Chapter 5
Integrated Education in Northern Ireland: Education for Peace?

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Introduction

Since the signing of the Good Friday/Belfast peace Agreement in Northern Ireland more than 15 years ago, tension between the two communities (Catholic and Protestant) continues to make the headlines almost on a daily basis (MacGinty, Muldoon, & Ferguson, 2007). While relations have substantially improved since the height of the conflict, the harsh reality is that segregation and negative attitudes remain a part of everyday life (Shirlow & Murtagh, 2006). With this in mind, there has been a push towards initiatives, both bottom up and top down, to improve intergroup relations. Many of these initiatives focus on educating young people.

With a focus on Northern Ireland, the aim of this chapter is to situate the movement towards integrated education and evaluate its effectiveness, in comparison to segregated education, using time series data from young people (16-year-olds) in the period from 2003 to 2013. The chapter concludes by presenting implications for education in Northern Ireland.

Intergroup Relations in Northern Ireland

Before presenting literature on the development of integrated education in Northern Ireland, a brief overview of the history of the conflict and how this is associated with current relations will be provided.

It has been well-documented that Ireland has witnessed conflict for centuries (Darby, 1995). The island was partitioned in 1921 after which events escalated cul-

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minating in the late 1960s and leading up to the recent conflict. At the most basic level, the recent conflict in Northern Ireland, known as the "troubles", began in 1968 following centuries of ongoing, but not always violent, conflict (Cairns, 1987; Darby, 1995). During this time, great inequality was experienced in the Northern Irish society. Unemployment was much higher among Catholics than Protestants; double the number of Catholics were on social security; Catholic children were more likely to finish school without qualifications and they were less likely to attend grammar schools than Protestant children (Cairns & Darby, 1998).

Often mistakenly viewed as a religious conflict, the troubles emerged due to a series of historical, religious, political, economic, and psychological factors (Cairns & Darby, 1998). It is commonly understood as a constitutional conflict between Protestants/Unionists/Loyalists and Catholics/Nationalists/ Republicans (Cairns & Darby, 1998). As is the case with any conflict, not everyone agrees on why the conflict began. The traditional Nationalist interpretation suggests that Ireland is one nation and Britain is at fault for keeping Ireland divided (Whyte, 1991). By contrast, the traditional Unionist interpretation claims that Unionists and Nationalists are distinct, and that the Nationalists' refusal to recognise this and to allow Unionists the same rights is the core of the problem (Whyte, 1991). One thing that is certain, however, is that competing political and national ideologies lie at the heart of the Northern Ireland conflict (Cairns & Darby, 1998).

The conflict has had devastating consequences on all aspects of Northern Irish society. It is estimated that approximately 3600 hundred people were killed and over 30,000 people were injured between 1968 and 1998 (Fitzduff & O'Hagan, 2009). Marking an "end" to the 30-year-period of sustained conflict, the road to peace started in 1998 with the signing of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. The Agreement aimed to ameliorate relations between the Protestant and Catholic communities, as well as between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and between Northern Ireland and Britain. The Agreement proposed reforms to Northern Irish society and the promotion of equality for all. This included the formation of a power-sharing government, the reform of the police force (including the name change from the Royal Ulster Constabulary to the Police Service of Northern Ireland), the release of political prisoners, and the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons. The Agreement also aspired to achieve tolerance and mixing in education, by later introducing the policy framework "A Shared Future" to help achieve this. Subsequent policy documents have only referred to integrated education in passing, while others have not mentioned it at all (see Hansson, O'Connor Bones, & McCord, 2013).

Despite the promises of the Agreement, relations in Northern Ireland remain fraught (MacGinty et al., 2007). Talks to deal with contentious issues surrounding parades and flags have started and failed time and again. It is even argued that violence is still a daily occurrence in Northern Irish society (McGrellis, 2005). Moreover, the consequences of the conflict are clear to see in many aspects of everyday life. Segregation is rife, the majority of children attend religiously segregated schools and almost 40 % of neighbourhoods are religiously segregated, with an even higher percentage in low socio-economic areas. Visual markers of identity and a sense of belonging are painted on public streets and walls. Flags (British Union Jack and Irish

Tricolour) continue to fly and an increasing number of peace lines have been erected since the height of the conflict (Shirlow & Murtagh, 2006). At the same time, Northern Ireland's demographics are changing. Data from the 2011 census shows no group holds a majority of the 1.811 m population, in which 45 % of the resident population self-identifies as Catholic and 48 % self-identifies as Protestant.

