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Research Grants - Standard PROPOSAL

Document Status: With Council
AHRC Reference: AH/F019661/1

29 November 2007
Panel 8:Philosophy, Religious Studies and
Law

Organisation where the Grant would be held

Organisation	University of Nottingham	Research Organisation Reference:	RIS 31475
Division or Department	Sch of Politics		

Project Title [up to 150 chars]

The Politics of Religious Conflict in Local, Regional and Global Perspective: A Public Opinion, Public Diplomacy and Peace Making Analysis

Start Date and Duration

a. Proposed start
date

01 September 2008

b. Duration of the grant
(months)

36

Applicants

Role	Name	Organisation	Division or Department	How many hours a week will the investigator work on the project?
Principal Investigator	Professor Stefan Wolff	University of Nottingham	Sch of Politics	7.5
Co-Investigator	Professor Adrian Blanchard Guelke	Queen's University of Belfast	School of Politics and International Stu	4.5

Objectives

List the main objectives of the proposed research in order of priority [up to 4000 chars]

Objectives

1. Proceeding from within a framework of existing theories about conflict, especially medium-range theories informed by a Weberian view that actor perceptions matter for understanding and explaining actor behaviour, and identifying their assumptions about root causes, testable hypotheses will be developed and applied to major conflicts with a religious dimension in the world today such that it will be possible to use public opinion polling as a research method to determine to what extent their causes are, or are perceived to be, religious, cultural, political, economic or social in character and whether they are located at the sub-state, state, regional or global level of analysis.
 2. Use data gathered in the course of public opinion polling to arrive at findings about the relative importance of different real or perceived causes of conflict, compare and contrast these findings for different demographic subsections polled, especially regarding how grievances may lead to disaffection, alienation, and ultimately radicalisation. This will be achieved by applying a set of discrete, yet compatible research methods outlined in the relevant section below.
 3. Determine to what extent these various characteristics feature as critical factors of escalation or de-escalation in conflicts with a religious dimension at the sub-state, state, regional and global levels of analysis and what 'solutions' to what 'problems' in these conflicts are most acceptable/important at these levels and how they can be translated into comprehensive and effective strategies of conflict resolution in such conflicts.
 4. Establish whether there is any correlation between a specific religion (or particular interpretation/sect of it) and the likelihood of violent escalation of a respective conflict. If such a correlation is found, probe deeper into this relationship and identify its causal mechanisms and conditions, as well as ways to prevent such escalation.
 5. By making the results of this research freely available through the media, internet and scholarly publications, generate a discourse that will detail the key 'problems' and 'solutions' to conflicts with a religious dimension both domestically and internationally by all interested parties from local minority groups to policy makers in states affected by conflict or involved in conflict resolution, and to members of the UN Security Council.
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Summary

Describe the proposed research in simple terms in a way that could be publicised to a general audience [up to 4000 chars]

Summary

In their recent report to the UN Secretary General the 'High Level Group' for the Alliance of Civilizations (2006) concluded that 'The key reasons for the growing divide between Muslim and Western societies are not religious, but political'. What may seem intuitively obvious, glosses over some of the complexities of this divide which is, after all, framed in political AND religious terms. More comprehensive analysis of the relationships between socialisation, cultural identity, ethnicity and religion on the one hand and sub-state, state, regional and global political and economic interests and structures on the other will provide a better understanding of the dynamics that lead to radicalisation and ultimately violent conflict, as well as enhance our policy capabilities to stem the growing tide of radicalisation, especially among Muslim populations, and end violence and resolve conflicts where the time for preventive action has passed.

The project proceeds from a thorough theoretical and conceptual engagement with the existing literature on conflict causes and resolution, and relevant case studies, and assumes that individuals/leaders/elites just as much as followers/masses make choices about their behaviour based on the perceptions they have about a particular situation in which they find themselves. Consequently, our analysis will utilise public opinion polling as its principal research method. Existing literature will help us to establish conceptually the scope of empirical research/local cases and the players in their regional and global environment. It will also enable us to identify the necessary sets of questions to be asked in order to determine causal relations about the apparently growing divide between the Muslim and Western world, its consequences and possible responses to it.

