



# **The Subjectivity of Victimisation: A Case Study on Post-1970s Northern Ireland**

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### Abbreviation List

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Definition</b>
CJS	Criminal Justice System
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
GFA	Good Friday Agreement
ICRIR	Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery
IRA	Irish Republican Army
LT	Labelling Theory
MP	Moral Panic
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RUC	Royal Ulster Constabulary
NICRA	The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association
The Legacy Act	The Northern Irish Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
V-PP	Victim-perpetrator paradigm

## Abstract

This dissertation looked to provide the reader with an understanding of how victimisation and the 'victim' label is subjective in different communities. This was conducted to give a perspective on how these communities, while experiencing the same or similar trauma, can disregard one another in order to grand themselves the experience of victimisation. Through desk-based research, a literature review regarding the existing body of work relating to victimisation was conducted. The sections within the literature review consisted of themes within media representation, which impacted perceptions of history and memory, as well as themes within labelling theory (LT) with special focus on how communities disregard their own violence towards others while experiencing victimisation. In order to support the literature review, a case study was used regarding the Troubles in Northern Ireland with specific reference to Bloody Sunday in 1972. This case study enabled the reader to compare the literature review to a real-life event. The findings of this dissertation suggest that all aspects of media representation have been reflected during the case study relating to Northern Ireland. It also proposes that memory and perception can influence a community and therefore how they determine who is a victim or perpetrator is on their own account. Finally, this dissertation found that LT, specifically the victim-perpetrator paradigm (V-PP) framework gives the reader a thorough explanation about how this subjectivity and ignorance forms. In conclusion, the case study of Northern Ireland during the Troubles supported the literature review and gave the reader an overall understanding of how victimisation is subjective as opposed to objective.

**Keywords:** victim, victimisation, subjectivity, media, memory, LT

## **Chapter One: Introduction and Methodology**

### **Introduction**

“It has long been the subject of debate within victimology that ‘victim’ is not an objective label, nor is victimisation an objective experience” (Quinney, 1972; Jankowitz, 2018: 261). From this quotation, we gather that the label and experience of being a victim is subjective. In understanding this, the reader will grasp the idea that the label is a social construct based on values and beliefs that are instinctive to different communities (Jankowitz, 2018).

This dissertation will analyse how the label ‘victim’ and experience of victimisation is subjective to each community. It looks to prove that each community sees victimisation as something different. This will be conducted through researching ways the public forms different opinions which may explain collective memory. It will examine how different aspects of media can influence communities. These different aspects include how the media decides what is newsworthy. It will also look at how the events that are chosen to be newsworthy can instil moral panic (MP) on the reader when referring to terrorist events, such as what is discussed in this paper during the case study of Northern Ireland in chapter four. This paper will further examine other important aspects of media such as photos, videos, and language where it will analyse if they provide any influence on the perception of the public and a community’s collective memory. While assessing how communities perceive these events, this paper takes into consideration the different processes some individuals may take when labelling it as factual information, discussed further in chapter three (Gearhart & Kang, 2014)

Along with the media section, LT is used in this dissertation’s literature review to understand the victims and perpetrators of a society and it also aids the understanding of victimisation in Northern Ireland. This will be informed to the reader by explaining deviant behaviour (Bernburg, 2019), and Christie’s ideal victim theory (van Wijk, 2013). LT will assist this dissertation in leading the reader to the understanding about how these labels influence societies opinions through the language used around these individuals (Alshiban, 2018; Fohring, 2018). The V-PP framework will be used in this dissertation to give the reader a clear understanding of why individuals in these communities hold the label victim close to their identity (Jankowitz, 2018), which is directly relevant to what we see in the vulnerable communities of Northern Ireland today.

As a means of assisting the dissertation’s literature review, the use of the case study relating to Northern Ireland, particularly after the 1970’s, aims to show a real-life example of



how communities have different opinions on who is and is not a victim and who deserves to be at the top of the hierarchy for victimisation. An in-depth study into the history of Northern Ireland is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but main aspects following the 1970's are used in order to understand the victimisation of Catholics and Protestants, Republicans and Unionists. This includes discussing the importance of Bloody Sunday and the events leading up to it, which is where this dissertation begins relating to the history of Northern Ireland. Inquiries are important to this case study as a lot of what is discussed is the lack of accountability surrounding Bloody Sunday (Hegarty, 2002). Important moments such as the Eames Bradley Report and the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) will also be looked on further, seeing how they were affected by the divided societies. This case study will end with recent events relating to the Troubles, The Northern Irish Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023 (The Legacy Act). This paper will go into detail about the impact it has had on families of all different backgrounds in Northern Ireland, and it will discuss the impression it has made on their cases against those who injured them or their family members.

## **Roadmap**

This dissertation will begin regarding methodology. This is used in order to present a guide to the reader on how the dissertation has been constructed to best answer the research title regarding how victimisation is subjective. The literature review will focus on different forms of media's influence and how the theory of labelling can help to understand what communities process and remember when they hear the words 'victim' and 'victimisation'. The case study, as stated previously, gives the reader the opportunity to put the literature review in the context of a real-life domestic terrorism event. This is then followed by the limitations this dissertation faced during the information gathering process. Further research suggestions then finish off the discussion section by giving concepts which would have been discussed if given the opportunity. This is followed by the conclusion, wrapping up the dissertation.

## **Methodology**

In this dissertation, the goal is to guide the reader in understanding the subjectivity of victimisation. In the literature review, this dissertation will look at ways in which different media representations can influence perceptions of victimhood and encourage a hierarchy of victimisation. This will be done by discussing the themes of newsworthiness, MP, forms of news coverage, linguistics, perception, and memory. This dissertation will then look at the

theory of Labelling through the themes of deviance, being labelled a victim, ideal against non-ideal victim, linguistics revolving the victim label, the V-PP framework, and how vulnerable communities may be affected by the label. In the next chapter, this dissertation will use the case study of Northern Ireland during the period of 1970s and onwards in order to relate the information of the literature review to a real-life event.

### **Data Collection**

As this dissertation is desk-based, it was limited in the data it could collect. Article research was the main form of data collection. This was done through researching key words relating to each of the topics of ‘Media Representation of Victims and Perpetrators’, ‘The Victimisation of Labelling’, and the case study of ‘The Victims of the Troubles’. Desk-based research was best for this dissertation due to the time and word limits. It was unrealistic to conduct field research in the span of less than a year as data collection, such as interviews and questionnaires, would prove difficult.

### **Data Analysis**

Once all of the articles relating to the themes of each section were collected, this dissertation looked to analyse each of them relating to societies understanding of victimisation and being labelled as a victim or deviant individual. This data was then interpreted to suit the research topic of the subjectivity of victimisation. The information from the literature review was taken into consideration while discussing some of the key events in Northern Ireland, making sure to relate them to each other. The consideration of collective memories and the language used against victims and perpetrators was beneficial in this dissertation as it provided a window into how communities view their own traumas against another community, in this case Catholics comparing their experiences of The Troubles to Protestants. This method of analysing different themes aided in the research of this dissertation as they all proved beneficial in understanding victimisation, and how the idea of a victim is subjective in different communities.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This dissertation, while being of desk-based research, did not have to take ethics into consideration as much as other research methods may have. In the articles used, ethical considerations were already taken. This meant this dissertation did not have to take extra steps to ensure ethical standards were upheld.

## **Changes and Reflections**

The initial plan of this dissertation was to look at different terrorist events around the world and compare how communities of the same fate and nationality as the perpetrators fell victim to the media and society as a whole. If this dissertation could have been extended, it would have been interesting to compare The Troubles of Northern Ireland to the national terrorism experiences in countries such as Uganda. With these two countries being in completely different parts of the world, it would be interesting to see how their hierarchy of victimisation and how the label different individuals compare.

## **Conclusion**

This methodology section discussed how the data collection was conducted in order to find existing data on the themes of each section of the literature review and case study. These themes aided in the understanding of how victimisation is subjective in different communities. This section also discussed the steps taken to analyse the data found. It concluded with reflections and changes that it would take if doing this dissertation over again.

## **Chapter Two:**

### **Literature Review - Media Representation of Victims and Perpetrators**

#### **Introduction**

Put by Kellner, the media "...helps shape our view of the world and our deepest values; what we consider good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil" (2011:1). In this respect, media platforms influence what individuals believe as this is how information of current events is fed. In this section, newsworthiness, MP, forms of news coverage, linguistics, people's perceptions, and collective memory will be discussed relating to the subjectivity of victimisation. The discussion of newsworthiness is important when referring to media in regard to victims and perpetrators as those reporting have the ability to shape what they say to fit in line with their beliefs. In this sense, they are able to convey the message of who is and is not an accepted victim, as well as who is the perpetrator of an event. MP falls in line with newsworthiness, as following what is being reported on it can cause an overall fear within communities that may be in danger, fearing they too will become victims. Different forms of news coverage are important to discuss in relation to the media's connection with victim and perpetrator labelling. In these different forms of coverage, the images and language they use is important when conveying their message. All of these key aspects of the media's representation of victims and perpetrators shapes the subjective perception of a society.

#### **Newsworthiness**

As news media progresses, so does the aspects in which makes an event newsworthy. Theories have been developed over time to aid in the understanding of what makes a particular situation newsworthy. Galtung and Ruge (1965) published a theory based on twelve aspects that make an event newsworthy, which influence people's subjective opinions on worthy victims and their victimisation. These twelve factors include: the frequency an event has occurred and its timespan, the impact it has had and how intense it is, the events lucidity, if the event is relevant to the media's opinions, if the action conforms to the expectations of the world, if it is or is not expected, if it develops another news report further, the composition of the news, referencing significantly powerful countries, referencing significantly powerful people, how personal the story can be made, and the negativity that can be taken from the story (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; De Nies et al., 2012). Following this theory of newsworthiness, Harcup and O'Neill (2001) revised Galting and Ruge's theory to make it fit with more modern times, with special attention paid to entertainment (De Nies et al., 2012). These added values

include; if there is the addition of photographs, references of sexual nature, reference of animals, humour, celebrity culture events, good news, and (where in relation to powerful people) a distinction of those in power and celebrities (Harcup and O'Neill, 2001; De Nies et al., 2012). Shoemaker and Cohen proposed a theory that suggested that newsworthiness consists of deviance and social significance (Zhang et al., 2013). From this, four sub-dimensions were later defined in order to expand this idea of the significance of an event, known as 'political significance,' 'economic significance,' 'cultural significance,' and 'public significance' (Shoemaker & Cohen, 2006, cited in De Nies et al., 2012: 108).

In 2013, the National Counterterrorism Centre estimated that the daily average amount of terrorist events was thirty worldwide (Zhang et al., 2013). Following through the years, 2022 appeared to be the lowest recorded year of attacks since 2015, with a total of 101 estimated events being of fatal and non-fatal nature such as plotting attacks and actual attacks themselves (Ravndal et al., 2023). The News is how individuals' source most of their information as a population, so it is unsurprising to note that these outlets follow a "herd mentality" when it comes to ways to report events (Maguire et al., 2002: 469; Silva & Capellan, 2019), influencing people's subjective minds. People expose themselves to media that fits with their judgement of the world (Dixon & Williams, 2015). Many reporters find themselves in competition with each other, focusing on the dramatic stories including victims at which their views can identify with (Dixon & Linz, 2000), something that may be considered newsworthy. Newsworthy events are needed to push sales and views, but the conflict arises when it also benefits the terrorist organisation (Zhang et al., 2013). Reverting back to the 2013 estimated thirty events a day or the 2022 101 events in western Europe, it can be difficult to know what to report and what not (Zhang et al., 2013). In some situations, news media can make matters worse. The negative framing of communities and othering individuals can be noted to either benefit or aggravate a situation, with the possibility of disrupting peace processes (Armoudian, 2016). Some have referred to the media in this form as 'peace spoilers,' emphasising on conflict rather than reconciliation (Sheafer & Dvir-Gvirsman 2010). In cases such as Northern Ireland, discussed later in this dissertation, majority of the media supported the peace agreement, which assisted in the acceptance of the GFA (Wolfsfeld, 2004). In contrast to this, the media, in consideration of the Middle East, worsened the conflict between Israel and Palestine through the negative language and overall reporting, spoiling the possibility of peace (Armoudian, 2016).

