

Violence, Identity and Peace

Understanding the Northern Ireland conflict through the lens of RRI

This module introduces students to sociological approaches to identity, peace and conflict in Northern Ireland. The nature of Northern Ireland's peace process is analysed in relation to contemporary local evidence as well as to scholarly debates about conflict transformation. Lectures are mainly given by visiting speakers from diverse backgrounds. They are offered experiential learning opportunities, eg visits to exhibitions about the Troubles at the Ulster Museum; a Black Taxi tour of Belfast and a (voluntary) visit to the theatre to see a relevant play. There is also peer learning and students are given preparation for designing, carrying out and reporting on semi-structured interviews with societal actors and then carry out this interview.



Methodology

1. *An ethnographic approach to research:* understanding society better through interaction between social actors:
2. *Understanding social divisions:* specifically, by challenging a perception that the only division in Northern Irish society that matters is protestant/catholic
3. *Promoting reflexivity:* encouraging students to think about other students and other people's experience of events
4. *Understanding Ethics* through the practical application of principles in designing, carrying out, recording and interpreting research

Learning outcomes

Students should be: Familiar with sociological debates about Northern Ireland (NI) as a 'society in transition'; Capable of critiquing different analyses of the causes of conflict in NI, understanding multiple perspectives and complexity; Able to engage in systematic, critical and reflexive reasoning about change in NI society; Confident in using different types and sources of data to analyse contemporary society; Students know how to interact ethically and inclusively with social actors in order to enhance their own learning and contribute to society's understanding of conflict; Students have an enhanced appreciation of the importance of their own values and those of others; Students have enhanced awareness of the value of appropriate collaboration in learning

Conclusions

Reflective practice: the students needed a lot of feedback to understand it but most of them did
Field visits: for many of the students, including the local ones, they learned a lot from the Ulster Museum and Black taxi tour about Northern Ireland, but they also learned to observe critically, mainly from each other
Fieldwork and presentations: the students needed a lot of preparation, in order to carry out the research ethically – they were willing to learn, and they were often elated when the interview and/or presentation went well

Trainers' and Learners' profiles

24 2nd year sociology students participated in this module, including both local and international students. It was co-ordinated by QUB academic staff with a strong profile in public engagement and was supplemented by a series of visiting lecturers who could bring different perspectives on Northern Irish society. The module is worth 10 ECTS

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