FEAR OF REPRISAL – RESEARCHING INTRA-COMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND SOUTH AFRICA

Knox, Colin; Monaghan, Rachel

URI: http://nur.nu.edu.kz/handle/123456789/2306
Date: 2003

Abstract:
Measuring the impact of violence is fraught with problems, not least because of the definitional problems around what constitutes violence and how this might be quantified. If one considers violence perpetrated by paramilitaries in Northern Ireland or vigilante groups in South Africa then the task becomes even more difficult. This chapter will examine methodological problems associated with gaining access to, and undertaking research in, the dangerous arena of paramilitary violence in Northern Ireland and vigilante violence in South Africa. It will consider the difficulties in obtaining reliable information on the levels of violence particularly from official police sources, and the way in which this type of crime is classified. Other statistical sources such as pressure group data will be examined and problems highlighted with the use of documentation gleaned from tendentious organisations. Data about the impact of violence from primary research are also fraught with problems. Victims, for example, can be reluctant interviewees for fear of paramilitary/vigilante reprisal. A ‘victim’ of paramilitary/vigilante ‘punishment’ may be an erstwhile perpetrator of violence. Should one treat internecine turf wars between paramilitaries in Northern Ireland in a similar way to violence meted out in pursuit of their political goals? These and other issues make the measurement of the impact of violence difficult methodological questions. This chapter will therefore highlight these problems and examine how we managed them within this study of intra-communal violence.

Files in this item

The following license files are associated with this item:
- Creative Commons

This item appears in the following Collection(s)
- Books and Chapters of books. [10]
The Troubles (Irish: Na Trioblóidí) was an ethno-nationalist conflict in Northern Ireland during the late 20th century. Also known internationally as the Northern Ireland conflict, it is sometimes described as an “irregular war” or “low-level war”. The conflict began in the late 1960s and is usually deemed to have ended with the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. Although the Troubles primarily took place in Northern Ireland, at times the violence spilled over into parts of the Republic of Ireland.