This changing Northern Irish landscape and the de-escalation of violence leave Northern Ireland at a crucial stage to cement the road to peace. One way to help achieve this is through the education of Northern Ireland's youth.

Education in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland has a long history of informal and formal education initiatives, aimed at improving intergroup relations (although often as a secondary goal). While there are many approaches to understanding the philosophy and rationale behind these interventions, such as through critical race theory (see Gillborn, 2006) and liberal multi-cultural education (see Jenks, Lee, & Kanpol, 2001), I situate my understanding and evaluation of these educational programmes in light of the principles of the contact hypothesis. At the most basic level, the contact hypothesis proposes that one way to reduce intergroup prejudice is by increasing intergroup contact between the groups (Allport, 1954). This works best when the contact occurs under favourable circumstances in which there is social or institutional support, there is equal status between the groups within the contact situation, and when there is co-operation in the pursuit of common goals. The contact hypothesis has been substantially empirically supported with decades of research in different countries and with different groups of people (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). The next section of this chapter will outline the development of informal education programmes and then move on to discuss the movement towards integrated education in Northern Ireland.

Informal education. During the height of the troubles, there was grave international concern for children and young people who were faced with the realities of living in highly conflicted areas, particularly during the marching season—a contentious time of the year. As a result of this concern, cross-community holiday schemes were developed (Robinson & Brown, 1991). The first scheme, arguably a form of informal peace education, took place in 1973 and since then there have been many schemes which vary greatly in their duration (from 5 days to 6 weeks) and their content (Trew, 1989). Typically, each scheme offers children the opportunity to travel to another country in Europe or the USA where they stay with local families.

Variations of these schemes still exist today, but their effectiveness in promoting community relations has come under fire (McKeown & Cairns, 2012). This is due to a number of key reasons. First, each scheme uses very different techniques (Trew, 1989). Second, many of the schemes do not directly address intergroup difference (McCartney, 1985; McWhirter & Trew, 1985; Robinson & Brown, 1991), and third, a lack of follow-up has meant that these holiday scheme experiences often do not transfer into the everyday lives of the children who partake in these initiatives (Robinson & Brown, 1991).

Despite these criticisms, time series survey data (among 16-year-olds living in Northern Ireland) lends support for cross-community programmes as a way to improve intergroup relations. Schubotz and Robinson (2006) reported that young people who attended cross-community programmes reacted more positively towards the outgroup than those who did not attend the programmes. Moreover, there is evidence that the majority of young people (82 % from the 2007–2008 data series) feel that relations would improve if more community programmes were available (Schubotz & McCarten, 2008). By providing further support for community programmes, research has shown that it can result in attitudinal and behavioural change. This was found when testing seating choice preference pre and post a cross-community programme (McKeown, Cairns, Stringer, & Rae, 2012).

Formal education. Recognising that children should be encouraged to interact with children from the "other" side more frequently than during the summer holidays, a series of initiatives (situated within the formal education system) have been developed over the past 40 years. These approaches have included the encouragement of contact between Protestant and Catholic schools through interschool programmes, the introduction of new curricula, and the emergence of integrated schools. Each of these will be discussed in turn, with a focus on the latter.

In the early mid-1980s, interschool contact initiatives were introduced into the Northern Ireland education system. These initiatives were originally funded by the Department for Education with the aim of increasing contact between Catholic and Protestant schools (Richardson, 1997). Smith and Dunn (1990) give a detailed account of an initiative in 1986, the Inter School Links Project, which involved eight schools (three elementary and five secondary). They reported the positive effects the scheme had on parents, pupils, and the teachers involved. Since the introduction of this specific project, additional funding was secured to develop further initiatives, but similar to the holiday schemes previously discussed, criticisms have been raised regarding their effectiveness in promoting positive relations. In addition to failing to discuss controversial issues surrounding the Northern Ireland conflict, the school contact initiatives were often viewed as a day off from school for the young people involved (Kilpatrick & Leitch, 2004; O'Connor, Hartop, & McCully, 2002).

