# Symbiotic Othering: terrorism, emotion and morality

Debra A. Smith

To be labelled a 'terrorist' has become synonymous with being morally reprehensible, and therefore devoid of an essential aspect of humanness. A terrorist becomes a non-human, something to be eliminated rather than someone to listen to or negotiate with. Yet those labelled as terrorists commonly claim to be working from a position of high moral authority. They may see themselves as altruistic, representing the powerless, and sacrificing themselves for the betterment of their communities. For the so-called terrorist, the existing power structures of society are inherently unfair and therefore violate deeply held moral ideals such as justice, autonomy and equality. Moral imperatives become the framework for justifying violence against those identified as upholding the existing social conditions.

So how do we make sense of the highly moralistic judgements and language around terrorism as each opposing side claims a monopoly on moral understanding and behaviour? One way is to follow Bauman's advice to avoid searching for the legitimacy of moral claims in the actions of each group. For Bauman, the Holocaust exemplifies how actions have no intrinsic moral value, with social organization rendering all social action adiaphoric – neither good nor evil – measurable only against the amoral requirements of the bureaucratic or the technical (Bauman 2000 [1989]: 215). In his search for the source of morality, Bauman turns to Emmanuel Levinas to suggest that the most solid foundations lie in the experience of being in the world with others (Bauman 2000 [1989]: 182, 214). Ideally, this experience generates a sense of unconditional responsibility; however, in societies where terrorist groups emerge, the experience of being in the world with others has become the experience of being in the world with the 'Other'. Rather than generating responsibility, this experience has become intolerable, to the point that violence has come to be seen as a viable and acceptable way of dealing with co-existence.

When Bauman endeavoured to understand how it is possible that violence against fellow human beings can come to be seen as a perfectly logical, indeed rational, response to a perceived social problem, he came to the conclusion that the answer lay in a process of transformation in which responsibility to the other erodes as social distance increases. Social

distance, he argues, is the 'technological and bureaucratic achievement of modern rational society' (Bauman 2000 [1989]: 184). The idea of the 'technical', the 'bureaucratic' and the 'rational' seems to evoke a process devoid of emotion, as emotions are often conceived of as impulses – the very antithesis of rational thought and meaning. Indeed, it is the non-emotional, the technocratic and endlessly bureaucratic diffusion of responsibility that, for Bauman, creates the social distance necessary for the systematic and efficient mass elimination of human beings. In this sense, social distance equates with emotional detachment and social proximity with emotional contiguity. While this may indeed be true, the process of arriving at a point of cold, dispassionate distance remains a process imbued with emotion.

Being in the world with others generates emotions. Emotions are central to the way we understand and relate to each other and to the strengthening or undermining of social bonds. They affect the judgements we make about our past, our present and our future, and about those we see as either facilitating or blocking our chances for a rewarding life. They also help us to tap into the energy we need to act, and influence the way we think about (in)justice. However, it is the special relationship that emotions have to the development of beliefs that can either consolidate or erode relationships, creating proximity or distance between individuals, groups and societies, which is most pertinent to understanding the social production of morality.

This chapter draws from interviews conducted with violent political activists operating in Northern Ireland¹ during the period known as 'the Troubles' to look more closely at the social production of distance that may lead to a decline in responsibility to the Other and provide a platform for the construction of alternative moral positions that are used to justify violence. Emotions have a special relationship to morality, with feelings of anger, compassion, envy, fear, grief, shame and love, to name just a few, providing knowledge and informing our judgements about what is fair and just. What follows highlights the symbiotic nature of producing the Other, as the failure to entrench a degree of emotional continuity and connectedness between the state and a section of its citizenry lays the foundations for the development of alternative and conflicting concepts of morality.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> All names of interview participants have been replaced with pseudonyms in order to maintain anonymity.

The agents of terrorism typically view the targeted group as responsible for some kind of gross moral violation, whether that be occupation of disputed territory, despoliation of culture or religion, or the unconscionable treatment of others (Barbalet 2006: 47). They cast their own violent actions as a morally righteous response to these violations. Indeed, so-called terrorists draw a sharp distinction between their violent actions and those of criminals by pointing to the altruistic nature of their goals as they promote the agenda of the group to which they belong (Schwartz et al. 2009: 539). This suggests that, while social distance may increase between some, it may simultaneously decrease between others as tightly defined identity groups form in opposition to the status quo.

It may make us uncomfortable to think that violent political extremists do not just blindly obey the commands of a few who have abandoned morality completely, or are entirely lacking in morality themselves. However, in order to understand (as opposed to condone) violent political extremism it is necessary to understand that, regardless of the perspective of others, members of terrorist groups do perceive their actions to be moral within the context of their particular circumstances. This would come as no surprise to Bauman, who argued that, rather than being a product of society, '[m]orality is something society manipulates – exploits, re-directs, jams' (Bauman 2000 [1989]: 183). I would add that this manipulation is not necessarily conscious, or controlled or directed from 'above', but rather a by-product of the reciprocal emotional processes arising in response to perceptions of discrimination, exclusion or not being valued. Ironically, those in power are held responsible for withholding or making impossible this sense of belonging by those who see themselves as excluded from the benefits of society, while those excluded are held responsible by society for rejecting the possibilities and benefits of belonging.

The approach taken throughout this chapter reflects three important propositions about emotions. First, emotion is viewed as intertwined with reason, rather than diametrically opposed to it. The ubiquitous yet erroneous belief that emotion works only to distort rationality, and therefore reason, does nothing to further our understanding of why people do what they do, including engaging in violent political extremism or, indeed, setting aside central components of liberal democratic principles to justify torture. When asking why people do what they do, we tend to look for reasons for their behaviour; so the customary dichotomy between reason and emotion ensures that emotion is largely absent from serious

inquiries into behaviour (Zhu & Thagard 2002: 32). While it is certainly possible for emotion to contribute to flawed decisions or behaviour by unduly influencing outcomes, it is equally true that reason is flawed when emotion is not present at all.

