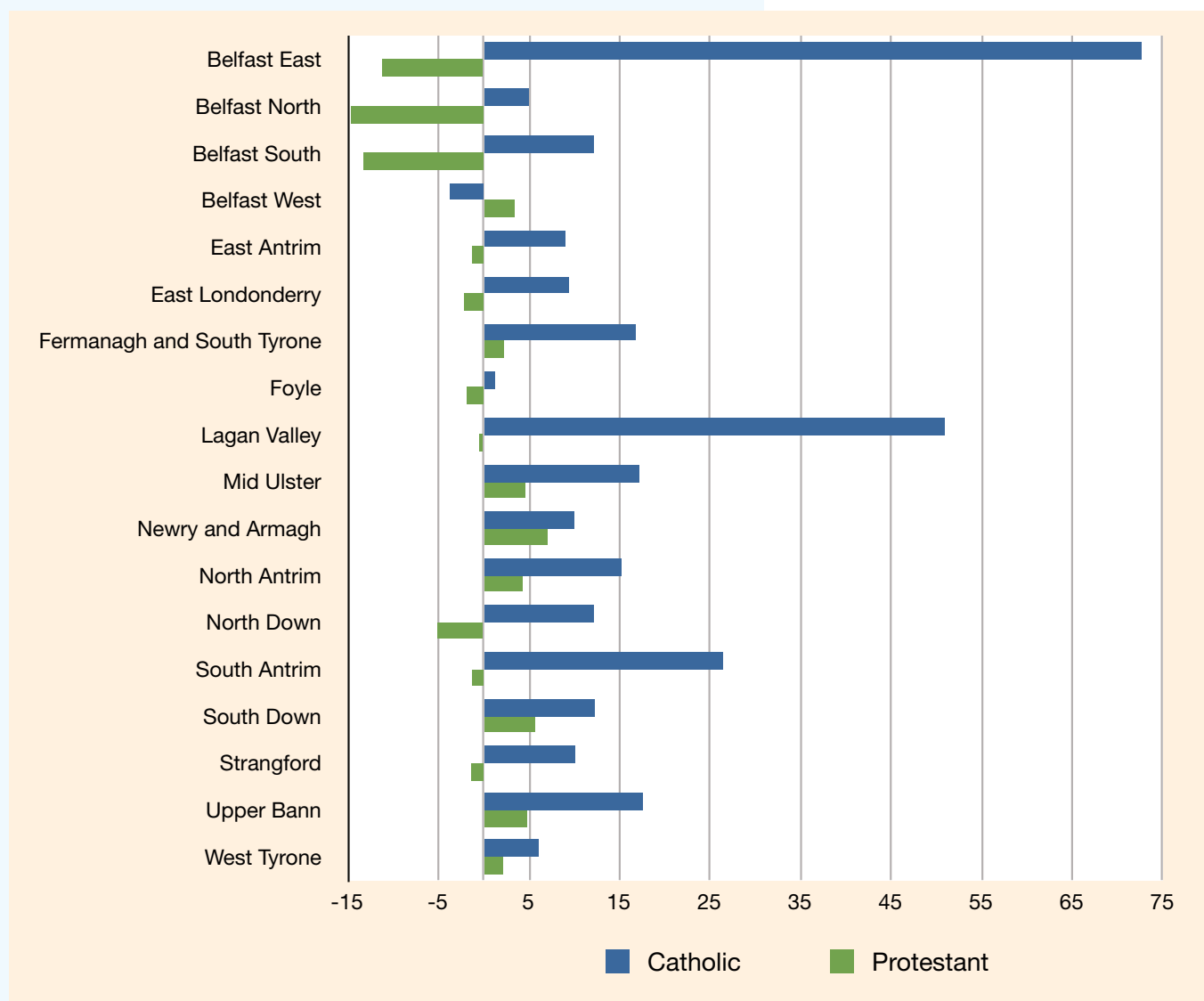
## Belfast - The demographic tipping point



Between 2001 and 2011 the demographic balance in Belfast went through a small but decisive shift. The Catholic population increased by approximately 5,500, or 4.2%. Much more significant however was the decline of the Protestant population, from 134,797 to 118,856 – a decline of 15,941, or 11.9%. Those in the Other category doubled in numbers, and the net effect of these changes was that the demographic balance tilted in such a way that Belfast which had, from its origin, been a Protestant majority city became a city where the Catholic population has the largest share. The new district boundaries for the enlarged Belfast area (see page 149), show the following breakdown: Catholics 49 per cent, Protestants 42 per cent and Others 9 per cent.

136,000 residents (49 per cent), a rise of 4.3 per cent since 2001, compared with 119,000 Protestants (42.3 per cent), a decline of almost 12 per cent. While the number of Catholics increased in 17 of the 18 Assembly constituencies, the Protestant count fell in ten. The proportionally largest increase in the number of Catholics was in Belfast East (73 per cent), followed by Lagan Valley (51 per cent) and South Antrim (26 per cent), while there were significant Protestant declines in Belfast North (15 per cent), Belfast South (13 per cent) and Belfast East (11 per cent).

**Chart 7: Percentage change in community background by Assembly area 2001-2011**



## The growth of new communities

The arrival of new communities, and in particular since 2004 'A8' migrants from central and eastern Europe, has shifted the population ratios of Catholics and Protestants. If the census had counted only the indigenous population, then Protestants would have accounted for 50 per cent and Catholics 45. The ratios were nuanced by the religious background of the 202,000 usual residents born outside Northern Ireland, 34 per cent identifying

as having Protestant backgrounds while 48 per cent identified as Catholic (Russell, 2013). The proportion of the usually resident population born outside Northern Ireland rose from 9.0 per cent in April 2001 to 11 per cent in 2011.

