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Northern Ireland

ACCESS RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE

Can Northern Ireland become ‘normal’?

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- ‘Normality’ and universal norms
- Rule of law and civil rights
- Populist politics
- Constitutional attitudes
- ‘Bread-and-butter’ issues
- Institutional political focus
- Conclusion

- Do you have sympathy with the reasons for violence from loyalist/republican groups even if you don't condone the violence itself (%)?

	Loyalist groups	Republican groups
A lot of sympathy	3	5
A little sympathy	26	25
No sympathy at all	70	69
Don't know	2	2

Rule of law

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- Compare results for 1998, when violence was *more* strongly delegitimised:

	Loyalist groups	Republican groups
A lot of sympathy	2	3
A little sympathy	16	11
No sympathy at all	77	82
Don't know	4	3

- Results for Catholics only:

	Loyalist groups	Republican groups
A lot of sympathy	3	11
A little sympathy	24	31
No sympathy at all	70	55
Don't know	3	3

Human rights

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- Do you think the authorities should have the right to detain people for as long as they want without putting them on trial (%)?

Definitely should have right	23
Probably should have right	35
Probably should not have right	21
Definitely should not have right	15
Can't choose	16

- Results for Protestants only

Definitely should have right	30
Probably should have right	36
Probably should not have right	21
Definitely should not have right	8
Can't choose	5

- Should organising protest marches and demonstrations be allowed (%)?

Definitely	23
Probably	37
Probably not	20
Definitely not	13
Can't choose	7

Populist politics

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- **Political party feel closest to (2007) / support (1998) (%)**

	2007	1998
Democratic Unionist	20	9
Sinn Féin	14	7
Ulster Unionist	18	25
Social Democratic & Labour	20	22
Alliance	8	8
Other	2	8*
None of these	15	12
Other answer / don't know	2	11*

Populist politics

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- Best performances by main populist radical right parties in European (lower-house) parliamentary elections (Mudde)

Country	Party	High score (year)
Austria	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ)	26.9 (1999)
Russia	Liberal'no-demokraticheskoi partii Rossii (LDPR)	22.9 (1993)
Belgium	Vlaams Belang (VB) Front national (FNb)	16.8 (2003) 6.9 (1995)
Romania	Partidul România Mare (PRM)	19.5 (2000)
France	Front national (FN)	14.9 (1997)
Denmark	Dansk Folkeparti (DFP)	13.2 (2005)
Slovakia	Slovenská národná strana (SNS)	11.7 (2006)

- Do you think of yourself as a unionist, a nationalist or neither (%)?

Unionist	36
Nationalist	24
Neither	40

- Compare 1998:

Unionist	40
Nationalist	25
Neither	33

- If the majority of people in Northern Ireland ever/never voted to become part of a united Ireland do you think you (%)

	Ever voted for a united Ireland	Never voted for a united Ireland
Would find this almost impossible to accept?	12	4
Would not like it, but could live with it if you had to?	46	34
Would happily accept the wishes of the majority?	39	58
Don't know	3	4

‘Bread-and-butter’ issues

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- Do you think it is more important that the Assembly spends its time dealing with policy issues or constitutional issues (%)?

Policy issues	65
Constitutional issues	12
Both equally	20
Don't know	3

Policing and justice

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- On constitutional issues that the Assembly will have to deal with, which of these do you think is the most important (%)?

Devolution of policing and justice	53
Securing Northern Ireland's union with the United Kingdom	26
Bringing about a United Ireland	9
None of these	7
Don't know	6

Institutional focus

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- Which of the following has the most influence/ought to have most influence over the way Northern Ireland is run (%)?

	Which has most influence	Which ought to have most influence
Northern Ireland Assembly	36	68
UK government at Westminster	45	11
Local councils	7	11
Irish Government	2	3
European Union	3	2
Other	1	1
Don't know	5	3

- Positive trends towards democratic normality in stress on 'bread-and-butter' issues and assembly, more tolerance on constitution
- But strong authoritarian hangover from 'troubles': significant (indeed rising) sympathy for reasons for violence, weak support for civil liberties, polarisation towards populist parties
- Result: deadlocks on range of day-to-day issues, reinvolverment of London, little legislation, devolution of policing/justice postponed
- All in all, still some way from 'normality'