Such an analysis was undertaken in Northern Ireland as part of the peace process there. It engaged local political elites, ran public opinion polls on all matters of concern to them, published results in the local press and brought that analysis and the public discourse resulting from it into the negotiation of the 1998 Agreement. Similar exercises in conflict analysis and public diplomacy were run by Dr Irwin in the Balkans, Cyprus, the Middle East and the UK. These tested and verified methods are now to be applied to a selection of major conflicts with a religious dimension around the world.

This will include, among others:

1. In consultation with relevant stakeholders and experts, revise the UK 'West and Muslim World' poll for UK and international application by incorporating new questions to distinguish between cultural, social, economic, political and religious factors; including questions to explore grievance, anger, disaffection, alienation and radicalisation, and refining the demographic section to facilitate analysis internationally.
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2. Re-run the UK poll to test the new questions and 'time line' previously run questions.

3. In consultation with relevant IGOs, NGOs and other interested state and non-state parties repeat this exercise by building on previous work undertaken in the Balkans, Cyprus and Middle East and then extend this programme of empirical research to relevant cases in Africa, Asia, Asia-Pacific, and the Far East. Similar to our polling in the UK, we will include key European states and other regional and global powers that have an impact on the conflicts in question or experience them at home.

4. Reanalyse the full dataset to produce a set of comparative findings on all hypotheses generated, publish these in relevant scholarly works and other formats as per our more detailed dissemination plan and maintaining the interactive website for the lifetime of the AHRC grant.

Ref: Alliance of Civilizations (2006) 'PRESS RELEASE: Politics, not religion, at the heart of growing Muslim-West divide, new report argues' at:

http://www.unaoc.org/repository/report_press_release.pdf

Outputs

The main outputs of the research

Book (co-authored)
Journal article (refereed)
Conference paper
Datasets
Website
Interactive website
Case Study Material
Expertise gained through the application of research in a non-academic environment
If Other,

Ethical Information

Are there ethical implications arising from the proposed research ?	Yes
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Provide details of what they are and how they would be addressed [up to 1000 characters]

Dr Irwin has run public opinion polls on peace processes in Northern Ireland, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia. In all cases standards of ethical research have been applied compliant with those set by the World Association of Public Opinion Research and equivalent domestic organizations. All of these will be used for the polls in this project and include: only persons over the age of 18 years of age will be interviewed with their consent and with their identity kept strictly confidential; a questionnaire preamble explaining who is doing the research and why, who is funding it and what use will be made of the results that will be placed in the public domain.

Also, Dr Irwin has developed new standards for research ethics in conflict settings, which advocate the participation of all parties to a conflict in in the research process (Irwin, C. J., 2008, 'Research Ethics and Peacemaking' in Mertens, D. & Ginsberg, P. eds. Handbook of Social Research Ethics, Sage).

Does the institution have a policy on good conduct in research?	Yes
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Details of where the policy can be accessed

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/ris/html/research-strategy-and-policy/>

Summary of Resources Required for Project

Financial resources

Summary fund heading	Fund heading	Full economic Cost	AHRC contribution	% AHRC contribution
Directly Incurred	Staff	131440.00	105152.00	80
	Travel & Subsistence	45000.00	36000.00	80
	Equipment	50000.00	40000.00	80
	Other Costs	26550.00	21240.00	80
	Sub-total	252990.00	202392.00	
Directly Allocated	Investigators	81935.88	65548.70	80
	Staff	0.00	0.00	80
	Estates Costs	25066.00	20052.80	80
	Other Directly Allocated	0.00	0.00	80
	Sub-total	107001.88	85601.50	
Indirect Costs	Indirect Costs	138982.00	111185.60	80
Exceptions	Equipment	200000.00	200000.00	100
	Sub-total	200000.00	200000.00	
	Total	698973.88	599179.10	

Summary of staff effort requested

	Months
Investigator	11.50
Researcher	36
Technician	0
Other	0
Visiting Researcher	0
Student	72
Total	119.5

Estimated cost of project students	£99882.00
Total project cost including students	£798855.88

Other Support

Details of support sought or received from any other source for this or other research in the same field.

