



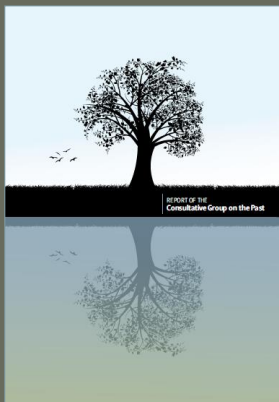
# Discourses of Conflict and Peace in Northern Ireland

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## healthy discussion?



“Debate and discussion are healthy for any society emerging from years of violence and conflict”

(Eames/Bradley, 2009)



Video Clip

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7856195.stm>

Can peace only be preserved at a cost to open, honest and challenging public discussion?



## outline of session

1. Discourse
  - Language and power
  - Discourse and division
2. Conflict Process in Northern Ireland
  - Defining legitimacy
3. Peace Process in Northern Ireland
  - Framing negotiation
  - Facilitating agreement
4. The Present
5. The Future
  - Good relations

## 1. DISCOURSE

## Power and language

- The ‘language of politics is the language of power’  
(de Landtsheer 1998)
- Political utilisation of language
  - **Bargaining**, persuasion, communication, cooperation
  - Discursive construction of **ideology** and identity
- Political conditions constructed by a “conglomeration of social practices and ideological assumptions, **embodied in language use**”  
(Shiffrin et al. 2003)

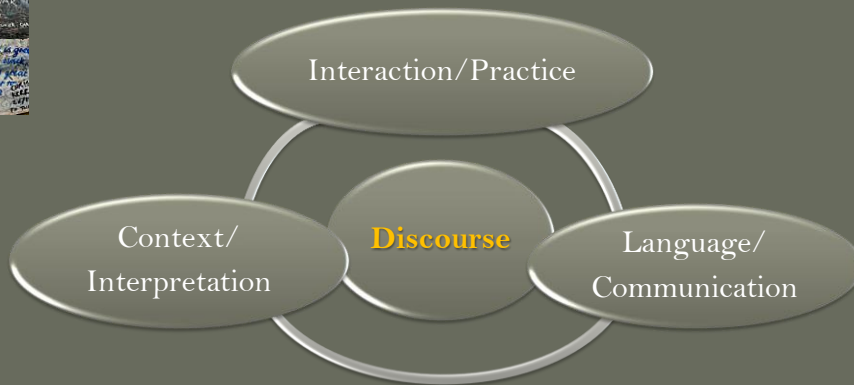
## ‘the enemy’

Donald Trump

- <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/video/2015/dec/08/donald-trump-calls-for-complete-ban-on-muslims-entering-the-us-video>
- Hillary Clinton
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JIOMNCT\\_aA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JIOMNCT_aA)

## discourse

- Discourse is at the **cross-over** between social context, interaction and language – and POWER



## why study discourse?

- Close relationship between language, practice and context.
  - Changing **relationships of power** in transition between conflict and peace manifest in changing language
- Discourses are given meaning through localised everyday practices
  - but cannot be abstracted from the politics of the public sphere
- Discourses of conflict and peace are contextually constructed
  - and inseparable from wider power relations



## but caution -

- *Not a comprehensive explanation*
- *Language is not direct reflection of interests*
- *Discourse does not reveal hidden motives, all outcomes etc.*
- *No causal relationship between political and discursive change*



## discourse and division

- Discourse performs the social function of defining and sustaining:
  - (Legitimate) POWER
  - (Collective) IDENTITIES
  - (Motivating) VALUES
- Boundaries set by discourse
  - Defining acceptable ideas/language
  - Defining Us
  - Defining Them
  - Delimiting progress





## working proposition

*To look at discourse helps us understand how conflict is maintained, how agreement is found, how peace is structured... and the limits and weak spots therein.*

## 2. CONFLICT



## starting points

1. What key terms/words that have regularly appeared in the party's discourse vis-a-vis:
  - (a) power
  - (b) identity
  - (c) values
2. Are there certain key terms/words in party discourse that, in recent times:
  - (a) have been 'reinterpreted' or revised in recent times?
  - (b) have remained stubbornly consistent?
  - (c) have been dropped or are notably absent?



## discourses in conflict:

defining 'legitimacy' early 1970s

- **Unionist** discourse
  - the internment powers were legitimate because they were settled in **law**;
  - **force** used by the police and the army was legitimate because they had a mandate from the state;
  - democracy was viewed as the implementation of **majority rule** as set down in the governing procedures of the state.
- Within such a framework, opposition to the state became illegitimate by definition, and the only valid political question regarding internment was whether it served the purpose of restoring **order**.
- The portrayal of '**terrorists**' as isolated characters without context and history and with the creation of fear as their only rationale, 'proved' that the conflict was a matter of order, not state legitimacy.