Chart 9: National Identity

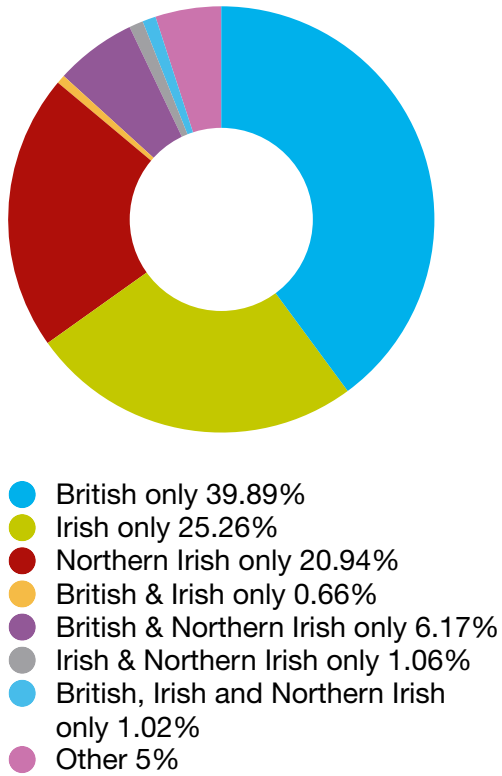
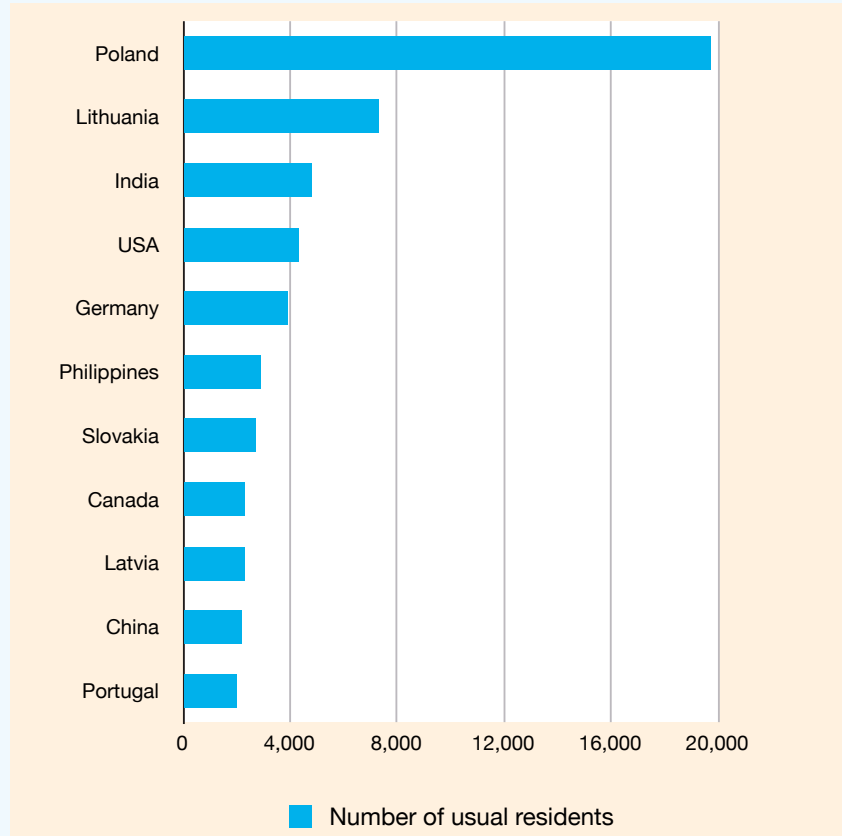
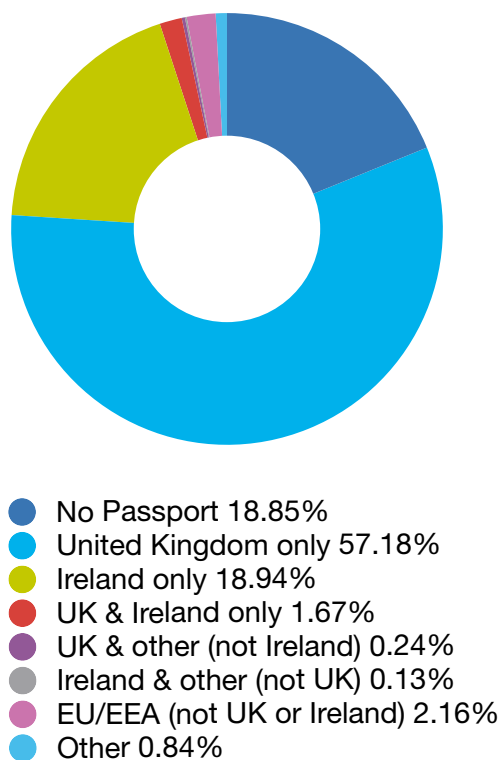


Chart 8: Number of usual residences born outside UK and Ireland



Source: NISRA Statistics Bulletin – Census 2011: Detailed Characteristics for Northern Ireland on Ethnicity, Country of Birth and Language

Chart 10: Passports



### National identities

The growth of the Catholic population has not translated into a growth of Irish identity, This was claimed by only 25.3 per cent of the population and only 18.9 per cent held exclusively an Irish passport. For the first time the census allowed for a Northern Ireland identity and this accounted for 21 per cent.