The acknowledgement of the need for improved community relations in Northern Ireland also led to education curricula reform. In 1989, Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) and Cultural Heritage (CH) were introduced into the school curricula (Richardson, 1997). In comparison to earlier initiatives, EMU and CH were not introduced to promote increased contact between Protestant and Catholic young people. Rather, the premise behind these initiatives was to promote acceptance of difference and to ensure fairness and respect (Richardson, 1997). While marking a change in the educational landscape, EMU and CH have been criticised for producing less than optimal outcomes (Gallagher, 2010).

At the same time when these informal and formal educational initiatives were introduced, Northern Ireland witnessed the emergence of a new type of school, which transformed the education system from one of religious division to one that now offered the opportunity for integration.

Integrated education. Today, the education system in Northern Ireland is divided into four types: controlled (mostly Protestant), grant-maintained (mostly Catholic), voluntary (grammar schools which are either predominantly Protestant or Catholic), and planned-integrated schools. The latter refers to schools which are driven to educate Catholics, Protestants, and young people regardless of faith or ethnicity, together (www.nicie.org.uk). In today's Northern Ireland, there are approximately 60 integrated schools (40 elementary and 30 secondary), with 5–7 % of young people attending these schools.

Integrated education in Northern Ireland is the result of a bottom-up process whereby parents, from both sides of the divide, came together to campaign to educate "All Children Together". Known as ACT, the group engaged in campaigns for a number of years until 1981 when Lagan College, Northern Ireland's first planned-integrated secondary school, opened. The 1989 Education Reform Order (Northern Ireland) promised to aid and facilitate the development of integrated schools; up until that period, integrated schools were funded by parents and charities [see Hansson et al. (2013) for a review of policy changes relating to integrated education from 1999 to 2012].

Since the Education Reform Order, new schools have opened and others have transformed to integrated status (McGonigle, Smith, & Gallagher, 2003). In order to classify as an integrated school and to receive funding, a school must maintain at least 30 % children of the smallest religious (Protestant/Catholic) community in the school's area, or have a ratio of 40:40 (Catholic:Protestant) and 20 children from other backgrounds. Commentators argue that integrated education in Northern Ireland is becoming increasingly popular, resulting in oversubscription (Hansson et al., 2013) [see Smith (2001) for further details on the emergence of integrated education in Northern Ireland].

With the underlying premise of integrated education to educate young people from all communities together, it is unsurprising that integrated schools have been viewed as an important way to improve relations between Protestant and Catholics living in Northern Ireland (Donnelly & Hughes, 2006). This is because integrated schools provide an opportunity for intergroup contact to occur, where it may not have been possible before, making integrated education an exciting opportunity for social change (Hayes & McAllister, 2009).

Research on the effectiveness of integrated education in promoting more positive group relations has produced mixed results. Early research found that young people attending integrated schools reported a significant increase in outgroup friendship over time (Irwin, 1991). Stringer et al. (2000) provided further support for this assertion, observing that young people attending integrated schools, compared to those attending religiously segregated schools, self-reported experiencing more intergroup contact and were more likely to support mixed religion marriage. In addition to increased friendship formation, research from a national survey (1996–2007) of Northern Irish adults also shows that compared to those who attended segregated schools, those who attended integrated schools were more optimistic about future intergroup relations in Northern Ireland (Hayes & McAllister, 2009).

Despite these positive outcomes, there have been some criticisms associated with integrated education. To begin with, each integrated school has a different philosophy with regard to its role in building peace; there is no single model of integrated

education (McGlynn, Niens, Cairns, & Hewstone, 2004). Some teachers are of the opinion that the interaction of Catholics and Protestants in a school environment is sufficient, while others embrace additional activities to promote relations (Kilpatrick & Leitch, 2004). This has also been observed among the discourse of school principals (Montgomery, Fraser, McGlynn, Smith, & Gallagher, 2003). This is coupled with the fact that trainee teachers in Northern Ireland are not required to learn about community relations as part of their training (a voluntary module exists).

