

Bonfires, Flags, Identity and Cultural Traditions

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22 November 2017

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#NILT16 #niflags

- Annual attitudinal survey of adults (18 years or older). Run since 1998 and prior to that as NISA 1989.
- Random sample of population with 1,208 achieved interviews. Response rate 55%
- Questions on flags and bonfires funded by The Executive Office.
- Full details, results, datasets www.ark.ac.uk/nilt

Aims for today

- Present NILT survey data from 2016 on public attitudes towards bonfires, flags, identity and cultural traditions.
- Allow this to feed into wider community, policy and academic debates.



Figure 1: Percentage saying relations between Protestants and Catholics are better than they were 5 years ago

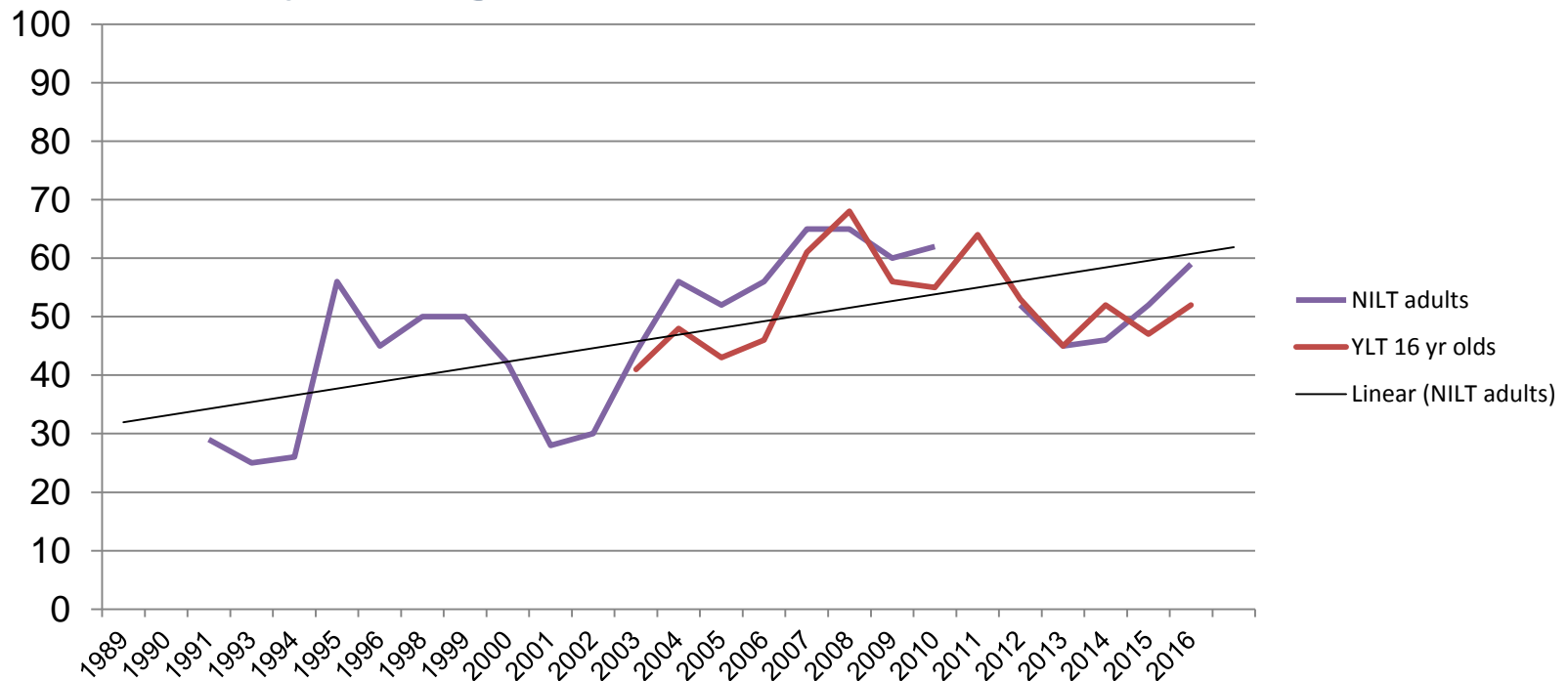


Figure 2:
Reaction to markers, 2004-2016

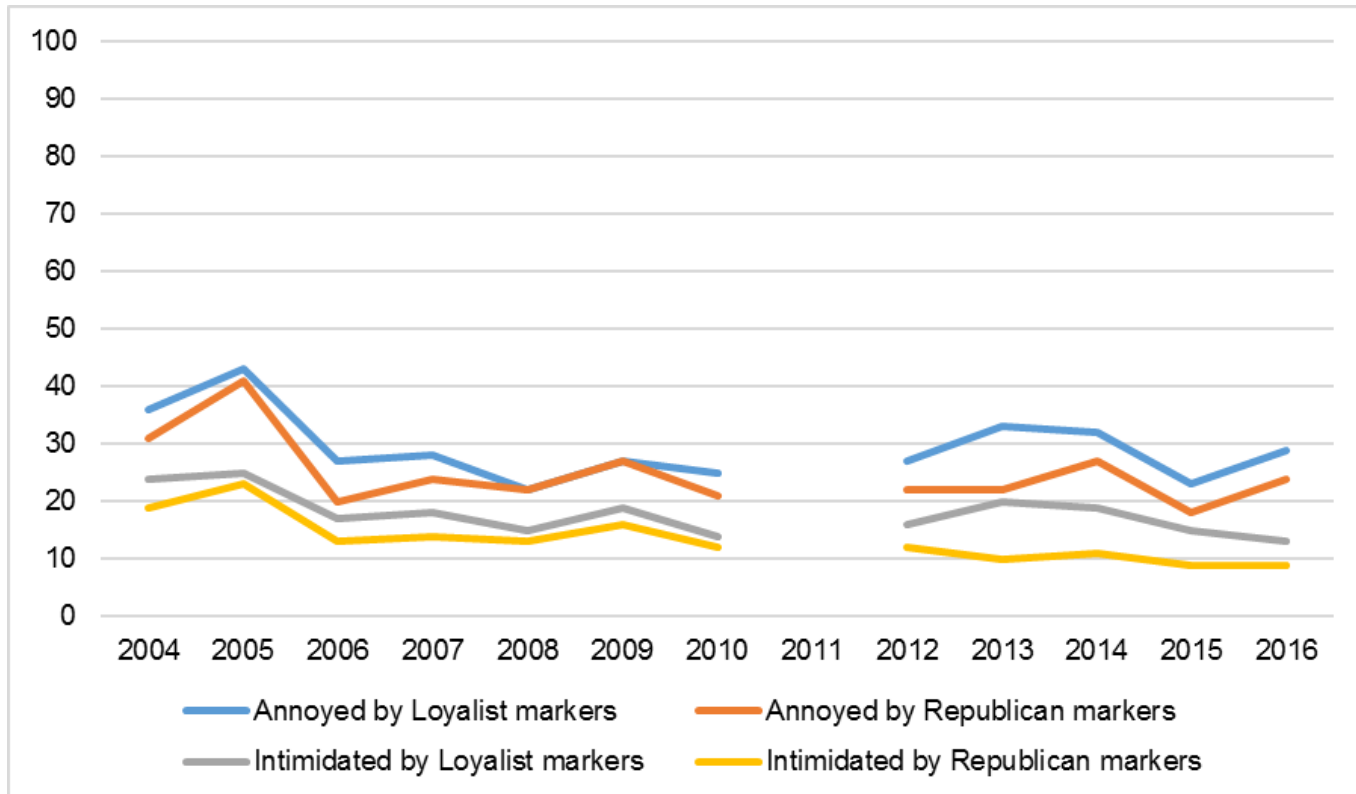


Table 1: Reaction to markers, 2016

	%			
	Republican murals, kerb paintings or flags		Loyalist murals, kerb paintings or flags	
	Intimidated	Annoyed	Intimidated	Annoyed
All	9	24	13	29
Protestant	11	26	8	25
Catholic	8	21	19	32
No religion	9	26	12	31
Unionist	13	34	8	28
Nationalist	7	19	24	36
Neither Unionist nor Nationalist	7	19	12	27
British	11	26	8	22
Irish	7	21	21	35
N Irish	9	28	12	35

Table 2: Annoyance at markers, 2016

	%			
	Neither	Both	Republican only	Loyalist only
All	67	19	4	10
Protestant	68	20	7	6
Catholic	65	19	2	14
No religion	65	22	4	9
Unionist	61	24	11	4
Nationalist	63	19	1	18
Neither Unionist nor Nationalist	71	18	2	9
British	69	18	8	5
Irish	63	20	2	16
N Irish	62	24	4	11

48% overall support the flying of flags on lampposts throughout Northern Ireland on special dates for particular celebrations.

34% are opposed.



Figure 3: Support for flying of flags on lampposts throughout Northern Ireland on special dates for particular celebrations