Awarding Organisation	Awarding Organisation's Reference	Title of project	Decision Made (Y/N)	Award Made (Y/N)	Start Date	End Date	Amount Sought/Awarded (£)
The British Academy	SG-44765	A Comparative Analysis of Public Opinion, Public Diplomacy and Peace Making	Y	Y	01/01/2007	31/12/2007	7071.00

Related Proposals

Proposal is related to a previous proposal to AHRC

Reference Number	How related?
AH/F008961/1	Resubmission

Staff

Directly Incurred Posts

Role	Name /Post Identifier	Basic Starting Salary	Scale	Increment Date	Start Date	EFFORT ON PROJECT		London Allowance (£)	Super-annuation and NI (£)	Total Other Allowances (over period of appointment) (£)	Total cost on grant (£)
						Period on Project (months)	% of Full Time				
Researcher	Colin Irwin	34813	R&T5 pt38	01/08/2009	01/09/2008	36	100	0	7566	0	131440
Total											131440

Costs by Project Year

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Directly Incurred Posts	42379	43876	45185

Applicants

Role	Name	Post will outlast project (Y/N)	Contracted working week as a % of full time work	Total number of hours to be charged to the grant over the duration of the grant	Average number of hours per week charged to the grant	Rate of Salary pool/banding	Cost estimate
Principal Investigator	Professor Stefan Wolff	Y	100	990	7.5	86326	51796
Co-Investigator	Professor Adrian Blanchard Guelke	Y	100	594	4.5	83723	30140
Total							81936

Costs by Project Year

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Directly Allocated Posts	27311	27312	27313

Research Students

Role	Name /Post Identifier /Institution	Start Date	Full Time	Estimated Cost
Project Student	PhD student / University of Nottingham	01/09/2008	Yes	49941.00
Project Student	PhD student / Queen's University of Belfast	01/09/2008	Yes	49941.00

Equipment (the cumulative value of equipment over £50,000 will be treated as an exception)

Description	Country of Manufacture	Delivery Date	Basic price £	Import duty £	VAT £	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Total £
Public opinion polls	United Kingdom	01/09/2008	250,000.00	0	0	100000	100000	50000	250000.00
					Total £	100000	100000	50000	250000.00

Travel and Subsistence

Destination and purpose		Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Total £
Within UK	Travel for Adrian Guelke for meetings with Co-applicants and conferences in the UK	500	500	500	1500
Outside UK	Travel for Prof. Adrian Guelke to attend international conferences/meetings	1000	1000	1000	3000
Within UK	Travel for Prof. Stefan Wolff for meetings with co-applicants and conferences in the UK	500	500	500	1500
Outside UK	Travel for Prof. Stefan Wolff to attend international conferences/meetings	1000	1000	1000	3000
Outside UK	Travel for Dr. Colin Irwin overseas to target states (10 return flights at £400 each; 100 days at £60 per day for each of 3 years)	10000	10000	10000	30000
Within UK	Travel for Dr. Colin Irwin for meetings with co-applicants, conferences in the UK, and public opinion companies.	2000	2000	2000	6000
Total £		15000	15000	15000	45000

