**Good Relations**

The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILT)[[1]](#footnote-1) deals with the attitudes, values and beliefs of the people in Northern Ireland on a wide range of issues, including relations between Protestant and Catholics.

The NILT survey asks respondents:

* What about relations between Protestants and Catholics? Would you say they are better than they were 5 years ago, worse, or about the same now as then?
* And what about in 5 years time? Do you think relations between Protestants and Catholics will be better than now, worse than now, or about the same as now?

For the combined years of 2018, 2019 and 2020, just over 80% of respondents in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough believe that relations between Protestants and Catholics are better (41.4%) or about the same (38.9%) as they were 5 years ago. Almost 13% of respondents believed that relations were worse now than they were 5 years ago. This figure has increased significantly from the previous reported results from the 2016-2018 combined studies when just 3.3% of respondents believed that relations were worse now than they were 5 years ago. In Northern Ireland overall, 40.4% of respondents believe that relations between Protestants and Catholics are better now than they were 5 years ago, slightly lower than Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. 41.1% of respondents in Northern Ireland believe relations are about the same as 5 years ago. A lower proportion of respondents in Northern Ireland (11.5%) than the borough (12.7%) believe relations are worse now than 5 years ago.

For the combined years of 2018, 2019 and 2020 the largest proportion of respondents (32%) in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough believe that relations between Protestants and Catholics will be better in 5 years time. 31.7% of respondents in the borough believe relations will be about the same as they are now while 14% believe that relations will be worse in 5 years time. Over one in five respondents in the borough responded don’t know to this question. In Northern Ireland overall 31.4% of respondents believe relations between Protestants and Catholics will be better in 5 years time, similar to the borough. A higher proportion of respondents in Northern Ireland (35.4%) than the borough believe relations will be about the same 5 years from now while 13.5% believe relations will be worse. 18.3% of Northern Ireland respondents answered don’t know.

|   | Relations between Protestants and Catholics |
| --- | --- |
|   | 5 years ago | In 5 years time |
| ABC | NI | ABC | NI |
| Better | 41.4% | 40.4% | 32.0% | 31.4% |
| Worse | 12.7% | 11.5% | 14.0% | 13.5% |
| About the same | 38.9% | 41.1% | 31.7% | 35.4% |
| Other | 0.0% | 0.4% | 1.0% | 1.5% |
| Don’t know | 7.1% | 6.6% | 21.3% | 18.3% |

*Table 1: Percentage of people who think relations between Protestants and Catholics are better, worse, or about the same as 5 years ago and 5 years from now in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland 2018 - 2020. Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (ARK).*

*Figure 1: Percentage of people who think relations between Protestants and Catholics are better, worse, or about the same as 5 years ago and 5 years from now in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland 2018 to 2020. Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (ARK).*

The NILT survey also asks:

* In some areas the communities are divided and Protestant and Catholics tend to go to different local shops or use different GP surgeries and other services. Thinking about this area, would you say this happens a lot, a little or not at all?

Respondents to the survey in the combined years of 2018, 2019 and 2020 in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough believe that Protestants and Catholics tend to go to different local shops, GP surgeries and other services a lot (18%) or a little (26.2%) while 44.7% do not think this happens at all. 11.2% of respondents in the borough answered don’t know. Northern Ireland shows a higher proportion of those who responded that this happens not at all (51.1%) while 13.5% believe it happens a lot and 21.9% a little.

|   | ABC | NI |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A lot | 18.0% | 13.5% |
| A little | 26.2% | 21.9% |
| Not at all | 44.7% | 51.1% |
| Don’t know | 11.2% | 13.4% |

*Table 2: Percentage of people who think Protestants and Catholics use different local shops, GP surgeries and other services in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland 2018-2020. Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (ARK).*

*Figure 2: Percentage of people who think Protestants and Catholics use different local shops, GP surgeries and other services in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland 2018-2020. Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (ARK).*

The NILT survey further asks:

* Do you think leisure centres in this area are ‘shared and open’ to both Protestants and Catholics?
* Do you think that parks in this area are ‘shared and open’ to both Protestants and Catholics?
* Do you think that libraries in this area are ‘shared and open’ to both Protestants and Catholics?
* Do you think that shopping centres in this area are ‘shared and open’ to both Protestants and Catholics?

In Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 78.6% of respondents to the combined years of the 2018, 2019 and 2020 survey think that leisure centres are definitely ‘shared and open’ while 16% think they are probably ‘shared and open’. This compared to 70.6% of respondents in Northern Ireland overall answering that leisure centres are definitely ‘shared and open’ while 21.1% think they are probably ‘shared and open’.

When respondents in the borough were asked about parks, 76.8% answered that they are definitely and 18.2% probably ‘shared and open’. Comparing these to Northern Ireland overall responses were 72.3% and 19.8% respectively.

Agreement that libraries are definitely and probably ‘shared and open’ to both Protestants and Catholics was higher in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough than Northern Ireland.

Shopping centres are thought to be ‘shared and open’ by 97.8% of respondents in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough (82.3% yes definitely, 15.5% yes probably). This is slightly higher than the responses from Northern Ireland overall (96.3%).

|   | . . . . . in this area are ‘shared and open’ to both Protestants and Catholics |
| --- | --- |
|   | **Leisure Centres** | **Parks** | **Libraries** | **Shopping Centres** |
|   | **ABC** | **NI** | **ABC** | **NI** | **ABC** | **NI** | **ABC** | **NI** |
| Yes definitely | 78.6% | 70.6% | 76.8% | 72.3% | 81.9% | 74.9% | 82.3% | 78.0% |
| Yes probably | 16.0% | 21.1% | 18.2% | 19.8% | 15.2% | 20.4% | 15.5% | 18.3% |
| No probably not | 1.9% | 4.0% | 2.9% | 3.7% | 1.6% | 1.9% | 0.8% | 1.3% |
| No definitely not | 1.9% | 1.7% | 1.1% | 2.2% | 0.0% | 0.6% | 0.8% | 0.5% |
| Don’t know | 1.6% | 2.6% | 1.1% | 2.1% | 1.3% | 2.2% | 0.5% | 1.8% |

*Table 3: Percentage of people who think, in their area, leisure centres, parks, libraries and shopping centres are ‘shared and open’ to both Protestants and Catholics in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland 2018 - 2020. Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (ARK).*

*Figure 3: Percentage of people who think, in their area, leisure centres, parks, libraries and shopping centres are ‘shared and open’ to both Protestant and Catholics in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland 2018-20. Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (ARK).*

Further information can be found via the following links:

<https://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/>

<https://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/Home.aspx> and type Northern Ireland Life and Times into the search bar.

1. Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (ARK) - <https://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)