

Predicting Intergroup Forgiveness From In-Group Identification and Collective Guilt in Adolescent and Adult Affiliates of a Northern Irish Cross-Community Organization

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The relationship between in-group identification, intergroup forgiveness, and collective guilt has been established, with results suggesting differences between Catholic and Protestant adults. However, the literature lacks investigation observing these psychological elements in adolescents, particularly in the context of the Northern Irish ethno-political conflict. The aim of this study was to examine relationships between in-group identification, intergroup forgiveness, and collective guilt by comparing Catholic and Protestant adolescents and adults affiliated with the Ulster Project, a cross-community organization in Northern Ireland. Results revealed a significant main effect of age on intergroup forgiveness, with adults scoring significantly higher on a 6-item scale adapted from Myers, Hewstone, and Cairns, (2009) than adolescents. Collective guilt was a significant predictor of intergroup forgiveness across community background and age. There were no significant interaction effects when entered in the model separately or pooled. Further research investigating the developmental, psychological, and social differences existing between Northern Irish adolescents and adults during their transition from conflict to peace is needed.

Keywords: in-group identification, intergroup forgiveness, collective guilt, Northern Ireland, adolescents

Social interaction is an essential feature of human life. Forming social ties by way of establishing friendships and building trust is a critical element in psychosocial development,

especially in terms of establishing one's social identity (Erikson, 1968). Although both social and personal identities play an important role across the life span, it is a significant issue,

This article was published Online First August 25, 2014.

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ED CAIRNS passed away on February 17, 2012 and is included as a co-author based on his substantial contributions to this research. Born in 1945, he was a fellow of both the British Psychological Society and the American Psychological Association. Ed was a leading international scholar on social identity, conflict and peace, and children and political violence. He was a committed teacher and mentor of many university students and of many peace psychologists from around the globe. He was also an influential leader worldwide and the first international President of APA's Division 48, the Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict, and Violence.

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particularly for developing adolescents, who often experience a struggle with developing a sense of both self and social identity. The period of adolescence can be a tumultuous time and is often characterized not only by periods of internal and external conflicts, but also by the possibility of discovery and growth on both personal and social levels.

Tajfel's (1978) social identity theory (SIT) suggests the importance membership in social groups can have on one's social identity. Social group membership contributes to the images that people have of themselves, and it plays a role in the process of social categorization, which Tajfel describes as a "guide for action" in the sense that it helps to create the social environment. Social groups, specifically families, peers, and communities, all play an active role in the socialization process for adolescents. Yet, for those in a divided society, such as the Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, the formation of social groups can result in conflict, both between and within these groups.

In-Group Identification

How does the process of identifying with a particular social group operate for adolescents who are members of a divided society that forces in-group identification to permeate all aspects of daily life and social interaction? In the case of Northern Ireland, the clash between opposing social groups has resulted in many years of uninterrupted violence and conflict colloquially known as "The Troubles" (McGarry & O'Leary, 1995). Historically, the conflict in Northern Ireland has been viewed as a disagreement between opposing social/ethnic identities (Cairns & Darby, 1998). These identities are typically based upon political ideologies and are separated by religious affiliation. Group identification has been described as a salient feature of Northern Irish society, and it has been shown to play an important role as one of the social and psychological factors that maintain the conflict (Cairns, 1982, 1996; Trew & Benson, 1996). Traditionally, the two opposing groups have distinguished themselves along religious lines (i.e., Catholic or Protestant). However, in reality, the root of the conflict lies in a history of political, economic, and psychological elements (Cairns & Darby, 1998).

Tajfel and Turner (1979) suggested the influence that social identity plays in intergroup conflicts, and some studies have demonstrated the effects of in-group identification on behavior (Brown & Turner, 1981; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). As discussed by Turner and colleagues (1987), a shift occurs from personal to social identity when group membership is salient. Thus, intergroup situations can provide a setting in which members replace their own personal concerns with the concerns of the group. Identifying one's self as a member of a group, for example, the "in-group," also makes it easier for individuals and groups to adopt an "us" against "them" outlook. This process is both a social and psychological one. Not only is it a process whereby situations of conflict may be created, but it is also a way that groups can strengthen and unify themselves by defining shared beliefs, ideologies, and behaviors.