Significance in newsworthiness can be found relating to the predictability of crime. There are many factors that lead to the predictability of an event. The number and age of the

victims injured and killed is important (Grosholz & Kubrin, 2007; Gekoski et al., 2012; Silva & Capellan, 2019). If there is a larger number of victims, it is correlated to the worthiness in the newspaper as it draws in more attention (Zhang et al., 2013; Silva & Capellan, 2019). This is especially true when the public believe it to be a random attack, drawing them in as they will feel more attached because there is the possibility this could be them (Lankford, 2016). Similarly, according to a group of UK journalists, the murder of a child will always make the front page of a news source as it is seen to act with statistical deviance (Gekoski et al., 2012). Ideology behind crime is another factor of newsworthiness that can be predicted to generate attention from the public (Silva & Capellan, 2019). It can be noted that Middle Eastern individuals receive more negative media attention than their White counterparts (West & Lloyd, 2017; Silva & Capellan, 2019). This is interesting when you consider that, over the period of 1966 to 2016, Silva and Capellan (2019) found in 314 mass public shootings that the basic characteristics of race that 60.6% (193) were White males and 3.4% (11) were Middle Eastern males, showing the effects media has on the public's perception of crime (Silva & Capellan, 2019). This indicates that Middle Eastern individuals are over-represented in the media. It can be suggested that, following the 9/11 attacks, people have grown a fascination with terrorism, particularly Islamic terrorism, which may lead to Islamophobia (Werbner, 2005; Silva & Capellan, 2019; Elman, 2019). This overall bias can be seen from the representation of victims in the media. As of 2000 in America, White individuals were the most likely to be represented as victims of a crime compared to Black and Latino Americans, where for every two white victims there was less than one black and Hispanic victim mentioned in the media (Dixon & Linz, 2000). White people were also less likely to be represented as perpetrators compared to their minority counterparts, where black people were perceived as perpetrators 2.26 times more frequently than they were portrayed as victims, Hispanic people were noted to be perpetrators 1.48 times more than mentioned as victims, and white people were the reported perpetrator 0.76 times more than as the victim (Dixon & Linz, 2000).

In terms of events carried out relating to terrorism, media journalists make sure to report on what is currently newsworthy to the public. As the media is the public's main source of being notified about events that occur, it can be suggested that they are able to shape public perceptions and how they think to prevent these situations from occurring (Schildkraut & Elsass, 2016). Homicide, particularly when the victim is a woman or a child, is most newsworthy in the eyes of the media (Gruenewald et al., 2009; Gekoski et al., 2012; Gruenewald et al., 2013). The idea of these individuals as vulnerable people who need to be looked after may suggest a reason as to why the public view this as newsworthy (Gekoski et

al., 2012). Co-victims or those known to be bereaved from homicide are other individuals who can be noted in the domain of an ideal victim (Gekoski et al., 2012). Regarding public shootings, if the media chooses to report this, they are aware that by suggesting that it is a random attack they are playing on the feelings of the public, who will feel more unnerved at the fact that it could be them next, instilling fear (Silva & Capellan, 2019). While homicide and public shootings are mostly reported on, it can be noted that workplace shootings are one of the most common forms of violent acts to occur with the least amount of coverage in the news (Silva & Capellan, 2019). This may lead to inadequate public fears, followed by insufficient policies which are not focusing on the correct threats. These are factors that draw people in to engage with the news source. There are factors that media try to avoid as to not lose engagement with their audience. Reporting on individuals who do not fit the ideal victim picture is something these outlets avoid, considering them undeserving of public attention (Gekoski et al., 2012).

### **Moral Panic**

In suggesting that the media controls what is newsworthy, it can be assumed that, with particular views on different communities, the media is able to create MP within the mind of their readers. Cohen suggested there are ways in which one can identify stages of MP (Cricher, 2008).

The first of five suggestions is how an event is interpreted as threatening an individual's life and safety (Paterson & Stark, 2001). The second is the way in which this is represented as a threat, through different media outlets (ibid, 2001). Next is the pace in which public concern rises, followed by how the government responds to these concerns (ibid, 2001). The final aspect suggested is the shift in society, if the panic shifts or subsides (ibid, 2001).

In all, Cohen's definition of the occurrence of MP is when something happens that can be described as a threat to societal values (Carlson, 2020). This can be interpreted in many ways, but this dissertation will relate it further on to the events of the Conflicts in Northern Ireland. Following Cohen's five aspects of MP, Goode and Ben-Yehuda suggested these five characteristics that may cause MP: an exaggerated response; anxiety relating to the threat; prejudice towards those who this community is panicked against; an overall agreement that this needs to be panicked about; and the unpredictable nature of the MP regarding the scale of the situation (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 2010; Burke, 2018). These suggestions by Cohen, Goode, and Ben-Yehuda agree that the media is are the forefront of shaping the publics perceptions

and reactions to an event that goes against social normalities. This is important regarding shaping the views of victims and perpetrators of events, enhancing the probability that the outgroup will face prejudice no matter their believed victim status.

News media is the main source of information for the public, and shapes perceptions of normal behaviours in society, creating a universal understanding of right versus wrong behaviours (Carlson, 2020). In some ways, the media can have a psychological effect on a community, instilling fear, and MP (Dixon & Linz, 2000). An event being amplified in the media can be tied to when a community is experiencing a time of anxiety and MP is created (Gratten, 2008). This can be related to times such as religious conflicts in Nigeria between Muslims and Christians, at the time of the troubles in Ireland, or, more recently, the ongoing conflict of Israel and Palestine.

In news outlets, there is a large amount of discrimination and overrepresentation, which facilitates this MP that can label the wrong person as the perpetrator (Maneri & Ter Wal, 2005). This thesis suggests these individuals become a victim to the power of media. In America, Black and Latino people are overrepresented as criminals and underrepresented as victims and it is the opposite for white people. In fact, Black and Latino people are reported as victims at half the rate as their white counterparts (Dixon & Linz, 2000; Dixon & Williams, 2015). Relating this back to newsworthiness, it could be suggested that the news is reporting to who they believe their largest consumer group is in a way they can relate best.

It was discovered that, on cable and network news outlets, those of the Muslim faith were 81% more likely to be considered as terrorists compared to non-Muslims at 19% in American society when, according to official United States of America (USA) government reports, those of the Muslim faith are at 6% while non-Muslims commit at a rate of 94% in America (Dixon & Williams, 2015). These figures show that Muslims are overrepresented as terrorist perpetrators than their non-Muslim counterparts. This could, as suggested previously, be caused by media reporting in line with newsworthiness in a society traumatised by previous events, playing on MP. The power relationship perspective predicts the emphasis on white victimisation compared to minority communities (Dixon & Linz, 2000). This is based on the bias of more white individuals owning news outlets, casting an emphasis on their victimisation, stereotyping the outgroup, of which thrives on subjective opinions, and evaluating the other communities with preconceptions (Dixon & Linz, 2000). When a media outlet is opinionated on certain aspects, they are impacting how individuals feel about outgroups. In the case of this thesis, we will refer back to this in the context of Northern Ireland and the UK during the times of the Troubles, honing in on the victims of these times. With a bias focus in a large community, it could lead



to a shift in policies when responding to these scenarios rather than actual threats. For example, media-generated MP regarding mass school shootings in America led to a stronger measure surrounding the policing of younger people (Burns & Crawford, 1999). It was also suggested that the coverage of jihadi mass public shootings influenced extreme policies relating to terrorism in the USA (Silva & Capellan, 2019). This is important to this dissertation as it fails to address the problem of the true threat as the public are influenced by what the media presents (Silva & Capellan, 2019). In the scenario of America, the predominant perpetrator is a white middle-aged man who targets workplace environments for mass shootings (Silva & Capellan, 2019), which is not what the media would consider newsworthy.

How the media prioritises their newsworthy material contributes to societies subjective opinions on victimisation, who is worthy of being reported as a victim and who is not. This can create MP by causing fear within a society about their victimisation or the possibility of it. Factors that come into play are subjective to the company and country where the news is reported from, and influence society. Further on in this dissertation, references to Northern Ireland will be made regarding what was considered newsworthy in order to show a real-life example of how victimisation is subjective.

### **Forms of News Coverage**

Ways in which the public obtain their information about current news is important in relation to the treatment of victims, many of which may experience prejudice concerning the information being shared based on subjective opinions. There are many ways to gather information about incidents of crime, this dissertation focuses on the overall collection relating to the subjectivity of victimisation. Newspapers were once the most popular ways of finding out information (Nielsen, 2015). The usage of a newspaper allows the consumer to pay attention to information they may find more significant than other reports (Grosholz & Kubrin, 2007). Unlike reading newspapers, watching the news by television subjects the viewer to observe more-or-less all aspects of reports, giving them less free-will in that respect (Doyle, 2003).

The transition from television news media to the digital age has rapidly accelerated at the hands of social media's use of video technology platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and TikTok (Bivens, 2015; García-Perdomo, 2021; Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2022). Along with its benefits of news-sharing there is the added problem of enabling MP within communities by

spreading misinformation about individuals or outgroups (Carlson, 2020). This can be equally true following incidents of terror in which a community may suffer prejudice due to a similar comparison between them and the terrorist, leading to the shaming of a whole community (Carlson, 2020). This dissertation suggests that the victim in these terrorist events is subjective to the community reporting on it. The public become amateur journalists, able to report a situation live at their fingertips and share it to the world (Bivens, 2015).

When media is shown visually, the reporter uses representational strategies in order to show the criminal as an individual or represent it as the individual's community as a whole (Machin & Mayr, 2013), depending on what they are reporting on, for example a lone mass shooter or a terrorist organisation. Making clear visuals for the reader helps to paint a better picture of the importance of the situation. In examining photographic representation of the 2015 Paris attacks and the Beirut bombings in media outlets, there was a clear hierarchy of newsworthiness and victimisation when discussing the victims of these attacks (El Ali et al., 2018; Ismail & Mishra, 2019; Kim, 2022). Lebanon, as of 2022, was noted as the twenty-first country most impacted by terrorism but it received close to no media acknowledgement, while France was ranked thirty-sixth in being impacted by terrorism and received significantly more media attention, reminding people of the September eleven attacks (Kim, 2022). Watching scenes from an incident unfold, as well as the aftermath, is suggested to stimulate the emotions of empathy and sadness of the public towards the victims (Chouliaraki & Blaagaard, 2007). This choice of reporting on Paris at a higher rate than Beirut, thousands versus approximately 60 images being uploaded to western media outlets, not only shows a hierarchy of newsworthiness but also a hierarchy of human lives (Chouliaraki, 2013; Kim, 2022). The considerable number of images of the incident in Paris showed rescue missions and objects invoking solidarity as well as photos of victims (Kim, 2022). These photos reflected the humanisation of the victims and public gathered in solidarity for them (Kim, 2022). Regarding the photographs from Lebanon, there was an aspect of dehumanization relating to the themes of protesting and arresting in the images reported to the media (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017; Kim, 2022). It has been suggested that the Paris attacks were reported on at a higher frequency due to "cultural proximity" (Ismail & Mishra, 2019). This left the Lebanese to feel forgotten about, insinuating these situations are normal in countries like Lebanon and should not be focused on as highly (Ismail & Mishra, 2019). The treatment of those who suffered in Lebanon compared to those in Paris shows the importance of the Ideal Victim.

## **Language**

The words used in news articles make an impact on the viewer/reader and how they interpret the information being presented to them. The reporter is armed with a large vocabulary of words they can use to describe an event carried out by a person or persons. The language they use is determined by how they want to represent the person(s) (Machin & Mayr, 2013). Fowler (1991) termed this choice of phrasing words in relation to the individual(s) being reported on as representational strategies. These word strategies influence the reader/viewers opinion of communities around the world, as well as determining their identity from the news report (Machin & Mayr, 2013). Language has the ability to shape the public's attitudes so, in this respect, the reporter has the power to shape the mind of their readers (Sabao, 2016). It is suggested that it is impossible to write an article that is free of ideology (Sabao, 2016). Regarding this, it can be suggested that bias lingers in reports, down to the simple word changes made. In playing with the emotions of the public, propaganda is able to focus and direct the public's attention in times of trouble and chaos (Steuter & Wills, 2010). An example of this is, following the announcement of the War on Terror, propaganda linguistics were found being implemented in reports surrounding this terrorism topic, influencing a large nation of people (Steuter & Wills, 2010). The language used in articles and reports has been found to shape constructs of reality reflecting enemy-construction and influences the opinion of the public (Knightly, 1975; Merskin, 2004; Grozholz & Kubrin, 2007; Steuter & Wills, 2010). Dehumanisation language can be used in order to shape the minds of a nation following events of terrorism. Following September eleventh, newspapers used dehumanising language in relation to their enemies, where the Daily News, New York used the term 'vermin,' and a newspaper from Toronto used 'rat' when describing Iraqi individuals (Steuter & Wills, 2010). This dissertation suggests that certain terms posed on these people may cause for individuals from similar communities to experience discrimination and prejudice from those who rely on minimal research to shape their opinions, known as Heuristic Processing, instead of using Systematic Processing to research more effectively, becoming educated on the biases that may be in what they read.

## **Perception and Memory**

Media has the power to impact people's perceptions of an event. From researching ways media best make an impact on how an individual perceives news, this dissertation discovered

Systematic and Heuristic Processing (Gearhart & Kang, 2014). Heuristic processing, also known as the heuristic bias, is important in certain aspects of news media as those who use this processing will make decisions based on a shortcut of judgements, using minimal information (Todorov et al., 2002; Gearhart & Kang, 2014; Denovan et al., 2017). This form of processing aids in persuading opinions, such as by medias which have strong views on a particular event, and influences people's subjective opinions on victims of these crimes. This is dangerous for communities that are brought to the spotlight following these incidents as it can have a negative impact on them, sparking secondary victimisation (Garland & Chakraborti, 2006). Systematic Processing requires individuals to question the information presented by these news media outlets, researching further into the event to form a cohesive opinion (Gearhart & Kang, 2014). Further research into multiple news sites provides a better understanding of the situation and aids in one's perception formation (Gearhart & Kang, 2014). It can be suggested that those who rely on heuristic processing may be more susceptible to being influenced by false information (Carlson, 2020), such as believing some communities are inherently bad because of the action carried out by one individual.

