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THE CONTRIBUTION OF FAMILY RESILIENCE TO POSITIVE
ATTACHMENT AMONG MIDDLE-AGE ADULTS FROM NORTHERN IRELAND

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work


by
Nicola Gillen
June 2000

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ABSTRACT

In contrast to previous studies which have focused on pathology and negative outcomes, this study examined the contribution of family resilience present in childhood to adjustment in middle adulthood among a sample of the population from Northern Ireland who grew up during the period of intensified violence beginning in 1969. The research design was primarily qualitative in nature, with a small quantitative component, and involved the submission of a questionnaire devised to measure family resilience in childhood and achievement of intimacy in adulthood via the Internet. The results overall demonstrated that the majority of participants had attained intimacy in adulthood and that their families of childhood had embodied many of the identified factors of resilience. This study potentially contributes to social work practice by increasing an understanding of ways to enhance the psychosocial development of not only people in Northern Ireland, but of people in all parts of the world faced with chronic violence or stress.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. McCaslin for her guidance, direction, faith in me, and ongoing encouragement from the beginning ideas of this project through to the end, despite others' views that it was "too ambitious" to undertake in the available time period. I also need to thank some of the extremely helpful organizations that provided me with information on the current events in Northern Ireland and on the status of the peace process, including the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Southern California and those involved in the CAIN Project in Ireland. I am incredibly grateful to the participants who opened their hearts and shared their life stories with me, even though some of the information may have at times evoked some painful memories. I am grateful as well to my family for their support and belief in me not only in completing this project, but throughout the last three years in this program. My classmates and friends also deserve my gratitude and affection for their advice, support, and willingness to listen to my worries and complaints throughout the entire process. Finally, I would like to say to my best friend/my love/soon-to-be husband, Quinn, that I could not have done this without your unconditional love, your constant encouragement and cheering me on, and the promise of spending the rest of my

life with you. Words can not say how thankful I am for
all you have done and for all you are.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
Problem Statement	1
Problem Focus	5
Literature Review	6
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS	22
Study Design	22
Sampling	25
Data Collection and Instruments	25
Protection of Human Subjects	28
Data Analysis	29
RESULTS	32
DISCUSSION	41
APPENDIX A: Questionnaire	50
APPENDIX B: Informed Consent	52
APPENDIX C: Debriefing Statement	53
REFERENCES	54

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Avoidance and Attachment Scores.....	33
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INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of factors of family resilience present in childhood on adjustment in middle adulthood among a sample of adults from Northern Ireland who grew up during the period of intensified violence (referred to as the Troubles) beginning in 1969 and continuing throughout the decade of the 1980s. While previous studies have focused on pathology and negative outcomes in relation to children growing up in the violence, this study aspired to identify how the presence of family resilience had potentially contributed to positive psychosocial development, conceptualized as intimacy/attachment, in middle adulthood among the Northern Irish who were between the ages of 1 and 18 in 1969.

In support of this hypothesis, research demonstrates, in terms of the psychological effects on children, that, like adults, the majority of Northern Irish children have adapted well to the political violence, and while they may experience nightmares, neurosis, phobias, and nervous debility, these problems tend to be temporary. However, it also appears that the most vulnerable children are the most likely to suffer serious and lasting mental and emotional problems requiring medical treatment. The most vulnerable children appear to be those who are shy or

timid, those with personality weaknesses, and especially those who have one or both parents who are themselves psychologically disturbed by the violence. Almost every child exposed to rioting and other forms of political violence experiences acute emotional reactions, such as nightmares, difficulty eating or sleeping, and fear of separation from parents. While these anxiety reactions tend to disappear of their own accord shortly after the violence subsides, a minority of the children exposed to rioting, bombing, shooting, and other forms of political violence develop severe psychological problems that persist for long periods of time and require medical attention.

As part of the overview of this problem, it is helpful to understand the historical context. Although the violence has been present for centuries in Northern Ireland, it significantly escalated in 1969 when the Irish Republic Army (IRA), a guerilla military organization supported by a large Catholic minority, sought to defeat British military forces (which are supported by the Protestant majority) in an attempt to achieve reunification with the Irish Republic. More than 3600 individuals have been killed since 1969 in Northern Ireland, with at least 6800 people having had the experience of one of their immediate family members being killed in a Troubles-related incident. Almost 26 per cent

of all victims have been under the age of 21 (Fay, Morrissey, & Smyth, 1999, p. 201). Consequently, children and young people were forced to witness in some form or other the ever-escalating cycles of violence.

Additionally, because more than one-third of the Northern Ireland population was under 17 years of age in 1989, these individuals have lived their entire lives within the present period of violence which began in 1969 (Tibbetts, 1989).

Although this problem may seem foreign to us in the United States, it was important to study and can have an impact on social work practice both here and in Northern Ireland. As will be presented in the Literature Review section, many children have been negatively affected by the years of violence, which can contribute to ongoing emotional, behavioral, and consequently social problems. Further, this type of study and more like it are needed in light of the efforts by the United States to expedite the peace process in Northern Ireland, as well as the intensive efforts in Northern Ireland in the past few years to maintain a ceasefire and to create a power sharing government toward achieving peace. There are always consequences to every action, even those which seem to be in the best interest of another. If peace is established, consideration needs to be given to peoples' ability to adapt to the radical change which would be the

result. It would be helpful, in this case, to understand the factors which contribute to resilience so that appropriate prevention and intervention efforts can be made to deal with the stress accompanying the changes. The United States needs to be aware of these issues as well as they work with Northern Ireland and England toward peace.

Another reason for the importance of this study was the report by Donnelly (1995) that more adolescents in Northern Ireland exhibit low or mild levels of depression or distress, which may be associated with living in a society that appears unable or unwilling to resolve long-standing differences which often lead to violence. It is suggested that while the political violence may not have caused any marked increase in serious psychiatric illness, it may have stimulated an increase in normal anxiety, particularly among the more vulnerable and especially those with a previous history of psychiatric disturbance. Additional research is needed to assess the impact of political violence and socioeconomic deprivation on the mental health of young people living in Northern Ireland, and to identify ways to positively impact their psychosocial development (such as by enhancing family resilience), which this study intended to do.

Problem Focus

It has been demonstrated by numerous research studies that growing up amid the conflict and political violence in Northern Ireland can have detrimental effects on the mental health of children and young people. However, there is a lack of research on the long-term psychosocial development of adults who have been exposed to that violence for most of their childhoods. A number of studies show that factors related to family resilience which were present in a person's childhood can contribute to positive adjustment as an adult, despite exposure to severe stress. However, the family has been a neglected resource in interventions aiming to foster resilience in children and adults. Many of the studies conducted specifically on the Northern Irish population corroborate this hypothesis, in that they emphasize the significant impact of parental and familial support, willingness to talk about the violence, and overall response to the environmental stress.