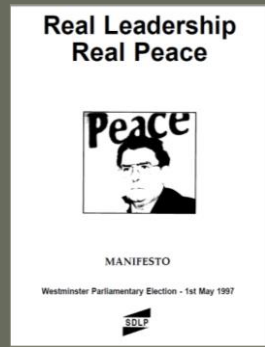




# discourses in conflict: defining 'legitimacy' early 1970s

- **Nationalist** discourse
  - **Countering hegemonic** interpretation of the relationship between the state and legitimacy
  - **Human rights** were made the defining source of legitimacy.
    - Consequently, rights were not linked to being a citizen in a state, but instead made a product of being human: *if the state violated these rights, it could not be regarded legitimate.*
- Nationalists also increasingly turned to **international sources for validation** of their approach
  - Thus 'removing' legitimacy from the political and territorial confinements of the state

## 3. PEACE PROCESS







## peace process

- **Power**
  - Whose responsibility is conflict (resolution)?
- **Identities**
  - Who is the conflict between?
- **Values**
  - What is the conflict about?



## EXAMPLE

### framing negotiations 1995

“[The two governments] acknowledge that in Northern Ireland, unlike the situation which prevails elsewhere throughout both islands, **there is a fundamental absence of consensus about constitutional issues.**

There are **deep divisions** between the members of **the two main traditions** living there over their respective senses of **identity and allegiance**, their views on the present **status of Northern Ireland** and their vision of future relationships in Ireland and between the two islands.

However, the two Governments also recognise that the large majority of people, in both parts of Ireland, are at one in their commitment to the democratic process and in their **desire to resolve political differences by peaceful means.**”

**A New Framework For Agreement (Art.11)**

A shared understanding between the British and Irish Governments to assist discussion and negotiation involving the Northern Ireland parties,  
22 February 1995

## EXAMPLE

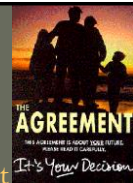
### facilitating agreement 1998

“We are committed to **partnership, equality and mutual respect** as the basis of relationships within Northern Ireland, between North and South, and between these islands.

We reaffirm our total and absolute commitment to exclusively **democratic and peaceful means of resolving differences** on political issues, and our opposition to any use or threat of force by others for any political purpose...

We acknowledge the **substantial differences between our continuing, and equally legitimate, political aspirations.** However, we will endeavour to strive in every practical way towards reconciliation and rapprochement **within the framework of democratic and agreed arrangements.**”

**The Agreement** (Declaration of Support, Art.3-5)  
The agreement reached in multi-party negotiations  
Belfast, 10 April 1998



## 4. PRESENT DAY



## Our Plan for Northern Ireland

# Taking pride in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is a great country, full of potential and bouncing back after the dark days of the Troubles. Despite the negativity generated by some, there has been a growing pride in Northern Ireland and the achievements of its people, coinciding with the restoration of devolution. There is a clear opportunity to build pride amongst everyone in Northern Ireland and in particular, our future generations.

The achievements of our sporting heroes like Rory McIlroy, Carl Frampton and the Northern Ireland football team have contributed to this process.

Northern Ireland has been showcased to the world through successfully hosting major events like the MTV awards, the BBC Sports Personality of the Year Awards, the Tall Ships and the Giro D'Italia.

The DUP has been to the fore of promoting Northern Ireland across the globe. An example was the 'NI 2012 Our Time, Our Place' tourism campaign in 2012. This helped attract 1,000,000 visitors to Northern Ireland and was worth over £40 million to the local economy. This year we are showcasing our strengths in the agri-food sector with our NI Year of Food and Drink.

The DUP sees this as only the beginning of what Northern Ireland can be at home and abroad. With Northern Ireland fast approaching its centenary year in 2021, we want to see more people, regardless of their community background, taking pride in Northern Ireland. 2021 presents us all with the opportunity to build positively on the events of recent years and to develop a series of events and initiatives that will celebrate this historic milestone and build community pride.

- POWER?
- IDENTITIES?
- VALUES?

## This is our Plan to help us all take pride in Northern Ireland.

### 1. MORE INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

The DUP believes we can continue to shine on the international stage by securing more and bigger international events. The DUP believes we should be seeking to attract events such as:

- the Grand Depart of the Tour de France, building on the outstanding success of the Giro D'Italia in 2013;
- after hosting the Commonwealth Youth games in 2021, a bid to host a future Commonwealth Games in Belfast should be developed and
- the 2023 Rugby World Cup with stadiums in Northern Ireland playing a major role in the tournament.