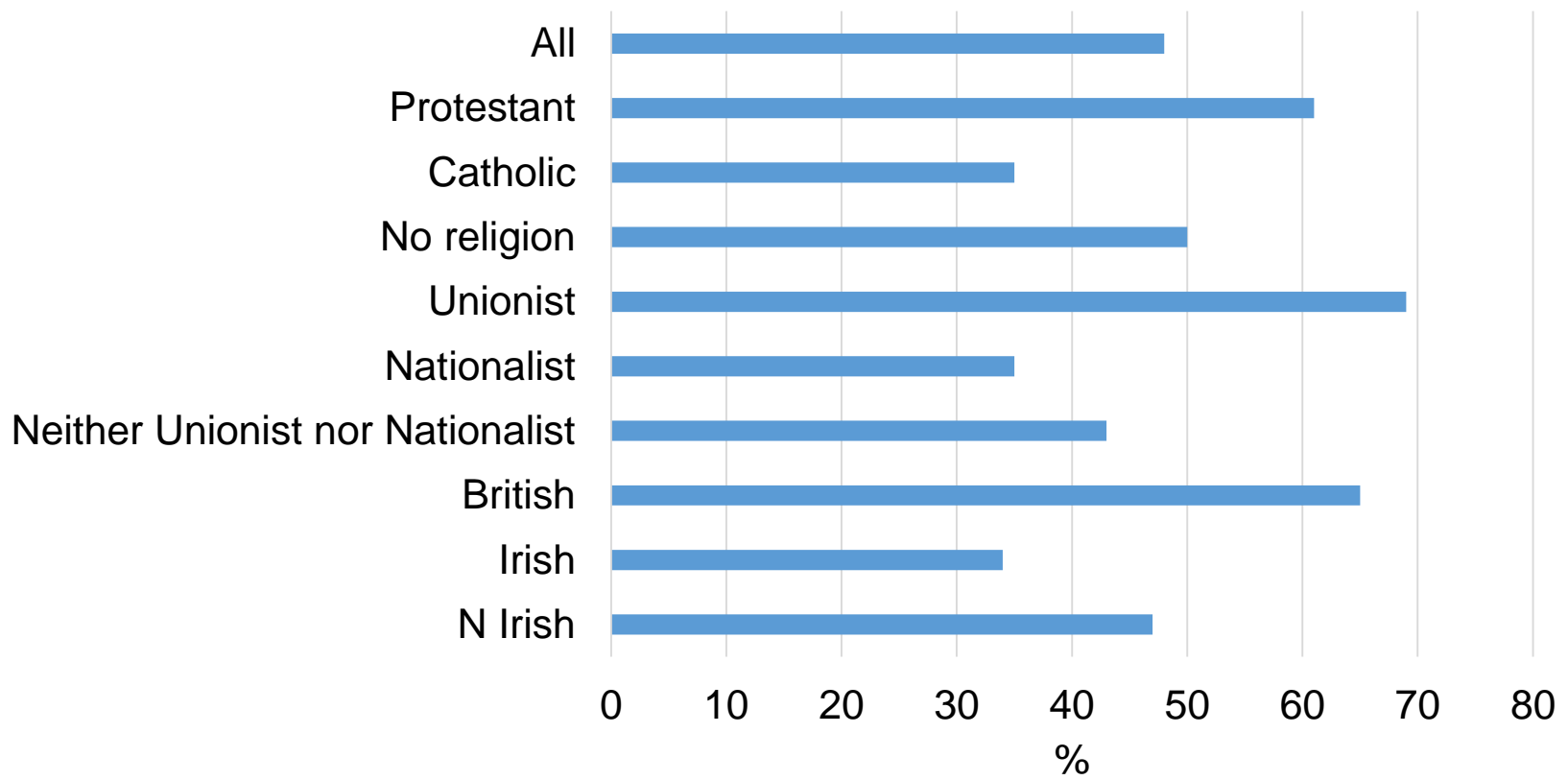


Table 3: If flags appear on lampposts I would like them all taken down straightaway, even if this causes trouble

	%	
	Supportive	Opposed
All	45	33
Protestant	36	43
Catholic	58	23
No religion	39	35
Unionist	37	45
Nationalist	62	20
Neither Unionist nor Nationalist	41	34
British	35	42
Irish	60	22
N Irish	49	32

Table 4: Attitudes on flying of union flag on public buildings

	%			
	All the time	Designated days	Never	Don't know
All	20	59	14	7
Protestant	38	56	2	4
Catholic	2	61	27	10
No religion	19	60	13	8
Unionist	45	53	<0.5	2
Nationalist	2	59	34	6
Neither Unionist nor Nationalist	14	63	13	11
British	43	52	2	2
Irish	2	55	35	9
N Irish	14	73	9	4

Table 5: Bonfires are a legitimate form of cultural celebration

	%		
	Agree	Neither	Disagree
All	42	23	33
Protestant	56	21	20
Catholic	24	22	51
No religion	52	22	24
Unionist	67	15	18
Nationalist	23	18	59
Neither Unionist nor Nationalist	38	29	29
British	60	21	19
Irish	22	21	56
N Irish	42	25	33

Who is responsible?

Table 6: Bonfire organisers should be held to account if there is property damage or injuries as a result of their bonfires

	%
Strongly agree	46
Agree	40
Neither agree nor disagree	7
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	2
Can't choose	2

Key points (1)

- Two thirds of NILT respondents had not felt intimidated by republican or loyalist markers of identity (murals, flags and kerb painting) in the last year.
- Significant minorities (35% of Catholics and 32% of Protestants) have felt annoyed by markers of identity in the past year.
- 48% of NILT respondents support the flying of flags on lampposts throughout N. Ireland on special dates for particular celebrations, but 34% are against this.
- Opinion was split about whether flags should be taken down straightaway, even if this causes trouble: 45% of respondents agreed, whilst 33% disagreed.

Key points (2)

- 20% of respondents think that the union flag should be flown from public buildings all the time, while 14% think that it never should be flown.
- 59% support flying the Union flag on designated days on public buildings.
- 42% think that bonfires are a legitimate form of cultural expression; 33% disagree.
- Nine out of ten think that bonfire organisers should be held to account if there is property damage or injuries as a result of their bonfires. Only 5% disagree.

Thank you

Tables of results, datasets, technical
notes and publications
www.ark.ac.uk/nilt