Directly remembering a past trauma on a community is difficult and is often influenced by those higher than the normal individual (Brown & Rafter, 2013). After times of trouble, people gather with the intention of understanding their traumas, and in doing so they create collective memories (French, 1995). This shared memory enables people to learn their history and build on previous knowledge through memorials, stories and other forms of remembering (Brown & Rafter, 2013). This form of group memory is used to explain the social identity and the historical memory (French, 1995). Collective memory also enables individuals to glorify the past and identify with their heroes (de Saint-Laurent et al., 2017). It reflects on the inherent characteristics of the subjective mind (Olick & Robbins, 1998). Memory focuses on "photographs, moving images, material objects, clothing, personal effects and bodily remains... [bringing] us visually into the physical realm of the threshold between life and death" (Brown & Rafter, 2013: 1021), connecting the past to the present (Gyollai, 2022). Collective memories in the form of trauma have the ability to create hostile environments with aggression and a lack of accountability (French, 1995; Blatz & Ross, 2009; Gyollai, 2022). It has been criticised as being easily malleable, being based on recollection and not on full evidence or truth (French, 1995; Olick & Robbins, 1998; de Saint-Laurent et al., 2017; Gyollai, 2022). In these memories based on recollection, people find it difficult to accept their own wrongdoing and, therefore, do not fully heal from their trauma (Brown & Rafter, 2013). Despite

the criticisms of it, there has been a growth in research into the collective memory and scholars agree that this form of remembering shapes how people view themselves, others, and the world around them (Olick & Robbins, 1998; Gyollai, 2022).

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, the media's representation of victims and perpetrators is vital when it comes to communities' perceptions of them, impacting how they will be treated and looked on in the future following, in the case of this thesis, a terrorist event. The media are able paint pictures in the minds of the public through what they deem is newsworthy and worth reporting, as well as ways in which they portray through imagery and language. MP can form if the media persistently reports on events where individuals can see themselves as becoming victims or in general danger, playing with public concerns. This puts communities in the spotlight and means they may fall victim to prejudice brought on by the media's shaping of societies mind or can have an overall opposite effect where victims may be forgotten about as they are not considered the ideal victim. The victimisation of these individuals' shapes who they are and grow to be and can lead to further shifts in their behaviour.

## **Chapter Three: The Victimization of Labelling**

### **Introduction**

The label an individual has, places them on a hierarchy within society. Through looking into LT, the reader can expect to gain an understanding of the how and why an ingroup receives a label and why they identify themselves differently to the outgroup. A label can form a stigma around certain communities and put them at risk, or the label can be used in a way to hide from the ingroup's truth (Bar-Tal et al., 2009). By using the theoretical framework of an ideal victim, it is easy to also understand the non-ideal and understand the subjectivity of victimisation (Jankowitz, 2018; Long, 2021). Where individuals or communities are seen as lesser of a victim, they may receive a deviant label (Bernburg, 2019). Language is an important aspect when labelling individuals (Fohring, 2018). How people perceive a person's/community's characteristics can determine what level of victimisation they can claim (Jankowitz, 2018; Fohring, 2018). Analysing a person's reaction to being labelled as a victim can show the stigmatisation of the word, while some communities use it to justify their violent actions (van Dijk, 2009; Fohring, 2018; Jankowitz, 2018). It is important to identify the situation in which an individual is labelled. The V-PP framework helps in understanding why an ingroup will claim the label of victim and title the outgroup as the deviant perpetrator (Jankowitz, 2018). This has the ability to cause the outgroup to become vulnerable (Jankowitz, 2018). This vulnerability may lead to further segregation and cause difficulties for communities (Simmons, 1965; Bernburg, 2019). How different groups identify themselves and others will be analysed regarding the subjectivity of victimisation through the loose definitions and characteristics of an ideal victim, non-ideal victim, and an individual labelled as deviant.

### **Deviance**

LT has been derived from sociological approaches into the criminological perspective of the development of deviant behaviour and victimisation (Bernburg, 2019). This theory is important as it gives an understanding of why labelling is used in society (Appleby, 2010). Labels are what society uses to navigate the world, but the use of deviant labels is seen as 'stigmatising markers' (Bernburg, 2019: 2). This means that there is an attached connotation of the label being negative, triggering different processes of stigmatisation (Link & Phelan, 2001). LT has an area of focus on how the act of labelling negatively effects social bonds (Bernburg, 2019), which could be suggested for the reason 'othering' in different communities exists

(Appleby, 2010). It has been claimed that a response to an action being considered as deviant will only occur if it does not fit social normalities. This suggests that subjectivity allows for some individuals to be labelled as deviant while others who have done the same thing to them are not (Gibbs, 1966). This form of social control has an impact on the life chances of an individual (Deakin et al., 2022), which may lead to prejudice of a particular group of people. This is an objective that can be carried out automatically by an individual, often times not being aware of the prejudice it holds.

Following being deemed as deviant, individuals experience a new issue of how they and others react to the stigmatising prejudices that are associated with this label (Bernburg, 2019). This experience may lead the individual to adopt this new identity and act in ways that society predicts them to, as a deviant individual (Appleby, 2010). In retaliation or as an act of defence, deviant behaviours may be acted upon by the individual suffering the labelling (Lemert, 1967; Bernburg, 2019).

### **Labelled ‘Victim’**

Identifying as a victim is a confusing time for the individual, both socially and in their personal life (Fohring, 2018). While it is easy to put this label on some, the identity of a victim has been argued for some time (Arifi, 2016). The UN’s broad term for a victim is someone who “has suffered physical or psychological damages, economic loss or a noticeable deterioration of fundamental rights through actions or neglect contrary to a nation’s criminal legislation (United Nations, 1985, cited in Arifi, 2016: 496). This step acknowledged the millions of people who were suffering harm in quiet and recognised them as victims (Fattah, 2000a). In 2012, the EU took on the same definition of victim, but added in that a family member of a person who has been harmed at a severity to cause death by a criminal offence is also a victim (Arifi, 2016). As of 2015, each member state is to comply with Directive 2012/29/EU and from 2017 onwards of every three years, must report to the Commission on how victims of crime have accessed their rights (Bard & Borbiro, 2015), influencing the Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2017 in Ireland (Government of Ireland, 2017). In Ireland, the court acts with the Adversarial System. For a victim this means they are a witness. With the inclusion of this directive, the role and importance of the victim is not minimised (Arifi, 2016).

In Western society and many other places worldwide, the label ‘victim’ is looked down on (Fohring, 2018). Those labelled must deal with the negative stigmatisation, and in some

cases prosecution, that comes with it (Fohring, 2018). An individual may only be labelled as a ‘victim’ and access services if they are deemed worthy by the subjective society, relating to aspects such as both demographic and structural variables, as well as if they have the innocence that revolves around the label (van Wijk, 2013; Long, 2021). When a person is put in a situation that may put them in danger, socially or physically, it is understandable why they may not come forward – protecting themselves from a traumatic situation (Neimeyer et al., 2002; Fohring, 2018).

### **The Ideal Victim, and not so Ideal**

Niles Christie’s theoretical framework of an ‘ideal victim’ has been a staple in many studies on understanding the global perspective on victims (van Wijk, 2013). The six characteristics of an ‘ideal victim’ are known as: being a weak individual, involved with a worthy cause, has no reason to be blamed, has been harmed by a cruel person(s), even more so when the individual(s) who have harmed the person are unable to be identified, and has contributed positively enough to society to be worthy of the label (van Wijk, 2013; Long, 2021; Lewis et al., 2021). This suggests that people use moral judgement in order to evaluate the worthiness an individual has in being labelled a victim (Jankowitz, 2018; Lewis et al., 2021). An example Christie gave is based on a rape victim. If an individual is raped by a person unknown to them on their way home from visiting sick relatives, they are more deserving of the title ‘victim’ than an individual who had the same experience with their spouse (Lewis et al., 2021). Women, as more risk-prone victims, are at the centre of this concept (Long, 2021). In modern times, this and the little old lady theory of ideal victims appears further from reality, where victims are more frequently young and male rather than old and female, and know the offender (Fohring, 2018).

Unfortunately, most victims are considered non-ideal (Christie, 1986, cited in Long, 2021) and, therefore, considered non-deserving (Gekoski et al., 2012). In being considered a non-ideal victim, the individual is considered more deserving of harm (Jankowitz, 2018). Men, unlike the risk-prone women, are risk-free and fall under the label of non-ideal victim (Long, 2021). The image of an ideal and non-ideal victim being similar to the good guy and bad guy image excludes the lesser individual from receiving the same, deserving care (Jankowitz, 2018). There is not a large amount of research relating to the impact on labelling an individual as a victim (Fohring, 2018), and Christie’s theoretical concept was not backed up empirically



(van Wijk, 2013; Lewis et al., 2021). While not being empirically backed up, it serves as a tool in understanding society.

### **Language surrounding the Victim**

The word ‘victim’ originally comes from the title given to Jesus Christ translating to a sacrificial animal (Galona, 2018). In being translated to a word for someone who has suffered at the hands of crime (van Dijk, 2019), it may suggest the negative connotations to being identified as a victim. The word stigma, originating from the Greek language, relates to negative aspects about a person’s moral status (Pollock et al., 2019). This negative association of stigma, especially when paired with the victim label, is another reason why individuals have pessimistic views in having their experience labelled (van Dijk, 2009; Fohring, 2018).

The themes of weakness, vulnerability, powerlessness, the need to distinguish between a victim and non-victim, and the fluidity of victimisation all relate to people’s perceptions of their victimhood (Fohring, 2018). It is paired with socially disadvantaged individuals who are powerless and have a lack of support (Link & Phelan, 2006; Hope, 2012). This response to the word ‘victim’ shows the negativity attached to it and how individuals find the label undesirable (Jankowitz, 2018). In an attempt to avoid the label, some may not report the crime to protect themselves from the stigma that is attached (Christie, 1977; Sable et al., 2006; Fohring, 2018). The examination of how victims identify themselves shows a disconnect between themselves and the crime that harmed them while still acknowledging the action was illegal but not their victimisation (Fohring, 2018).

Society’s reaction to the label ‘victim’ is similar to what has been shared above regarding to Christie’s theoretical framework. They view the victim as weak, helpless, vulnerable, and innocent (van Dijk, 2020; Lewis et al., 2021). When a victim shares characteristic of the ideal, the public sympathises with the individual and shows compassion (Lewis et al., 2021). When an individual presents themselves as strong and independent, society views them as lesser of a victim and more deserving of the crime (van Dijk, 2009; Lewis et al., 2021). This is important regarding the subjectivity of victimisation because, if the victim is not considered ideal, they do not receive the same treatment and attention as a weak and powerless individual. Independent individuals, similar to all other characteristics of the ideal and non-ideal victim, can look different to everyone. This, therefore, is based off of subjectivity (Sinclair, 2020).

In a study used to understand the benefits of using linguistic analysis when examining the role of the victim, Lewis and colleagues looked into how moral values shaped the ideal victim construct (2021). This study based itself on Christie's characteristics of an ideal victim and analysed how ordinary individual's language revolving around a victim shows consistency with the theoretical framework. Using common language, participants were asked to describe a worthy or non-worthy victim, and their answers were analysed. They found that, out of four hundred and thirty-five participants, an average of twelve words were used to describe a worthy victim. These words include hurt, innocent, harmed, taken, abused, injured, scared, violated, helpless, and pain. Regarding a non-worthy victim, people used the words such as liar, wrong, fake, not innocent, person, false, attention seeking, illegal, unfair, and crime. Overall, while Christie's framework did not have empirical evidence to back it up, this study shows that people's perceptions of victims is consistent with the ideal victim construct. A person's morals can be related to how they perceive a worthy and not-so-worthy victim of crime (Graham et al., 2009).

Words used to describe individuals as worthy victims or non-worthy has been shown to be based off of an individual's moral judgement. It can be assumed that in differing parts of the world, people have different moral judgements. If this is the case, and people base their idea of an ideal victim off of this judgement, their idea of victims and their victimisation is subjective.

### **V-PP Framework**

The V-PP framework enables us to understand the differing perceptions of victim and perpetrator intergroup conflicts (Jankowitz, 2018). It answers how and why these groups go to great lengths in order to maintain their victim status (Jankowitz, 2018), similar to both the multiple victimhood theory, discussing how people can be labelled both the victim and perpetrator through conflict (Brewer, 2010), and the double victim syndrome, describing how the identification of the self as a victim disregards their own violence and disallows the victimhood of the outgroup (Oberschall, 2007). During times of conflict, both sides of groups fighting against each other believe that they truly are the victim (Bar-Tal et al., 2009). In denying the outgroup their status of victim, they deny the possibility of them experiencing harm (Jankowitz, 2018). The exclusion of the outgroup as victims' halts processes of transitional justice and peace processes, stripping people of their fundamental rights to access specific needs (Jankowitz, 2018). The V-PP framework uses theories relating to victimhood and the

psychology of intergroup relationships (Jankowitz, 2018). Intergroup conflicts occurs simply because an individual identifies as one group instead of another (Brewer, 2010). This relates to the subjectivity of victimisation of those in Northern Ireland, following Acts aiming for justice.