Other Directly Incurred Costs

Description	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Total £
Apple 15" Powerbook, 2.33 GHz, 2GB memory, 120 GB Hard Drive, Superdrive and 3 year AppleCare to replace 5 year old Apple Titanium Powerbook of Dr. Colin Irwin.	1500	0	0	1500
Blackberry mobile phone and internet access for Dr. Colin Irwin for domestic and international use calculated at an average of £100 per month.	1200	1200	1200	3600
Olympus DS-2300 Digital Voice Recorder and MacSpeech iListen 1.7 Transcription software.	250	0	0	250
Website application development, hosting, management, backup, maintenance and cost of dedicated server.	7000	7000	6000	20000
Mac Mini 1 Gig memory, 80 Gig Hard Drive, Superdrive, 23" Flat Monitor, mouse and keyboard with 3 year AppleCare to replace Dr. Colin Irwin 5 year old eMac. Education Price.	1200	0	0	1200
Total £	11150	8200	7200	26550

Estates Costs

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Estates Costs	8355	8355	8356	25066

Indirect Costs

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Indirect Costs	46327	46327	46328	138982

Technical Appendix

Please complete this section if your application proposes to create an electronic resource.

1. Project Management of technical aspects

a. Management and reporting structure:

The project website at: <http://www.peacepolls.org> was initially established in 2002 when Dr. Colin Irwin was working on the Northern Ireland peace process in the Institute of Irish Studies at Queen's University Belfast supported by grants from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and Atlantic Philanthropies. As Queen's University were unable to provide support for independent third party non-profit 'dot org' websites, Dr. Irwin registered and established the peacepolls site with the assistance of Dr. George Munroe who had recently left Computing Services at Queen's University Belfast to set up his own Internet Service Provider (ISP) and then consultancy company, Platypus Consultancy Limited. Although the peacepolls.org site has only been used as an online resource for questionnaires, polling reports and technical papers, relating to peace polls undertaken in different countries in the past, it has established a relatively high profile in various Internet search engines over the years. Links from other sites have also been established. For all these reasons the peacepolls site will continue to be the primary point of access for this project and will continue to be jointly managed by Dr. Colin Irwin and Dr. George Munroe for the lifetime of this project and they will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the project to make sure all targets and deliverables are met on a timely fashion. Additionally they will report to the PI, Co-investigator and named researcher who will meet as a committee on a regular basis throughout the course of the project to monitor and give oversight to all aspects of the programme of work. The costs of a dedicated server, hosting, backup, maintenance, security and initial site development are to be covered by this grant application as well as the costs of ongoing Programme Development for the log on and posting/interactive discourse aspects of the site by Platypus Consultancy Limited under the leadership of Dr. George Munroe.

b. Project Timetable:

The peacepolls site was established in 2002 and is up and running at the time of this grant application. However, it will be further developed over the lifetime of this project as follows:

Year 1: The site will be further developed to provide it with a more effective interface that will facilitate a more focused and direct access to the various resources available on the site such as questionnaires, conflicts by countries, reports, working papers, various topics in peacemaking, methodologies, other sites on similar and/or related projects etc. etc. The peacepolls site will continue to be run on a shared server during year 1.

Year 2: The site will continue to expand with new pages and resources made available for each peace poll as it is completed in each target state. However, during year 2 of the project an interactive discourse dimension will be added that will allow 'participants' who logon to add their own analysis of the peace polls data, generated by the programme of polling research, to the website and/or comment on other parties analysis. The peacepolls site will be moved onto its own dedicated server during year 2.

Year 3: As more analysis, data and comments are added to the site in year 3 it is anticipated that the site will take on an organic, yet carefully monitored and managed character, rich with qualitative information. All the data sets will be archived in year 3.

c. Project deliverables:

1. Data sets from previously run peace polls in Northern Ireland and the Balkans will be posted on the site for access and secondary analysis.

2. New pages established around this Religion and Society project will be posted on the site and the questionnaires, reports, and data sets etc., generated from this programme of research will be uploaded and made available to all interested parties.

