UNIVERSITÀ DELLA VALLE D'AOSTA
UNIVERSITÉ DE LA VALLÉE D'AOSTE

Dipartimento di Scienze Economiche e Politiche
Corso di Laurea in Economia e Politiche del Territorio e dell'Impresa
Percorso di studio in Mercato ed Impresa

ANNO ACCADEMICO 2019/2020

Tesi di Laurea

**BEYOND WALLS: COMMUNICATION IN THE SECTARIAN WORKPLACE,
THE IRISH QUESTION AFTER THE TROUBLES**

Docente 1°Relatore:
Chantal Morosso

Docente 2° Relatore:
Paolo Gheda

Laureanda:
Linda Lazzaro
Matricola n. 18 G01 144

INDEX

ITACA

Quando ti metterai in viaggio per Itaca
devi augurarti che la strada sia lunga,
fertile in avventure e in esperienze.
I Lestrigoni e i Ciclopi
o la furia di Nettuno non temere,
non sarà questo il genere di incontri
se il pensiero resta alto e un sentimento
fermo guida il tuo spirito e il tuo corpo.
In Ciclopi e Lestrigoni, no certo,
né nell'irato Nettuno incapperai
se non li porti dentro
se l'anima non te li mette contro.

Devi augurarti che la strada sia lunga.
Che i mattini d'estate siano tanti
quando nei porti – finalmente e con che gioia –
toccherai terra tu per la prima volta:
negli empori fenici indugia e acquista
madreperle coralli ebano e ambre
tutta merce fina, anche profumi
penetranti d'ogni sorta;
più profumi inebrianti che puoi,
va in molte città egizie
impara una quantità di cose dai dotti

Sempre devi avere in mente Itaca –
raggiungerla sia il pensiero costante.
Soprattutto, non affrettare il viaggio;
fa che duri a lungo, per anni, e che da vecchio
metta piede sull'isola, tu, ricco
dei tesori accumulati per strada
senza aspettarti ricchezze da Itaca.
Itaca ti ha dato il bel viaggio,
senza di lei mai ti saresti messo
in viaggio: che cos'altro ti aspetti?

E se la trovi povera, non per questo Itaca ti avrà deluso.
Fatto ormai savio, con tutta la tua esperienza addosso
già tu avrai capito ciò che Itaca vuole significare

K. KAVAFIS, 1911

Troubled legacy: Children taunt a British soldier in Londonderry, Northern Ireland, after an explosion in 1972. (AP / Michel Lipchitz)

If they aren't able to destroy the desire for freedom, they won't break you. They won't break me because the desire for freedom, and the freedom of the Irish people, is in my heart. The day will dawn when all the people of Ireland will have the desire for freedom to show. It is then we'll see the rising of the moon.[2]

---

[1] https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/northern-ireland-integration-schools-lagan/;

[2] R. Sands, Prison Diaries, available online at https://irishstudies.sunygeneseoenglish.org/bobby-sands-and-the-hunger-strikers/

INTRODUCTION

Do you know the Hail Mary?

When everything around is burned by the fire of petrol bombs, when it is not possible to wear a colour, profess a confession, when even the walk, the gesture or the way of speaking must be controlled in order to avoid mockeries, violences or arrests, life seems suspended, the social identity gets lost, and people forget what it means to have one.

In a civil conflict where allies and enemies speak the same language and they are children of the same cultural matrix, it is difficult to understand the difference among them.

At first glance the Northern Irish riots and revolutionary movements before, and The Troubles after, seem to lie in the religious nature, but in fact the threads which move to unleash this long-lasting and cruel conflict are investigable in politics and in the British Crown's eternal desire of expansion for its dominion and empire.

In this way, the Northern-Irish people have had to face a war fought most of the time in the defence line. Indeed, during The Troubles, in the heart of Belfast streets, precisely in the Protestant district of Shankill and in Falls -the Catholic one-, as well as:

<<In the poorest areas there was a progressive population ghettoization following criteria based on ethnic religious homogeneity>>[3].

Self-ghettoization with the raising of barricades to guarantee physical and psychological safety and the building of the *peacelines* by the British hands in the city of Derry - or Londonderry, depending whether the interlocutor is nationalist or unionist, Catholic or Protestant – all bring to light the true nature of the conflict:

<<The political belonging to the British or Irish identity>>[4].