Second, in this chapter emotions are viewed as a source of knowledge. In other words, our emotions communicate or 'tell us things' about the world and therefore may contribute to the development of epistemological positions (Frijda & Mesquita 2000: 69). The experience of emotion blends with thoughts and cognitions in order to inform us about the nature of social reality. Feeling sad or happy can be construed as evidence that something is bad or good, and feeling scared can be interpreted as evidence of a threat. Similarly, hope or anger may contribute to the belief that a particular political position is preferable.

Finally, personal emotions are viewed as operating within broader emotional contexts. Emotions permeate social life to the point that we ascribe them to the character of institutions, nations or processes, thereby enabling us to speak about the greed of financial markets, the humiliation of Arab nations, or the arrogance of foreign policy (Hoggett 2009: 1). Emotions are embedded within the norms, values, institutions and social structures in which we all live. For Simmel (1950 [1908]), faithfulness and gratitude played a substantial role in binding us together via the in social relations that enabled the creation of permanent institutions. Similarly, in the *Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*, Weber (2003 [1904/5]) explores how anxiety, stemming from uncertainty as to whether one is predestined to be saved or damned, helped to define the emerging capitalist economic system.<sup>2</sup>

Even more broadly, social theorists have identified emotion with entire epochs. The kind of enduring configuration of emotion that gives expression to a period or generation was referred to by Williams (1977: 131) as 'structures of feeling'. For instance, Elias (1982: 292) has argued that a key characteristic of modernity is the reification of shame, while Bauman (2006) and Beck (1992) have associated late-modernity with both fear and anxiety. A theme that ties these understandings of emotion together is that individual emotional responses take place within a wider emotional environment in which 'structures of feeling' and 'abiding affects' are expressions of economic, social, political and institutional forces (Clarke et al. 2006: 11). One 'function of the political state is to legitimate some emotions and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Similarly, in *Politics as vocation*, Weber (1946 [1918]: 78) argued that the three legitimate forms of domination (traditional, charismatic, and legal) are determined by "highly robust motives of fear and hope".

differentially encourage, contain and dissuade others' in order to maintain social control (Barbalet 2006: 32; also see, Bensel 2008: xi). Possibly the most well-known expression of this concept was in Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince*, when in response to the question of whether it is better for a prince to be loved or feared he counselled:

that one would like to be both ... but ... it is far better to be feared than loved if you cannot be both ... nonetheless ... [a prince should] make himself feared in such a way that, if he is not loved, at least he escapes being hated. (Machiavelli 1986 [1532]: 96–7)

So keeping in mind that emotions are a part of reason, that they operate as a source of knowledge and that they are not contained to the individual, this chapter considers how emotions can develop that encourage people either to gravitate towards a sense of social proximity or, conversely, to recoil and retreat, creating social distance and a subsequent reduction of responsibility towards the Other. Along with the erosion of responsibility there is an ensuing freedom from the kinds of norms and rules of behaviour that forbid using people as a means of achieving political ends. This chapter looks more closely at four emotions that help create social proximity or, conversely, social distance. Following Flam (2005), it focuses on the role of loyalty, anger, shame and fear in generating or undermining social bonds. Making extensive use of the words of men who have been convicted of terrorism offences in Northern Ireland during the Troubles, it illustrates the complex relationship among emotions, social proximity and distance, and the construction of a morality that considers responsibility to the Other to be a selective process.

## Loyalty

Loyalty is, among other things, an emotional connection that is felt towards other people, groups, institutions, places or causes (Connor 2007: 132). As such, it is inextricably tied to a sense of belonging and, in Bauman's terms, of social proximity. National loyalty refers to the connection felt towards a particular nation, but the idea of loyalty is applied to a variety of relationships, ranging from the personal and familial; to sports teams; political institutions; religious doctrines; gender, race, ethnic and class groups; locations; and causes, among other possibilities (Connor 2007: 2, 73). Social institutions play a direct role in building national loyalty by providing physical, psychological and existential security through the controlled use of the law and military, the provision of education, housing and income paths, social

recognition and representation (Berezin 2002: 38; Connor 2007: 79; Flam 2005: 31; Grodzins 1956: 5–6). A claim of legitimacy is not enough to ensure national loyalty and obedience to the state if an individual or a collective group does not experience the sense of security and opportunity that it is seen as being the obligation of the state to provide. This becomes even more problematic when the experiences of security and loyalty are seen to be provided or withheld depending upon an identity marker, whether that be ethnicity, religion, class, gender or an array of other indicators of difference connected with status (Kemper 2001: 66).

In this sense, the history of Northern Ireland provided a challenge to the British Government in developing loyalty among Irish Catholics. Northern Ireland became a separate legal entity as a result of being partitioned under the Government of Ireland Act 1920. While it is not the intent of this chapter to re-examine the history of Northern Ireland, it suffices to say that partitioning effectively divided the 32 counties of the island into two parts: an independent Irish Republic comprising 26 counties with a majority Catholic population; and a devolved government within the United Kingdom (UK) comprised of the other six counties (four of which were predominantly Protestant), which became known as Northern Ireland (Rose 1971). The Northern Ireland state perceived itself as a Protestant state and systematically established policies that marginalized Catholics (Moloney 2002: 42). As such, the history of Northern Ireland is undeniably characterized by discriminatory policies and extensive enmity towards its Catholic population (Moloney 2002: 42-5). Catholics in Northern Ireland were born into a state that was already deeply divided and defined, in part, by social distance. They were 'Taigs' or 'Paddy', the 'Irish Frankenstein', or the subject of jokes meant to imply stupidity. And yet they were also expected to become a part of the state, to internalize its norms and obey its rules, including developing a sense of loyalty to the existing regime.