Given the wide range of ideas regarding what constitutes integrated education, it is not surprising that critics have commented (based on previous research) that many integrated schools do not facilitate the conditions outlined by the contact hypothesis (Niens & Cairns, 2008). The authors claim that this may be because many schools have transformed from segregated to integrated status, because schools often avoid discussing controversial issues, such as religion and politics, and because schools cannot merely rely on bringing young people together to promote relations. However, if the purpose of a school is understood to be primarily for learning, perhaps too much is expected from integrated education. This is particularly true when considering the following definition of peace education:

> Peace education is the process of teaching people about the threat of violence and strategies for peace. Peace educators strive to provide insights into how to transform a culture of violence into a peaceful culture. They have to build a consensus about what peace strategies can bring maximum benefit to the group (Harris, 2010, p. 11).

This may be part of the reason why there has been a movement towards a shared-education agenda.[1] Nevertheless, integrated education arguably has an important role to play in promoting intergroup relations. If we understand peacebuilding as a means to handle structural violence (i.e. the structural inequalities existing between Protestants and Catholics) and to promote social justice, then perhaps promoting intergroup contact through integrated education is a potential way to help achieve this in Northern Ireland (see Christie, Wagner, & Winter, 2001 for a review of peacebuilding). In support of the peacebuilding potential of integrated education, McGlynn (2004) argues that it is through integrated education that young people can learn about diversity and how to embrace identity. Other commentators have established frameworks for understanding how integrated education is related to peace and reconciliation across different contexts.[2]

Present Research

In addition to reviewing the role of education in helping to build peace in Northern Ireland, this chapter presents 11 years of cross-sectional national survey data collected among 16-year-olds during the period from 2003 to 2013. The aim is to address the following research questions:

[1] The purpose of this chapter is to relate findings to integrated education, so rather than review shared education here, I will return to this in the discussion section.

[2] For a review of the 3Rs of integrated education; respect, reconciliation and recognition, please see Ben-Nun (2013) who compares integrated education in Israel and Northern Ireland.

1. Do respondents attending integrated schools have more positive attitudes to mixing (school, neighbourhood, workplace) than those attending segregated schools?
2. Are respondents attending segregated schools more likely to think that religion will always make a difference in Northern Ireland, compared to those attending integrated schools?
3. Are any observed trends consistent over time?

It was predicted that respondents attending an integrated school would have stronger preferences for religious mixing and would be less likely to think that religion will always make a difference, when compared to respondents attending a segregated school.

Method

Sample

The sample was taken from data gathered for the Young Life and Times (YLT) survey (2003–2013). The survey monitors the attitudes and behaviour of young people in Northern Ireland. The respondents were children who turned 16 during February/March of the year in which the survey was conducted. Participants were given the opportunity to complete the survey either by post, online, or telephone, using their unique identification number indicated in the initial survey letter. During the period from 2003 to 2013, a total of 10,538 young people were involved in the survey. Table 5.1 presents the number of respondents for each annual survey.

Materials

All surveys contain demographics with additional questions relating to general health, community relations, attitudes to ageing, and others being added and removed over the years. For the purposes of the present research, questions of interest included: schools attended (e.g. What type of school do you attend? If you have left school, what type of school did you last attend?); preference for mixing in school (e.g. When deciding to which school you want to send your children, would you prefer a school with children of only your own religion, or a mixed-religion school?); the workplace (e.g. If you were looking for a job, would you prefer a workplace with people of only your own religion, or a mixed-religion workplace?); the neighbourhood (e.g. If you had a choice, would you prefer to live in a neighbourhood with people of only your own religion, or in a mixed-religion neighbourhood?); and attitudes towards religious difference (e.g. Do you think religion will always make a difference to the way people feel about each other in Northern Ireland?).

Table 5.1 Number of respondents per year

Year	Number of respondents
2003	902
2004	824
2005	819
2006	772
2007	627
2008	941
2009	857
2010	786
2011	1433
2012	1210
2013	1367

Results

Analysis

Data sets from the 2003 to 2013 young life and times survey, made available through the ARK (archive research knowledge) website, were collated and re-coded in SPSS. A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between type of school attended (integrated or segregated) and responses to questions about preference for mixing (school, workplace, and school) and perceptions of religious difference. In addition to comparisons, which included all participants, separate tests were carried out for each year.