This study, then, addressed the problem of growing up surrounded by violence in Northern Ireland by seeking to recognize those factors which increase the likelihood that positive adjustment will be attained in middle adulthood as evidenced primarily by achievement of intimacy, as measured by attachment. It was this particular stage of development which was examined because those adults who

were between the ages of 1 and 18 when the violence escalated in 1969 would now be between the ages of 31 and 48 in middle adulthood. A small sample of this population was accessed on-line, and a questionnaire was administered which incorporated factors related to family resilience present in childhood, as well as factors present in adulthood which would demonstrate successful psychosocial adjustment in terms of achievement of intimacy.

The research question which this study addressed was the following: Among a sample of adults from Northern Ireland who were between the ages of 1 and 18 in 1969, do factors related to family resilience present in their childhoods contribute to positive adjustment in middle adulthood as manifested primarily by the achievement of intimacy?

Literature Review

In order to understand the effects of chronic violence in Northern Ireland on the people who live there, it is necessary first to possess some awareness of the history of the conflict. Ireland was divided in 1921, with the six counties in the north (Ulster) remaining part of the United Kingdom and maintaining a two-thirds Protestant majority. The rest of Ireland, with twenty-six counties and a predominantly Catholic population, eventually attained political independence from Great Britain. In Northern Ireland, the majority of Protestants

want to maintain the current political status and retain their British identity, while most Catholics want to break with Britain and become part of a reunited Ireland (McNamee & McNamee, 1985). MacDonald (1986) discusses the impact of colonialism on Northern Ireland, asserting that by privileging colonizers (the British) over the colonized (Irish), Britain dichotomized the social order into hostile communities, with Catholic inferiority the necessary corollary of Protestant superiority. He makes the point that, in the face of this polarization, Britain has been unable to fashion a compromise between the two communities. He further maintains that with co-optation thus closed to Britain as a viable strategy for restoring order, Britain is unable to impose a solution to Northern Ireland's violence, and it must instead rely on repression to contain the conflict it cannot mediate (MacDonald, 1986). Fraser's (1973) hypothesis corroborates this argument by proposing that the position of the Catholic in Ulster is virtually identical to that of the African-American in the United States and, to a lesser extent, that of other ethnic minority groups. He holds that both groups suffer from the same social pressures and stereotypes and that they respond with the same forms of protest. He suggests, then, that it is only in this context that the Northern Ireland conflict can be fully

understood, and in which the most realistic solutions can be developed.

As Fay, Morrissey, and Smyth (1999) point out, it is imperative to understand that it is only since 1994, when the cease-fires came into effect, that it now seems possible to turn our attention to and honestly study the issue of loss in Northern Irish society and the suffering that so many people have endured. They claim that until that point no one dared to realize the extent of the damage in case it had to be re-lived should the cease-fires, and the attempt at peace, fail. The authors cite a poignant quote from a mother living in constant violence in Beirut as representative of the common feeling in Northern Ireland: "Let's talk about psychology when the war is over. When the war is over, I will dream all those dreams I cannot afford to now...If I were to sit down and think of my emotional state, I would break down." This issue of silence is an important one to understand in terms of the effects of the long-term violence on the people of Northern Ireland. Fay, Morrissey, and Smyth further indicate that many, including those providing services to people in need, have operated during the Troubles by not mentioning the Troubles, not identifying themselves or their true responses to certain situations, and being cautious or silent when Troubles-related issues were raised. As a result, there has been a kind of

'conspiracy of silence' in organizations about the effects of the Troubles. People are often afraid that if the real issues are discussed, it will cause division and conflict, so they are ignored. Additionally, there is no special training for psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, or other professionals to prepare them for the kinds of effects the Troubles may have on their clients, nor is there specific training on the range of appropriate services or approaches to use. As a result, the major service providers with dedicated services to those affected by the Troubles are in the voluntary sector. It is interesting to note, despite all the talk about peace time efforts and gains, that in one very recent study which is exploring long-term effects, it was found that suicide figures in Northern Ireland have risen as the number of deaths in the "Troubles" has decreased (Fay, Morrissey, & Smyth, 1998). Therefore, the emotional/psychological problems may just be coming to the surface as the actual violence decreases.

Although the problem of violence and its effect on children in Northern Ireland had been studied prior to the cease-fires, most of the research was conducted in the 1980's and early 1990's, and the majority of the researchers indicated that additional research was needed. Sluka (1989) cites significant concern in Northern Ireland that the political troubles may be having a very harmful

social effect on children and teenagers, in the sense that they may be producing a generation of violent anarchists. Similarly, Cairns (1990) reports that careful research carried out over the last ten years has suggested that indeed the majority of children in Northern Ireland almost certainly are well aware of the violence going on around them and that this equally applies to children in the unscathed areas and to those who live in city ghettos, primarily due to the impact of television news exposure. O'Kane and Cairns (1988), Fraser (1973), and Fay, Morrissey, and Smyth (1999) assert that growing up in such a society produces a generation of children and young people who show a lack of respect for law, order, and authority of any kind because of the ease with which antiauthority attitudes learned on the street generalize to other settings. In a study done by Schwartz (1982), educators were questioned about the observed effects of violence on school children, and expressed the following major three concerns: 1) the childrens' attitudes toward law, structure, order, and authority were fast deteriorating, making it more difficult for the youngsters to use their institutions, and especially their schools, to their own advantage; 2) the childrens' code of behavior and sense of moral standards were being debased; and 3) they were carrying inside them many damaging feelings for which they had no outlet. Fay, Morrissey, and Smyth

(1999) point out as well that children in Northern Ireland experience the violence of the Troubles in addition to the ordinary risks of childhood, including deprivation, residential and educational segregation, low educational attainment in deprived areas, and risks of physical and sexual abuse. They conclude that it is those children who already suffer from deprivation and marginalization that are most at risk from the violence.

Morris Fraser, a child psychiatrist at a Belfast Clinic, has extensively observed, and wrote a book about, the effect of the violence on the children of Northern Ireland. He indicated that acute symptoms are experienced by every child who is subjected to an event that makes unusual demands on his/her emotional resources (such as a street riot or explosion in Belfast, or the death or injury of someone known or close). Both Fraser (1973) and Sluka (1989) describe these symptoms as: sleep disturbance, separation fears, school refusal, loss of appetite, bowel/gastric/urinary upsets, headaches, repeated descriptions of the experience or refusal to talk about it, war games, cranky behavior, greed and possessiveness, aggression, temper tantrums, withdrawal/sadness/resignation, self-injury, and adultism. They also both hold, however, that these symptoms usually fade quickly unless there has been a lack of support for the child or a lack of opportunity for discussion.

Significant to the study of resilience in this population, Fraser writes that there is a certain universality about a child's response to disaster. While the varying realities of the event may add details to the child's nightmare or fantasy, the child's fear is always that of loss of the factors that otherwise ensure physical and emotional security. He/she dreads the prospect of separation from his/her parents as much, if not more, than he/she does bodily harm to him/herself. This was corroborated by Fay, Morrissey, and Smyth (1999) who added that in some cases, children and young people have coped with losses alone for fear of upsetting adults if they speak of their feelings or experiences.