Even though the members of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) interviewed were largely from the second or third generation born into an already established Northern Ireland state, they did not express a sense of national identity that demonstrated affective ties to Britain, or more broadly, the UK.<sup>3</sup> As one participant noted:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The 2011 Northern Ireland Census revealed that 87 per cent of people who 'felt' British *and* Northern Irish had been brought up in Protestant denominations. A similar percentage of Catholics (86 per cent), however, regarded themselves as Irish and Northern Irish only (NISRA 2013).

I have never ever felt British, I have always felt Irish and my family has been involved in Irish culture, I played Gaelic football, and my sisters went to Irish dancing and stuff like that. ... Well, it's not like my family ever told me specifically that I wasn't British, or that I had to reject Britishness, or that I made a decision, I just grew up being Irish, I wasn't hostile or anything, I just didn't have a sense of it being relevant. I lived in Ireland and I was Irish, easy! (Padraig, PIRA)

When invited to discuss this further in relation to a growing political awareness, the participant went on to say:

I mean, as I say, I didn't feel part of the state. ... To go to Dublin for the day it was to go to the capital ... um, well, if someone had've said go to London we would have said, 'What do we want to go to London for?' I mean, it was complete detachment, innocent, you know, not a thought-out position, or a political statement. It just wasn't relevant to me in any way. (Padraig, PIRA)

In a similar vein, the following exchange with the same PIRA member highlights how a childhood dispute was framed in terms of the broader issue of feeling alienated from the state based on being Catholic:

the Queen didn't mean anything, the royal family didn't mean anything. I remember having an argument again with a wee Protestant friend about who was the richest, the Queen or the Pope ... it's nothing but a kid's argument. But it sort of reinforces there was a difference there, a different outlook, all of that sort of stuff. No affinity to the state and no affinity to Britain. ... Bear in mind too, I mean Catholics were almost excluded totally from the likes of the police force, the higher ranks of the civil service, the visual representatives of the state and all at that time. During the 50s and 60s all the heavy industry of ship building, the metal foundries almost exclusively were Protestant workforces you know, so you just didn't

feel a part of it. That's how I would have felt at the time, not so much in opposition, just not a part of it, not me. (Padraig, PIRA)

Clearly a sense of loyalty to the ruling state was not developing for Padraig during his childhood. While there was not necessarily a sense of hostility, there was more an ambivalence towards 'Britishness' in terms of the self. <sup>4</sup> In Bauman's terms, the foundations for social proximity were not solid and a sense of exclusion and ambivalence, rather than responsibility, had begun to take hold. Another PIRA participant expressed his sense of dislocation from British rule as a young man by saying:

you knew the City Hall didn't belong to you, you knew even the police didn't belong to you ... everything was foreign to ya, around ya, ya felt like you were in a wee ghetto. (Ruari, PIRA)

However, this participant described an incident that occurred when he was a little older, in which the sense of not belonging becomes more frustrating and acrimonious because of the deliberate misuse of his name in favour of the more generic Catholic identifier of 'Paddy':

the military come in and there's a honeymoon period and my ma is out there making 'em tea and the next thing is they're starting searching us. So you were going to school in the morning and you'd be stopped by the military and thrown against the wall and, 'Paddy' they'd call ya, and I'd say, "my name's Ruari", "alright Paddy" [they'd say]. Fuck! (Ruari, PIRA)

A PIRA member, who as a child had hoped to become a British Merchant Marine, talked about his sense of not being valued by the state:

The state ... was a state designed by the Unionist and British. They carved it up to suit the political needs of only one section of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Furthermore, a 2004 study commissioned by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister found that even at the age of three, Protestant children in Belfast were twice as likely to identify the Union Jack as 'their own flag' than Catholic children, while Catholic children were twice as likely to dislike the police (see Connolly & Healy 2004: 4).

community. Every single facet of life within those six counties was geared towards one section of the community and the community that I was brought up in, the Catholic, Nationalist, Republic, you can call it what you like, we were second class citizens. I didn't realise that [at the time] and I say that openly and honestly. ... Maybe I didn't have to understand fully, it was enough to feel it. (Eamon, PIRA)

Eamon's observation that it was enough to 'feel' rather than understand or know that he was not a valued member of the nation equates to what is commonly known as a 'gut feeling'. His evaluation may or may not be an objective one, but it does contribute to the development of his personal belief system and to the way he makes judgements about his sense of responsibility to those he views as treating not only him, but also his community, as secondclass citizens. The failure to embed a sense of loyalty within the social structures of a society risks laying the foundations for widening social distance built on mistrust, in turn arising from hurt, anger or fear (Connor 2007: 43). Loyalty is, in part, an emotional connection which helps to construct a person's social identity, offering a sense of belonging and identification that erodes social distance and strengthens responsibility towards others (Connor 2007: 132). The reasons behind a sense of 'not belonging' are often complex and may or may not have their roots in obvious political failures of the state. However, a perception that the state is either rejecting or excluding you from the security and opportunity it is expected to provide can transform a sense of ambivalence into hostility. Furthermore, a perception of being under threat and the subsequent development of hostility works to create emotional distance between the two opposing groups while simultaneously increasing the emotional saliency within the group that perceives itself to be under threat (Castano et al. 2008: 264). In the following quote, Padraig clearly demonstrates how responsibility is connected to social proximity:

I mean, my world was a war zone and you had to be on a side and so my side was my community, my family, my friends. To me there was no way to be neutral, you were loyal to those people you knew, who went to the same school or football club, or whose house you went to or you saw at church on Sunday. I mean, I think that the rioting and all that took place during that August in 1969 was the beginning of

my awareness that you were on one side or the other. Up until then I had mostly Protestant friends actually. (Padraig, PIRA)

Padraig's words reveal that he felt he needed to choose a side, or a group, to be loyal to, and that there was an underlying conflict which did not allow him to negotiate differing levels or layers of loyalty among competing options. For Padraig, being loyal to his community ostensibly meant that he could not be loyal to those he perceived as outside his group. In a sense, Padraig's words demonstrate how the emotional bonds to broader society can be eroded, while the emotional connections to a more exclusivist group can become stronger in the face of perceived threat — a theme that will be explored more fully later in the chapter. For now, however, it is important to note that when a sense of loyalty is established it helps to guide behaviour, framing a set of moral obligations and responsibilities. In cases where people feel a sense of loyalty to the state they generally feel an obligation not to attack it or its citizens. However, when multiple layers of loyalty seemingly cannot be engendered, and loyalty is almost exclusively associated with a particular group, the logic of this group correspondingly prescribes behaviour, and moral obligations and responsibilities are limited to within it, rather than extended more broadly (Castano et al. 2008: 262). Take, for example, the way this PIRA member justifies being able to commit acts of violence:

I didn't feel any loyalty to the Brits, none at all. I mean, what did they do for us except make our lives more difficult? We were subjected to constant searches, to guns in our faces and barbed wire and checkpoints around our homes. I mean, how the hell can you feel anything but resentment of that? ... No, my loyalty was to my community, and I was going to protect it. If some of 'em [the British] had to die in order for them to get the message that we didn't want 'em here, then so be it. (Mick, PIRA)

So while loyalty is an emotion that binds people together, these bonds also have the potential to exclude others. Indeed, the differing individuals, groups, causes and institutions to which someone is loyal must inevitably be balanced by alternative possibilities to which the person could be loyal but is not (Hirschman 1970: 82). Still, it is possible to choose some loyalties over others without necessarily developing a deep sense of hostility; this is what most of us

do every day. Nevertheless, particularly under conditions of perceived threat, the tendency for loyalties to develop that are more exclusivist and hostile to others is increased, forming the foundation for 'in-group' and 'out-group' dynamics, largely because loyalties are associated with identities and as such mark our memberships and belonging as well as associated social roles (Connor 2007: 49).

### **Anger**

Anger is generally understood as a 'sanctioning emotion' in the sense that it arises as an objection to a slight or signals that a perceived injustice has occurred. Additionally, a growing body of literature points to how anger is predominantly appropriated as a 'top-down' emotion (Hochschild 1983; Kemper 1978). This is not to say, of course, that only people with power or status get angry. Rather, the display of anger is more likely to attract negative sanctions when shown by those with less power and status. As Holmes (2004: 127) notes, 'it is oppressed groups in particular who have been encouraged to repress their anger'. One of the most recognizable example of this is the traditional dichotomy of demonstrative anger by men as opposed to anger suppression by women (Hochschild 1983: 127). However, this may also apply to the relationships between boss and employee (Hearn 1993), parent and child, colonial power and native, or any other social relationship in which there is an imbalance between the power or status of one party in relation to the other. Bottom-up anger occurs when those with less power perceive their status to have been unjustly reduced or withdrawn by the more powerful other, and the negative sanctions directed towards the display of 'bottom-up' anger are part of the strategy for maintaining the status quo (Cropanzano et al. 2011: 165; Holmes 2004: 127; Kemper 2001: 66). The containment of extreme anger is arguably a goal aimed at maintaining political and social order, but in controlling anger there is also a risk of suppressing essential dialogues about injustice, which inevitably involve an element of anger (Lyman 2004).

It is self-evident that those who joined PIRA felt anger at the situation in which they found themselves. Indeed, anger, hate and humiliation, are arguably the emotions most commonly attributed to those engaging in violent political extremism (see, for example, Moghaddam, 2005). However, here the focus is on anger as it is embedded in social structures and as it relates to either strengthening social proximity or increasing social distance. The following examples illustrate the way in which PIRA members experience their anger socially rather

than subjectively, although this is in no way intended to suggest that the subjective experience of anger is neither present nor unimportant. Rather, these quotes demonstrate how the subjective experience of anger is mediated by social forces:

In prison you're not allowed to express anger in any form, that's part of the control mechanism. In a sense, living in Belfast with the Brits all around, and remember that there were 27,000 British troops, plus the RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary], plus the UDR [Ulster Defence Regiment] on top of that, so you're talking about an armed contingent of about 40,000 for a population of less than a million and a half people. Well, it's the same sort of control mechanism. If you were a Catholic in Belfast then you weren't supposed to be angry. That didn't mean we weren't. It just meant that we was illegitimate because of it, and so if we chose to show it we were goin' to get in trouble. (Cian, PIRA)

For Cian, choosing to express anger equates with moving outside the socially prescribed behaviour associated with his status and role as a Catholic in Belfast and into the area of negatively sanctioned or proscribed behaviour. Another member, when relating his experience of being one of only a few Catholics working in a majority Protestant workplace, talked about being invisible:

they would just talk as if you weren't there, they would just talk about things and talk about your community ... about attacks on the RUC and they could be outraged and self-righteous and, well it does, I mean, it makes you angry ... but it's all about the hierarchy. They can feel suffering we obviously can't, or they have the right to feel angry but we obviously don't. It's not like they even have to tell you, you just know because you matter so little they don't even have to worry that you hear them talking that stuff. (Liam, PIRA)