School attendance trends. For school attended, participants were asked to select between: planned-integrated, grammar, secondary, Irish language, special, or other schools. For the purposes of the present research, participants were categorised as attending either a planned-integrated school or a segregated school (encompassing all other answer options) (Table 5.2).

Trends show those attending integrated schools are the minority within our sample and this is reflective of the Northern Ireland education system. Moreover, for the majority of years (except for 2007 and 2012), our sample of those who attended an integrated school encompasses more Protestants than Catholics.

Preference for mixing. When asked which school they would send their children to, whether they would prefer to live in a mixed/segregated neighbourhood, and whether they would like to work in a mixed/segregated workplace, participants were asked to select between, "own religion only", "mixed religion", "other" or "don't know". For ease of analysis, respondents who chose "other" or "don't know" were recorded as missing data, leaving two categories of mixed religion or own religion only for analysis.

School. Combing respondents from all years, a chi-square test reveals that those who attended integrated schools were significantly more likely to report that they would send their child to an integrated school, compared to those who attended a

Table 5.2 Number of respondents (depending on religious identity) attending an integrated or segregated school by year

	Integrated		Segregated	
	Protestant	Catholic	Protestant	Catholic
2003	21	18	344	368
2004	15	13	298	337
2005	10	10	316	302
2006	15	9	266	274
2007	7	10	241	242
2008	20	12	331	359
2009	24	10	287	313
2010	18	13	252	297
2011	33	29	467	522
2012	25	27	402	431
2013	40	18	425	497

segregated school, $\chi^2(18,569) = 339.72$, $p < .001$. This finding was also consistent on a yearly basis from 2003 to 2013. Descriptive percentages are presented in Table 5.3 and chi-square tests, per year, are presented in Table 5.4.

Neighbourhood. For desires towards mixing in the neighbourhood, a chi-square test revealed that overall, respondents who attended an integrated school were more likely to support living in a mixed-religion neighbourhood, than those who attended a segregated school, $\chi^2(18,383) = 82.86$, $p < .001$. This observation was supported across the majority of years, except for 2007, 2009, and 2010, although the latter was close to significance ($p = .053$) (see Tables 5.3 and 5.4).

Workplace. In addition to having a stronger preference for mixing in the school and neighbourhood, it was observed that respondents attending integrated schools reported a significantly stronger desire for a mixed religion workplace, than those attending segregated schools, $\chi^2(18,406) = 35.65$, $p < .001$. This finding, however, was not supported across all years with data from 2005, 2007, and 2009 to 2012 finding no difference between the types of education on preference for workplace mixing (see Tables 5.3 and 5.4).

Religion will always make a difference. In addition to examining preferences for religious mixing, respondents were also asked whether they think that religion will always make a difference to the way people feel about each other in Northern Ireland. Respondents were given the option to select between "yes", "no", "other", or "don't know" as an answer. For ease of interpretation, responses in this research were categorised as "yes", "no", or "missing" ("other", or "don't know").

Combing respondents from all years, a chi-square test found no difference in responses comparing those who attended an integrated or segregated school, $\chi^2(19,082) = 1.68$, $p = .194$. When comparing by year, it was only in 2004 when significant differences were observed in which respondents who attended an integrated school were significantly less likely to say that religion will always make a difference in Northern Ireland than those who attended a segregated school (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.3 Percentage of respondents who chose a preference for mixed-religion workplace, neighbourhood, and to send their child to a mixed-religion school, and who state that religion will always make a difference in Northern Ireland

	School	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Mixing in school	Integrated	86.8	92.7	88.2	86.5	95.0	89.6	88.9	95.7	87.8	95.7	93.3
	Segregated	51.1	45.3	49.2	47.4	53.5	48.7	49.3	50.8	54.2	56.2	57.9
Mixing in neighbourhood	Integrated	80.8	78.6	84.4	88.2	80.0	85.7	81.1	83.0	90.7	92.8	84.4
	Segregated	59.2	57.6	64.7	63.1	73.0	66.6	71.0	69.6	73.1	66.3	73.3
Mixing in workplace	Integrated	92.0	92.9	91.2	97.1	85.0	97.8	92.5	93.5	93.8	94.6	98.9
	Segregated	80.4	78.5	81.9	84.0	85.3	84.0	87.1	84.2	89.7	89.1	90.3
Religion always	Integrated	94.0	82.5	78.8	89.2	90.5	90.9	87.5	87.2	78.9	84.3	89.7
	Segregated	91.0	92.1	89.6	88.8	87.9	86.1	89.6	85.8	84.5	87.3	87.9