In order to understand some of the typical defense mechanisms and coping strategies employed by the children in Northern Ireland, it is important to examine three main factors identified by both Cairns (1987) and Fraser (1973) as related to vulnerability: first, the degree of emotional security the child enjoyed both before and during the stressful event (this emotional security was related not only to the child's own psychological resources, but particularly to those of his/her immediate family); second, the stressful experience itself; and finally, the fact that a child's response to stress is to a certain degree unique and depends upon his/her own usual way of responding to new experiences. Further, Cairns has

identified two possible coping processes - habituation and denial. By habituation, he means that some of the children have become so used to violence, or reports of violence, and its associated problems that for them it has become a "normal" feature of everyday life (Cairns, 1987, p. 66). Cairns and Wilson (1984) also describe studies which have been carried out to measure the possibility that children simply deny the existence, or at least the prevalence of, violence in the areas in which they live. Sluka identified another defense mechanism or coping strategy which seemed to be used by a significant number of children as that of identifying with the aggressor, in that Catholic children identified the British soldiers and police as the enemy, or aggressor, and responded to them with violence and aggression (1989). McNamee (1994), Fraser (1973), and Cairns (1987) all discuss this active/warrior victim role also as the only other option available to children caught in this type of chronic conflict, as opposed to a passive victim role in which children see themselves as helpless to some degree. Fay, Morrissey, and Smyth further identify age, personality, family, and school support as important factors in helping children to cope under such circumstances (1999).

Relative to the concept of resilience among this population, McNamee (1994) asserts that children are vulnerable psychologically if they do not know that they

are safe, if they do not know if they *will* be taken care of, and if they do not know if they *can* be taken care of. She argues, however, that a warm supportive environment provides powerful evidence to the child that some people are still good, that the world is not all evil and meaningless, and that he/she is a worthy person. The variables McNamee identifies as contributing to how victimized a child becomes (which are supported also in the studies of Cairns in 1987 and Fraser in 1973) include: the types of experiences a child has had related to the violence, and how many experiences a child has had at one time or in succession; the child's perception of the experience/s, which has to do with the child's vulnerability as a person; and the kind of support the child has had, primarily from a family that remains at least partially intact, and from outside mediators (friends, teachers, counselors, and other mentors). Fraser (1973) describes the primary emotional needs of children subjected to trauma as human company, physical closeness, information, and, eventually, an opportunity to question and discuss the experience.

As Tye (1999) reports, "the standard way of taking the toll of the Troubles here is to cite the more than 3,000 killed and 40,000 wounded in 30 years of clashes between Protestants and Catholics" (p. A1). While much of the literature and previous studies on this population

have tended to focus on negative outcomes and pathology (particularly PTSD in such studies as McNamee, 1994; Tibbetts, 1989; and Fraser, 1973) this study aspired to examine how factors of resilience present in childhood (especially those related to family resilience) contribute to adjustment in middle adulthood among a sample of the population from Northern Ireland. Based on the emphasis placed throughout the research on family response to the violence in Northern Ireland relative to its effect on the child's ability to adapt, a focus on family resilience among this population is of special relevance in that it seeks to identify and foster key processes that enable families to cope more effectively and emerge hardier from crises or persistent stresses, whether from within or outside the family (Walsh, 1996).

As cited by Doll and Lyon (1998), there have been numerous studies by pioneers on the concept of developmental resilience as it relates to individuals, including those done by Garmezy, Masten, and Tellegen (1984); Higgins (1994); Rutter (1985, 1987, 1990); and Wolin and Wolin (1993), which conceptualize resilience as successful coping with or overcoming risk and adversity, or the development of competence in the face of severe stress and hardship. Doll and Lyon summarize the findings of Garmezy (1983) on resilient children who have experienced unusually stressful situations such as war,

concentration camps, and natural disasters. The conclusion was that children who were themselves competent and who received competent and consistent care from their families fared much better under such extreme conditions of stress. Doll and Lyon (1998), Mothner (1995), Walsh (1996), and Rak and Patterson (1996) also cite the significance of contextual factors in fostering resilience, which include: a close, affectionate relationship with at least one parent or caregiver, effective parenting (characterized by warmth, structure, and high expectations), access to consistent, warm caregiving and positive adult models in a variety of extra-familial contexts, and strong connections with other pro-social organizations or institutions including schools. Ensign, Scherman, and Clark (1998) found that hostility within the family has a stronger influence on the child than does the family structure. They argue also that parental conflict has been found to have a negative impact on children's and adult's self-esteem, educational attainment, parent-child relationships, courtship and marriage experiences, and psychological adjustment. Rak and Patterson (1996) present an array of family factors that contribute to a buffering effect on children in the wake of stressors. The more prominent of these were: the age of the opposite-sex parent (younger mothers for resilient males, older fathers for resilient females);

four or fewer children in the family spaced more than 2 years apart; focused nurturing during the first year of life and little prolonged separation from the primary caretaker; an array of alternative caretakers who stepped in when parents were not consistently present; the existence of a multiage network of kin who shared similar values and beliefs and to whom the at-risk youths turned for counsel and support; the availability of sibling caretakers in childhood or another young person to serve as confidant; and structure and rules in household during adolescence despite poverty and stress.

Walsh (1996) presents a number of concepts pertaining to family resilience relevant to this study. She asserts that a family-systems perspective enables us to understand the mediating influence of family processes in surmounting crisis or prolonged hardship. How a family confronts and manages a disruptive experience, buffers stress, effectively reorganizes, and moves forward with life will influence immediate and long-term adaptation for all family members and for the family unit. She cites the importance of such interactional processes as cohesion, flexibility, open communication, and problem-solving skills in facilitating basic family functioning and the well-being of members. Walsh reports as well that there is a necessity for fit and balance in adaptation in order to achieve a level of functioning that promotes the

development of both the family unit and individual members. Families need to achieve a functional fit between their challenges and resources, between individual and system priorities, and between different dimensions of family life. Additionally, resilience involves multiple, recursive processes over time, from a family's approach to a threatened or impending crisis situation through adaptations in the immediate and long-term aftermath. Summarily, Walsh identifies such processes as cohesion, flexibility, open communication, problem solving, and affirming belief systems as basic elements in family resilience. Spiritual values and a cultural heritage provide meaning and purpose beyond the family unit, and how families make sense of a crisis situation and endow it with meaning are most crucial for family resilience. As corroborated in the research already presented specifically on the families in Northern Ireland, Walsh also emphasizes the significance of family perceptions of a stressful situation or transition and how these intersect with legacies of previous experience in the multigenerational system to forge the meaning the family makes of a challenge and its patterns of response to it.