Building from this idea, researchers have investigated the various psychological components of intergroup conflict by looking at factors such as in-group identification, forgiveness, and collective guilt (Hewstone, Cairns, Voci, Hamberger, & Niens, 2006; McLernon, Cairns, Hewstone, & Smith, 2004; Myers, Hewstone, & Cairns, 2009). Previous research on adults in Northern Ireland has demonstrated that high identification with one's religious community serves as a negative predictor of intergroup forgiveness and collective guilt (Hewstone et al., 2004; Myers et al., 2009). Research has also found Catholic adults demonstrating greater in-group identification than Protestants (Myers et al., 2009). In a society such as Northern Ireland, the weight of these concepts should not be underestimated, especially in the consideration of useful alternatives to promoting peace and reconciliation.

Intergroup Forgiveness

Intergroup forgiveness has been described as a way to help groups in conflict put the past behind them and to facilitate both public and private healing (Shriver & Shriver, 2008). Despite the fact that the sectarian violence was to have come to an end with the signing of the Belfast Agreement ("Northern Ireland Peace Agreement", 1998) in 1998, it would seem that those who have suffered directly from the con-

flict are more likely to struggle with the concept of forgiveness. "Reckoning with a violent past requires remembering it" (Shriver & Shriver, 2008, p. 11) and this is certainly not an easy experience to come to terms with for those who have been affected by political, physical, and emotional violence. The ability to move forward and ease feelings of anger and revenge is a difficult process; however, forgiveness offers a hopeful solution by serving as a possible stepping stone on the path to reconciliation between groups in conflict.

Understanding individuals' attitudes toward forgiveness, especially in the context of intergroup conflicts, is an interesting and potentially useful way of examining the psychological process of how or why certain groups or individuals may be able to forgive past transgressions. In the context of Northern Ireland, prior research utilizing an adult sample has reported Catholics demonstrating greater intergroup forgiveness than Protestants (Myers et al., 2009). Studies have also shown that in-group identification can serve as a strong negative predictor of forgiveness, whereas religiosity served as a weak predictor (Cairns, Hewstone, Niens, & Tam, 2005; Hewstone et al., 2004; Hewstone et al., 2006; Myers et al., 2009). This hints at the underlying nature of the Northern Irish conflict in that it is more ethno-political in nature than religious. Often, the conflict is mistaken as a religious one; however, it is not so much the strength of one's religiosity, but the strength of one's ties to their community that predicts forgiveness. Group identification can be a powerful influence in the lives of individuals. Therefore, the empirical literature on the topic of intergroup forgiveness is still in need of further investigation, especially on the relation or role between intergroup forgiveness and the development of peace between groups in conflict. The current study attempts to contribute to this area of psychological research by examining Northern Irish adolescents' attitudes toward intergroup forgiveness.

Collective Guilt

Intergroup forgiveness has been discussed in relation to the concept of collective guilt, particularly regarding how collective guilt can help facilitate intergroup forgiveness by encouraging the act of apologizing (Hewstone et al., 2004).

As described by Branscombe et al. (2004), guilt experienced at the group level is known as collective guilt, and it can be characterized by the feelings of remorse that occur when one's group has illegitimately harmed another group and not repaired the damage done.

In the context of intergroup conflicts, examining collective guilt offers a valuable way of understanding how groups in conflict come to acknowledge the wrongs that have occurred. Wohl and Branscombe (2005) suggest that expecting a group to feel collective guilt implies that members of the group have not been forgiven for their ancestors' past immoral actions. These empirical studies have investigated how social categorization among victimized group members affects collective guilt and the willingness to forgive. Their results revealed that members of a victimized group can forgive contemporary members of their former perpetrator group when a more inclusive level of categorization is used. A more inclusive level of categorization would entail categorizing others on the basis of their identity as human, rather than as a member of a specific group. In other words, the results of these studies support the idea that "when the harm done by the perpetrator group is seen as but one example of the harm humans have perpetrated against their fellow humans, it encourages forgiveness and discourages assignment of collective guilt to that specific perpetrator group" (Wohl & Branscombe, 2005, p. 299). In the Northern Irish context, the findings of Wohl and Branscombe are particularly relevant because they support inclusive categorization as a method of promoting forgiveness between groups.