Table 5.4 Chi-square test comparing school type and responses on preference for religious mixing (school, neighbourhood, and workplace) and whether religion will always make a difference in Northern Ireland

Year	Mixing in school	Mixing in neighbourhood	Mixing in workplace	Religion will always make a difference
2003	$\chi^2(1807) = 25.407, p < .001$	$\chi^2(1775) = 9.458, p = .002$	$\chi^2(1785) = 4.112, p = .043$	$\chi^2(1839) = .452, p = .502$
2004	$\chi^2(1726) = 34.866, p < .001$	$\chi^2(1705) = 7.162, p = .007$	$\chi^2(1678) = 4.985, p = .026$	$\chi^2(1750) = 4.547, p = .033$
2005	$\chi^2(1693) = 19.751, p < .001$	$\chi^2(1678) = 5.230, p = .022$	$\chi^2(1680) = 1.917, p = .166$	$\chi^2(1746) = 3.824, p = .051$
2006	$\chi^2(1624) = 21.315, p < .001$	$\chi^2(1597) = 8.877, p = .003$	$\chi^2(1596) = 4.235, p = .040$	$\chi^2(1644) = .005, p = .941$
2007	$\chi^2(1530) = 13.378, p < .001$	$\chi^2(1509) = .408, p = .480$	$\chi^2(1509) = .001, p = .973$	$\chi^2(1549) = .129, p = .720$
2008	$\chi^2(1759) = 30.134, p < .001$	$\chi^2(1720) = 7.643, p = .006$	$\chi^2(1708) = 6.420, p = .011$	$\chi^2(1797) = .829, p = .362$
2009	$\chi^2(1666) = 31.117, p < .001$	$\chi^2(1671) = 2.459, p = .117$	$\chi^2(1667) = 1.267, p = .260$	$\chi^2(1740) = .247, p = .619$
2010	$\chi^2(1624) = 35.393, p < .001$	$\chi^2(1636) = 3.748, p = .053$	$\chi^2(1628) = 2.863, p = .091$	$\chi^2(1679) = .078, p = .780$
2011	$\chi^2(11,162) = 41.164, p < .001$	$\chi^2(11,122) = 14.566, p < .001$	$\chi^2(11,131) = 1.709, p = .191$	$\chi^2(11,207) = 1.969, p = .161$
2012	$\chi^2(1906) = 41.735, p < .001$	$\chi^2(1911) = 20.650, p < .001$	$\chi^2(1938) = 2.183, p = .140$	$\chi^2(1994) = .540, p = .462$
2013	$\chi^2(11,072) = 42.857, p < .001$	$\chi^2(11,137) = .234, p = .629$	$\chi^2(11,086) = 7.257, p = .007$	$\chi^2(11,137) = .234, p = .629$

It is worth noting here that the percentage of those thinking religion will always make a difference is particularly high (above 82 %) among respondents regardless of year or school attended (see Table 5.3).

Discussion

Education is a powerful tool for promoting peace (Harris, 2010) and is used across the globe. The aim of this chapter was to review the effectiveness of integrated education as a tool for promoting peace in Northern Ireland. In addition to reviewing the literature, it presented data from the Young Life and Times Survey to compare preferences for mixing and attitudes towards religion in Northern Ireland depending on the type of school (integrated or segregated). In the remainder of this chapter, the results observed from the survey data will be discussed in relation to previous literature.The problems associated with conducting research in integrated schools will then be discussed, followed by a brief introduction to a new educational initiative, shared education, and implications on education for peace in Northern Ireland.