Erikson's psychosocial model of development, and particularly the contributions to it by Vaillant, also guided this study, in that it holds that a psychological trauma (i.e. exposure to ongoing violence) can interrupt

the normal progress of development, causing more difficult resolution of current life issues and impending growth (Newman & Newman, 1995). According to this model, human development consists of a gradual unfolding of personality wherein new learning and skills facilitate movement of the individual from one state to another (Johnson, 1989). Johnson explains, according to Erikson's model, that each successive stage of development, resulting from the external demands of environment interfacing with internal readiness for new levels of functioning, creates a specific vulnerability. Development, then, is a process of transformation through stages characterized by specific demands, opportunities, and vulnerabilities, which may be affected in stage-specific ways by adverse conditions (Johnson, 1989).

Of specific relevance to this study is the conclusion in Vaillant's study that achievement of intimacy in middle adulthood is a strong indicator of positive psychosocial adjustment (McAdams & Vaillant, 1982; Vaillant, 1977). In the study by McAdams and Vaillant, intimacy motivation at age 30 was shown to be positively associated with subsequent psychosocial adjustment in middle age. They report that this conclusion is further supported by a multitude of theoretical and clinical propositions suggesting that the capacity for interpersonal intimacy is undoubtedly evidence of psychosocial adjustment in

contemporary society. McAdams and Vaillant define the intimacy motivation construct as a recurrent preference or readiness for experiences of close, warm, and communicative interpersonal exchange.

Intimacy, in this study, was conceptualized as and measured in terms of attachment because of the substantial number of studies in the past ten years which have demonstrated associations between attachment organization and a wide range of beliefs and behaviors connected with satisfaction in intimate relationships (Morrison & Goodlin-Jones, 1997). Guerrero and Burgoon (1996) describe attachments as affectional bonds that represent the cognitive and emotional connection one individual feels for another.

Attachment theory explains: the process of forming an attachment and becoming close to others, the mental working models or cognitive perceptions that guide this process, and the resultant attachment styles that individuals develop to maintain the type of relationship they desire. An attachment style is a social interaction style that is consistent with the type and quality of relationship one wishes to share with others, and is based on dimensions of intimacy and self-sufficiency (Guerrero & Burgoon, 1996). Because attachment theory essentially describes the process of development of intimacy, it was used in this study to determine the level of intimacy

attained among the participants. Attachment theory holds that individuals develop an internal working model of the self in relationship to the attachment figure, based on early experiences in the attachment system (Bowlby, 1982). Adapted over time, internal working models of attachment come to function as affectively laden social schemes and guide expectations about future relationships. These internal working models of relationships are considered to contain information about issues such as how emotionally available and reliable the other person and the self are likely to be, what sorts of emotional experience and expression feel comfortable and useful, how disappointment and emotional discomfort are to be handled, and communication and problem solving in the relationship (Morrison & Goodlin-Jones, 1997).

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Study Design

The purpose of this study was to explain adjustment in middle adulthood, among a sample of the population from Northern Ireland who grew up during the period of intensified violence in 1969, in terms of the presence of family resilience factors in their childhoods. Specifically, it sought to identify how the presence of family resilience has potentially contributed to achievement of intimacy in middle adulthood among the Northern Irish who were between the ages of 1 and 18 in 1969. To accomplish this, the design was primarily qualitative, with a small quantitative component, in order to more accurately reflect the individual experiences, beliefs, and meanings attributed to events of those from the Northern Irish culture. Although the question addressed in the study was explanatory, in a general sense, the study itself was exploratory in that there is very little research on the long-term psychosocial development of these adults who have been exposed to the violence for most of their childhoods. As a result, the qualitative component allowed for the opportunity to inductively explore possible constructs for a theory related to the proposed hypotheses. It also permitted a holistic, individualistic, and more culturally sensitive in-depth look at the lives of people in the sample.

Additionally, it was hoped that, through this study, people would be empowered by the identification of ways to positively impact psychosocial development, especially for those subjected to significant stress (such as by enhancing family resilience).

In order to carry out this study, access to a sample of the population in Northern Ireland was gained via the Internet. This was accomplished through requests for responses on a link on the CAIN (Conflict Archive on the Internet) web page and on numerous bulletin boards posted over the Internet in Northern Ireland and all over the world. A variety of bulletin boards were chosen in an attempt to access a sample which would be more representative of the population in Northern Ireland (i.e. nationalists and unionists, Catholics and Protestants). Requests were also made to respondents for additional names of people who would meet the qualifications for participation, although this did not produce many results. A separate e-mail account was created by the researcher solely for the purpose of carrying out this study. After obtaining informed consent from the prospective participants through e-mail attachments, questions related to the study's hypothesis were also submitted by e-mail attachment. One questionnaire had to be mailed by, and was received back by, regular mail because the participant could not accept e-mails via attachment. The responses

were then categorized relative to family resilience factors in childhood and psychosocial adjustment in middle adulthood (specifically, intimacy achievement) in order to examine the relationship between the two variables. The hypothesis was that more successful achievement of intimacy in middle adulthood would be related to a greater presence of family resilience in childhood, even in the midst of significant stress and environmental instability.

By conducting the study via e-mail, participation was more convenient both for participants and for the researcher because of the ability to re-submit an e-mail easily if the initial one was not responded to. Additionally, the cost of administering the questions was decreased. However, one of the limitations of this method was that less intimacy and rapport was established between the researcher and participants than if they were to be directly observed and/or interviewed. It was also not possible to directly observe their affective reactions and nonverbal communication in response to the questions. Still, by the end of each respondent's participation, the researcher felt as if she knew him/her personally because of the number of times correspondence was sent back and forth. Another limitation was a lack of socioeconomic diversity among the sample, as only those who had access to e-mail participated in the study, which may have indicated a higher socioeconomic status.

Sampling

The sample from which data was obtained were adults from Northern Ireland who had access to the Internet and were between the ages of 1 and 18 in 1969 when the violence escalated. Because the selection of participants was based on certain characteristics and viability (access to e-mail), the sampling was purposive. The study also relied on snowball sampling by requesting identified participants to lead the researcher to additional participants. While about 15-20 people were actually identified as potential participants, only 8 fully completed the process and returned the questionnaire. In an attempt to access this sample, a link was placed on the CAIN web page which provides the e-mail address for people to respond to the study. (This web page provides information on the Northern Ireland conflict, and offers the opportunity for comments and responses). Requests for study participants were also placed on several bulletin boards over the Internet in Northern Ireland and around the world, also providing the e-mail address to respond to.

Data Collection and Instruments

The data collected were the participants' responses to questions related to family resilience factors in childhood and psychosocial adjustment (specifically,

intimacy achievement as measured by strength of attachment) in middle adulthood. The dependent variable in this case was psychosocial adjustment, as indicated by achievement of intimacy in middle adulthood, and the independent variable was the presence of family resilience in childhood.

In order to qualitatively measure the family resilience variables, and to quantitatively measure attachment, a questionnaire was submitted to elicit responses in the specified areas. Because of its potential effect on the outcome of the study, demographic information was also obtained, including specific age (within the designated range), gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, level of completed education, religion, number of members in family of origin and in current family, and the area in which the participant was raised and how much exposure he/she had to the violence. These independent variables were all taken into account in the final data analysis.