Specifically in Northern Ireland, other empirical studies of adults have shown collective guilt to be negatively associated with in-group identification (Myers et al., 2009). Research in Northern Ireland has also reported that Catholic adults experience greater collective guilt than Protestants (Hewstone et al., 2004), and that collective guilt predicted intergroup forgiveness in that higher levels of collective guilt was related to greater intergroup forgiveness (Hewstone et al., 2004; Myers et al., 2009). These results suggest the importance of collective guilt in the sense that it can serve a positive function by promoting intergroup forgiveness and possibly serving as a path to improving intergroup relations. Studies have also found

that in-group identification is related to the likelihood of acknowledging negative aspects of one's group as a way to eliminate feelings of guilt, with those who identify more strongly to their in-group demonstrating less likely acknowledgement to negative aspects of their in-group (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998, 2006).

Despite the growing body of evidence to support the significance that in-group identification has on the psychological elements of intergroup forgiveness and collective guilt in Northern Irish adults, little or no research appears to have investigated the effects of in-group identification on intergroup forgiveness and collective guilt in developing Northern Irish adolescents, which is important when considering whether there is a developmental difference in how adolescents experience these psychological elements compared with adults.

Identity development can be a challenging process for adolescents (Erikson, 1968), and from a developmental perspective, adolescence often brings about greater self-awareness and higher-level thinking (Carlson, 2010), which may allow for a greater range of possibilities concerning behaviors, attitudes, and values. Adolescents are at an impressionable stage and seek to establish an identity separate from their parents. They are generally open to new ideas, perspectives, and change, which are important components of the process of identity development. The findings of Inglehart (1971) lend support to the notion of intergenerational change, especially as it relates to changing values.

In the context of Northern Ireland, the dramatic change in the political atmosphere since the signing of the Belfast Agreement could be seen as providing the conditions necessary for adolescents to gravitate away from the attitudes and values held by their parents. One way in which this has been demonstrated is adolescent participation in cross-community organizations whose goals are to bring young people from different communities together with the hope of promoting positive attitudes and reducing conflict and prejudice. The growing social acceptability of participation in these cross-community organizations has played an important part in the peace-building process by providing young people with opportunities to develop

friendships, reduce prejudice, and promote healing and forgiveness (Stringer et al., 2009).

Ulster Project: A Cross-Community Organization

The Ulster Project is one such cross-community organization in Northern Ireland dedicated to promoting peace and fostering a mutual understanding between adolescents (14–17-year olds) from Catholic and Protestant communities. The Ulster Project was formed in 1975 after the escalation of The Troubles. Their purpose is: (a) to promote reconciliation between Northern Irish Catholics and Protestants by fostering tolerance, understanding, and friendship among teenage future leaders; (b) to present a program that brings Northern Irish teens of differing Christian faiths together in a strife-free atmosphere that emphasizes acceptance of all people, regardless of creed; (c) to educate and encourage persons, particularly supporters, committee members, and American host families, to appreciate their roles as peace-makers and mediators; and (d) to encourage Northern Irish leaders and clergy involved in the program to continue to foster the spirit of the Ulster Project among the Northern Irish participants following each program (<http://www.ulsterproject.org/>).

A recent evaluation of the Ulster Project investigated the impact of cross-community involvement on the amount of out-group contact and friendships between Catholic and Protestant adolescents (Leonard, Mayne, & Cairns, 2010). Results revealed that the adolescents who had participated in the Ulster Project, compared with those who had not, reported significantly more out-group contact and friendships (e.g., they reported having more out-group friends, visiting their out-group friends more often, and being visited more often by out-group friends). These findings are important because they support the long-term advantages of participation in cross-community organizations like the Ulster Project.

The Current Study

Despite the fact that the Ulster Project and other cross-community organizations have been in existence in Northern Ireland for several decades, very little empirical research has been published. This lack of empirical literature leads to the main

question of the current study: How do Catholic and Protestant adolescents who participate in cross-community organizations experience the psychological elements of in-group identification, intergroup forgiveness, and collective guilt? This is an important question to address because many more young people are participating in these types of organizations, which in the past was not looked upon favorably and was even discouraged (Racioppi & O'Sullivan See, 2006).

The aim of the current study was to examine the correlations between in-group identification, intergroup forgiveness, and collective guilt in a sample of Northern Irish adolescents and adults who were affiliated with the Ulster Project and to determine if community background (Catholic and Protestant) and age (adults and adolescents) had an impact on these correlations. Based on an extensive literature review, the current study might be the first to investigate these three psychological elements within and between a group of adolescents and adults who have chosen to participate in a cross-community organization in Northern Ireland.