When responses from all survey years were combined, results consistently showed that participants who attended an integrated school were significantly more likely to prefer to work in a mixed-religion workplace, to send their child to a mixed-religion school and to live in a mixed-religion neighbourhood, compared to those who attended a segregated school. These observations were consistent, for the most part, across years for school and neighbourhood mixing. However, they were not consistent for mixing in the workplace. In addition, the percentages of preference for mixing in the workplace appear to be much higher than participants' responses to mixing in school or in the neighbourhood. This may be because the workplace is an abstract concept for the young respondents who are either still in school or have only recently left. As a result, they may be more likely to support mixing in the workplace than in school or the neighbourhood, both of which represent a reality for them.

These findings go some way to support previous research which has demonstrated behavioural effects of increased contact through integrated education. For example, Hayes and McAllister (2009) found that those who attended integrated schools were significantly more likely to have more intergroup contact through friendship and residency than those who didn't attend integrated schools. Moreover, research has repeatedly shown that attending an integrated school is associated with increased outgroup friendship formation (Hayes & McAllister, 2009; Irwin, 1991; Stringer et al., 2000). These positive attitudes and behaviours are important and may filter into further outcomes as there is evidence to suggest that pupils attending integrated schools are more liberal concerning "mixed marriage" (Stringer et al., 2000).

Research and Policy Implications

As integrated education appears to be slowly disappearing from the policy agenda (Hansson et al., 2013), this chapter serves as a way to highlight the importance of keeping integrated education at the forefront. Integrated education has the ability to improve intergroup attitudes and increase friendship formation, arguably a way to help build peace and move towards social justice. While it is recognised that integrated education is not the only means to promoting relations (see the later section on shared education), it should still be considered as a viable option. This is particularly important as integrated schools continue to be over-subscribed. Perhaps now is the time when Northern Ireland should move towards opening more integrated schools and put the rights of Northern Ireland's children, to live together in a peaceful society, above the demands of parents and others to maintain a segregated education system (see McGlynn, 2004).

The observed findings are particularly relevant in light of contact theory which claims that increased (positive) contact can improve intergroup relations (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). What cannot be assumed, however, is that preferences towards mixing will result in individuals engaging in intergroup contact with outgroup members. Therefore, it would be important to see how this translates in behaviour, for example, through exploring social networks and friendships and comparing these across types of schools, neighbourhoods, and religious identity.

While differences were observed in mixing preferences comparing school type, no such difference was found when considering perception of religious relations. Regardless of the type of school, percentages show that the overwhelming majority of respondents report that religion will always make a difference in Northern Ireland. This is a disappointing finding, not only for the effects of integrated education, but in general, especially given that Northern Ireland's youth perceive a future in which religion will always matter. It would be interesting to see how this compares to the older generations living in Northern Ireland to understand if young people are particularly pessimistic as they have not experienced the height of the conflict and, therefore, may think relations are worse than they are.

The results presented here offer some indication of the effects of integrated education on basic measures of intergroup relations, but are limited due to their cross-sectional nature and the reliance on self-report measures, arguably problematic when aiming to understand controversial issues. Moreover, the data is constrained due to the limited number of participants who attended an integrated school. In an ideal world, research would follow a triangulated approach and be longitudinal in nature, but aside from monetary and time constraints, conducting research in integrated schools can be difficult for a number of reasons.

The Problem of Conducting Research in Integrated Schools

Integrated schools have been criticised for their differing approach towards improving intergroup relations (Niens & Cairns, 2008). In particular, for having an avoidance culture (i.e. when assuming that physical co-presence is enough to promote relations) and for the rationale to obtain integrated status (i.e. some schools arguably transformed to integrated status to prevent closure or for financial reasons) (Niens & Cairns, 2008). In addition to these criticisms, commentators have argued that there have been problems with conducting research in integrated schools, making it difficult to assess their effectiveness (Stringer et al., 2009). According to Stringer et al. (2009), this is because of four key reasons. First, there is often strong resistance from gatekeepers, such as the school itself, teachers, parents, and administrators who do not want research to be conducted. Second, there may be concern with regard to the research findings. For example, if a school is found to be a poor example of integrated education, this could have serious consequences in terms of finance, recruitment, and general perceptions of the integrated education sector. Third, it can be difficult to understand what is meant by successful integrated education. For example, success can be defined in different ways, such as a focus on learning outcomes, simply bringing young people together, or the formation of intergroup friendships and the promotion of more peaceful relations. Fourth, there is a problem with the measures which are used. This is particularly salient when research focuses on cross-sectional, self-report measures, which arguably cannot tell us much about behavioural change over time (true of the present research). Similarly, self-report can be problematic when asking individuals to respond to sensitive issues, such as religion and intergroup relations. In these instances, respondents may be more likely to give socially accepted responses. This critique has been applied to contact research in a more general sense (Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2005), sparking a movement towards the analysis of intergroup behaviour as it occurs in everyday life settings (e.g. Dixon & Durrheim, 2003; Koen & Durrheim, 2009). As an attempt to address this research problem in the Northern Ireland context, McKeown et al. (2012) examined the seating behaviour of young people in the classrooms of integrated schools. Despite this attempt to examine behaviours, it is still limited, since it is difficult to make conclusions from these behaviours. As such, we need to move towards a more comprehensive approach to understanding integrated education as a tool for promoting peace in Northern Ireland. It is only through doing so that we will be able to fully understand integrated education's potential.