The topics that were incorporated into the questionnaire in relation to family resilience included: family of origin emotional climate, as indicated by the presence of warmth, affection, cohesion, emotional support, and clear-cut, reasonable structure and limits; family of origin belief systems and how these were communicated to the children; and family of origin

perceptions of and typical responses to the environmental stress and conflict, including how these perceptions were transmitted to children and whether there was open communication surrounding the violence.

Achievement of intimacy in middle adulthood was quantitatively measured by the self-report attachment measure developed by Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (1998) called the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECL). This measure actually contained two subscales: Avoidance (or discomfort with closeness and depending on others) and Anxiety (or fear of abandonment). This particular measure was chosen because it was the most highly recommended in the literature on available measures of attachment among adults. This multi-item dimensional measure demonstrated the greatest precision and validity (Brennan et al., 1998).

The questionnaire (see Appendix A) was structured into three groups of questions, with the first group eliciting demographic information, the second group addressing family resilience in childhood, and the third group consisting of the ECL inventory to assess achievement of intimacy. To allow for more individualized responses to the topics of family resilience, there was an open-ended question which gave the respondent the opportunity to provide any additional information which he or she felt was significant in providing an accurate

depiction of his or her unique situation and life story. There was also the possibility for follow-up questions to be submitted easily by e-mail when necessary. The qualitative portion of the questionnaire was adapted in part from one developed by Rak and Patterson (1996) to measure resiliency, and was also based on concepts related to family resilience from Walsh (1996).

Protection of Human Subjects

Because individual people were being studied, the need for confidentiality and anonymity was addressed. Informed consent (Appendix A) and debriefing (Appendix B) statements were transmitted by e-mail to the participants, and the purpose of the study was clearly explained. The researcher also addressed any further questions or concerns the participants had through e-mail correspondence. To protect confidentiality, once participants' responses were received, any identifying information (such as names and e-mail addresses) was removed, and a number was assigned for tracking purposes. In this way, the full response was printed, but the information did not have the name or address attached. Because of the nature of the study, and the possibility that questions about childhood and growing up surrounded by conflict and violence may have evoked emotional responses needing attention, some resources in Northern Ireland and the United States for counseling and emotional

support were identified and provided to the participants. This was done in the debriefing statement, which was submitted to participants by e-mail once they had completed and submitted the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data collected, the e-mail responses were printed directly off the computer so that they were verbatim accounts of the participants' replies and reactions to the questions asked. The researcher kept a journal to record each step in the process of identifying participants, establishing contact by e-mail, and collecting data. The researcher's reactions and ideas were also recorded in the journal. Additionally, all of the messages from each participant were saved in the e-mail account used solely for this study. Furthermore, it was important to the researcher to have current information on the status of the peace process in Northern Ireland throughout the course of conducting the study, because the situation is so tenuous and because of the potential effect on participants of some of the setbacks which occurred. This was accomplished by subscribing to a news service over the Internet which provided current information in detail on all the events in Northern Ireland and throughout the world as they related to the peace process.

After conducting a preliminary review of the data, the participants' responses to the quantitative portion of the questionnaire were entered into SPSS. Two separate scores in the measurement of level of attachment, one for avoidance and one for anxiety, were calculated for each participant. Three categories were developed out of these scores based on natural groupings in the resulting numbers. One category, with scores below '2' for both the avoidance and anxiety scales, was conceptualized as signifying a high level of attachment/intimacy. The second category, with scores between '2' and '3.99' for the avoidance and anxiety scales respectively, was conceptualized as signifying a moderate level of attachment/intimacy. The third category, with scores above '4' on the avoidance scale and above '3' on the anxiety scale, was conceptualized as signifying a lower level of attachment/intimacy. Additionally, the mean and standard deviation for each scale (avoidance and anxiety) were calculated.

Within each of the three categories, data was analyzed question by question in terms of the responses to the qualitative portion of the questionnaire. Comparison was then made in each category to find meaning units of data with the same characteristics, which were assigned the same code. Meaning units that were different in significant ways were given other codes. The next step was

more abstract second-level coding, which involved interpreting the meanings of the first-level groupings as they related to the concepts of family resilience being measured. Once these steps were completed *within* categories, similar steps were taken to compare and contrast the data *between* the three categories to assess whether components of family resilience related in some way to the scores of attachment.

The final steps in this process, then, were interpreting the data and building theory, and assessing the trustworthiness of the results. Interpretations of the themes that were consistent with earlier categorization schemes and meaning units were developed. The themes and their interpretations were assessed in relation to the proposed hypothesis that family resilience present in childhood contributes to positive attachment in adult relationships among Northern Irish adults, despite their highly conflictual and stressful environment.

RESULTS

The sample for this study included five males and three females with an age range of 31 years to 48 years. Six out of the eight respondents described their current socioeconomic status as "middle," with one respondent describing it as "lower," and the other as "lower/middle", while four of them identified their status as "lower" when growing up, three as "middle," and one as "lower/middle." In terms of religion, two respondents identified themselves as Protestant, three as Catholic, one as no religion, and two as non-practicing Catholics. In describing their religion when growing up, two identified themselves as Protestant and six as Catholic. All seven of the respondents were born in and spent their childhoods in Northern Ireland. Currently, two live in Northern Ireland, one in the Republic of Ireland, one in New Zealand, and four in the United States. In terms of education levels, four attained post-graduate degrees, one a college degree, two completed high school only, and one had not received any education. All seven participants indicated that they had experienced direct exposure to the Troubles throughout their childhoods, and some had family members involved in the actual violence. As one respondent recalled, "a friend's father was a member of a paramilitary organization and was charged with terrorist related offenses." Another indicated he had experienced

having "friends murdered by Loyalist and Crown forces (anti-Catholic/Nationalist), had taken physical action against the British army, and was involved in Republican and Socialist groups." The most common number of members in family of origin was two parents and six children, while in current families, those who now live in the United States most commonly had two children. Presently, only two of the participants are not married; one is a single mother.

The results overall for the avoidance and attachment scores are recorded in Table 1.

Table 1. Avoidance and Attachment Scores

Respondent	Avoidance Score	Anxiety Score
1	1.50	1.89
2	4.78	3.39
4	3.00	2.22
5	5.94	3.56
6	2.83	2.33
7	2.94	2.39
8	3.06	2.61
9	3.00	2.06

The mean for the avoidance score was 3.3819 with a standard deviation of 1.36. The mean for the anxiety score was 2.5556 with a standard deviation of .6071. The

range for the avoidance score was 4.44 (from 1.50 to 5.94), while the range for the anxiety score was 1.67 (from 1.89 to 3.56).

Only one respondent fit the criteria for Category A (strong attachment) with scores below '2' on both scales. Five respondents fit into Category B (moderate attachment) with a score between '2' and '3.99' on the avoidance scale and a score between '2' and '2.99' on the anxiety scale. Two respondents fit into Category C (lower level of attachment) with a score above '4' on the avoidance scale and above '3' on the anxiety scale. The majority of the sample studied, then, has achieved at least moderate levels of attachment/intimacy in spite of environmental and cultural stressors, which may be due to the presence of family resilience in their childhoods.