Having an image of the ideal victim is important in the V-PP framework, and, more often than not, autonomous (Jankowitz, 2018). These different groups do not usually appear distributed among different populations, but often times is shown in areas where people share many similarities (Posick, 2013). Many of those looking to be identified as victims during times of conflict will use the vagueness of Christie's theoretical framework to relate their experiences to victimisation and deny the outgroup any representation other than the perpetrator (Jankowitz, 2018). Many ingroups will use their victimisation as a shield to deny their wrongdoing in acting violently towards the outgroup and excuse it for self-defence, and any acts against them are seen as unjust (Fattah, 2000b; Smyth, 2006). This devaluation of the outgroup desensitizes the ingroup from further violent actions against those opposing them as it is in the name of safety (Fattah, 2000b). We will delve into this further when discussing the case study on Northern Ireland during the Troubles. Based off of what has previously been discussed in this dissertation, the label an individual forces on themselves or others is powerful and can make others vulnerable (Fohring, 2018).

### **Vulnerable Communities**

“Collective fear stimulates herd instinct and tends to produce ferocity toward those who are not regarded as members of the herd” (Russell; 1995: 121, cited in Appleby, 2010:421). Minority groups are most likely to experience this process of negative labelling (Crossley, 2015; Bernburg, 2019). This separation creates an invisible barrier that defines them from the other (Simmons, 1965). This barrier is defined through stereotypes of characteristics that are not associated with people who do not identify with these labels (Bernburg, 2019). These characteristics are not so much defined by the actions of the individual but, suggested by Becker (1973, cited in Appleby 2010), by rules which have been set up socially in order to create a form of exclusion. The overall meaning of this is that an individual does not have to break rules to be considered deviant or have to have experienced a crime to be a victim, as it is decided by the larger community who initially created the rules (Appleby, 2010; Lewis et al., 2021). These attitudes posed towards the labelled individuals will shape how they define themselves as people and can lower their self-esteem (Kaplan & Johnson, 1991). This also automatically

encourages a loss in status and overall discrimination as they are not the same as the other (Bernburg, 2019; Deakin et al., 2022). In redefining these individuals negatively, this stigmatisation has the ability to leave a snowball effect, which can impact the individual longer than they are discriminated against (Bernburg, 2019). This could permanently change who they once were before being labelled to who they are afterwards (Krohn & Lopes, 2015).

The rejection felt by this separation could force individuals to withdraw from society (Bernburg, 2019). Feelings of alienation and marginalisation has been noted to make young individuals experience different emotions such as anger, resistance, and empathy (Deakin et al., 2022). The stigma created by labelling an individual leads to the production of social inequality (Tyler & Slater, 2018), and an immense feeling of injustice not only regarding the other communities, but also the criminal justice system (CJS) (Deakin et al., 2022). In the event that a young person is arrested it was reported that, if the school and local community was not informed, there would be minimal to no impact on the youth's life, but if the school and community were informed it could create negative reactions towards the young person (Bernburg, 2019). These spectators were noted to raise the likelihood of the individual dropping out of education (Bernburg, 2002; Bernburg 2019). Individuals being labelled fall victim to these social standards that are set in order to create an 'other', such as stated above. The feeling of alienation, low self-esteem, marginalisation and an experience of injustice from the justice system are some of the many ways in which this labelled individual is separated from community to community.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, labelling has the power to determine the treatment of an individual in society. The theory of labelling has been supported throughout this section Lewis and colleagues' (2021) study supports Christie's ideal victim framework, suggesting a victim must appear weak and helpless in order to be worthy of the label. It also supports the characteristics of a non-ideal victim being labelled as a liar and not innocent, suggesting the deviant label. In understanding the ingroup versus outgroup conflict with the V-PP framework, we can determine how and why individuals justify their victimhood and their violent actions, which are not deemed as such to them but as protection. In suggesting one community is deemed less deserving of the victim label, it puts them in a position of vulnerability. This vulnerability can be followed by injustice which may lead to anger. This anger can develop into further deviance,

causing the individual or community to take on the label of deviant. The subjectivity of the ideal and non-ideal victim, as well as being labelled deviant shows how different communities have specific opinions about victimisation. It is not, and has never, been straightforward.

## **Chapter Four: Case Study - The Victims of The Troubles**

### **Events leading up to Bloody Sunday:**

Society can give thanks to history for the ability to create and relive the collective memory or trauma of an event (Butler, 2021). The town known as Doire, later changed to the English version 'Derry', was exploited and used for the plantation of UK settlers (Dawson, 2005). Being financed by The City of London Corporation, it explains the name given 'Londonderry' (Dawson, 2005). For this dissertation, we will refer to this city as Derry. Outside the walled city was an area known as the Bogside (Abdelmonem & Selim, 2019). Catholics in this area, while being of majority, faced discrimination from equality regarding housing, local authority franchise, and job opportunities compared to the Protestants (Conway, 2003; Dawson, 2005). This led the Catholic population to feel hopeless, trapped in a county run by enemies (Farrell, 1976; Dawson, 2005.). While the Catholics felt discriminated against, the Protestants also felt separated from The Irish Free State due to the religious disagreements (Conway, 2003). Both communities felt discriminated against.

The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Movement 1968 which campaigned for equality between the two communities was met with violence (Ó Dochartaigh, 2010). Responding to the brutality used against them, the Bogside was declared a no-go zone for the police, which became known as Free Derry (Conway, 2003; Dawson, 2005). The Battle of the Bogside is worth a brief mention here as this dissertation does not facilitate the detail it might otherwise deserve. The police joined with loyalists to try and invade the Bogside, but the Republicans were able to defend their area during the forty-eight-hour battle (Dawson, 2005). This resulted in the Catholic community being perceived as disloyal to the state, and this angered the Protestants (Conway, 2003).

Three years prior to the famous day known as Bloody Sunday, General Sir Harry Tuzo, sought to end 'routine military policing' (RMP) in a bid to end violence (Ó Dochartaigh, 2010). Frank Lagan, a local Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) district inspector, informed the British that the protest on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January was not going to march into the city but turn away at the barriers, upholding the laws (Ó Dochartaigh, 2010). Rather than listening to him, those in power disregarded his information (Ó Dochartaigh, 2010). A few weeks following the agreement of ending RMP, violence was slowly reintroduced (Ó Dochartaigh, 2010). It failed the attempt of bringing peace.

## **Bloody Sunday**

January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1972. A historic day for the island of Ireland. We mentioned The Battle of The Bogside previously, which took place mainly on Rossville Street. This is significant as it is where Bloody Sunday took place two and a half years later (Dawson, 2005). The Civil Rights march organised by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA), began peacefully (Butler, 2021). During this march against the policy of internment, thirteen protesters were shot dead in the Bogside by British Paratroopers and another fifteen were injured (Conway, 2003; Dawson, 2005; Ó Dochartaigh, 2010; Butler, 2021). Many of these Irish Nationalists injured or killed were unarmed (Conway, 2003), and shot by 1 Para, which was then considered to be one of the best trained units of the British Military (Dawson, 2005; Butler, 2021). Those in 1 Para were deployed to the Bogside in order to arrest people who were illegally protesting (Butler, 2021). This deployment ended up in a chase down Rossville Street, where communities became mixed and rioting broke out, causing the troopers to panic and view everyone as their enemy (Butler, 2021).

This day has been speculated as a politically motivated exercise to punish those who rioted against the crown (Ó Dochartaigh, 2010; Butler, 2021). This supports the deviance section of the literature review as, since they were going against the crown, they were also going against the normal behaviours of the Protestants, and this was viewed negatively. Whether it was politically motivated or not, the British Troopers were unable to handle the crowd in the Bogside and this is why they resorted to using force resulting in the death and harm of many (Ó Dochartaigh, 2010). The internal struggle to control the community of Catholics, which led to this massacre on the streets of Rossville, is suggested to have brought division in the political sphere in Northern Ireland (Ó Dochartaigh, 2010). There was a large amount of sympathy for the British soldiers among the unionist and loyalist communities over the victims of Bloody Sunday. The 1 Para unit insisted that they were fired on first and it was the reason they retaliated (Ó Dochartaigh, 2010). This cannot be proven. It is argued that, if the soldiers did not have a choice in their deployment on Bloody Sunday, are they really to blame for the death and harm of so many people (Ó Dochartaigh, 2010), supporting the section about V-PP framework in the literature review. It supports this section as it takes the victimisation away from those who were harmed by the soldiers. This shows the importance of the need for truth inquiries to assess all aspects of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. It also shows the importance of the subjectivity of victimisation, how there are different opinions of what

happened and who is at fault. The events of Bloody Sunday received negative reactions internationally and forced the British to hold a Tribunal Inquiry (Conway, 2003).

### **Inquiring about The Past**

Following the events of Bloody Sunday, papers were quick to publish their opinions of what occurred (Ganderup, 2010). Two of the major opinions at the time were of the British Army and the Catholic Citizens (Ganderup, 2010). Those on the side of the British Army were quick to circulate their memory of events to the American media, reiterating that out of those killed were wanted individuals (Ganderup, 2010). This can be related to the media section of the literature review based on news outlets producing an article that is seen as newsworthy due to the impact it has on the North. It can also be related to MP as it was threatening to people's lives. The conflicting memories led to distrust between the Catholics and British Army, where some believed that the violence used against the state was justified and that they were being withheld from peacefully protesting their rights, while others heavily disagreed (Hegarty, 2002; Barcat, 2014). The dangers of these published mixed opinions lead to a "pitched battlefield of opposing ideologies, more divisive and triumphal than healing and celebratory" (Ganderup, 2010:4). To this day, Bloody Sunday has suffered controversial opinions (Barcat, 2014), many of these opinions questioning the true victims and perpetrators, even though the Saville inquiry made it clear that innocent people were injured and killed. This dissertation believes this shows an importance in the ways the media and state can influence a community's opinion on victimisation, as well as how the media can interpret people's memories based on their political agenda.

### **Importance of Inquiries**

Inquiries are an important process in many countries when it comes to truth seeking. They are ways for people to take accountability for events that have occurred and shows a person's truth being acknowledged (Hegarty, 2002). They also aid in the acknowledgement of Human Rights abuses and misuse of laws (Van Noorloos, 2021). Like victimisation, truth is difficult to determine philosophically and realistically (Hegarty, 2002; Nally, 2023). Out of all of the inquiries into Bloody Sunday, this dissertation will now look at The Widgery Inquiry and The Saville Inquiry, understanding the importance of these documents and also their pitfalls.



## **The Widgery Inquiry**

The Widgery Inquiry, also known as “the Report of the Tribunal appointed to inquire into the events on Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> January 1972, which led to the loss of life in connection with the procession in Londonderry on that day, was set up following the events that took place on Bloody Sunday” (Walsh & Walsh, 2000; Ganderup, 2010: 1; Aiken, 2015). It followed the rules of the British Tribunals of Inquiry (Evidence) Act 1921. In this regard, the inquiry was to conclude facts about Bloody Sunday that told the truth of the events that unfolded (Ganderup, 2010). Unfortunately, this inquiry did not impress the victims’ families and concern spread (Barcat, 2014). Similarly to media reports, as inquiries are used in order to find the truth about what happened, it can be suggested that the Widgery inquiry used the same methods when reporting it’s believed truth. The report was later dismissed by many as they were concerned it was published in order to control the memories for possible political reasoning (Ganderup, 2010; Hamourtziadou & O’Sullivan, 2021). It focused on the actions of those there on the day and not the political lead up (Ó Dochartaigh, 2010). It was branded a whitewash document by Nationalists with an aim to protect those at fault and forget those victimised (Hegarty, 2002; Kelly, 2009; Ganderup, 2010; Barcat, 2014; McEvoy et al., 2020). V-PP framework is seen in this situation as the Catholic community were not believed to be victims and therefore not allowed to feel victimised. It refused the suggested violence of the British during this time. This reflected the power that the British had over communities such as the Catholics and how they could determine the needs and interests of those in Northern Ireland (Conway, 2003).

While this report appeared to many as pro-British (Aiken, 2015), it did not condone the actions of the British army as much as people say (Ganderup, 2010). This suggests it was not as biased as believed by some. The report suggests how deaths could have been avoided if the soldiers were more cautious in their arrests (Widgery, 1972). Widgery does not solely blame the nationalists in this report. The report also goes on to criticise some of the soldier’s lack of control during Bloody Sunday, such as how there were shots fired without justification (Ganderup, 2010). Majority of those in Northern Ireland and the UK believed the Widgery Inquiry to be completely truthful and fair, which can be an indicator as to why it is accused of being partly to blame of the acceleration of the Troubles following its publication (Hegarty, 2002). This occurs when people use heuristic processing which can lead to a bias in views about an event, such as what is discussed in the perception section of the literature review. While the report did not look to create a divide in society, many of the Catholics in Northern Ireland felt as though they were revictimised by this report and that it did not show the full

truth, leading to a feeling of a sense of injustice and alienation from the State (Hegarty, 2002). It displayed the culture of protection for loyalists and military fighting against the republicans, denying them justice and facilitating the V-PP framework for those not on the republican side (Butler, 2021).