Despite the transition from a political atmosphere that excites violence to one that stimulates peace through accepted and encouraged participation in cross-community organizations, three main predictions were tested: (a) Catholics compared with Protestants would report significantly higher in-group identification, and lower intergroup forgiveness and collective guilt, as it has been suggested that the continuing psychological ramifications for Catholics continue to exist (Cairns & Darby, 1998; Hewstone et al., 2004); (b) adults would report significantly higher in-group identification than adolescents, as well as lower intergroup forgiveness and collective guilt, because these had already been demonstrated in adult-only samples (Hewstone et al., 2004; Myers et al., 2009); and (c) in-group identification and collective guilt would predict intergroup forgiveness across community background and age.

Method

Recruitment

The University of Louisville's Institutional Review Board (IRB) provided study approval, and the Ulster Project Executive Committee in Northern Ireland gave permission to conduct research involving individuals affiliated with

the Ulster Project. Adolescents and their parents, as well as adult counselors and volunteers, were invited to participate. An individually signed letter from the study's principal investigator was forwarded to eight different Ulster Project center coordinators for distribution to their Ulster Project affiliates. The letter explained the study was about cross-community involvement in Northern Ireland. Ulster Project adolescent and adult affiliates were invited to attend one of seven meetings on a specified date, time, and location.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection meetings were conducted by a trained research team from the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences at the University of Louisville who traveled to Northern Ireland. Prior to travel, the research team members completed Human Subjects Protection Training. Surveys were administered to adolescent and adult affiliates of eight different Ulster Project centers throughout Northern Ireland: Enniskillen, Omagh, Castlederg, Sion Mills, Derry/Londonderry, Limavady, Portadown, and Belfast (see Table 1). The research team provided oral instruction prior to survey distribution. Survey completion lasted approximately 20 minutes. Upon completion, members of the research team collected the surveys and provided a short debriefing.

Respondents

Respondents were 156 adolescents and 213 adults. The survey included seven possible age ranges as responses, 14–17, 18–25, 26–35, 36–45, 46–60, 61–75, and over 75 years of age; therefore, means and standard deviations for age are not available. Two adolescent and four adult respondents were excluded from this sample because of failure to specify belonging to either the Catholic or Protestant community. Table 1 represents the demographic breakdown in the final sample size of $N = 363$ (154 adolescents and 209 adults; 205 Catholics and 158 Protestants).

Measures

The measures selected for the survey instrument consisted of the following predictor and criterion variables.

Predictor variables. In-group identification was assessed using a 5-item group identification scale (adapted from Brown, Condor, Mathews, Wade, & Williams, 1986; Myers et al., 2009). The instructions preceding the in-group identification questions were, “Thinking about the community that you belong to (i.e., Protestant or Catholic), please answer the following questions along the 5-point scale.” Questions were “Would you say you are a person who . . . ” (a) “Considers your community important?” (b) “Identifies with your community?” (c) “Feels strong ties with your community?” (d) “Is glad to belong to your community?” (e) “Sees yourself as belonging to your community?” Ratings were made using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*). Responses were combined to yield an index (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .865$), in which higher scores denote greater religious group identification (e.g., Catholic or Protestant).

Collective guilt was assessed using six items (adapted from Branscombe et al., 2004; see also Myers et al., 2009), measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*): (a) “I feel guilty about the negative things my community has done to the other community in the past;” (b) “I feel regret for my community’s harmful past actions toward the other community;” (c) “I believe that I should repair the damage caused to the other community;” (d) “I do not feel guilty about the things done to the other community by my community in the past” (R); (e) “I do not feel regret about the things my commu-

nity did to the other community in the past” (R); and (f) “I believe that my community should repair the damage done to the other community in the past.” Items marked (R) indicate reverse scoring. Responses were combined across all six items to produce an index (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .825$) in which higher scores denote greater collective guilt.

Criterion variable. Intergroup forgiveness was measured using a 6-item scale (adapted from Myers et al., 2009; Hewstone et al., 2006). This scale included the statements: “The two communities in Northern Ireland must learn not to retaliate against political violence;” “It is important that my community never forgets the wrongs done to us by the other community” (R); “Only when the two communities of Northern Ireland learn to forgive each other can we be free of political violence;” “It is important that my community never forgives the wrongs done to us by the other community” (R); “My community can only forgive members of the other community when they have apologized for past violence;” and “My community has remained strong precisely because it has never forgiven past wrongs committed by the other community” (R). These items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Items marked (R) indicate reverse scoring. The reliability for all six intergroup forgiveness items was an unacceptable .45. After deleting the item “My community can only forgive members of the other community when they have apologized for past violence,” a more satisfactory reliability (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .631$) resulted. The