3. During the third year of Programme Development methods of organising and analysing the comments/qualitative data will be explored but it is not possible to detail what these methods and 'deliverables' will be at this stage in the project, as this will depend very much on the character of this data. Given these 'unknowns' and the open ended aspects of this part of the project the commitment of Platypus Consultancy is an indispensable and welcome addition to the overall programme of research and dissemination.

d. Monitoring process:

The project web site peacepolls.org is open and available for monitoring by all interested parties at all times. However, the logon criteria and its dynamics are critical to the success of the interactive part of the project and will require careful monitoring and adjustment as this aspect of the programme is introduced. The objective here is to establish an open and honest informed international discourse on all the religion, society and conflict resolution issues being researched. A totally open, unrestricted and anonymous approach would most likely invite unhelpful comment on such issues while an overly restricted access approach to the site and opportunities to comment could defeat the objective of creating an informed international discourse. Setting, monitoring and adjusting the logon criteria and associated site access will be an ongoing aspect of the project that will likely entail a number of different solutions for academic, government, educational and general public users.

2. Data Development Methods

a. Content selection:

With respect to documents and data files the content selection will be made by the PI, Co-investigator and Dr. Colin Irwin while the content of the comments will be made by those who log on, although this will be monitored and controlled through the log on and access criteria developed in consultation with Platypus Consultancy Limited, led by Dr. George Munroe.

b. Data/file formats:

The system will allow for files of standard and proprietary data formats to be stored and downloaded for further analysis. It is envisaged that the most common formats will be ubiquitous plain text (including e.g. CSV format for data sets). Web site pages will be auto-generated as XHTML. Anticipated supported formats include MS Word, RTF, PDF, MS Excel, CSV and SPSS. Any required images will be stored in original format (PNG) and resolution but converted to thumbnail, medium and larger resolution JPEG versions for use online.

c. Documenting the resource:

The peacepolls website is registered under the ownership of Dr. Colin Irwin. Database schema used in any part of the project will be readily viewable by project administrators using established web tools. Metadata will accompany reports that are made available online. Registered users uploading files will be required to provide appropriate supplementary information to enable suitable metadata compilation. This will assist with both searching the resource and internal organisation and reporting.

The 'style' of online presentation will be controlled by one or more core style sheets (CSS2).

Content will not be mixed with web mark-up elements within database fields, which will only contain 'pure' content or links to content.

Mark-up coding and accessibility tests will be carried out on pages generated by the delivery software engine.

The system will be intuitive to use, however, there will be a simple user guide for all registered users.

d. Advice sought on planning your proposed project:

Discussions and correspondence were initially undertaken with staff at the Computing Centre at Queen's University Belfast when the peacepolls website was first set up in 2002. The further development of the site was discussed with staff at the University of Liverpool. Links can and will be provided from the relevant Universities to the Peacepolls site but they are not able to host the peacepolls site. This project has been discussed at length in meetings with Dr. George Munroe in Belfast and a letter of support from him is attached to this grant application.

e. Consultation with projects using similar methods:

Platypus Consultancy has extensive experience and knowledge of similar projects and staff will bring all of this expertise to this enterprise as indicated in the letter of support.

3. Infrastructural Support

a. Hardware, software and relevant technical expertise available:

The PI and Co-I will use their University based PCs and Macs with Microsoft Office, SPSS and various Browsers (Netscape, Explorer, Safari, Firefox) to prepare files and documents for uploading to the peacepolls web site. The original site was composed of a main home page with links to documents, working papers and analysis updated using Freeway Express, a simple HTML editor for the Mac. FTP was used to upload the files/documents.

However, the web site is presently being redeveloped to give it a more professional look and feel. A simple content management system has been provided and access logs can now be analysed weekly and summary reports monitored to review visitor activity on the site. Technical planning, service provision, and software development skills are provided by Platypus Consultancy.