What Liam is effectively expressing here is an implicit understanding, embedded in the structure of society, about which group has the socially sanctioned right to express anger. He

is conscious that both the representatives of the Protestant community as well as himself are angry at the existing social conditions, but also that his position as a Catholic means that his anger is in defiance of the accepted social norms. When asked what he 'did' with his anger, Liam replied:

Well ya just kept quiet didn't ya. Anyway, there was other ways of getting it out like throwing a few stones on the way home or something like that. (Liam, PIRA)

Rather than displaying an irrational and uncontrollable rage, these members of PIRA demonstrate both an understanding of, and an ability to control, their anger. Liam makes a rational decision to suppress his anger when its expression may compromise his employment. He also easily identifies an alternative avenue for acting out by which he does not put himself at high risk of negative social sanctions yet which provides him with the 'release' of defying those norms that violate his deeply held values of fairness.

The sense that expressions of anger are the prerogative of the powerful and that displays of anger attract negative social sanctions may lead to anger suppression, thereby maintaining a sense of social order. However, as Liam's and Cian's reflections demonstrate, this does not mean that anger is not present. The experience of anger can work emotionally to create social distance from the established political institutions and those that support or uphold them, although this is by no means automatic. People go out and angrily protest against government policies or practices regularly, particularly within western democracies where this is defended as a legitimate form of political expression, without disconnecting from society more broadly. However, what seems especially pertinent to creating social distance is the perception that you are not 'allowed' to express anger based on *your social position or identity*. For Liam and Cian, it was the fact that they were Catholics under the rule of the British in Northern Ireland that provided the context for feeling that they could not express their anger without attracting negative sanctions that were heftier than those for their Protestant counterparts.

The idea that expressions of anger are seen as legitimate or not based on particular identity markers, such as being Catholic, may or may not be objectively accurate. However, the perception that group membership contributes to determining whether it is legitimate to

express anger is especially relevant to understanding why some people find their anger reinforcing an oppositional stance to broader society in which responsibility to others is diminished. The implicit assumption arrived at is that being angry means you are pushed away and seen as a threat rather than having your voice heard and taken into consideration. As such, the shared experience of supposedly illegitimate anger connected to identity can help to bind people within these more exclusivist identity groups, while simultaneously isolating them from the broader society.

#### Shame

The idea that shame is a dominant social emotion is most famously expounded in Elias's (1982) seminal work, *The civilizing process*, in which he observes how the increasing importance of manners since the seventeenth century coincided with escalating shame and embarrassment over bodily functions, such as defectation or sexual intercourse, previously performed in public but now strictly contained within the private realm. For Elias, shame over violating tightly held social conventions ensures that people are automatically socialized into upholding certain social rules, ensuring that shame acts to promote solidarity in social relations.

Flam concentrates on two aspects of shame in relation to social structure. First, drawing on Simmel, she identifies shame as an emotion experienced when we fail to live up to either our own or others' internalized societal standards (Flam 2005: 22). Second, following Kemper, Flam suggests that shame reifies systems of domination by upholding systems of classification that ensure those with less power are obligated to think of themselves as inferior or naturally flawed in terms of intelligence, skills, appearance and morals, among other things (Flam 2005: 22). As one member reflected on his surroundings growing up:

it's oppressive, obviously you feel that, well, a lot of people felt they were not worthy to get jobs, you know, you weren't worthy enough to feel that, you know, you weren't good enough to match up. (Coilm, PIRA)

Both aspects of shame that Flam refers to with regard to the upholding of social order appears to depend on the acceptance of social norms as broadly valid. Coilm's comments suggest that

there was a sense of shame internalized within some people in the Catholic community such that they sensed that their lack of employment was a result of some internal flaw. However, in explaining the difference between the period of relative peace leading up to the Troubles and the civil unrest that characterized the period from the late 1960s until the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, Coilm pointed out that:

there was a change happening for my generation that didn't happen for the previous generation ... and it meant then that people ... coming into the 50s and the 60s had this opportunity of third-level education. And with education you change the way you think about yourself. We watched what was happening with Martin Luther King over in the United States and we saw, just like the Blacks in the Civil Rights Movement, that we were equal and as worthy as anyone else and that it was a structural kind of discrimination that was to blame for our conditions. ... But you still don't get, no, you still don't get the opportunity for the jobs ... Catholics are twice as much, are twice as likely to be unemployed. You're expected not to get above yourself you know. (Coilm, PIRA)

# Coilm explained that:

it is in the state's interest to keep people feeling like they're not worthy, it's in-built, like socially ingrained. (Coilm, PIRA)<sup>5</sup>

Shame is an emotion that operates by the adoption and internalization of the point of view of others, thereby ensuring a type of conformism (Barbalet 2001: 103; Cooley 1964 [1922]; Scheff 1988). As long as the societal myth of natural inferiority is believed, it is unlikely that any challenge to the status quo will gain momentum. However, once one realizes that the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ed Moloney (2002: 45), in his book *A secret history of the IRA*, suggests that it was the introduction of The Eleven Plus exams by a well-meaning Labour Party swept into office after the Second World War that was one of the main catalysts for the Troubles. The opening up of social mobility within British society collided with unionist privilege in Northern Ireland, resulting in a more highly educated Catholic population with correspondingly higher economic, social and political expectations that were then stymied by discriminatory policies and practices.

other person's point of view is not valid, shame is stripped of its power to ensure conformity and, as Coilm describes, can unleash a counter-reaction:

that's where the anger and the frustration came to the fore because people then began to challenge it and say 'this is no longer good enough'. ... They still think they can humiliate the Irish. ... There's a, there's a pride about being Irish and about the contributions the Irish people have made over the centuries, abroad and at home, and the resistance that they've put up, you know ... and well, pride comes from resistance. (Coilm, PIRA)

Coilm here highlights the distinction between shame and humiliation. Once the other's point of view is no longer considered credible, the same criticisms or circumstances are viewed as humiliation – an emotion that does not take on the viewpoint of the other. For Coilm, higher levels of education were associated with the ability to think more highly of oneself, thereby rejecting any sense of inferiority and the subsequent shame that emanates from this. Instead, by rejecting the validity of what he viewed as a social norm, he interpreted the conditions of the Catholics in Northern Ireland as an attempt to humiliate, provoking in him an angry and frustrated response.