Table 1
Demographics

Ulster Project location (n = 8)	Community background				Gender			
	Catholic		Protestant		Male		Female	
	Adolescents (n = 87)	Adults (n = 118)	Adolescents (n = 67)	Adults (n = 91)	Adolescents (n = 72)	Adults (n = 73)	Adolescents (n = 82)	Adults (n = 135)
Belfast	18	24	11	21	14	18	15	27
Castlederg	7	5	6	8	7	3	6	10
Derry/Londonderry	14	9	11	13	14	7	11	15
Enniskillen	12	10	10	11	9	8	13	13
Limavady	7	26	7	15	4	11	10	30
Omagh	8	12	8	11	8	6	8	17
Portadown	18	25	10	9	13	18	15	16
Sion Mills	3	7	4	3	3	2	4	7

remaining five items were combined to form an index in which higher scores denote greater intergroup forgiveness.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Preliminary analyses included Cronbach's alphas to determine scale reliability on all the predictor and criterion variables. An a priori power analysis using an alpha of .05, an effect size r of .5, and a total sample size of 54 revealed a power of .9862 to find a large effect (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). All data analyses were conducted using Version 21 of SPSS (IBM SPSS, 2012) and an alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests.

Pearson product-moment correlations and independent-samples t tests were conducted to determine correlations between variables and to compare whether group differences existed independently across age (adults vs. adolescents) and community background (Catholic vs. Protestant) in the psychological elements of in-group identification, intergroup forgiveness, and collective guilt. Table 2 represents the results for the entire sample ($N = 363$) across age (adults vs. adolescents), with adults reporting significantly higher in-group identification and higher intergroup forgiveness compared with adolescents. These findings run counter to existing literature (Hewstone et al., 2004; Myers et al., 2009), in that higher in-group identification in adults does not predict lower intergroup forgiveness. Table 3 represents the results across community background (Catholic vs. Protestant), with Catholics reporting significantly higher in-group identification than Protestants. No group differences in community background were demonstrated in collective guilt or inter-

group forgiveness. These results may be influenced in part by the fact that the sample was taken from a cross-community organization dedicated to promoting peace and fostering a mutual understanding between Catholics and Protestants.

Moderated Regression Analyses

To confirm whether age or community background had a moderating effect on the relationship between in-group identification and intergroup forgiveness, and collective guilt and intergroup forgiveness, moderated regression analyses were conducted. Prior to analyses, predictor variables were centered to reduce multicollinearity among predictor variables (Aiken & West, 1991), the age dichotomous variables were coded as 0 = adolescents and 1 = adult. The community background dichotomous variables were coded as 0 = Protestant and 1 = Catholic. Interaction terms were computed: Centered In-Group Identification $\times$ Dichotomous Age, Centered In-Group Identification $\times$ Dichotomous Community Background, Centered Collective Guilt $\times$ Dichotomous Age, and Centered Collective Guilt $\times$ Dichotomous Community Background.

In Block 1, the predictor variables accounted for significant variance, $R^2 = .104$, $F(4, 358) = 10.343$, $p < .001$. Specifically, inspection of the coefficients revealed that intergroup forgiveness was associated positively with collective guilt, $\beta = .216$, $p < .001$, and negatively with age, $\beta = -.192$, $p < .001$. However, in-group identification had no significant association, $\beta = .054$, $p > .05$, and neither did community background, $\beta = -.093$, $p > .05$. A series of possible interactions were then considered, as reported in Table 4. However, none of the interactions were significant.

Table 2
Summary of Means, Standard Deviations, Group Differences, and Intercorrelations Across Age

Variables	Adolescents <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Adults <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>t</i> (<i>p</i>)	1	2	3
1. Ingroup identification	3.66 (0.70)	3.92 (0.77)	3.33 (<.01)	—	0.17*	0.13
2. Collective guilt	3.60 (0.78)	3.74 (0.76)	1.63 (.11)	0.15	—	0.19**
3. Intergroup forgiveness	3.04 (0.67)	3.33 (0.62)	4.27 (<.01)	−0.10	0.26**	—

Note. Intercorrelations for adult respondents ($n = 209$) are presented above the diagonal, and intercorrelations for adolescent respondents ($n = 154$) are presented below the diagonal.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 3

Summary of Means, Standard Deviations, Group Differences, and Intercorrelations Across Community Background