In Category A (strong attachment), it is interesting to note that the respondent is Protestant and lives currently in the United States. As a Protestant, she was actually part of the majority in Northern Ireland growing up and may have been subjected to less of the harassment and mistreatment that was reported by all of the Catholic participants as a significant factor in their lives. For example, she had family members who were actually in the Security Forces, as opposed to having felt victimized by them, as was reported by the Catholic participants. She identified herself as being happy and hopeful (optimistic)

as a child even in difficult times. One of the over-riding themes of her responses was an emphasis on respecting others. Feelings of anger and disgust in relation to the violence were also prevalent. There were limits and structure in the home and a dependence on both immediate and extended family members, especially in times of difficulty. Religion did not appear to have played a significant role in her life growing up, although the family did attend church regularly. She indicated that the family did talk openly about the Troubles, and parents would answer childrens' questions about them. It may also be significant to note that she and her family identify themselves as "British, not Irish," and are all staunch union supporters."

Category B (moderate attachment) was composed of four Catholics and one Protestant. Interestingly, the four Catholic respondents attained post-graduate degrees (three of them Ph.D.'s living in the U.S.). There were a number of commonalities among the members of this category. All five of them described themselves as happy and hopeful as children even in difficult times. In each of their households, there were limits and structure, which essentially embodied respect for others, treating others with kindness, and obeying parents. Achievement in school was also emphasized as important to at least three of the

respondents, as were responsibilities to complete chores and help in household duties.

Two of the males in this group had to assume "father roles" after their mothers died, as both of their fathers had difficulty dealing with the deaths and were absent from the family for some time. In terms of whom in their families the respondents turned to when they felt upset, all five of them identified their mothers. Other family members were also mentioned as important in this role. One of the participants whose mother died indicated that "in the end, my sister was the one I turned to and still do. I think I trust her 100%."

In terms of support outside the immediate family, all of the respondents communicated that there was not much available, and each seemed to find their own sources. Two of them expressed that there were actually very little community resources. One stated, "Next door neighbors were good support. Support over there meant Mrs. Brady coming over and gossiping and frightening us with ghost stories." Another recalled, "Very often friends would help each other whenever possible. It was sort of like an unwritten code of help."

In identifying whom the respondents learned values and beliefs from, all of them identified their mothers and fathers. Again, a common theme was respecting others. As one said, it was important to "listen to and respect the

views of others even if you do not agree with them." When asked about the role of religion in their families, three of the five respondents indicated that it seemed more important to their parents, and that as children, they were just fulfilling a duty by attending church services. Two of the Catholic respondents, however, identified religion as "enormous" and "very central" in their families. As one stated, "We would often say the family rosary together, which was a method of bringing everybody together at one time."

Another commonality among Category B was the willingness of parents to openly discuss the Troubles with the children. One reported that his family had "great debates about it all," while another recalled that his family would discuss what resolves they could think of. In each family, it appeared that the parents were willing to explain to the children what was happening and to address their questions. In terms of parents' feelings about and perceptions of the Troubles, a common theme was disgust/distaste toward the violence. All of the Catholic respondents, however, were sympathetic toward the nationalist movement, but advocated more peaceful means of achieving this. Two described the Troubles as "a waste of time, money, and lives," and as a "a waste of lives and property." One of the respondents who was more actively involved in the nationalist movement, paradoxically

stated, "(The Troubles) were seen as almost normal, however we were always aware that it was not a normal situation." In describing parents' attitudes toward the Security Forces in Northern Ireland, all of the Catholic respondents expressed mistrust of them, but two of them also acknowledged that they felt sorry for them at the same time. The Protestant respondent expressed, "They had a job to do." Each participant had a different response to the question about how their families dealt with members' injury or death. The Protestant respondent stated, "With anger and resentment, but life goes on." Two of the Catholic respondents indicated that their mothers played a central role in dealing with this type of situation and that their fathers showed little emotion over it. Another reported it was dealt with "through family and friends - lots of talking."

When asked to describe anything else they felt was important to know about their families, each of the five respondents expressed something positive about their families. One reported, "I am aware just how lucky I was to have my family. There was a lot of love, still is...There was a sense of humor. I don't think I can remember many days when there was not laughter in our house." The Protestant respondent stated, "My parents did not like to make an issue of religion and I was unaware of the Protestant/Catholic thing until the age of 8 or 9."

Another talked about the role his father played in starting the second integrated college (Catholics and Protestants together) in Northern Ireland.

Category C (lower level of attachment) was comprised of two Catholics, both of whom, interestingly, continue to live closer to the situation (one in Northern Ireland and one in the Republic of Ireland). It was observed by the researcher that the tone of their responses to the questionnaire was noticeably more negative with greater expression of anger and hatred toward the British than those of the other two categories. However, they both also emphasized the strength of the family unit. They both described themselves as optimistic in childhood with less conviction than the participants in the other categories. Both of them identified family members as sources of help when they felt upset or in trouble, one naming his grandmother and the other her father. When asked about support outside the immediate family, one identified friends and the other relatives; both indicated there were few community resources. In terms of values and beliefs and how these were transmitted to the children, both emphasized the importance of the family unit. One indicated that these were learned primarily from his grandparents, and the other from her father. Religion did not appear to play an important role in either of the respondents' families. One reported,

"Church was important to parents, but it was up to ourselves what we thought and practiced."

Both respondents expressed that their family talked openly about the Troubles. As one stated, "hard not to discuss them as we were living them." A negative tone was observed in the response to the question about parents' feelings about and perceptions of the Troubles. One recalled, "They felt very strong about the subject. They felt terrible about what was happening in Northern Ireland and thought it was unfair the way Catholics were treated." The other stated, "Same as everyone else. We wished the British would just leave us alone." Again, some anger was detected in response to the question about what parents' attitudes were toward the Security Forces: "They hated them/didn't trust them." "They were murdering our friends and family. We seen them as they were - murdering bastards." A sense of powerlessness was observed in the responses to how families dealt with members' injury or death. One reported, "They did their best and seemed to do well. There was nothing they could do but deal with it." The other respondent stated, "It had to be accepted. How could we change it?"

DISCUSSION

Some of the overriding themes the researcher noted upon examining the responses in general and the results in particular were the following: emphasis on respecting others; the existence of structure and limits in the home with specific responsibilities for the children; willingness to openly talk about the Troubles, violence, and resulting deaths; the availability and support of extended family members, especially grandparents; the integral role of the mother in each family; general feelings of disgust toward the violence from both Catholics and Protestants; and self-description overall of being happy and hopeful (optimistic) in childhood. These themes were found in each of the three categories, albeit to a lesser degree in Category C, which indicated a lower level of attachment. The results as a whole seem to attest to the strength of the family unit, and appear to embody many of the indicators of family resilience identified in the literature, among this sample of adults from Northern Ireland, most of whom appear to have developed a secure attachment in adulthood despite growing up amidst chronic violence and stress.