In another exploration of shame, Ruari relates the story of watching his mother being humiliated by British soldiers when he was thirteen years old:

I remember the first time them coming into the house and um ... my ma was in bed, she was all half naked or in a wee thing, and she was all baring the shoulders and things and my sisters went in, there was five or six soldiers. [My sisters were] holding the blanket up so she could put her shawl on and they just ripped it off and said, 'You Irish fuckin' bitch'. My sisters, like that was their mother, I mean, I, they could'a said, [sighing], bastards. But I think, um, it's terrible that they called that to my mother, that there's all that name calling and they're all sitting there with my wee sisters. And my dad and I, what can we do huh. We have to sit there and do nothing, can't protect 'em or

stand up for them like you should because we was being held downstairs and just had to listen to the whole thing. ... Even now, every time I say that the hairs go up on the back of my neck because I remember. (Ruari, PIRA)

When asked if the inability to help his mother and sisters in that situation left him with a sense of shame, he responded with:

They [the British soldiers] were there to put us down ... aye, at the end of the day we didn't see it as our problem, we saw it as they're the problem. They're the ones who should be ashamed. They're in the country, they need to get out. (Ruari, PIRA)

Ruari did not acknowledge that his experiences were connected with a personal sense of shame, though it is hinted at through his acknowledgement that he 'should' be able to help his sisters. Rather, his immediate response was to draw attention to the role of the British soldiers as the ones who abrogated the expected standards of social behaviour, and who therefore should feel ashamed. When describing an incident that took place closer to the time Ruari joined PIRA, his rejection of the authority of the British is more strongly articulated and, rather than express shame in a similarly disempowering circumstance, he expresses anger at what he sees as an attempt to humiliate him:

[When] you grow up in that estate you get, aye aye, let's go and play some football, and you see soldiers and you just get used to it - you never accept it. It's like strip searching in prison, you know, it's repeated and routine, so you go through with it, but you're still naked in front of some hellish fuckin' guard. So what I'm trying to say is you still don't accept it but it's a routine you go through, being put up against a wall and searched and spoken to like you are shit. It's humiliating and that's what it is meant to be, and you know that's what it's meant to be. In a way you don't give 'em the pleasure of knowing you're humiliated, especially if there is some wee girl you like watching it all happen. Instead you give 'em some cheek or you

resist, that's better. No, there was no way I was going to be fuckin' humiliated, I just felt more justified in fighting for the Republicans. (Ruari, PIRA)

The idea that a relationship exists between humiliation and the propensity to commit acts of violence is well established (Cook & Alison 2007: 4; Fattah & Fierke 2009; Moghaddam 2006; Moïsi 2009: 56–89; Speckhard 2005). While shame may play a role in strengthening social proximity by ensuring a particular standard of behaviour is upheld, this can only be realized when there is an acceptance of the validity of the social norms that one is expected to adopt. Shame tends to focus on the self and relies on the belief that it is in some way deserved (Klein 1991: 117). Humiliation, on the other hand, is distinguishable from shame to the degree that it focuses on the harm done by others and judges that harm as undeserved (Gilbert 1997: 133; Klein 1991). Humiliation is more likely to alienate individuals and groups from the rest of society than experiences of shame. As such, it increases social distance and undermines social proximity. As the above examples suggest, experiences of humiliation, or even the perception that either yourself or those with whom you identify are being humiliated, turn the focus away from the self and towards the behaviours and practices of others. For this reason, humiliation has become a powerful tool for radicalization, provoking estrangement from society, along with a judgement surrounding the immorality of others and motivation to bring about change.

### Fear

When fear emanates from and has consequences for society it can be viewed as more than just a personal infliction. Thucydides (1982 [1866]: 44) and Machiavelli (1986 [1532]: 131) recognized the role of fear in political motivation, while Hobbes (1991[1651]: 188) argued that fear is central to both the origin of civil society and its means of preservation. It has also become common to talk about 'the politics of fear', a term that refers to the ability to appropriate fear in order to achieve particular political or policy outcomes (Altheide 2006; Massumi 1993; Mythen & Walklate 2006; Robin 2004; Sparks 2003). The kind of fear referred to in these instances is more than just personal (such as a fear of heights or flying), because it arises in the context of struggles and conflicts within and between societies and is particularly related to a sense of apprehension over harm that may be inflicted on collective wellbeing (Robin 2004: 2).

Drawing on Weber, Flam (2005: 23–5) argues that fear is an intrinsic feature in all unequal power relations because whenever there is a situation of inequality, the more powerful group is in a position to influence the life chances of the less powerful. From this perspective, fear works to encourage social order through engendering a degree of compliance and conformity to social norms. For example, fear of punishment may encourage people not to break the law, or fear of being unemployed may encourage people to get to work on time and be productive. However, a key tactic within social movements is to magnify the fear of existing power structures in order to motivate collective groups of people to challenge them. Therefore, a union movement may emphasize workplace insecurity, as happened in response to the introduction of 'Work Choices' under the Howard government in Australia in 2005, in order to mobilize people in response. Similarly, the fear of social exclusion may contribute to minority groups mobilizing in order to gain equal status and rights.