### 2. A PUBLIC HOLIDAY AND FULL 2021 CENTENARY PROGRAMME

Northern Ireland was established as a legal entity on 3rd May 1921. The centenary of this date should be made a one-off public holiday and for that day and year a full programme of events developed to celebrate and examine our history.

### 3. THE FIRST CHILDREN OF OUR NEW CENTURY

The DUP believes that 2021 should not be marked solely by events but also by illustrations of our values. In our centenary year, every child born will receive a Baby Box with every child having an equal start. This Baby Box will be based on the long-established and highly successful Finnish model.

### 4. OUR LIVING INHERITANCE

In our centenary year, we should recognise all of those who have lived through our first 100 years. Each Centenarian in Northern Ireland will receive an award of £1,000 and a personal oral history project to document their memories.

### 5. A LASTING LEGACY

The DUP wants a lasting legacy to the centenary celebrations. It will support public art and environmental projects such as a centenary wood and a centenary greenway.

### 6. FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MILITARY COVENANT

Our pride in Northern Ireland is matched by our pride for those who serve and have served in our Armed Forces. The present estimate of 95% implementation of the Military Covenant here is unacceptable to us. The DUP wants to secure the full implementation of the Military Covenant and see the end of any legal barriers to its full enjoyment by servicemen/women and veterans.

### 7. OUR NATIONAL FLAG

An open and full expression of pride should include the display of our national symbols. The DUP remains committed to the display of the national flag from public buildings on a '365 day' basis.

### 8. INSTITUTE OF ULSTER-SCOTS

The DUP is committed to establishing the Institute of Ulster-Scots to drive forward a positive research and educational agenda for this vital strand of Northern Ireland's identity.

A Chairde,

Over the last eight years, despite unprecedented challenges caused by a global recession and an assault by the Tory party on the Executive budget, progress has been made. The economic crisis has caused real hardship for many families and businesses, that is why we have so strongly opposed austerity and prioritised building the peace, delivering unprecedented job creation, targetting investment to frontline services and protecting the most vulnerable.

- » Over £8bn invested in economic regeneration.
- » Unprecedented inward investment with over 800 international companies locating in the North, employing more than 75,000 people.
- » Unemployment has fallen for 27 months in a row.
- » The transfer of powers over corporation tax, as a first step in the securing of control over all fiscal powers.
- » Reform of Local Government, including the reduction in the number of Councils from 26 to 11.
- » Transfer of powers on Policing and Justice.
- » Improvements in outcomes for children at primary and secondary level.
- » Revitalising the Irish language community through investment in Irish medium education and the Liofa Project.
- » A deal on CAP reform for farmers in the North.
- » An unprecedented all-party agreement on dealing with the past.

During the Stormont House negotiations we demonstrated once again that it is possible to take an effective stand against the Tory assault and to deliver for the people. We successfully negotiated a significantly enhanced package of welfare protections for some of the most vulnerable people within our society. These agreements must now be delivered.

- POWER?
- IDENTITIES?
- VALUES?

However, all of this work is now being undermined as a result of four years of Tory cuts and austerity targetting public services and the most vulnerable in society. They are threatening further cuts after this election. This is not acceptable or sustainable.

Austerity imposed from London is the price citizens are paying for the union. That is economically wrong and fundamentally undemocratic. Our economy, our society and our future should be in the hands of a government accountable to and elected by our citizens.

This austerity agenda is the single greatest threat to the people of the North and it's political institutions.

The absence of fiscal powers have made the Executive's task even more difficult. The political institutions in the North need to move to the next stage – financial powers need to be transferred to the Assembly and Executive. It is the people who live here who will make the best decisions, not a cabinet of millionaires in London – which is neither elected by, nor accountable to the people here. Taxes raised here should stay here and the Executive and Assembly should decide how they are spent. It is only with independence and self-determination that we will have the ability to determine our own future.

In the coming weeks, while other parties are seeking to prop up either Labour or Tories and their policy of cuts for narrow political agendas, Sinn Féin will be relentless in seeking the best deal for all our people. We have achieved more in direct negotiations with the British Government than other parties have in decades on the back benches at Westminster.

This election is an opportunity to take a stand against the Westminster politics of austerity and for a vision of a united, prosperous, equal and inclusive Ireland.

After the election we will be seeking an immediate negotiation with the incoming British Government to restore the budget and protect public services and to gain full control over our economy.

A vote for Sinn Féin will strengthen our hand.