Variables	Catholic <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Protestant <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>t</i> (<i>p</i>)	1	2	3
1. Ingroup identification	3.96 (0.73)	3.62 (0.73)	-4.40 (<.01)**	—	0.16*	-0.10
2. Collective guilt	3.74 (0.75)	3.60 (0.79)	-1.76 (.08)	0.15	—	.15*
3. Intergroup forgiveness	3.17 (0.70)	3.25 (0.61)	1.17 (.24)	0.16	0.38**	—

Note. Intercorrelations for Catholic respondents ($n = 205$) are presented above the diagonal, and intercorrelations for Protestant respondents ($n = 158$) are presented below the diagonal.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Taken as a whole, the full model accounted for approximately 10% of variability in intergroup forgiveness (see Table 4). As predicted, there was a significant positive relation between collective guilt and intergroup forgiveness across all groups (adolescents and adults, Catholics and Protestants). Contrary to our prediction, in-group identification had no significant contribution to the model. Partially supporting our first hypothesis, there was a significant main effect of age on intergroup forgiveness, with adults reporting significantly higher intergroup forgiveness ($M = 3.33$, $SD = .63$) compared with adolescents ($M = 3.04$, $SD = .67$); $t(361) = 3.763$, $p < .001$. However, there was no main effect of community background on intergroup forgiveness (Catholic $M = 3.17$, $SD = .70$; Protestant $M = 3.25$, $SD = .61$; $t(361) = 1.812$, $p = .07$). There were no significant interaction effects when entered in the model separately or pooled. In other words, neither age nor community background moderated the relations between in-group identification and intergroup forgiveness, nor collective guilt and intergroup forgiveness; nor did age moderate the relation between community background and intergroup forgiveness.

Discussion

The current study was designed to assess the attitudes of Northern Irish adolescents and adults involved in a cross-community organization in the psychological elements of in-group identification, intergroup forgiveness, and collective guilt. Although researchers have demonstrated these elements to be highly correlated in Northern Irish adults (Hewstone et al., 2006; Myers et al., 2009), to the best of our knowledge, the results from this study are the first to

report that in-group identification is not significantly correlated with either intergroup forgiveness or collective guilt across community background and age in a sample of individuals affiliated with a Northern Irish cross-community organization. This finding does not support our third hypothesis in that in-group identification did not predict intergroup forgiveness across community background and age and did not emulate the overall empirical results in adult-only samples. This suggests that the sample used in the current study might possess qualitative differences from those in previous studies.

To start with, the findings of the current study may be due in part to the changes that have occurred since the signing of the Belfast Agreement in 1998. With the signing of the Agreement, there began a period of renewed determination to eliminate the conflict and to increase both social and political solidarity between Catholics and Protestants. With this type of environment, the adolescents of today have been brought up in communities that have been more open to change and new ideas. Today's Northern Irish adolescents have been raised in a drastically different political climate, one that has been encouraging positive interaction in the form of peace and nonviolent cooperation. This changing political atmosphere has prompted the development of peace-building initiatives and increased in-group acceptance of participation in cross-community organizations (Schubotz & Robinson, 2006). This type of change evidenced in a society such as Northern Ireland reveals the dynamic nature of conflict, and it provides support for intergroup contact initiatives that strive to change group and individual views on certain social issues and conflicts over time. The transformation of the social atmo-

Table 4
Moderated Regression Analyses Output

Variable	B	SE B	β	t	Sig.	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	SE est.	R ² change	F change	Sig. F change
(Constant)	3.385	0.057		58.895	<.001							
In-group identification	0.047	0.046	0.054	1.019	0.309							
Collective guilt**	0.185	0.044	0.216	4.233	<.001							
Age**	-0.255	0.068	-0.192	-3.763	<.001							
Community background	-0.124	0.068	-0.093	-1.812	0.071							
Model 1: IVs and DV**						0.322	0.104	0.094	0.627	0.104	10.343	<.001
Model 2: Collective Guilt $\times$ Age	0.072	0.087	0.055	0.826	0.409	0.325	0.105	0.093	0.628	0.002	0.683	0.409
Model 2: In-group I.D. $\times$ Age	-0.112	0.092	-0.078	-1.214	0.225	0.328	0.107	0.095	0.627	0.004	1.474	0.225
Model 2: Collective Guilt $\times$ Community Background	-0.138	0.086	-0.119	-1.601	0.110	0.332	0.110	0.098	0.626	0.006	2.562	0.110
Model 2: In-group I.D. $\times$ Community Background	-0.049	0.091	-0.041	-0.532	0.595	0.323	0.104	0.092	0.628	0.001	0.284	0.595
Model 2: Age $\times$ Community Background	-0.155	0.135	-0.100	-1.150	0.251	0.327	0.107	0.094	0.627	0.003	1.323	0.251