This suggests that while some degree of socially embedded fear can be useful in maintaining the status quo, there is a balance, particularly within liberal democratic states, in which the fear of repercussions can be countered by the fear of not changing the present situation, which is viewed as unfavourable. One former PIRA member expressed how fear operated to ensure conformity, when talking about his childhood in Belfast:

Well all my Protestant friends were great but they'd use certain words, words that say things, like derogatory things at times, and at that age you're scared to be different I guess, so you stay silent, don't draw attention to yourself and wait 'til something else gets your attention. (Ruari, PIRA)

Certainly experiencing a fear of being different, particularly when young, is in no way unique to a future member of a violent political organization. On the contrary, it is the normality of this experience that demonstrates how fear operates to uphold group bonds. Nevertheless, in this example it is apparent that Ruari's fear of being different is connected to his identity as a Catholic among his Protestant friends. Later in this interview, Ruari touches on the theme of fear again, and once more connects it to his Catholic identity, this time in relation to his father's fear that he would have no prospects for decent work when he left school,

[My] da said, 'ah, don't be doing the English and the maths, be doin' the woodwork, concentrate on the woodwork 'cos you're going to Canada', because, you know, we all felt the lack of opportunities for Catholics and the inequality, like my da says. ... But my mum says, 'oh my son's not goin' to go nowhere', and my dad's like, 'he's not goin' to go through what we went through'. (Ruari, PIRA)

Within Northern Ireland, inter-subjective fear is also apparent in the way that people negotiate public space in a manner that reflects their identity as either Catholics or Protestants (Lysaght 2005). For example, another PIRA member reflected on his childhood:

You had to know which was a Catholic area or a Protestant area because if you walked up the wrong street it could mean you weren't safe. I mean, you never wandered into the Shankill if you was a Catholic unless you had a death wish, just like they [Protestants] wouldn't feel safe coming to the Lower Falls. Even in the mixed areas you had to know which side of the road to walk [on] or which houses to avoid. ... I don't really know how to explain it. It was just a normal part of growing up that you learnt stuff like which streets you could use and which ones to avoid or which bus stops to get off and which ones you wouldn't. ... It's like a built-in radar. (Ciarán, PIRA)

The sort of diffuse fear over exclusion or employment prospects is different to more immediate fears over physical harm. But the fact that the fears discussed above are perceived as being connected to the participants' identities as Catholics provides an insight into the way in which fear is understood by these men who ultimately committed to acts of political violence. The following example shows how a vague sense of fear, unconnected to any political perception, develops into something intrinsically connected to identity:

Well, umm, well, it's kinda hard to explain [what growing up in Belfast was like] but it's a bit like a sense that the air is thick, like everything is heavy and at the same time kind of jumpy and anxious. (Padraig, PIRA)

But when recalling the events of August 1969, when most of the houses in Bombay Street were burned to the ground by rioting Loyalists, Padraig explicitly connects the experience of fear to a threat to his community:

the adults at the time sort of speaking in hushed tones about what was happening, with concern on their faces. ... You know, you'd just feel these things as a child rather than know all the politics ... there was tension and worry and concern and stuff like that. So while we didn't really know much concrete stuff, we were aware just by the atmosphere of fear that something was wrong and was kinda threatening us and our community. (Padraig, PIRA)

In a similar vein, Liam explained how his parent's fear about the welfare of their teenage children was also imbued with a sense of panic related to the fact that they were Catholic:

You know, my older brothers and sisters and I remember they used to go to a dance and all the rest. My parents were just waiting, just waiting for them to come home and if they weren't home there was a certain panic [that] would arise. I am sure that parents do that all the time but this was about being us, being Catholic and all, not about a car crash or stuff like that, but a fear that they had been lifted or shot by a stray bullet or stuff like that. Being young you sort of don't talk about it, you just get on with it, or you think you are getting on with it. (Liam, PIRA)

As they became older, the connection between fear, identity and oppression became more overt in the eyes of PIRA members. For example, the following recollections describe incidents that took place in the year or so prior to each particular participant joining PIRA. The first two examples refer to the policy of internment without trial, while the third refers to the experience of being raided:

You couldn't be sure what would happen to you once internment began. You could just be goin' about ya business and you'd be lifted off the street and there was stories and all about what happened during the interrogations. I mean I heard of this fella, he was the brother of a friend of mine ya see, and I heard terrible stories about what they did to him in interrogations and his poor family, getting threatened and abused an' all, and in that August, 1971 it was, they were all Catholics that were getting lifted and it didn't matter if you were involved in anything or not you just had to live with the fear that you'd be lifted and end up in the Crum [Crumlin Road Gaol]. In the end I was lifted. I got released [...] I still remember the bloody dread of what might happen in Girdwood. (Seán, PIRA)

7000 Catholic families fled their homes, 7000 *Catholic* families, not 7000 *Protestant* families. Why do you think that was? [...] It was because the Catholics knew they were the ones who were in the firing line. The Protestants, they had active paramilitary groups at the time as well, but they didn't have to fear being lifted. That was something for the Nationalist and Republic communities to worry about, ya know. (Ciarán, PIRA)

the soldiers kicked ya door in at 4 in the morning and that's just, that's shocking, it's just traumatizing, but they do it because that's the trained role they do ... that's shock, at 4 o'clock in the morning, it's your worst fear, and it kept you in fear you know, whether it happens again or whether it doesn't it's all the same because once you know it can happen then there's always the fear that it might. That's part of what it means being a Republican. (Ruari, PIRA)

The combination of what would generally be viewed as an unacceptable level of everyday fear and the sense that this is experienced unequally within society according to a particular identity marker – in this case 'Catholic', 'Nationalist' or 'Republican' – reinforces a sense of social and moral distance between one section of society and the mainstream. It also imbues

the mainstream with a strong sense of illegitimacy from the perspective of those who are afraid. Of course, this works in the opposite direction. We are more accustomed to talking about violent political extremists – such as those whose words and stories are set out above – as the instigators of fear, as 'terrorizing' the broader community with their acts of violence. From the perspective of the broader community it is the fear evoked by their violence that contributes to their illegitimacy as political actors. Either way, when fear becomes pervasive within the context of everyday life it can be appropriated as a tool of identity formation whereby the feared and the fearful become increasingly polarized, with social proximity eroding and social distance increasing.