### **The Saville Inquiry**

After the backlash of the Widgery Inquiry and an ongoing campaign for justice by families of the victims of Bloody Sunday, in 1998 the Saville Inquiry began and lasted twelve years, until 2010 (Barcat, 2014). This inquiry reexamined the events of Bloody Sunday in a new light (Lundy & McGovern, 2008). Some say it was created to replace the failed Widgery Inquiry and offer a sense of justice to all victims and their family members (Hegarty, 2002). In contrast to the Widgery Inquiry, the Saville Inquiry had a lot of critics from the British side, some going as far as to suggest this new inquiry was appealing to the Irish Republican Army (IRA) (Hegarty, 2002). Those on the unionist side found it hard to believe that republicans were also victims during the Troubles, which is an aspect of the V-PP framework. While this inquiry had to reconstruct the timeline reported in the Widgery Report, it was not the aim to analyse it and, instead, focus on getting the truth about what happened on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January 1972. The Saville Inquiry had to battle the limitations of anonymity and national security which minimised the level of information that it could receive (Hegarty, 2002). One aspect of importance in this inquiry is the use of photography as evidence, which was not viewed on as favourably in the Widgery Inquiry.

Photographs aided the reconstruction of the truth in the Saville Inquiry (Barcat, 2014). As this Inquiry begun research approximately thirty years after Bloody Sunday, the difficulty in trusting eyewitness accounts to remain fresh can be understood. The incorporation of photographs with these eyewitness accounts aids in the memory recall of the individual giving evidence of the day (Barcat, 2014), which will be further looked on below regarding media representation. This visual aid assists the witness in location orientation (Barcat, 2014). As suggested previously, there should be room for caution for this in that photographs can be manipulated. It is of interest to make sure these photos are authentic and show a clear story. If the photograph is the original, it can show what is truly being represented, such as telling the time on the Guildhall Clock in figure 2, shown further below. The use of photographs, while

controversial, appears to aid in sharing individual truths of victimisation experienced on both sides of the struggle.

### **Comparing Widgery and Saville.**

While this dissertation has looked mainly on the negative impact of the Widgery Inquiry, that is not to say nothing positive came from it. The negative response from family members of victims of Bloody Sunday created new ways to show remembrance and to share their truth (Hegarty, 2002). Human rights abuses were sidelined in the Widgery Inquiry and the victims did not stand for their experiences to be forgotten about because the inquiry did not see the evidence as fitting (Hegarty, 2002). Regarding the Saville Inquiry, it was viewed as more positive in regard to respecting individual's human rights (Barcat, 2014). It took truth finding and included more than just factual, but also emotional evidence through giving recognition to traumatic evidence submitted (Barcat, 2014). Unfortunately for both Inquiries, they were not fully independent and were, in some way, tied to the government (Hegarty, 2002; Ganderup, 2010). According to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), an inquiry such as these two should be completely independent from the state in order for maximum accountability and in compliance with Article Two of the ECHR – the right to life (Chevalier-Watts, 2010). For an inquiry, as well as an investigation, to be independent it means that all of those who harmed another will be culpable (McEvoy et al., 2020). Positively, Lord Robin Eames, co-chair of the Eames-Bradley Report, told the media that the Saville Inquiry encouraged a new way of thinking into the past and mending bonds (Rowan, 2010). This positive feedback showed that it is possible to hold a truth inquiry, getting it right is the hard part.

### **Media Representation**

Media representation of communities have been known to make an impact on the perceptions of their readers/viewers, creating opinions on news worthiness and MP. This has led to a cohort of people feeling mistrust in the state, while reports from amateur individuals relating back to eyewitness accounts and personal photographs are less likely to manipulate their ideas of what happened (Barcat, 2014).

Media reports can side specifically with one community over the other. While the British government and their army had many supporters, Catholics in Northern Ireland also had individuals around the world supporting their work and empathising with them (Ganderup, 2010). Along with publications such as the Socialist Worker's Party, those in the Republic of Ireland showed empathy towards them (Ganderup, 2010). The British government were quick to release their version of events to the media, while civilians of Derry along with eyewitnesses of this day reported a different timeline of events, where the British were first to open fire (Hegarty, 2002). Following the release of the Widgery Inquiry, the *Sunday Times* released their own report, they contradicted each other as the *Sunday Times* concluded that there was enough evidence to suggest that the British made the decision to put civilians in harm's way when they attacked the march on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January (Mullin, 2000). This shows how they both had conflicting opinions on what was considered newsworthy when reporting on what happened during Bloody Sunday. As the Catholic's collective memory differed from the reports of the British, there grew an overarching level of scepticism of published documents by them (Ganderup, 2010). Due to the controversy of what happened on this day, inquiries were held to identify the true victims and perpetrators of Bloody Sunday.

Memory plays a particularly important role in how to determine an individual to be a victim or perpetrator (Ko & Park, 2020). Referring to The Troubles, communities all over Northern Ireland have fallen victim to "memory wars" (McBride, 2017: 11). While an individual has their own interpretation of what happened, what can be seen in Northern Ireland is that communities with collective memory often times influence these individuals, shaping their previous knowledge to the beliefs of those around them (Barcat, 2014).

Along with the influence of a community, the language used by newspapers and official documents have the ability to shape an individual's memory, and therefore their perception of victimisation. The Mirror, read by predominantly English people, published an article that, of those killed on Bloody Sunday, four had been on the list of wanted men in relation to the IRA and how often times the army did not return fire (Ganderup, 2010). This supports the claim of moral panic being used again in British media to paint the republicans in a bad light. The failure to mention the victims of the army overrides their victimisation as it does not recognise them. Instead of being recognised as victims of the British Army, the Catholics of Northern Ireland are given negative references in published documents such as the Widgery Inquiry, where they are referred to as terrorists twice, rioters thirteen times, and hooligans no less than nineteen times in the Tribunal, as well as five other times in another article, both written by Lord

Widgery (Widgery & Dash, 1980; Ganderup, 2010), ultimately labelling them as deviant. Referencing the Catholics as hooligans connects them to negative perceptions such as thugs who create trouble for those around them. One of the Widgery Inquiries biggest faults was the constant shift from natural tones to more negative phrases (Ganderup, 2010). As learned from LT, this minority community, once labelled in these deviant terms, are more likely to have prejudice experiences (Bernburg, 2019). Others have used terms relating to Bloody Sunday such as “Wholesale Slaughter” and “Awful Slaughter” referring to those innocent individuals who were killed at the hands of the British Army (Ganderup, 2010: 5). *The New York Times* and *the Irish Independent Supplement Paper* used languages that blamed the British army, putting them at fault for the death of these individuals, honing in on the brutality through the use of the word “slaughter” as opposed to saying lives were lost, or how *The Mirror* only focused on the death of four IRA men. Different forms of news coverage allow newspapers and official documents to use more than language in order to mould and have an overall influence on people’s memories and therefore their perception of victimisation, this includes media such as photographs.

Photographs are an important part of the media, as well as to how people interpret events so much so that they base their opinions often on the quick snapshot of an image (Barcat, 2014; Denovan et al., 2017). Images used to follow Bloody Sunday can be found to have an emotional impact on viewers (Barcat, 2014). A famous photograph to exist of The Troubles in Northern Ireland was taken by Fulvio Grimaldi (Figure 1). Father Edward Daly (Catholic) is shown guiding a group of individuals to safety as they carried the body of Jackie Duddy (Dawson, 2005; Barcat, 2014). What is important about this image compared to others is the white handkerchief that Father Daly is waving in the air to signal to the British Paratroopers to end their firing at them (Barcat, 2014). The white napkin in this photo symbolises the peace of these individuals as they search for safety as well as their sense of community and courage as they risk their lives for the protection of Duddy. It can be suggested this was not included in the Widgery report as it painted the republicans and Northern Irish people as something they were not, victims.



*Figure 1: Father Daly leading boys while waving white handkerchief, photographed by Grimaldi (Barcat, 2014).*

Along with emotional attachment to photographs, they can also aid in memory recall for witnesses. They can be used to build a chronological order of events if showing types of timestamps such as a clock in the background (Cooper et al., 2005; Barcat, 2014). Following Bloody Sunday, this exact method was used in order to determine what time the soldiers entered the Bogside; the Guildhall clock showed approximately 16:10 (Figure 2). The pairing of photographs along with individual's eyewitness accounts can be suggested to assist in discovering the true events of The Troubles, more specifically during the 1970's Bloody Sunday. Unfortunately, not all agree on the use of photographs in reliably recalling the past.



*Figure 2: The Guildhall clock, photographed by Grimaldi (The National Archives, 2010a).*

Referencing the inquiries, photographers were not well appreciated by those who were in charge of these published pieces looking into what happened in Northern Ireland (Barcat, 2014). The British did not welcome many of these photographs as they often painted them in a negative light (Barcat, 2014). This shows their belief that they are the true victims, and they do not want to allow for the republicans to be viewed as victims too. Some have published articles

about missing photos of British army members, which are believed to have been destroyed following the Widgery Inquiry (Rolston & Gilmartin, 2000). It is possible these destroyed photos could have made an impact on further inquiries, such as the Saville inquiry, and could have suggested different outcomes compared to what Widgery concluded. The emotional impact they conveyed is unable to be determined, but this dissertation suggests that they would have shown similar significance in understanding a timeline of events as the two photographs previously displayed. While original photos are able to hold the truth, there should always be room for error of judgement. The manipulation of photographs can come as individuals try to push their beliefs of what happened and who was truly victimised during this time (Barcat, 2014). An example of this manipulation of photographs is the photo taken by the RUC. Gerald Donaghey was photographed, deceased, by a member of the RUC with nail bombs in his pocket (Barcat, 2014). It can be proposed this was a scare tactic, aiming for MP, along with further manipulating of the story to side with the British rather than Catholic Northern Irish individuals. Others have testified that, while with and tending to Donaghey, he did not possess these bombs, and it is suggested they were planted by the army (Barcat, 2014). This further proves that photographs can be manipulated by the photographer to further fuel an agenda.

Figures 3, 4, and 5 all show a quick moving sequence of photographs taken by Doyle and used in the Saville Inquiry. These photos are yet another example of how interpretation is important when determining the events that occurred. The Saville Inquiry stated, “although it was submitted that the photographs show unjustified violent assaults by soldiers... we are not persuaded that they do so” (Barcat, 2014). In fact, Doyle testified violent actions from the soldier in the Widgery report, but in the Saville Inquiry he was unsure what these sequences of photos proved (Barcat, 2014). Overall, it can be proposed that photographs do not show conclusive evidence of events and should not be used in order to decide what group of individuals were victimised during The Troubles of Northern Ireland as it can be subjective to the individual viewing it.



*Figure 3: riot during Bloody Sunday, photographed by Doyle (The National Archives 2010b).*



*Figure 4: riot during Bloody Sunday, photographed by Doyle (The National Archives 2010b).*



*Figure 5: riot during Bloody Sunday, photographed by Doyle (The National Archives 2010b).*

### **Eames Bradley Report:**

The Eames Bradley Consultative Group on the Past was announced in 2007 with the intention of being an independent consultant group with the task of finding the best way possible to resolve the problems of the past between the Republican and Unionist communities



in Northern Ireland (Barber, 2009; Lundy & McGovern, 2008). While this group aimed for the best resolution for all of Northern Ireland, it was founded during a time of “social dislocation, fragmentation and ultimately the sectarian divide between the two main communities” (Duffy, 2010: 27). When the report was finally published on the twenty-eight of January 2008, people found it grouped the two communities together (Barber, 2009; Lynch & Argomaniz, 2017). There are many negative associations with this report. Due to the lack of background documentation used during this report, it is difficult to get a full and honest representation of what was discovered during their investigation which led to their list of over thirty recommendations (Barbar, 2007; Moriarty, 2010; Hancock, 2012). This resulted in clashes as to who the actual victims of the Troubles were (Lynch & Argomaniz, 2017).

The recommendations were aimed at peace and stability, beginning with the establishing of a five-year Legacy Commission, with a bursary of one-hundred million pounds responsible for reconciliation, justice, and recovering information (Barber, 2009; Rowan, 2010). With a proposed budget for bursaries (Moriarty, 2010), its four stages were to be addressing social issues following the conflict and administering funds were needed, review historical cases which ended in death, finish investigation and provide families with closure, and examining recurring themes from the cases during the conflict (Rowan, 2010). The main focus revolved around the psychological needs of victims and survivors (Barber, 2009). It suggested the setup of a Reconciliation Forum to aid in the Commission’s aims, as well as asking for cooperation from the Commission for Victims and Survivors of Northern Ireland (Rowan, 2010). While many of the suggestions were aimed at reconciliation, the true meaning of the Report was put in question. What stunned many people was how this report, while advocating for reconciliation and accountability, suggested the conclusion of any further inquiries into The Troubles, and a one-time payment of twelve thousand pounds would be made to all families who were affected and lost someone (Rowman, 2010, Sloan; 2010; Simpson, 2013; Preston, 2024). The one-off payment was to be paid to an individual who was the nearest relative to a victim who died at the hands of The Troubles, no matter who the person was (Barber, 2009). This put all individuals into the one category, and it was not a popular suggestion with the public (Barber, 2009; Sloan, 2010). This especially angered Unionists who felt victims in their community were receiving the same treatment as perpetrators from paramilitary groups (Simpson, 2013), suggesting a possible hierarchy of victimisation depending on the community.

