The Social Ecology of Northern Ireland:
In-class Video and Discussion

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Recommended Use:

Instructors can use the following in-class activity with both undergraduate and graduate students. The goal is to teach Bronfenbrenner's social ecological model by applying it to the context of Northern Ireland.

Recommended Readings:

Townsend, D., Taylor, L. K., Merrilees, C. E., Furey, A., Goeke-Morey, M. C., Shirlow, P., & Cummings, E. M. (2020). Youth in Northern Ireland: Linking violence exposure, emotional insecurity, and the political macrosystem. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 85*(4). https://doi.org/10.1111/mono.12423

Videos, commentaries, teaching materials and more are available at monographmatters.srcd.org.

INTRODUCTION

Instructors will show a short (11-minute) news report summarizing the current state of intergroup relations in Northern Ireland. Based on the various topics discussed in the video, student will be asked to identify factors at each level of the social ecology that may impact youth development.

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"Two decades after peace pact, reconciliation still lags in Northern Ireland"

Video: https://youtu.be/hdCR9N8v9XY

PBS NewsHour, April 8, 2018

The video linked above describes some of the ways that the Northern Ireland conflict continues to manifest in society, despite the fact that two decades have passed since the signing of the peace agreement. The narrator and interviewees cover topics such as shared education, sectarian political parties, economic development, segregated and shared neighborhoods, political murals, paramilitary activity, unsolved sectarian crimes, and cross-community initiatives.

Ask students to think about the following questions while watching the video. After the video is over, give them a few minutes to write out their answers before discussing.

1) What are some of the ongoing issues being discussed in this video?

2) At what level of the social ecology would you place each issue (variable)?

3) Theoretically, how might these variables impact youth development and well-being?

4) Think of some research questions that incorporate different levels of the social ecology.

5) What methods could you use to assess these variables?

6) What kind of intervention studies could be designed to support youth in this context?