# **Conclusion: emotions matter**

Social, as opposed to physical, distance is partly an emotional construct. It reflects a failure to generate the kinds of emotions that affirm the saliency of communal bonds and responsibility to others. Even if only a small proportion of people choose to pursue their political agenda using violence, these few exist within a larger group that either accepts or is apathetic to violence perpetrated against the Other. Berezin (2002: 48–9) argues that the secure state is also the empathetic state – the one in which the 'community of feeling' is extended widely to embrace as many as possible, and where citizenship produces feelings of belonging.

The social status of subordinate groups makes it almost impossible for them to experience the 'conventionally prescribed emotions' (Jaggar 1989: 166). If this is an individual experience, it may lead to confusion, self-doubt or personal existential crisis. However, when these emotions are shared by others, particularly others who share some salient common identity, dissident emotions may become validating and a source of alternate communal bonds and alternate moral perspectives that simultaneously contribute not only to the construction of the Other, but also to the withholding of responsibility for their welfare which Bauman, following Levinas, sees as so critical to the source of moral behaviour towards others.

The examples provided above were not the result of a negative emotional experience or episode as much as a sense that the particular experiences they were having were routine and habitual, indeed familiar aspects of everyday life connected to their identity, as the following exchange with the interviewer reveals,

Máirtín: But, you know, we were resigned in so far as that was what we expected from the British, that was what we expected from the courts, we expected to be tortured when we went into Castlereagh and we expected to be brutalized when we went in the H blocks. [...]

Debra: How did that leave you feeling about your existing circumstances?

Máirtín:

Umm, I mean, I guess contempt maybe. I'm not sure whether that's the right word though. I keep going back to the word injustice, and I know that isn't a feeling as such, but it does include a whole lot of feelings all at once. I mean, of course it is easy to feel contempt towards people who consistently cause injustices to not only you, but to your whole community. I mean if it was just to me of course I'd be angry, but when you realize it's systematic against your whole community, well that brings up more complicated feelings I think. The thing is, I think you feel as if you only have two choices. Either you accept the world around you or you don't. For me, I just felt as if I couldn't accept it. I just didn't feel at peace with the way things were, always having this sense that you are a second-class citizen in your own country. And by that I mean, not just that I felt that way, but that we all felt that way. And even worse, was that somehow you were expected not to. It's hard to explain, Debra, I mean when you ask about stuff that isn't just the obvious political stuff about representation or education or jobs. I find it difficult to explain what it actually feels like in terms of living with this sense of injustice churning away in ya guts day after day. Sometimes you can ignore it I guess, but if I really think about it I suspect that many of my decisions, many of the judgements I made were influenced by that everyday sense of injustice. That feeling of injustice, if you like.

An awareness or experience of discrimination, unfair treatment, lower status or threat can work to create emotional, and therefore social, distance between groups, while simultaneously increasing the emotional saliency within the group that identifies itself to be under threat (Castano et al. 2008: 264). The following reflections from Coilm reveal the degree to which a group of people can symbiotically construct the Other when their emotional reactions are so deeply in conflict with another section of society. In recalling the period following the death of his comrade Bobby Sands, Coilm recalled:

And when it happened it was just this awful sense of loss, right. ... I just had a total and absolute numb day, you know. It was just like frozen in time, and the screws comin' up were all jittery. ... And you're saying to guys, 'Everybody just keep a lid on it, don't anybody be doing anything because it'll just make it worse'. ... A couple of guys had to be um, almost physically restrained from um disappearing a screw off the front of the wing, just under the cell. But you knew ... they were chirpy, and a few about the place were making remarks and yeah, celebrating it, you know. ... But when the screws behave like that it just brings you back to reality. You see the profound disrespect for us and for what we are feeling, for our loss, and it hardens you. It, I mean, it makes you draw closer together. It is like we are two different species almost. There is no connection, no human connection. It is just obvious that they was on a totally different planet. (Coilm, PIRA)

The vulgar and callous reaction by some of the prison guards to the death of such a revered comrade was demonstrable proof among the prisoners of a profound sense that these guards were 'the Other', 'a different species' to whom no responsibility could, or should, be extended. The extent to which a person feels part of a particular group rests partially on the way in which they see their own emotional reactions reflected in the reactions of others. Being unable to recognize your own emotional reality in the eyes of others is part of the social mechanisms that lead to the dehumanization of the Other. For the members of PIRA represented in this chapter, their emotional experiences amounted to a process of transformation in which responsibility to the Other eroded as social distance increased.

However, this was not a process for which they alone were responsible. Indeed, while the responsibility towards the Other is a reciprocal responsibility, Spinoza<sup>6</sup> reminds us that emotions are constituted specifically in reference to perceptions of power. As such, those with power arguably have a responsibility to recognize and acknowledge the emotions of those who have become dominated or excluded within the existing social and political order.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Spinoza's account of emotion is expressed most fully in the *Ethics*, particularly Part III

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