Eleven months after the report was published, the Democratic Unionist Party released a detailed document which rejected the recommendations suggested (Simpson, 2013). This rejection was shortly followed by a consultation resulting in over 170 rejections from parties across Ireland, Northern Ireland, and England (Preston, 2024). While it was reported that those interviewed during the process of this report were listened to and aided in the overall structure, there is no qualitative or quantitative data to suggest that they made a true impact in shaping it (Duffy, 2010; Hancock, 2012). This proves problematic in providing credible references, which also limits the trustworthiness of the report (Duffy, 2010). Fairness is a large factor of trustworthiness, so if individuals found the suggestions to reflect the tragedies their families experienced, it can be suggested there would be more trust in this report (Tyler, 2000). It was looked at as a payment for terrorists and their families, making little of the victims who lost family members living their day-to-day lives (BBC, 2009; McAdam & Harrison, 2009; Preston, 2024). This suggested payment goes against the communities V-PP framework where they believe out of the two groups, only one can be a victim, and that is the ingroup. The comparison of perpetrators and victims being referenced as equals was viewed as a collapse of morals and an insult to those who were harmed. The then President of Sinn Féin, Gerry Adams, reacted to the entire report with concern (BBC, 2009). He recommended an International Commission, not conducted by the government, as a way to ensure adequate addressing of the issues that occurred (BBC, 2009, Rowan, 2010).

Being silenced is a reoccurring theme felt by individuals within this study. This can be identified through their uncertainty of what would happen if the once-off payment went to lesser deserving victims (Preston, 2024), as well as the overwhelming lack of representation felt on both sides of the communities (Lynch and Argomaniz, 2017). The victims of The Troubles noted the feeling of underrepresentation as, while the harrowing event is identified and discussed locally, it is not noticed of significance nationally (Lynch and Argomaniz, 2017). Within the conflicts of Northern Ireland, there is a clear hierarchy of victimisation that is related to the individual's political views; if an individual is killed by paramilitaries, then they are the victims and if they are on the side of the republic killed to benefit the unionist side, then that individual is not deserving of sympathy (BBC, 2009; Duffy, 2010; Preston, 2024). This is one way that those in the north decide who to label and what to label them as. Those within the community of the Republicans feel the struggles of the IRA against the British was not a choice but a necessity due to the lack of co-operation by the British (Ó Dochartaigh, 2015), which was not seen as deviant to the republican communities, resulting in a violation of Article Two of the

ECHR (Duffy, 2010). These negative reactions from the communities are why the parties rejected the report, but in the years following, some of the suggestions have found their way back into Northern Ireland through the Legacy Act, discussed further on.

## **Good Friday Agreement**

### **Pre and Post-Agreement**

Before the GFA, there are two significant agreements to look into during the peace process. The Sunningdale Agreement, signed December 1973, aimed for a “cross-border Council of Ireland and a power-sharing Northern Ireland Assembly” (Gillespie, 1998; Tannam, 2001: 497). People questioned what it meant about the control Ireland would have in the north, as well as the role the RUC would have (Tannam, 2001). With a Council of Ministers comprised of seven individuals from the Republic of Ireland and another seven from Northern Ireland, the agreement came that they would oversee security, agriculture, tourism, and other financial industries, while also facilitating for cross-border cooperation (Tannam, 2001). It was agreed that, without a majority vote from Northern Ireland, its status remained in the UK (Tannam, 2001). Within a year the agreement failed (Kyle, 1975; Tannam, 2001; Swift, 2020). Although it failed, it did encourage people to look for solutions to the conflict (Tannam, 2001). In looking for a resolution, The Anglo-Irish Agreement was signed in 1985 (McEovy et al., 2019). It looked into the possibilities of cross-border cooperation, amending articles two and three of the Irish Constitution, and for better policing and security within Northern Ireland (Tannam, 2001). It became evident that a main negotiation of an agreement centred around changing the constitution.

The peace process led to the signing of the GFA in April 1998 (Barbar, 2009), while paving the way for change in Ireland, the UK, and Northern Ireland and ending nearly thirty years of conflict (Tannam, 2001; Montgomery, 2021; Morrison; 2024). This final agreement looked for purposeful roles for north and south boarder council members, what powers these council members would have, and what actions must have been taken before Sinn Féin could contribute to constitutional change in Northern Ireland (Tannam, 2001; Montgomery, 2021). It replaced the Anglo-Irish Agreement, encouraged cross-border interaction, and agreed that the status of Northern Ireland remained up to the majority of those who resided there (Tannam, 2001; Montgomery, 2021). If the population of Northern Ireland is to come to a majority vote about changing from British rule to joining Ireland, legislation would be introduced to facilitate an amendment of the constitutional status of Northern Ireland (Tannam, 2001). Over twenty-

five years since the signing, it is still up for debate if the GFA brought peace or caused more sectarian governance (Nagle, 2018).

### **Aspects of the GFA**

The GFA brought for an end of direct rule from the UK in return for the decommissioning of paramilitary groups' weapons (Barbar, 2009). A large factor of this agreement relates to the needs of the victims of The Troubles (Lundy & McGovern, 2008; Lynch & Argomaniz, 2017). It established that victims deserved the right of remembering and discussed the need for addressing their suffering in order to facilitate for reconciliation (Lundy & McGovern, 2008). On top of this need for victim-centred processes, some parties had to go through internal changes relating to the GFA, a popular example of this is the rise of Sinn Féin (Nagle, 2018). While the GFA, in theory, expressed the need for victim-centred processes to mend relationships in Northern Ireland, Ireland, and England, there was an extreme lack of attention paid to the victims in reality (Lundy & McGovern, 2008). There was little to no reference covering the issues victims had or the possibility for a process focused on the past and on healing from it (Lundy & McGovern, 2008). Overall, there was a lack of referencing truth recovery for an agreement which claimed to be victim-centred (Lundy & McGovern, 2008). On a security level, it looked for a ceasefire of all armed groups (Deutsch, 2002). Unfortunately, it struggled here as tensions were still heightened (Deutsch, 2002).

A major problem following the signing of the GFA was the conflicting political ideologies. Communities in Northern Ireland remained deeply divided, where prejudice and social segregation ran high (Aiken, 2015). The British Government had to incorporate Human Rights laws from the European Convention into the laws of Northern Ireland (Tannam, 2001). This was based on the section in the agreement regarding the safeguarding and equality of opportunity (Tannam, 2001), attempting to defuse the conflict between communities. It was noted by McBride (2017), that while it brought the political class and working class together, memories of the IRA's campaign continued to facilitate hostility between republicans and unionists, and at the time of writing this dissertation (Summer 2024), it could be suggested there is still a sense of this between the Catholic and Protestant communities today. For example, there were eighteen peace-walls in Northern Ireland in the 1990s, which grew to over 80 in 2008 (McAttackney, 2011; Leonard & McKnight, 2011) and almost 100 in 2017 (Dixon et al., 2020). This suggests that the communities are still polarised.

### **Social Memory of the Troubles:**

We live in an age where memory is used to make sense of history where society comes to terms with their narrative (Lundy & McGovern, 2008). As said by Nora (1989: 7), “We speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left”. The events of Bloody Sunday are remembered two different ways, based on the two communities, one being called the official memory and the other being the folk memory (Conway, 2003). The growing attention Bloody Sunday receives reflects the ever-growing importance of understanding what happened that day (Conway, 2003), but also during the Troubles as a whole.

Individuals who were not there physically on the day of Bloody Sunday but observed through other news medias reported it being a critical moment in history, no matter the community (Conway, 2003). While both communities feel the sadness at the same level, they have different perspectives of what happened. Some feel the military killings were politically planned by the government, while others believe that the killings were undesired consequences based on confusion and anxiety (Ó Dochartaigh, 2010). It can be understood that both communities were influenced by different aspects of the troubles, and this explains why they grew to form different collective memories (Conway, 2003).

### **Generational Trauma:**

The traumatic experiences of the Troubles have been known to lead to unresolved psychological legacies, mainly based on the extreme violence used (Dawson, 2005). While it may have taken place in the past, people can still experience a range of reactions, such as emotional fluctuations, poor memory, and hallucinations (Dawson, 2005). Many victims recall traumatic memories, such as “on the day we knew real fear for the first time. When the bullets were fired, people dived to the ground and crawled away like dogs” (Dawson, 2005: 161). This comparison to dogs can be related to how they were made to feel lesser than humans. Another quote by a victim of the troubles stated, “The next morning there were groups of people standing around in Rossville Street, staring at the spot where it happened” (Dawson, 2005: 157). In these places where people live, their town became leached with trauma. Victims and family members of the Troubles have been noted to suffer from many psychological problems, such as depression and disturbances during sleeping, showing their suffering of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (McBride, 2017).

In a longitudinal study investigating the lived experiences of those who suffered from Bloody Sunday, as well as how it may impact more than just the individuals harmed through generational trauma (McGuigan & Shevlin, 2010). The impact of Event Scale-revised was used in this study on sixty-nine participants regarding PTSD, consisting of individuals who were wounded during this day, their immediate family members, their second-generation family members, and a comparison group for measures of validity of the study (McGuigan & Shevlin, 2010). This is a well-used way in order to measure PTSD and has been found to benefit research in other studies, validating its methods (Thoresen et al., 2010). According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Criteria A suggests that PTSD can only be experienced by an individual who has suffered directly from the event, but this study looks to prove these traumas can also be generational (American Psychiatric Association, 2000; McGuigan & Shevlin, 2010). Indirect exposure to these events can be suggested as relevant regarding the Troubles, but in this case, this study talks in relation to Bloody Sunday (Zimering et al., 2006). Following this study, all hypotheses suggest indirect exposure relating to high levels of PTSD to become prevalent in an individual were supported (McGuigan & Shevlin, 2010). This proves that those who experienced physical injuries during Bloody Sunday are not the only ones that should be considered as victims, but their family members and those generations who follow.

### **Controversy of the Legacy Act**

The Legacy Act, with the main objective of ending criminal investigations and hearings into the Troubles in Northern Ireland, was passed on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2023 (Northern Irish Human Rights Commission, 2023; Clenaghan, 2023; Duggan, 2024). The Legacy Act was accepted without the consultation or support of victims and their families, as well as all Northern Irish political parties (McAttackney, 2023; Duggan, 2024), and when informed they all opposed (Halpin, 2024). If an investigation did not pass the hearing stage by May 2023, it would not continue (Clenaghan, 2023). Such a large number of parties disagreeing to an Act is rarely seen and when it happens it stands out and should be a cause for concern around an Act such as this (Clenaghan, 2023). Others who opposed of this Act include Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights, the Oireachtas Committee on Implementation of the GFA, Amnesty International, and the Northern Irish Human Rights Commissioner (Duggan, 2024). Along with this list includes Mr Justice

Colton who suggested breaches against article two and three of the ECHR (Graham & McClements, 2024; O'Neill, 2024), and members of the PSNI voiced their concerns of victims needs not being reached in this Act (O'Neill, 2024), were criminal investigations, inquests and complains regarding the troubles are extremely limited (McAtackney, 2023). Given the concerns surrounding the human rights aspects of the Legacy Act (Clenaghan, 2023; Morgan, 2024), it can be suggested that victims still face discrimination in Northern Ireland and victimisation remains subjective to the state.

### **Human Rights Violation:**

The Legacy Act has faced large legal objections all over the north and south of Ireland, as well as from the UK from political parties and victim rights advocates (Holder, 2023). Volker Turk, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, expressed his concerns about The Legacy Act due to human rights violations, holding those who have been victimised during The Troubles back from seeking truth and justice (Holder, 2023). This Act attracted more attention than just within the European Union. The US Congress wrote to the British Prime Minister advocating for the rights of the victims, saying that the Act will negatively impact the peace and undermine the GFA (Fox, 2023). In limiting investigations and truth-seeking processes, they take away the right for the victim to seek reconciliation and allow criminals, be it “terrorists, police officers, soldiers, civilians or politicians”, to walk free (Lester & Llewelyn, 2022: para. 26).

### **Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR):**

The ICRIR, created by The Legacy Act, replaced previous mechanisms of criminal and civil investigations as well as inquiries that offered victims and their families of The Troubles justice (Clenaghan, 2023; Graham & McClements, 2024; O'Neill, 2024). The aim of the ICRIR is to assess deaths and other harmful activities that occurred during The Troubles and provide those who served during this time with the certainty they will not be prosecuted for their actions by ending investigations once the individual falls under the criteria set out (Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, 2022; Duggan, 2024). By ending investigations into The Troubles, it means all legal aid for victims and their families terminates (Duggan, 2024). This goes against The GFA (Duggan, 2024). The criteria an individual needs to fit in order to be granted immunity from investigation is vague and subjective (Clenaghan, 2023). The person must have requested immunity, the panel deciding the outcome agrees the individual is telling the truth,

and the panel believes that the content discussed would subject them to criminal investigation or prosecution in relation to The Troubles (Clenaghan, 2023). The panel is also not required to investigate further than the application to verify the individual's testimony (Clenaghan, 2023).