The web site is hosted on a shared web server, a Dell Poweredge rack server running Gentoo Linux, Apache, MySQL with other core system and application software installed

b. Additional hardware, software and relevant technical expertise, support and training that is likely to be required and how it will be acquired:

During the second year the web site will be transferred to a dedicated Dell Poweredge server. At that time, the rack servers on offer will be reviewed, however, the new server will be comparable to the present Dell Poweredge 2950 server, with a robust specification for longevity.

Software will be developed, tested, installed and maintained by Platypus. This software will include the following:

*a simple automatic user registration process, which will include verification of email address;

*registered user features, such as updating user details, forwarding support requests, setting preferences;

*a secure login and capability to remain logged in between sessions if desired;

*search and filter interfaces for specific and general resources;

*controlled upload capability for registered users, with an associated approval workflow;

*an easy to use and ordered procedure for publishing comments, and responding to comments, relating to different parts of the online resource.

c. Describe the backup procedures that your project will use to safeguard your electronic resource during its development:

All PDF, SPSS and other data files are presently backed up on a number of PCs/Macs.

At present, the peacepolls web site is hosted on one of the Platypus shared servers. Daily backups are performed, which back up all files and resources from the site each evening. Each backup is held on a second disk drive and held for 7 days after which the backups rotate.

A development server which is always available, is mirrored daily from the production server. If failure of the production

server ever occurred, the web site on the development server can be made the production site very easily (required host alias headers are already configured and all that is left to do is add an IP address alias). During the development of the site, all code is developed and tested on a separate development server. Only when the code has been tested and approved, is the new code transferred to the production server. Each of these servers are held in a very secure data centre with limited physical access.

4. Data preservation and sustainability

a. Please detail advice sought on the preservation of the electronic resource(s)

Alastair Dunning at AHDS was first contacted on 29 August 2006 with respect to the archiving of peacepolls data under the terms of the British Academy Small Grant awarded in 2007 (see 'Other Support' in this grant application). As the existing data sets were not generated under this grant and as the grant (about £7,000) was so small such archiving was considered to be beyond the scope of that project. However such archiving will be undertaken and completed for this project and arrangements were in hand to do this with AHDS when the proposal was conceived. However, following the AHRC directive of 14/05/2007, a conversation with Ian Broadbridge on 17/05/2007 and recommendations made on the original AHRC application this will now be done through the ESRC's ESDS archive service.

b. Please indicate what plans you have to preserve the data and make it available with the AHDS and/or through some alternative mechanism:

The data files were to be archived with the AHDS using the formats recommended for public opinion poll data which, in this case, will already exist and be available on the peacepolls web site. However, following the AHRC directive of 14/05/2007, a conversation with Ian Broadbridge on 17/05/2007 and recommendations made on the original AHRC application this will now be done through the ESRC's ESDS archive service.

c. Please indicate what plans you have to ensure that the electronic output will become a sustainable resource

The peacepolls.org website has been up and running without interruption since 2002 and will continue to be maintained by Dr. Colin Irwin and Platypus for the foreseeable future. Additionally the data files which were to be archived with the AHDS will be archived with the ESRC's ESDS archive service.

5. Access

Please indicate how you will make the resource accessible:

The peacepolls.org website is presently accessible on the Internet and will remain so for the foreseeable future. However, following the AHRC directive of 14/05/2007, a conversation with Ian Broadbridge on 17/05/2007 and recommendations made on the original AHRC application this will now be done through the ESRC's ESDS archive service.

6. Copyright and intellectual property issues

Please demonstrate that you have sought advice on and addressed all copyright and rights management issues that apply to the resource:

Copyright rests with the authors of the research who, in this case, are the Applicants who freely extend their copyright to all the materials that they make available to post on the project web site peacepolls.org. Third parties (for example other AHRC grant recipients with a relevant research programme) who choose to engage with this project by adding their analysis and comments to the web site may do so providing they hold and have not given their copyright for such materials to another third party. A caution to this effect will be posted on the peacepolls website wherever opportunities to add analysis and comments are made. Compliance with an acceptable user policy will also be required during the user registration process and a privacy policy and data protection statement will also be available for viewing by users.