In the Literature related to typical coping strategies employed by children in Northern Ireland, habituation and denial were specified along with identification with the aggressor. Based on the responses

in this study, it appears that most of the participants became habituated to the violence, while one in particular became more of an aggressor in that he joined Republican and Socialist groups and took action against the British army. In terms of specific factors which were identified as significant in contributing to resilience in childhood, this study seemed to show the presence of many of them in the participants' families as they were growing up. For example, Fraser (1973) described the primary emotional needs of children subjected to trauma as human company, physical closeness, information, and an opportunity to discuss the experience.

More specifically, in relation to concepts indicative of family resilience, Walsh (1996) had emphasized interactional processes, including cohesion, flexibility, open communication, and problem-solving skills as significant in how a family confronts and manages a disruptive experience, buffers stress, effectively reorganizes, and moves forward with life. Additionally, she stressed the importance of affirming belief systems, spiritual values, and a cultural heritage to provide meaning and purpose beyond the family unit. Another crucial element of her research, especially in relation to this study, was the powerful influence of the family's perceptions of a stressful situation and how these interact with legacies of previous experience in the

multigenerational system to forge the meaning the family makes of a challenge and its patterns of response to it. Identified in each of the respondents' families in this study were these elements of cohesion, open communication (especially related to the Troubles), affirming belief systems, spiritual values, and cultural heritage, which were presented in the literature as significant components of family resilience. Interestingly, the one element which seemed most distinctive between categories A and B, with at least moderate levels of attachment, and category C, with a lower level of attachment, was the perception of and meaning attributed to the environmental situation caused by the Troubles. This element was emphasized throughout the literature as crucial in contributing to a child's adjustment later in life following a traumatic event of chronic stress. Although there appears to exist a code of silence in Northern Ireland's culture related to the Troubles, within the families of this study's participants, open communication about the violence and the consequences of it was present and seemed to be encouraged. While all of the respondents expressed a certain level of disgust/distaste toward the violence, those participants in category C seemed to express more anger and a greater sense of powerlessness. Those in categories A and B, however, seemed to develop stronger

coping mechanisms by relying on extended family and adhering to common values about respect for all life.

Again, it seems noteworthy that the one respondent who scored highest on attachment level is a Protestant who currently lives in the United States, whereas the other Protestant respondent lives in closer proximity to the ongoing uncertainty of the situation in Northern Ireland and attained a moderate level of attachment score. This is interesting to note because of the typically privileged position of the Protestant in Northern Ireland as part of the political majority. As Fraser (1973) had postulated, the position of the Catholic in Northern Ireland is virtually identical to that of the African-American in the United States. Both groups suffer from the same social pressures and stereotypes and respond with the same forms of protest. Further, as all of the Catholic respondents reported, they often felt mistreated and unprotected by the Security Forces, which can also be related to the experience of ethnic minorities in the U.S.

Another observation made by the researcher in analyzing the responses was the absence of community resources. Only one respondent mentioned a youth club which he relied on as a child, and a number of respondents attested to the lack of such programs/resources. This may correspond with the overall code of silence which was described in the literature by Fay, Morrissey, and Smyth.

They indicated also that the main providers of services specifically related to the Troubles are in the voluntary sector. It would seem that this is an area which could be addressed as a means to empower families and to provide children and young people with an outlet for stress and an opportunity to come together regardless of religion or political beliefs, and it may be that such efforts are now taking place in the country during this time of new found peace.

It should be noted that the status of the peace process throughout the execution of this study may have had some effect on participants' responses. In February of 2000, the process experienced a major setback when the power sharing executive government, which was set up to include both British members and representatives of Northern Ireland (Protestants and Catholics), was disbanded by the British direct ruler. It was only recently (in May of 2000), after much negotiation and commitment from both parties, re-established, although the situation remains very tenuous. During this time, feelings of anger, fear, resentment, hopelessness, and uncertainty may have resulted and had some effect on the way participants responded to the questions, particularly the more political ones.

While the study, on the whole, appears to support the hypothesis that factors related to family resilience

present in childhood contribute to positive adjustment in middle adulthood as manifested primarily by the achievement of intimacy, the major limitation of the study is its small sample size. As a result, only observations and speculations can be made based on the eight responses that were received. Additionally, while the researcher is originally from Ireland and developed most of the questionnaire (i.e. qualitative questions) with the Irish culture in mind, the quantitative portion of the questionnaire was taken from a measurement of attachment developed in the United States. As observed by both the researcher and some of the participants, some of the items on the measurement were derived from American norms and concepts related to intimacy, which is in some ways different from a more European/Irish view of intimacy. Some additional limitations result from demographics. The majority of the sample identified themselves as middle class, and the majority were Catholic (with only two Protestants). These variables may have had some effect on the results. Finally, in any qualitative study, a great deal of information can be obtained simply by observing nonverbal reactions and responses in addition to what is actually said. In this study, all of the information was obtained over the Internet, and one questionnaire was received by mail. Consequently, there was no opportunity for the researcher to observe the participants as they

responded to the questions. On a positive note, however, by conducting the study through e-mail, there was the opportunity for follow-up questions and clarifications, as well as the opportunity to continue to solicit responses when they were not received expediently.

In conclusion, although this study focused specifically on adults from Northern Ireland and addressed the situation there, its results and implications can be applied anywhere in the world in which people are exposed to chronic violence and environmental stress, including our own inner cities in the United States. Efforts need to involve children and youth as important contributors in the planning and implementation of long-term solutions. Also crucial in the period of reconstruction, policy development, and intervention which is now occurring in Northern Ireland, is a focus on families, schools, and communities. Trust in authority and in each other must be re-established, people need to be assisted in developing a new sense of their own power and responsibility, and new ways of dealing with difference and conflict must be explored and utilized. In order to achieve these goals, the aura of stigmatization and blame must be changed, and the culture of silence broken. It is only now, in this time of peace and increased political cooperation from all parties involved, that these goals can actively be pursued. At the same time, Fay, Morrissey, and Smyth

(1999) advocate remembering all the suffering, principles, and consequences associated with the Troubles. They argue that the purpose of remembering is threefold: to reconcile accounts of what happened so that everyone understands each others' experiences, to publicly acknowledge and end the isolation of those who have suffered most within a culture of silence, and to come to terms with the irreconcilable nature of losses that have been sustained. Although nothing which has been lost can be retrieved, it can certainly be learned from.

The concepts addressed in this study extend beyond the unfortunate situation in Northern Ireland. Although the roots of the Northern Irish troubles lie far back in history and may be thought unique to that region, actually the kind of conflict that goes on in the streets of Belfast is common in many parts of the world, and the tensions that turn Protestant against Catholic and vice versa tend to occur between any two groups of people with different cultural traditions who are living in close proximity. This is evident in our own communities in the United States in which children and adults are exposed to chronic violence and tensions between different cultural groups. This study can be applied to them as well. Whether in Northern Ireland or in our own backyard, in order to enable families to manage stress-laden situations, change efforts may best involve the family,

support networks, and larger systems to foster community connections that most families have lost and to capitalize on the inherent strengths within families so that they are empowered not only to create change within, but to effect significant change in the world around them.