Those who do not cooperate with the ICRIR will not receive immunity and risk being prosecuted (Clenaghan, 2023). Another reason for an individual not to receive immunity from investigation and/or prosecution is that they have a previous conviction relating to The Troubles (Clenaghan, 2023). Twenty-five to thirty thousand republicans and loyalists were imprisoned during this time while minimal state actors received punishment (Clenaghan, 2023; Holder, 2024). It begs the question, why does one person's victimisation not equal another? With this in mind, people have blamed the British Government on protecting their soldiers whilst not considering the thousands of others effected (Quinn, 2024).

The ICRIR, promoting reconciliation, shields the British actors from accountability which is contradicting of its name (Ganghof, 2016; Lester & Llewelyn, 2022; Quinn, 2024). Academics have concluded that the ICRIR are unable to hold adequate investigations into The Troubles as their proposals go against academic ethics (McEvoy et al., 2020). After a five-year period, victims and their families will not be able to request investigations into any Troubles related inquiries they have as the UK will have implemented a de facto amnesty (Mallinder, 2019; Clenaghan, 2023). There is no evidence to support that the immunity of individuals and ceasing investigations will contribute to reconciliation in Northern Ireland (Graham & McClements, 2024). The only clear thing from the ending of investigations is that victims and their family members will not receive the truth and justice that is deserved.

### **Families:**

The Legacy Act has given the ICRIR the power to withhold from victims' information due to the aspect of immunity from investigation where the family is not informed if the individual who harmed them or a family member has received this privilege (Clenaghan, 2023; Duggan, 2024). The faith a community has in the state can only be minimal at best when they are kept in the dark during a time where accountability and recognition is necessary (Clenaghan, 2023). Therefore, it is understandable for victims to not want to come forward at all with information with the fear of being shut down. Those who have been harmed or family members who have lost someone due to the actions of the state are unable to seek justice and their needs are not being discussed in the UK government (Holder, 2023). These victims are experiencing breaches to their human rights under Article Two of the ECHR (Duggan, 2024).



They have the right to due process that makes certain their perpetrator receives justice (Duggan, 2024). This cannot happen when a government has granted these individuals immunity.

### **Conclusion:**

This case study began discussing the events leading up to Bloody Sunday. It noted the tension between the two communities in Northern Ireland. It then went on to discuss Bloody Sunday. It reflected on the hostility of the two communities against each other as well as how, with understanding the V-PP framework, they did not acknowledge their own violence and blamed one another.

MP pushed the British government to publish an inquiry into the truth of what happened during Bloody Sunday. These are important as seeking truth is to lead to acknowledgement and accountability. This led to the release of the Widgery Inquiry. Unfortunately, this landed on its face, receiving backlash. Following this, the Saville Inquiry was next published with hopes it would do the victims of the Troubles justice. This inquiry also received backlash, but from the opposing side. Both inquiries were believed to have chosen sides and inevitable, both were more-less disregarded to some extent by opposing communities.

This case study includes five figures. These images are important to the history of Northern Ireland. They aid history and collective memory more than through, for lack of a better word, storytelling. While these were noted to have aided memory recall, it was also suggested to be mindful when referring photographs from this time as they can be manipulated.

The Eames Bradley Report followed in similar lines to the inquiries regarding backlash. The main outrage revolved around the £12,000 once-off payment to any family who lost someone to the Troubles. The communities reminded the government their opinions about each other. As suggested in this section, some believed it would pay terrorists. Another problem people had with it was the suggestion of a conclusion of inquiries into the truth of the Troubles. Hosting inquiries appears to be the best way for victims of national terrorism to receive the acknowledgement they deserve and for the perpetrators to take accountability.

The GFA brought an end to direct rule from the British government to Northern Ireland. It also agreed that, if Northern Ireland was to become part of Ireland again, there would have to be a majority vote. Unfortunately, the Legacy Act went against many believes of the GFA.

Politicians, victims' rights advocates, and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission all agree that The Legacy Act should be reassessed and reshaped in line by following a victim-centred structure that protects the rights of all (Northern Ireland Rights Commission, 2022). This looks like meeting the needs of victims, survivors, and their family members (Northern Ireland Rights Commission, 2022). It also should promote the need for reconciliation, not just suggesting it in the name of the Act, and it should follow the rule of law, and any previous agreements set out before it's time (Northern Ireland Rights Commission, 2022; Clenaghan, 2023). Finding the truth in the Legacy Act is unrealistic as it looks to end accountability through ceasing all investigations from five years after ICRIR begins and offering immunity to those who offer their testimony and have not been convicted of a previous crime relating to the Troubles.

This relates to the subjectivity of victimisation for the treatment of individuals throughout this time. From what is noted above, the British Government valued their own soldiers and other state actors as victims and found ways to prevent them from being subject to investigation and prosecution. While these state actors were exempt from investigations, those who were part of the loyalist or republican groups were not granted the same immunity as majority of them had received previous convictions relating to the Troubles. The victims who have worked up the courage to call for an investigation will be unable to carry on with it if their perpetrator has received immunity. This does not respect the victim's rights and shows the state does not view them as deserving victims. This is seen through the treatment of these individuals where they are no longer allowed to seek truth and justice.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion**

### **Findings and Recommendations**

#### **Overview:**

This desk-based dissertation focused on the research question revolving around the subjectivity of victimisation and if it has an impact on how a victim and/or perpetrator is treated in society. The case study of Northern Ireland was used in order to localise the research question, as comparing other events in such a limited space was unrealistic. The Troubles in Northern Ireland has a wide variety of individuals who were victimised, which is why this case study was specifically chosen in order to discuss the subjectivity of their victimisation. In discussing the effects of different media, LT, and collective memory, this dissertation aimed to deliver an understanding of the subjectivity of victimisation to the reader in a clear manner.

#### **Media Affects:**

Galtung and Ruge's theory on the twelve aspects that make an event newsworthy has been found to correlate with the events of Bloody Sunday and how it was reported on by media and the government. This can be found through the impact it had on the communities of Northern Ireland, and how the north is still such a divided area. The events of The Troubles can be made personal, such as how Galtung and Ruge suggested an event can make an event newsworthy, along with the negativity that can be taken away. The events of The Troubles have been found to relate to both social significance and deviance which makes a situation newsworthy, as suggested by Shoemaker and Cohen. The eventual inclusion of photographs in the Saville inquiry became monumental as they were originally not used in the inquiry previous to it. These photographs used to aid in memory recall and telling significant moments, such as the time some of the images were taken during Bloody Sunday and what was occurring in the photographs, are important for newsworthiness as they are something people will pay attention to. This needs to be taken with precautions where individuals may not use the information of the photograph and do their own research. Some individuals only follow the news of specific papers relating to their own town, which is how misinformation can be spread. This spread of misinformation may lead to the mistreatment of other groups, such as what happened during Bloody Sunday on both sides and how they grew to form an ingroup and outgroup perspective. This has been found to evolve into mistrust of the state, such as what can be seen in the mistrust of the government by both sides following the Widgery and Saville Inquiry. Newsworthiness, in turn, instils MP.

MP has been found to form in stages of how it is represented in the media, the threat level, concern, reaction to the concern, and if there is a shift in the panic. This was found during The Troubles in many ways. The threat of the lives of individuals grew their concerns, growing the pace at which the government answered, resulting in inquiries that were rushed and poorly responded to. Another finding of this is the response to the Eames-Bradley Report, which grew public outrage. This was for two main reasons. It protected those in the government and offered a payment to families who some had prejudices against. The subjectivity of who deserves to be recognised as victims is a factor of MP As well as during The Troubles. The ingroup believing that the outgroup is getting undeserved recognition causes MP in their communities and has been found to cause more harm to already broken bonds, such as in Northern Ireland.

The words used in the inquiries, as well as how the communities reported on the events, shows the importance of language in these situations. Language has the ability to shape societies memory. Similar to how photos were used to discuss history of events, words in legal documents can be the same. The Northern Irish case study supported this hypothesis about language influencing the subjectivity of the perception of victimisation, particularly in traumatised communities. In order to minimise the victimisation of the Republicans, news articles focus on aspects that paint the British Army in a good light and justifying their violent actions on civilians, while pushing the importance of all the lives harmed and lost to the end of the hierarchy. This overrides the victimisation of people harmed, no matter the side they are on, and leads to further discrimination. It has been suggested in this dissertation that language shapes the construct of reality in relation of villainising and victimising individuals of crime. This finding has been supported by the above case study. The language used against the Catholics in Northern Ireland in the Widgery Inquiry has been found to replicate this form of enemy-construction by using the words terrorists, rioters, and hooligans in order to describe those advocating for their freedom. The negative connotations felt with these words being related to the Catholics in Northern Ireland revictimized them. It revictimized them as many experienced loss or harm during Bloody Sunday and after, where they fell victim to the neglect of the state for their people.

Visual forms of news coverage develop strong representational and emotional factors when it comes to mass events, such as The Troubles. While they hold strong values within communities, they are to be taken with caution. A reason for this is that the photos can be staged, such as what was found relating to a victim being posed after death with nail bombs in his pocket when witnesses said they were not on his body originally. Another example is the

sequenced photographs in the above case study. One could say they show a British soldier pushing an individual over, while another could say they ran into each other. The finding here is that photographs can be manipulated different ways depending on an individual's beliefs. The unwillingness to use photographs during the Widgery Inquiry has been suggested to be because of the poor light it paints of the British government and their soldiers. If photographs were used, it could be suggested that the negative words used, hooligans, terrorists, and rioters, would not have held their place. This is for reasons such that of the photo of Father Daly waving the white handkerchief, begging to cease fire as he led people who were carrying a young man to safety after being shot. If this photo was given the attention deserved in the Widgery Inquiry, the findings would have been different in the respect these individuals do not resemble the language used against them.

## **Memory**

Memory as a representation of history has not been researched in as much detail as of current but is becoming a popular topic. It relates to the subjectivity of a society's memory, how it impacts how a community feels they were impacted, and how they shape their precepted victimisation around it. As suggested above, how an individual perceives evidence, visual or verbal, can be shaped on how they situate themselves during these events. The process in which individuals use in order to gather their information about an event, such as The Troubles, is important. This dissertation found that, when using heuristic processing, individuals can be easily influenced. This is because they only rely on minimal sources, sometimes from the one newspaper. The susceptibility to bias when using this processing is what can be suggested to have happened during The Troubles when both communities did not stop to look at what was happening to one another. In order for this to be avoided, this dissertation recommends the use of systematic processing, where reviews of multiple sources from different medias are considered when deciding about the victimisation of one group over the next.

Collective memory is formed when individuals come together during or after a traumatic event. Bonds are formed and broken from this form of memory due to the subjectivity of the opinions people have. The danger of this is that it can create hostile environments between different communities. This dissertation found that, during The Troubles, the Protestant and Catholic communities formed this hostility against each other due to their conflicting collective memories. These memories have been influenced by a range of aspects such as reports from media, their own experiences as well as the experiences of those in their

communities. Both communities have had negative experiences with each other where loved ones were harmed and killed, and neither are willing to give up their victim status. This can be seen where Barcat discussed how the differing opinions lead to people questioning the true victims and perpetrators (2014). The Widgery Inquiry has been found to side with the Protestant community, while the Saville Inquiry has been accused as aiming to please the IRA. In being unable to understand each individual's side, accountability will never fully be reached for the traumas that were caused. This can be found significantly where, in the ICRIR, individuals belonging to the military are being given access to immunity if their testimony shows they can be prosecuted for the harms caused. Where this shows discrimination and revictimizes families and individuals who were harmed related to this treatment only being given to those who have not been convicted in relation to The Troubles previously. This dissertation finds that the treatment given to those who do not have convictions relating to The Troubles against those who do is discriminatory and favours those fighting for Britain as many of them were not arrested, while thousands of republicans were for different reasons. This shows how the subjectivity of victimisation impacted the legislation, which saw the introduction of the 2023 Legacy Act in Northern Ireland, even though it counteracted sections of the GFA. These counteractions neglected the victims the right to reconciliation and for the state to take accountability.

## **LT**

In LT, this dissertation found that, during the time of The Troubles, the United Nations identified a victim as “someone who has suffered physical or psychological damage, economic loss, or a noticeable deterioration of fundamental rights through a nations criminal legislation” (United Nations, 1985, cited in Arifi, 2016: 496). At this time, both sides experienced this, making it difficult when framing one as a victim and the other as deviant. We also found that deviance does not have to be illegal per say, but it has to go against what the ingroup believes. This is a clear example of how victimisation is subjective to the communities experiencing it, and often times the victim does not relate to the ideal victim proposed by Christie. Victims not receiving justice is seen where the Widgery Inquiry did not give recognition to the Catholics for their suffering, up until recently where the Legacy Act denies the victims and their family members of further investigation, offering immunity to people who may have caused them harm.