Note. Sig. = significance; est. = estimate. In-group identification and collective guilt were centered at their means. Age and community background were dichotomized. Intergroup forgiveness was entered as the dependent variable (DV) and all independent variables (IVs) were entered in Block 1. Interaction terms were entered independently in Block 2.

sphere in Northern Ireland can also be seen as a result of the combination of social, economic, and psychological factors that have brought establishing peace a more probable reality (Tam et al., 2008).

Moreover, there may be a developmental difference in how adolescents experience these psychological elements compared with adults. It has been suggested that differences between adolescents and adults' social experiences can lead to differences in their stages of moral development, which could in turn impact individuals' attitudes toward situations of conflict (Kohlberg, 1963/2008). Research has also demonstrated differences between adults and adolescents in their cognitive ability to reason and to integrate problem-solving skills, with middle-aged adults performing at a higher level and younger adults appearing to be more easily swayed by their own emotions (Blanchard-Fields, 1986). In addition to the previously established developmental differences between adolescents and adults, there still remain several possible explanations for the results found in the current study.

In addition, changing social norms in Northern Ireland may play a role in explaining the results. Past empirical research has demonstrated a stable relationship between in-group identification and conformity to the dominant in-group norms, with strong in-group identification being associated with higher conformity to in-group norms and an increased motivation to defend in-group identity (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Spears, Doosje, & Ellemers, 1997; White, Hogg, & Terry, 2002). Therefore, it is possible that the changing norms in Northern Ireland, especially in cross-community organizations, influence how in-group identification operates in terms of collective guilt and intergroup forgiveness.

Another factor that may be influential in explaining the current study results is the fact that the study sample was comprised of adolescents and adults currently affiliated with a cross-community organization. This is a unique sample in the sense that these individuals currently had the opportunity to engage in extended contact with members of the other religious community on a fairly regular basis. As previously mentioned, the emergence of a sociopolitical atmosphere that encourages peace and reconciliation has played an important role in the estab-

lishment of cross-community organizations in Northern Ireland. The opportunities that these organizations provide for contact with members of the out-group and for friendship building has helped in the promotion of peace and reconciliation. It is possible that the involvement in cross-community relational schemes at a young age really does have the potential to change attitudes and reduce conflict between groups. Therefore, it is important that these organizations continue to receive support, both from within their communities and abroad.

Furthermore, there is a possibility that the adolescents who participate in cross-community organizations experience the psychological elements of in-group identification, intergroup forgiveness, and collective guilt in a qualitatively different way than those who choose not to participate. Those who choose to participate may do so for a variety of reasons. For example, adolescents who embrace the opportunity to interact with members of the other community by participating in cross-community organizations may be intrinsically motivated rather than socially motivated. It could be possible that individuals choose to participate in a cross-community organization because they enjoy interacting with others and they take pleasure in taking part in activities that involve social groups; or in other words, such individuals are extraverted. On the contrary, it could also be possible that individuals participate because they feel compelled to do so by peers, family, or their school, whether or not they actually want to participate. With the influence that social phenomena such as socialization and social identity have on individuals, it would seem more likely that it is a combination of both personality factors and socialized behaviors that influence the participation of adolescents in cross-community organizations.

The current study also revealed that collective guilt was positively associated with intergroup forgiveness, which coincides with the empirical research in adults. This result supported our second hypothesis and was expected, considering the significant influence that adults have on the emotional development of adolescents, especially in a society such as Northern Ireland where religious, political, and social identity are so inextricably intertwined and embedded at a young age (Cairns & Darby, 1998). The current study provides correlational evi-

dence that it is possible to regard collective guilt as a beneficial psychological variable in that it can promote positive intergroup relations and encourage intergroup forgiveness.