Project Students Appendix

Project Student 1

1. a. Proposed start date	01/09/2008	b. End date	01/09/2011
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2. Name (if known):	PhD student
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3. For named project students, please state the source and duration of any prior funding for postgraduate study? (MA, MPhil etc.)

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4. Proposed departmental unit where the student will be registered

School of Politics

5. Proposed supervisor (name, department and institution)

Professor Stefan Wolff

6. Nature and scope of the doctoral thesis

Opinion Polling as a Tool of Peace-building in Conflicts with a Religious Dimension

Opinion polling has been shown to be able to contribute to conflict resolution in several recent cases, most notably in the process leading to the conclusion of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement in 1998. Yet, the dynamics of religious conflict, involving, as it were, a component of identity that is difficult to compromise over, may put certain limitations on both the nature of any settlement that can be achieved in a peace-building process and the impact that public opinion polling can have on establishing conditions in which a settlement acceptable to all conflict parties can be found. This PhD project would probe these issues at a theoretical and conceptual level and seek to verify any propositions arrived at this way by in-depth qualitative and large-n quantitative case studies.

7. Please describe how the student's project will contribute to the work of the project as a whole, justifying the importance of their inclusion within the wider project. What arrangements are there for the supervision and support of the student?

This thesis project will engage, through conceptual and empirical work, with the nature of public opinion polling and the impact that it can have on peace-building efforts, both on the inter-communal and broader inter-religious level. As such it will form an important component of the theoretically grounded, practice-focused component of the overall project, combining large quantitative analysis with in-depth qualitative case studies. In other words, this PhD project will inform the overall project in two crucial ways: (1) it will have an input at the conceptual and theoretical level as far as the overall purpose and expectations of the role of public opinion polling are concerned; and (2) it will be an important element at the level of verification of specific assumptions made at the conceptual stage of the project and in relation to the generalisation of our findings. This is particularly significant as, on the one hand, public opinion polling, used well, is assumed to contribute to inter-religious understanding, while, on the other hand, with religion being an identity component 'trade-offs' are more difficult to accomplish as part of peace-building efforts. Thus, this project will also investigate the conditions under which improved inter-religious understanding can accomplish de-politicisation of religion allowing conflict parties to focus on areas in which political bargaining is acceptable to them and overall possible.

Professor Wolff, the project's principal investigator has significant methodological and substantive experience in relation to conflict analysis and resolution, including from a practical perspective. He will act as first supervisor. Prof Cees van der Eijk, Director of Nottingham's Methods and Data Institute is an international authority on opinion polling and has agreed to co-supervise such a thesis.

At Nottingham, PhD students are under the overall guidance of the Director of Postgraduate Research, who chairs a weekly Research Colloquium in which PGRs present their research and organise a programme of professional development in partnership with their supervisors and other academic staff. In the first year, there are two annual reviews, one with supervisors and the second performed independently within the School. In the second and third years, formal annual reviews of PGRs are conducted only by staff other than supervisors. Each PGR is provided with individual study space in the dedicated 'Research Wing' of the School, a networked personal computer, and a photocopying and inter-library loan allowance (1,000 pages and 40 books p.a.). The School assists with funding for attending and organising conferences and workshops through a dedicated, ring-fenced part of the Research Committee's overall budget.