**On May 7th, Vótáil Sinn Féin**

## 5. THE FUTURE



### 'A Shared Future' : The Framework For Good Relations In NI (2005)

- Three clear principles flow from this [GFA], and from the wider international debate on inter-culturalism. If we follow these principles we cannot go far wrong.
  - First, everyone in Northern Ireland **deserves to be treated as an individual**, equal with every other ('vindication of the human rights of all') - not a mere cypher for a 'community'.
  - Second, each of us must mutually recognise our **common humanity** ('achievement of reconciliation, tolerance, and mutual trust') - rather than engaging in a perpetual and sterile battle for ethnic power.
  - And third, **the state must be neutral** between competing cultural claims ('promotion of a culture of tolerance at every level' and encouragement of 'integrated education - in its widest sense - and mixed housing').

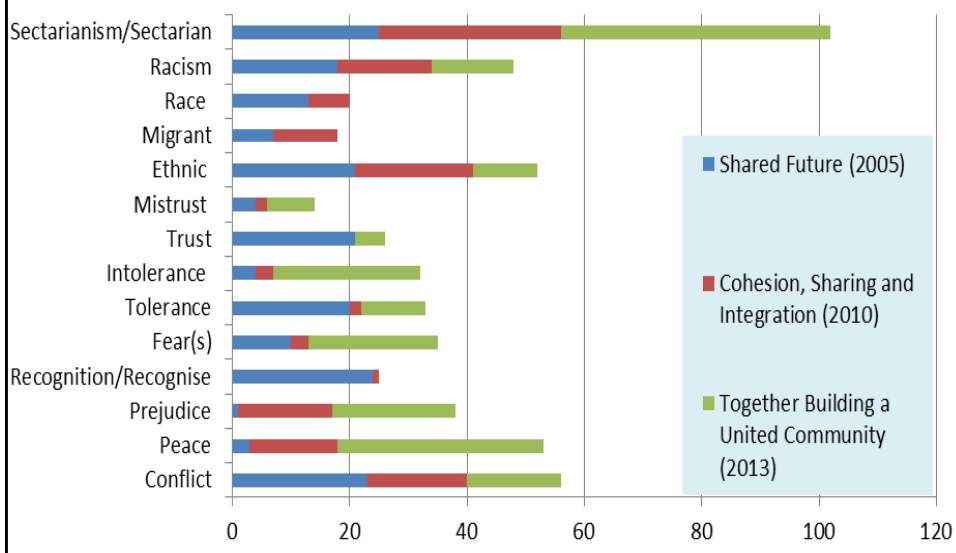


## Together Building a United Community (2013)

- **Preamble:**
- Peace is now firmly established with stable political structures that are delivering for local people. ...
- 4.11... We believe that an approach based on intercultural dialogue can help facilitate greater integration and build a more united community.
- 5.11 ... The fabric of our society is made up of many diverse parts – representing different cultural backgrounds and identities. Within the context of an increasingly diverse community, we must learn that expression of one cultural view is not a direct or indirect threat to the expression of another

## Good Relations strategies in NI

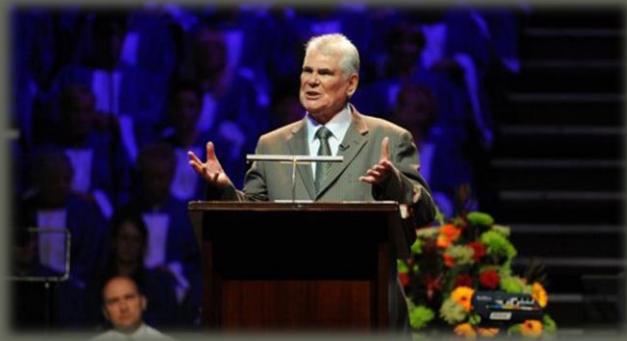
*(content analysis)*



## EXAMPLE

### Pastor McConnell, 'Islam' speech 2014

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9J\\_t7Eq1wdY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9J_t7Eq1wdY) (2.10)



## EXAMPLE

### Peter Robinson, First Minister Defends Pastor McConnell

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1AQv6hI2oo>



## EXAMPLE

# Anna Lo MLA Responds

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uP\\_bEpLqix4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uP_bEpLqix4)



ireland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/nigov/a-fresh-start-stormont-agreement\_0.pdf

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## A Fresh Start Agreement, 2015

- 9.1 'A shared future'
  - The UK Government will provide an additional £60m over five years in support of the Executive's delivery of confidence and relationship building measures within and between communities, contributing to the conditions that will allow the removal of peace walls and the creation of a shared future.