Along with investigating the relationships among these three psychological elements, the results confirmed the existence of differences between Catholics and Protestants in in-group identification, with Catholics averaging higher scores. Because similar differences have been found between Catholic and Protestant adults (Hewstone et al., 2006), our results provide support for the claim that in-group identification still plays a major role in the lives of Northern Irish citizens, particularly for Catholic adolescents, who exhibit greater in-group identification than their Protestant counterparts. As discussed by Hewstone et al. (2004), the Catholic community has greater direct and indirect experience of the violence than the Protestant community. Thus, the results from the current study could be a reflection of the continuing ramifications for Catholics due to the disproportionate experiences of the violence in the past. It could also signify the occurrence of a transmission of attitudes from generation to generation and the extent of the influence that in-group identification has on the lives of adolescents in Northern Ireland.

Limitations

Before concluding with potential implications of these results, some potential limitations will be discussed. One limitation of the current study is the self-report nature of the survey method, in that it is extremely difficult to account for a social-desirability response bias. The desire of respondents to project a favorable image can impact the validity of survey measures by obscuring measurement of content variables (Paulhus, 1991).

A second limitation concerns the sample of Northern Irish adolescents whose responses were examined. The adolescents were affiliated with a cross-community organization in Northern Ireland whose goals included reducing prejudice and fostering mutual understanding in the hope of bringing about a more complete reconciliation between the two communities. Because of this affiliation and participation in this type of organization, it is not possible to generalize the results from this study to all adolescents in

Northern Ireland. Some would suggest that a control group comprised of adolescents that had not participated in a cross-community project should have been used; however, it is increasingly common for Northern Irish children to become engaged at a young age in some form of cross-community scheme, such as the programs of the Community Relations Council and the introduction of Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) and Cultural Heritage (CH) in the Northern Ireland curriculum.

Third, perhaps younger people, especially those in a period of transition to peace, would not only identify with their immediate religious community but also with a more global community of young people that dresses in the latest fashions, participates in communities on Facebook and Twitter, watches the same TV programs as their counterparts in other countries and so on. Perhaps the young people who choose to participate in a cross-community organization like the Ulster Project are particularly outward looking and likely to identify with a more cosmopolitan youth culture. As such, although the transition from conflict to peace in Northern Ireland might involve being less isolated and cut off, these young people might be becoming more a part of the global sociopolitical ecology, which was not investigated in the current study.

Last, the current study was cross-sectional in design and therefore did not allow for conclusions concerning causation to be drawn. However, the correlational findings of this research still provide important insight into the relationships among the three psychological elements in Northern Irish Catholic and Protestant adolescents. This said, there are several implications and conclusions that follow from the results of this study that help to illuminate the importance of continuing investigations in this body of psychological research.

Implications and Conclusions

Despite the acknowledged limitations of the current study, our research did reveal some important findings and future directions for the peace-building process in Northern Ireland, a country that is still experiencing the effects of long-standing conflict. The current study has

highlighted the importance of three psychological elements that are central to the reconciliation process: in-group identification, intergroup forgiveness, and collective guilt. Moreover, it has been proposed that the psychological ramifications of the conflict may outlast the more direct consequences like violence and economic costs. Cairns and Darby (1998) suggested: "As the more concrete problems are resolved, a new generation of problems emerges. . . . Experience in Northern Ireland would suggest that these new problems are more symbolic or psychological in nature and consequently more difficult to deal with" (p. 759).

As the current study has demonstrated, the psychological elements of the conflict are very much a part of the experience of Northern Irish adolescents. The conflict has become much less visible in the traditional ways many view conflict, such as physical violence. Yet, it appears that the conflict continues to manifest itself in the daily lives of individuals through social interactions and environments. For example, the continuation of the segregated living and schooling of Catholics and Protestants in many areas serves as evidence of the remaining conflict between the two groups. These types of situations decrease opportunities for intergroup contact for both adolescents and adults and ultimately perpetuate the conflict by contributing to the physical, social, and emotional separation of the two communities. Therefore, the need for continued cross-community schemes is perhaps more necessary now than ever before. Further investigations into understanding the psychological dimensions of the continued conflict, the benefits of cross-community involvement, and the motivations behind participation, may provide assistance in promoting community development and peace-building initiatives as a part of the ongoing reconciliation process.

The use of a longitudinal method in investigating the group and individual differences between Northern Irish Catholic and Protestant, adolescents and adults could be useful in building our understanding of the developmental, psychological, and social differences that exist between them during their transition from conflict to peace. Because adolescents have had much more opportunity than their parents and other adults to participate in cross-community organizations and to grow up in a society in which the majority have been actively striving

for peace and reconciliation, they represent a unique and growing body of individuals who we hope will one day serve as advocates for peace and reconciliation between their cohorts and religious communities in Northern Ireland.

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