---

[3] P. Gheda, *Le Peacelines di Belfast. Quarant'anni di separazione tra comunità cristiane nella capitale dell'Irlanda del Nord (1969-2009)* in "*Muri in età contemporanea*", ed. 39/gennaio-aprile 2012, p. 98;
[4] Ivi p. 98;

The establishment of cruel martial laws during the harshest years of The Troubles, the wide deployment of the Crown armed forces against the Catholic nationalists, and enough ammunition suggest that the Anglo-Irish conflict is not a low-intensity war or a zero-sum game. All these elements lead to genuine guerrilla warfare involving not only military and paramilitary forces of the Catholic-Nationalist and Protestant-Unionist-Loyalist factions, but also and above all citizens, including women and children, involved in their turn in this absurd fight.

Precisely for these reasons and during the evolution of the war, it begins emerging a marked use of identity symbols, which bring the membership to one of the two factions. This desire to stand apart from others who do not belong to their own community, is based on colours which are worn and exhibited outside the windows, on typical clothing (such as the bowler hat for Unionists and cross necklace for Catholics), on slang prayers, objects and flags.

Harassed by an army professed colourless and in defence of the citizen, civilians have repeatedly seen their rights denied. A minority in the North, but a majority in the South, Northern Catholic nationalists had no access to political offices and public administration jobs for a long time, and even now there are some difficulties for them to work there. Furthermore, they could not access subsidies and mortgages, they were not allowed to Protestant schools or public places. In their turn, Protestants have always suffered for the under-siege syndrome because of their feeling of second-class citizenship, afraid of seeing their cultural identity fall into oblivion one day, pressed by the Catholic growth.

The Troubles have brought to the Ulster community infinite insecurities, consequences of the numerous betrayals on the part of the English and Irish motherland, of the total English disinterest towards this troublesome land. During times, all these problems have left not only economic, but even a very strong psychological distress. To calm the ghosts of this tormented past, Catholics and Protestants have repeatedly looked for the help by the international community, as well as the churches of their respective confessions. Especially during Thatcherism (from 1979 to 1990), civilians tried in every way to show the entire world the abuses

suffered, but the events that had a mediatic effect were very scarce. The British Government has often declared that it has moved the police in order to re-establish the social order, after riots and attacks caused by the Irish Republican Army - the nationalist paramilitary army -, and the fringes linked to it. Only with Bloody Sunday on 30th January 1972, the British Pandora's box began to unravel, showing the entire international community the truth reality. From rubber bullets shot against civil population and children, to bombs exploded in civilian homes, from the five demands of political prisoners in Long Kesh prison instantly denied by Margaret Thatcher[5] , to the death of political prisoners for deprivation and starvation during the last of three protests[6].

Civilians and political prisoners' requests were often subjected to the same treatment both in the street and in the cell: from internment without trial, to intimidation and torture. They have often remained unheard, and, faced with a choice, governments and the international community have opted for a comfortable *laissez-faire* strategy, for non-operating, remaining on their feet observing the consequences of a deep intrinsic hate among people belonging to the same nation, the same ethnic group with the same social roots, culpable for being born Catholic or Protestant.

And so, they float in the air, in their historical bubble, as if the Northern Irish people are actually living in a world we do not understand. It seems as if they are in a parallel dimension that stands in everyone against everyone. As if the war was so far away that it allowed her to slightly raise our heads, and then forget about it after a few seconds, distracted by a world where the Irish Question and The Troubles are seen from the outside as a real historical commemoration, a folklore, rather than a crime.

The Irish Question can be compared to ghosts: after all, everyone believes in them, but no one admits to have ever seen one. Only when the experience can be shared, then humans trust and look for more information about them and they discover that those ghosts have been lingering in the Emerald Isle for centuries.

---

[5] Cfr. p. 19;
[6] Cfr. p. 19;

It is exactly through the universal language of rhymes and metaphors that Bono Vox, the famous Irish band U2's singer and frontman, gave voice to the internal suffering of his land. Son of a mixed marriage between a protestant and a catholic, he brings to the attention of the international community -and especially of the civil public- all the horrors, massacres, tortures and injustices that Protestants have equally inflicted on Catholics and vice versa, even affecting the protected social layer: from children to the elderly, the cruelties committed are numerous and have left an indelible sign of sorrow, increasing hatred and, at the same time, compassion. There is no legitimacy and justice in war, because as in love, every means is lawful, and the Ulster people know that well. Born and raised in an environment full of uncertainty, fear and sectarianism, U2 as all the next generations are the children of a divided homeland, where there are so many deep wounds too far from getting scars. With courage and humility, they brought to the mainstream for the first time the dark chapter of The Troubles.