Project Student 2

1. a. Proposed start date	01/09/2008	b. End date	01/09/2011
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2. Name (if known):	PhD student
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3. For named project students, please state the source and duration of any prior funding for postgraduate study? (MA,

4. Proposed departmental unit where the student will be registered

School of Politics

5. Proposed supervisor (name, department and institution)

Professor Adrian Blanchard Guelke

6. Nature and scope of the doctoral thesis

An analysis of the role of religious motivation in political violence in nationalist conflicts

A large question in relation to nationalist conflicts is whether and to what extent explicitly religiously based groups differ in their motivation for political violence from secular groups. It is an issue that is much debated in relation to both Lebanon and Israel/Palestine where political violence has been resorted to both by self-consciously religiously inspired movements and secular movements that have made no claims of religious motivation. But the issue also has relevance to many other conflicts in the world in which both religiously motivated and secular movements pursue nationalist objectives. There is already a vast literature on the subject of suicide bombers that, inter alia, considers the question of religious motivation as a factor in resort to this tactic to be analysed as a starting point for the research and that provides a basis for generating hypotheses to test the continuing validity of accounts of political violence that emphasise the instrumental character of violence that can then be examined through empirical investigation in particular cases.

7. Please describe how the student's project will contribute to the work of the project as a whole, justifying the importance of their inclusion within the wider project. What arrangements are there for the supervision and support of the student?

This project will provide an important contribution to the overall project as it will investigate one particularly crucial set of relationships that is essential to understanding the dynamics of religious conflict at local, regional and global levels, namely the linkages (alleged or otherwise) between religious and ethnic extremism, international terrorism and organised crime.

The student's project will have a very close relationship to the overall project. It will draw on the existing data base of polling in relation to a number of conflicts in which the religious factor is or is perceived to be important. It will also generate through its generation of hypotheses on the basis of its review of the literature on religiously motivated violence questions that can be tested through polling, directly or indirectly. In so far as the main focus of the thesis will precisely be examining the interrelation between religious and political motivations, as well as at times the fusion of these motivations, it will contribute to the overall purpose of the project. It is the practice of the School of Politics, International Studies and Philosophy at Queen's for Ph.D students to have two supervisors. It is proposed that the student be supervised by Professor Adrian Guelke and by Professor Beverley Milton-Edwards, with the particular area of the research the student settles on to determine who takes the role of First Supervisor. Professor Milton-Edwards pioneered the study of Islamic movements in Palestine and has written three recent monographs on the issues of Islamic politics. It is the practice of the School that all research students are initially registered as undifferentiated research students. They achieve formal registration for the Ph.D after they had presented work to a panel of three experts (one of whom is one of their supervisors). The School possesses considerable expertise in the area of terrorism and started teaching an MA programme on Violence, Terrorism and Security in 2007-8, reflecting both its expertise in this area and a potential pool of applicants for further study in this general area.

At Queen's University Belfast, a comprehensive induction programme is held for all research students in September comprising University and School-specific sessions. To assist research training and the personal development of students £700 per year is available for each student from School funds. Complementing this support, the University operates a comprehensive generic skills training programme, that maps on to the Research Councils' Joint Skills Statement. This includes support for student-led initiatives and an annual poster competition.

Classification of Proposal

(i) Subject Classification

Subject Group	Subject	Practice-led	Time period	Place
Theology, Divinity and Religious Studies	Islam	N	Contemporary	Africa Central Asia Eastern Europe Mediterranean Middle East North America South Asia (Pakistan to Indonesia) UK & Ireland Western Europe
History	Diplomacy and International Relations	N	Contemporary	Africa Central Asia Eastern Europe Mediterranean Middle East North America South Asia (Pakistan to Indonesia) UK & Ireland Western Europe

(ii) Keywords

religion	public opinion
conflict analysis	identity
public diplomacy	peace making

OTHER INFORMATION

Nominated Reviewer

1	Name	Organisation	Division or Department	Email Address
	Dr Gareth Stansfield	University of Exeter	Arab and Islamic Studies	g.r.v.stansfield@exeter.ac.uk
	Area of Expertise	international security, Middle East, Islam, religious conflict, Iraq, Kurdistan		
	Relationship with Reviewer	professional contact with Professor Wolff (occasional referee for Wolff's journal Ethnopolitics)		
	Reason for Reviewer	one of the best UK-based experts on political and religious dimensions of contemporary conflict, with specialist expertise of Islam and the Middle East		