The V-PP framework demonstrates how individuals on both sides are able to view only themselves as the victims and are blinded to the idea of the individuals who have caused them harm being victims too. This theory has been supported by the above case study. This dissertation also found that, when the Eames Bradley Report was published, it grouped the two communities together. This was not received well. As the V-PP framework was, and can be suggested still is in some aspects, prominent in these Northern Irish societies, this would have forced the two communities to accept that both are victims to the troubles, and this is not how they truly felt. Those on the side of the British military sympathised with them. In believing that 1 Para were fired on first, the supporters of this army argued that the members did not have a choice but to fire back. The Republican community was noted to have felt the struggles of the IRA as they were being stripped of their Article Two rights of the ECHR, the right to life (Liechtenstein et al., 2024). In denying they are the sole victims of an event; the other group is denied the ability to label themselves as victims. During The Troubles, this has been found where the killing by paramilitary members gives the status of deserving victim, while if an individual died at the hands of a British soldier, they do not deserve the same treatment. This subjectivity of victimisation denies these individuals the ability to access important forms of justice which would help them come to terms with their past and for people to take accountability for their own actions.

## **Conclusion**

The research proposed in this section of the dissertation found Media, Memory, and Labelling all to have reasonable factors of influence relating to the subjectivity of victimisation, specifically in Northern Ireland post-1970s. Media was found to have significant influence on the perception of an event by the public, especially when negative language is used at such a high frequency as it was when relating to the Catholics in the Widgery Inquiry. The use of photos in media also influences people's perceptions of terrorist events, such as what occurred during The Troubles. Media has the ability to influence a community's memory, which is why it was important for this dissertation to discuss the impacts this has in general and following The Troubles. The processes an individual takes to research into a topic determines how they remember it. This memory, when discussed further in communities forms a collective memory and is a breeding ground for the possibility of bias. LT is important in this dissertation as it assists the readers knowledge of victim labelling, non-ideal victims, and the hostility that comes with it. This dissertation found aspects during The Troubles and up to recently which backed up this theory.

## **Limitations and Future Research Recommendations:**

### **Limitations:**

This research aimed to understand the subjectivity of victimisation. It was based off the idea that two different communities going through loss and trauma can view themselves as a victim, but not the other group who is experiencing the same thing. Unfortunately, while aiming for a dissertation with minimal to no bias, it is difficult to produce. This dissertation was written by an Irish person, not Northern Irish or British. In that sense, there will always be unintended bias.

### **Limitations of LT**

While this theory assists in understanding why communities label individuals, there are also limitations to consider. Majority of the limitations suggested about this theory fall in the 1970s to early 1980s. Plummer (1979) defined LT as a loose theory which gives way for contradiction and criticism. The vagueness of the theory, noted by Taylor et al., (1973), made for a failed attempt on differentiating on if something is a statement about an individual or a description. Tittle (1980, cited in Bernburg, 2019: 1), regarded LT as “vague, simplistic, and ideological” and stated that there was no evidence to suggest that being labelled negatively led to deviant behaviour. Since then, there has been evidence to back up LT. A significant amount of methodological testing which undermined this theory was found to be flawed (Bernburg, 2019). The popularity of LT was discovered to be the consistency of this theory with the mistrust of communities and the CJS (Palamara et al., 1986), which is seen in the previously discussed study by Lewis and colleagues supporting Niles Christie’s theoretical framework.

The limitation of desk-based analysis proved troubling as there is limited research regarding the national terrorism of The Troubles compared to other events, such as the international terrorist attack of 9/11 or the Paris Bombings of 2015. Another limitation of desk-based research is that sometimes the articles can be outdated, leading to facts possibly not always being up to date. Majority of the articles found which could relate to the topic at hand were over ten years old. In this time, many things can change, such as people’s memories or state opinions. In events such as this, news articles were used to keep the timeline in order. As mentioned previously about the unavoidable bias while writing this dissertation, the articles used throughout have the possibility to be bias, which may have affected this paper. There was



limited referencing to legislation, and it was mainly used during the case study in order to understand historic and monumental moments during The Troubles up until the Legacy Act.

As stated previously, the events chosen to cover The Troubles had limited research available. This limited selection of events occurred due to the word count of the paper. Twenty-thousand words is not enough to cover the events of The Troubles, but this dissertation hopes it covered an adequate amount of information to allow the reader to truly consider the subjectivity of victimisation and how being called a victim is not as simple as it sounds. As there is more to cover regarding The Troubles than this paper can discuss, we will next dive into future research recommendations which would improve this dissertation.

### **Future Research Recommendations:**

In coming to the finding that justice cannot be served if a community is unable to acknowledge that while being victims themselves, they could have also forced individuals to be labelled the same, it will be difficult for them to move forward. Being unable to accept their wrong doings, this can lead to a growth in 21<sup>st</sup> century paramilitaries terrorising these communities, leading to a repeating loop of victimisation for families to come. Relating back to the Legacy Act, this dissertation would look to research into the future of it.

### **LT**

With the evidence of LT contributing to criminological frameworks, there has been suggestions on ways to counteract the of this theory within communities. One widely used effort is community-based attempts in bridging the gaps between the separation of “us” and “them” (Deakin et al., 2022), building and maintaining relationships which could assist in finding new ways to deter this labelling tactic (Huq, 2013; Cherney & Murphy, 2016). This has been implemented in areas such as the USA and Australia regarding counterterrorism and, in particular, the Australian Police have dedicated Community Liaison Team members which build and maintain these relationships with the Muslim communities (Cherney & Murphy, 2016). As labelling is dangerous for the victim and perpetrator, it is important for countries to have methods which stamp out the stigma. In rolling this objective into action with other communities, it can be suggested the barrier can be mended through communication.

### **Restorative Justice.**

Through further research, this dissertation would like to look at different types of justice these communities could use that does not include sentencing individuals who were also traumatised during these terrorist events. Restorative Justice seeks alternate opinions for the outcome of offences other than through the punishment of the CJS (Fattah, 2000b). Victim-Offender Mediation is a form of Restorative Justice which allows for members of both sides, in the case of Northern Ireland this would be the loyalists and the republicans, and it would facilitate communication (Paul & Borton, 2017). These mediation sessions allow for an agreement to come between both the offender and the victim (Fattah, 2000b), which this dissertation believes would prove beneficial relating to the victims of the Troubles. Limitations to this form of justice is that both sides do not always want to participate in it (Siem & Barth, 2019). This would be something to take into consideration. In an interview conducted by McBride (2017), they found that some interviewees requested the possibility of sitting in a room with the individual(s) that harmed them or their family members and be able to talk to them and explain their trauma. This shows the need for other forms of justice.

### **Transitional Justice.**

Memories are an important part of Northern Irish History. From murals of Father Daly leading the boys through the streets while waving his white handkerchief, to inquiries into finding the truth, Transitional Justice should be understood in order for true accountability to occur. In future research, this dissertation would like to discuss the importance of murals in Northern Ireland and see how they compare to the impact of photographs shown by media. This dissertation would also like to assess the relationship with murals and the possible sense of revictimization, as well as the healing it can bring.

Truth commissions are an important factor when a nation is coming to terms with a trauma and such a large loss to life. The CJS in Northern Ireland was reported to have failed their duty to ensure extensive investigations, prosecutions and correct punishment for those who harmed others (Duffy, 2010). This went against Article Two of the ECHR, The Right to Life (Duffy, 2010). A truth commission is important as it encourages the truth to be found and acknowledgement to be taken (Lundy & McGovern, 2008). Inquiries have been met with hostility by the unionists, unfortunately, but this is important when coming to terms with what happened. In a study by Lundy and McGovern (2008), they found that there was a higher number of members from republican parties in agreement with a truth commission compared

to that of the loyalists. They also found that the most important thing people want to come from these inquiries is the acknowledgement of the violations to their rights during The Troubles.

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Struggles**

Further research in the area of the 21<sup>st</sup> century would be beneficial in order to understand current perspectives of victimisation in Northern Ireland. This would also be best to do through qualitative research and not desk-based to ensure the most accurate answers. This dissertation suggests looking into the violence of these groups in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the reasons they use these paramilitary style attacks (Morrison, 2024). Morrison noted that paramilitary groups from both the republican and loyalist sides are still active (2024). Further research in this area regarding why they do it and who they victimise would improve this dissertation.

Another aspect of future research relates to the Legacy Act. This dissertation suggests frequent monitoring to see how it treats different victims of The Troubles. It would be interesting to investigate if it forms a further separation between the communities and what it may lead to. As of 2024 the Labour Party have been elected and have been in contact with the Taoiseach regarding the Legacy Act (Holder, 2023). They have promised to repeal this act, so it would be interesting to see what the future holds for it.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, this dissertation has referenced the limitations it faced during research as well as writing. It has also suggested future research that it hopes will aid in the research of victimisation in Northern Ireland, and to further understand the complex subjectivity of it. LT aids us in understanding how individuals feel victimised. Restorative Justice is important for those who wish to be facilitated to have discussions about their trauma, and Transitional Justice aids all victims who are seeking for those who harmed them or their family members to take accountability. Researching 21<sup>st</sup> century in accordance with active paramilitary groups would further improve the current understandings of victimisation in Northern Ireland, as well as how the Labour Party will handle the repeal of the Legacy Act.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusion**

In conclusion, the aim of this study was to guide the reader through the existing literature regarding the subjectivity of victimisation. This was achieved through the use of an extensive literature review, looking at the media's implications and LT. The literature review was accompanied by a case study, giving the reader a real-life event to compare the previous relevant work to. The subjectivity of victimisation is important to consider as, suggested thoroughly throughout this paper, the experience as well as the understanding of the label 'victim' is unique to each community. This can also be suggested relating to the deviant individual. Communities have been discussed to relate to the V-PP framework where they are under the impression they are the only individual who can experience victimisation, therefore dismissing their own deviance. Overall, this shows how victimisation and the label of a 'victim' is subjective to the community.

In this paper, different media forms have been found to influence aspects of the news that is being reported. Depending on what has been deemed as newsworthy to reporters determines what individuals within different communities are reading. Referring to the case study, this was noted with the different information being pushed to American media, as well as the information in the inquiries. The information being pushed to the public has been suggested to cause MP in communities such as with the republicans and loyalists. Republicans sympathised with the IRA while the loyalists sympathised with the British army. They both had different memories of what happened during the Troubles. These different memories impact the recalled experience of victimisation. The memories formed between communities affects the acknowledgement given to those who were injured during civil unrest, such as during the Troubles. These different memories formed relating to communities' experiences of victimisation and their understanding of the victim label is considered in this dissertation by referencing the importance of LT. In understanding LT, the reader recognises how these groups identify who does and does not fit their idea of an ideal victim, such is suggested throughout this paper by Christie. The V-PP framework enables the reader to grasp how self-acknowledgement of victimisation disregards their violence and takes away the right of the outgroup to experience this victimhood.

The findings in this paper agree with the argument that victimisation is subjective to the community experiencing it. These findings matter as resolutions are built on the memories of communities. Taking Northern Ireland into consideration, the families of those who were

injured or killed during the Troubles advocated for a further inquiry into the truth of what happened during Bloody Sunday, feeling as though the Widgery Inquiry brushed over their victimisation from the state. This seek for acknowledgement is an important aspect of this dissertation as many victims of the Troubles are non-ideal and have not received acceptable recognition. This was seen through the recent publication of The Legacy Act, subject to reconsideration by the new government of the UK. The overall findings of this dissertation shows that while victimisation is subjective, accountability should still be taken by those who injured and killed innocent people. This is also relevant in the recent climate revolving the war of Israel and Palestine.

Solely relying on desk-based research is a limitation of this dissertation. The section in the case study relating to generational trauma would have benefited from the qualitative research of interviews, but this was unachievable in the timeframe. Qualitative research would have also benefited this paper as it would produce more up-to-date statistics. Along with this, interviews would have aided the understanding of collective memories within these communities in Northern Ireland. Overall, relying on previous literature limited the abilities of this dissertation.

Further exploration into this topic would be the consideration of the twenty-first century struggles. The struggles that would benefit this paper have been discussed as observing vigilante groups in Northern Ireland. Researching these groups would enable further understanding into the victimisation felt by these different communities. Restorative Justice would be beneficial in these communities. This suggested recommendation was influenced by an individual, referenced to above, saying they would like to sit down and talk about their trauma to those who caused it. This would allow for understanding between one another. Further research on Restorative Justice and Transitional Justice in Northern Ireland would enable the facilitation of a shared space where acknowledgement and accountability can form.

While the media shapes one's deepest values of the world, suggested by Kellner (2011), there is room for understanding between communities traumatised by conflict and civil unrest. By being facilitated to understand the implications of LT, the reader has gathered the information necessary to appreciate how different communities have conflicting values of victimisation. The understanding of the V-PP framework also guided the reader in how these communities can disregard how their own violence caused the victimisation of others and focus on their own experiences. This dissertation has proven that victimisation is subjective to each

community and facilitation is key in overcoming discrimination in societies such as Northern Ireland.

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