Certainly, if compared to the living conditions before the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, today they have clearly improved. Sectarian attitudes and self-exclusion from social and working life remain, due to mistrust and fear of the under-siege syndrome return. These elements have led Northern Irish society to repeatedly resume an identity and identification process, but often the adverse conditions have not ensured a linear development and a constant growth of the society. Ulster has fallen into a context of perpetual war, and now the fragile calm that is breathed beyond the *peacelines* dividing Belfast and Derry's districts may look illusory to them. Of course, physical and mental limitations do not help, indeed they are obstacles to social development and sociality, feeding the eternal permanence of psychological limits which represent boundaries not to be crossed, a dark area behind which there is always the enemy.

One of the most important Buddhist theories affirms that in order to consider a *milieu social* as healthy, society must be constituted by people who constantly develop:

<<a correct and harmonious functioning of all its organs and mechanisms, one in relation to the other>>[7],

because

<< at the same time, a healthy society internally arises from the cooperation of every member group, and from working harmoniously together. On the external level, the society well-being depends on economic, political and environmental factors, as well as on the general situation of the world >>[8].

It is a principle that Ulster is still unable to adopt, since the foundations of Northern Ireland's social welfare have been repeatedly undermined, destroyed by the internal conflict which has still left evident traces within the social fabric, the unsteady political stability and the difficulties that Northern Ireland is still facing during the peace process, divided by religious, social, economic, physical and mental borders.

As already introduced, the most famous chapter is that of The Troubles, the conflict between Catholics and Protestants has its roots in more remote times. Since the XVII Century[9], Catholics and Protestants have given rise to riots, feeding false beliefs and grafting hatred and resentment in the younger generations.

Violent actions and reactions have reached their peak during the 1980s: very dark chapters written by sectarianism, distrust and brutal violence have led to a divided society, the British and Eire governments being the complicit in it.

---

[7]   https://studybuddhism.com/it/studi-avanzati/storia-e-cultura/dialogo-interreligioso/creare-una-societa-sana consulted on 3rd December 2020;

[8] Ibidem;

[9] J. Brewer, G. Higgins, *Anti-Catholicism in Northern Ireland 1600-1998, The Mote and The Beam*, Palgrave Macmillan 1998;

Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Derry e Tyrone, the six Ulster counties, can be considered as a museum, which makes eternal the history of these multilevel conflicts. The sidewalks and neighbourhoods are still separated by walls up to 8 meters high of reinforced concrete and barbed wire. Catholics don't walk like Protestants, Protestants don't wear like Catholics, this is the scenario full of disruption and culpability reigning in Ulster.

During the Troubles, there were many initiatives led by churches and civilians in order to calm down the situation, trying to bring it back to a quiet, or at least civilised, coexistence. The interreligious dialogues and also the intervention of the Dalai Lama during his numerous visits in Ulster during and after The Troubles were the peaceful counterattack in response to the military and paramilitary groups of the two factions.

After the establishment of a long and difficult peace process[10], the founding of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association-NICRA (1966) and the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, Catholic paramilitaries of the Irish Republican Army have declared the dismantling of their arsenal, followed by Protestant[11] groups. Despite numerous start-and-stops of the peace process and cease-fire demands, the Northern Irish community has found its balance unstable. Like linen, its fabric is composed of threads so thin and delicate that it takes little to spoil it, thus causing the collapse of all the weaving so far accomplished.

Today, 22 years after the peace agreement, an apparent calm has been established. The interreligious dialogue and meeting activities strongly desired by the peacemakers continue, also in order to ensure an economically and socially stable future, especially from the point of view of work, with a view to opening up Ulster to the world and to globalisation. Social education passes through mixed school, the attendance of mixed environments, understanding and, above all, from a multicultural business developed in work environments and whose teaching is also carried out outside the work routine, that is, in everyday life. For us, multiculturalism is the interfacing of people towards other cultures at times also completely different and

---

[10] ibidem

[11] P. Gheda *I cristiani d'Irlanda e la Guerra Civile (1968-1998)*, Edizioni Angelo Guerini e Associati, 2006;

opposite. For the Northern Irish society, it is different: actually, the multicultural encounter happens between people who, for too long, have avoided any kind of contact albeit sharing the same territory for centuries. They only really started to consider and legitimize each other only a few decades ago. If the whole world runs at the speed of light, in Ulster time is slowed down by social and work meetings programmed by civil associations born during the hardest days of The Troubles.

Years of physical separation from each other have fuelled suspicious climates and certainly growing and being educated in separate schools, playing in separate playgrounds and working in separate workplaces reserved exclusively for Catholics excluding Protestants have not facilitated at all the development of the human being as "social animal"[12], that is a living creature that needs a continuous comparison and relationship with its fellows. Precisely the character of sociality has failed: in the counties of Ulster, it is not difficult to find people who prefer to avoid relationships with "enemies".