Moving Beyond Integrated Education

Integrated education has existed in Northern Ireland since 1981 and produced some positive outcomes, but more than 20 years later, it still accounts for only approximately 5–7 % of the school population. As such, the movement towards integrated education has not developed as was hoped by earlier researchers (e.g. Fraser, 1973).

Recognising that it is unlikely that the majority of young people will attend integrated schools in the near future, an alternative has been put forward to help promote group relations for the majority of children who attend religiously segregated schools. This is particularly important, since although segregated schools are not the cause of the problems in Northern Ireland, they existed before the recent conflict, the majority of children in Northern Ireland attend these segregated schools. This alternative is known as shared education. According to the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) on shared education:

> Shared education involves two or more schools or other educational institutions from different sectors working in collaboration with the aim of delivering educational benefits to learners, promoting the efficient and effective use of resources, and promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion (Connolly, Purvis, & O'Grady, 2013, p. 17).

Unlike integrated education, shared education encompasses a broader goal, one which focuses on promoting relations (Hughes, 2011). At a basic level, shared education aims to facilitate collaboration between schools and encourage sharing in the pursuit of high quality education (www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk).

The focus on shared education has increased following the implementation of the Sharing Education Programme (SEP) in 2007, which uses psychological theories (including intergroup contact) to bring together young people from different schools and to promote the sharing of facilities, as well as general collaborations between schools. In an evaluation of the programme, Hughes, Lolliot, Hewstone, Schmid, and Carlisle (2012) report on its effectiveness at promoting intergroup relations, using data collected among young people who had taken part in the programme.

The momentum towards shared education continues today. In 2011, the Northern Ireland Executive set up its 2011–2015 strategic plan to establish a MAG to make recommendations on shared education, to enable all children to engage in a shared-education programme, and to increase the number of schools that share facilities. Subsequent to this plan, in 2013, the MAG published a 190-page report on shared education. It made 20 key recommendations for the government to consider, of which 17 related specifically to the advancement of shared education. As shared education moves forward, it is hoped that it will work alongside integrated education (arguably a form of shared education) and grow momentum to help create a more peaceful Northern Irish society. This is particularly important as Northern Ireland continues to become increasingly ethnically and religiously diverse.

Conclusion

Educating for peace remains as important as ever, as societies become increasingly diverse and as war continues to dominate the headlines. Peace education has the ability to profoundly change the lives of many and is enriched through its diversity in approach, in academic background, and in context. Without doubt, educational initiatives have helped Northern Ireland move towards a culture of peace.

In particular, by increasing the likelihood that individuals will encounter those from the "other side" and, therefore, reducing prejudice and widening friendship networks. The present research suggests that while shared education is an important step forward, we should not forget about the vital role integrated education can play in promoting peace in Northern Ireland. That said, we must hold caution because arguably the main aim of schooling is to promote learning, rather than peacebuilding, and as such, we should keep this in mind when evaluating integrated education's impact on improving intergroup relations. This is particularly relevant if we compare definitions of peace education, which often focus on teaching individuals how to address the cycle of violence. Despite this cautionary note, integrated education and associated programmes can be understood as education for peace. Moving forward, integrated education and shared education have great potential for continuing to transform Northern Ireland to a culture of peace.

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