APPENDIX A: Questionnaire

Group A:

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your current age?
3. How would you describe your current socioeconomic status (lower, middle, upper)? Socioeconomic status when you were growing up?
4. What is your religious affiliation? Is this different from your family of origin?
5. What is the place of your birth? Place where you spent most of your childhood? Where do you live currently?
6. How much exposure did you have to the Troubles when you were growing up? Was it direct or indirect?
7. What level of education did you complete?
8. How many members were in your family of origin? Both parents? How many children?
9. How many members are in your own family now? Number of children?

Group B:

1. As a child, did you consider yourself happy and hopeful (optimistic), even when life was difficult?
2. When you were growing up, were there rules and expectations in your home? What were some of them?
3. Did any of your brothers or sisters help raise you? What do you remember about this?
4. When you felt upset or in trouble, to whom in your family did you turn for help?
5. Describe any support outside your immediate family when growing up (friends, relatives, community).
6. From whom did you learn about the values and beliefs of your family? What were the most important values and beliefs?
7. What was the role of religion in your family?
8. Did your family talk openly about the Troubles? What was your parents' response if you brought the subject up?
9. What was your parents' feelings about/perceptions of the Troubles?
10. What was your parents' attitude toward the Security Forces?
11. How did your family deal with members' injury or death?
12. Tell me anything else you feel is important to know about your family of origin.

Group C:

The following statements concern how you feel in romantic relationships. Please respond to them in terms of how you generally experience relationships, not just in terms of a current relationship. Respond to each statement by indicating how much you agree or disagree with it. Write the number in the space provided, using the following rating scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Agree Strongly

- _____ 1. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.
- _____ 2. I worry about being abandoned.
- _____ 3. I am very uncomfortable being close to romantic partners.
- _____ 4. I worry a lot about my relationships.
- _____ 5. Just when my partner starts to get close to me I find myself pulling away.
- _____ 6. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.
- _____ 7. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.
- _____ 8. I worry a fair amount about losing my partner.
- _____ 9. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.
- _____ 10. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him/her.
- _____ 11. I want to get close to my partner, but I keep pulling back.
- _____ 12. I often want to merge completely with romantic partners, and this sometimes scares them away.
- _____ 13. I am nervous when partners get too close to me.
- _____ 14. I worry about being alone.
- _____ 15. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.
- _____ 16. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.
- _____ 17. I try to avoid getting too close to my partner.
- _____ 18. I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by my partner.
- _____ 19. I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.
- _____ 20. Sometimes I feel that I force my partners to show more feeling, more commitment.
- _____ 21. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.
- _____ 22. I do not often worry about being abandoned.
- _____ 23. I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.
- _____ 24. If I can't get my partner to show interest in me, I get upset or angry.
- _____ 25. I tell my partner just about everything.
- _____ 26. I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.
- _____ 27. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.
- _____ 28. When I'm not involved in a relationship, I feel somewhat anxious and insecure.
- _____ 29. I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.
- _____ 30. I get frustrated when my partner is not around as much as I would like.
- _____ 31. I don't mind asking romantic partners for comfort, advice, or help.
- _____ 32. I get frustrated if romantic partners are not available when I need them.
- _____ 33. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.
- _____ 34. When romantic partners disapprove of me, I feel really bad about myself.
- _____ 35. I turn to my partner for many things, including comfort and reassurance.
- _____ 36. I resent it when my partner spends time away from me.

APPENDIX B: Informed Consent

The study in which you are about to participate is designed to explore the relationship between family strengths in childhood and the achievement of intimacy in adulthood, despite being surrounded by environmental stress and conflict. This study is being conducted by Nikki Gillen, a student in the Master's of Social Work program at California State University, San Bernardino, under the supervision of Dr. Rosemary McCaslin, professor of Social Work (phone number 909 880-5507; e-mail address: rmccasli@csusb.edu). This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of California State University, San Bernardino.

In this study you will receive by e-mail a questionnaire containing questions about your family as you were growing up and about your current relationships, friendships, and your own family, which you will be asked to respond to by e-mail as openly and honestly as you can. It is estimated that the response to the questionnaire may take about 1 to 1 1/2 hours. Responses will be analyzed in terms of the contribution of family strengths in childhood to positive adjustment in adulthood. One of the benefits of this study is the opportunity it presents for you to identify strengths in your family of origin and how these have contributed to your current relationships and ability to cope with challenges and stress. In the event that this study evokes negative emotional responses, perhaps due to memories of traumatic experiences related to the Troubles, the names of some resources will be provided for you to contact which can be of assistance.

Please be assured that any information you provide will be held in strict confidence by the researcher. At no time will your name or e-mail address be reported along with your responses. All data will be reported in group form only. At the conclusion of this study, you may receive a report of the results upon request.

Please understand that your participation in this research is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time during this study without penalty, and to remove any data at any time during the study.

I acknowledge that I have been informed of, and understand, the nature and purpose of this study, and I freely consent to participate. I acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

(Please indicate your agreement to participate by placing an 'X' on the line below and entering the date).

Participant's Agreement

Date

Researcher's Agreement

Date

APPENDIX C: Debriefing Statement

Thank you for participating in this research study. It is hoped that, as a result of your participation, you have been able to recognize and identify some significant and unique strengths in the family you grew up in and how they have contributed to your current familial relationships and friendships, as well as your ability to cope with stress. One of the reasons for the particular focus of this study was that the majority of existing studies related to the Troubles in Northern Ireland focused on negative outcomes, while this study aimed to identify how the presence of family resilience has contributed to positive psychosocial development in adulthood. Please remember that you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, in which case your responses will not be used.

If you would like to obtain the results of this study, they will be available at the end of June, 2000, and can be requested by contacting Dr. Rosemary McCaslin at the Social Work Department of California State University, San Bernardino (phone number 909 880-5507; e-mail address: rmccasli@csusb.edu). You may also contact Dr. McCaslin if you have any questions or concerns about your participation in the study.

If, as a result of participation in this study, you feel a need for counseling or support services, the major service providers in Northern Ireland of dedicated services to those affected by the Troubles include the following: WAVE, whose main service is befriending and home visiting throughout Northern Ireland and who also provide a counseling service and facilities for children; Survivors of Trauma, a locally based self-help group in North Belfast; An Crann/The Tree, who listen and collect people's accounts of the Troubles; Cunamh, a locally based project in Derry Londonderry; CALMS, a project which offers training in stress management for local groups; and other voluntary organizations, such as CRUSE and Victim Support, which have experience of working in allied areas such as bereavement and the effects of crime. In the United States, counseling is available through local county mental health clinics or by a referral from your primary physician for mental health services.

Your participation is greatly appreciated. Please indicate that you have reviewed this Debriefing Statement by placing an 'X' on the line below and entering the date.

Participant's Acknowledgment

Date

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