To guarantee a normal development of everyday life and, above all, to teach the younger generation that on the other side of the wall there are people with whom they can and must work together to rebuild a sociality and an identity, there are a lot of social experiments conducted on citizens, in order to instil empathy and understanding of each other and demonstrate that, in the end, wearing a uniform or acting in a certain way or speaking a certain slang while walking on the opposite sidewalk do not mean being the enemy of the next door.

The primary consequence of sectarianism is the weakening of society, due to insecurity and the fear that the neighbour could become the absolute enemy, even the traitor. Despite that 1998 has long since passed, the auto-sectarian attitudes are an everyday occurrence: this is demonstrated by the non-dismantling of Belfast and Derry *peacelines*, as a warning not to trust too much your colleague, employee or employer.

---

[12] Aristotele, *De Politica*, IV Century B.C.;

After many difficulties, the desire of Ulster to become part of a "normal" world and to show itself as a wounded nation meant that new opportunities opened up, thus improving the economic order with a consequent increase in the level of wealth and jobs, bringing with it a mild and general social relaxation. In this difficult context, the problems to be faced are numerous: from the interacting ability to the identity building, from regaining trust in people and institutions (including the British and Irish Governments) to the coexistence in the workplace. The embers still burn, in the entrails of society, the paramilitary organizations continue to be alert, ready to defend their honour and affirm their value.

In this climate where everything can falter at any time and with the spectre of a new sectarianism, we can see that Northern Irish companies, especially the old ones, as well as schools and institutions, are trying to ensure a certain degree of integrated social and an everyday economic welfare, with a tendency to prefer work and school environments where Catholics and Protestants can learn to coexist, even to demonstrate that mixed meetings can be one of the many ways to continue along a shared path, to achieve a common goal. A great commitment is required by the employer, who must assume the role of the true leader, calling to himself all the charisma in granting or denying requests avoiding any bias or prejudice.

To work in companies or to attend mixed schools where the coexistence between people who live the same daily life under a different religious imprint has been a very important challenge for a land that still lives today moments of strong tension, but thanks to the help of Dublin and the loosing of the British hold, there seems to be excellent results in this regard, both from the dismantling of prejudices and psychological barriers, both from the point of view of the identity construction and of a stronger united society, able to face its own past so heavy and unwieldy.

The first intention was to go to Ulster and interview the companies that first tried to implement social policies of mixed work, but because of the COVID-19 it was not unwillingly possible. This work is therefore intended to offer a social and, in some way, objective interpretation of the phenomena of Ulster companies that have succeeded in any case, despite the obvious difficulties, to implement equality policies within them, leaving that sectarian attitude out of every door, thus taking to the apex the duty to offer their employees, the opportunity to grow not only in their career, but also in their private life, overcoming all prejudices, until reaching a peaceful and fair coexistence.

Even should there not be 100,000 unemployed in the North, their pittance of a wage would look shame in the company of those whose wage and profit is enormous, the privileged and capitalist class who sleep upon the people's wounds, and sweat, and toils.

Bobby Sands

CHAPTER I

MOMENTS OF AN ETERNAL CONFLICT

<<It has withstood the blows of a million years, And will do so to the end. It was born when time did not exist, And it grew up out of life, It cut down evil's strangling vines, Like a slashing searing knife.>> [13]

1.1   A GREAT BEGINNING FOR THE WORST END

The Northern Irish Civil War is thought of as a finished chapter in contemporary history. Indeed, it is far from being closed. It is not even a purely political or religious question. This violent war has so many shades that it is really difficult to understand the real reasons for such a great hatred.

Probably,

<<anti-Catholicism in Ireland has its genesis in the social structure of Irish society, which was itself conditioned by the colonial relationship between Britain and Ireland>>[14].

Actually, Queen Elizabeth I's intentions were to expand England's borders to the east coast of the island. In 1606 the English and Scottish Protestants settled in the Northern Irish lands: this is the beginning of the struggle for supremacy against the native Catholics of the Irish island. As chronicle reports, the native pain started to grow and it turned into detestation for the occupiers until 1646, when one of the worst riots exploded in Ireland: Catholics, fed up with the economic abuses and English supremacy on Irish territory, revolted violently, claiming numerous victims. Therefore, the quiet living and equilibrium of the six Northern Irish counties was put to the test,

---

[13] B. Sands, *The Rhythm of Time,* 1981, Long Kesh Jail, available online at www.bobbysandtrust.com consulted on 4th December 2020;

[14] J. Brewer, G. Higgins, *Anti-Catholicism in Northern Ireland 1600-1998, The Mote and The Beam*, Macmillan 1998- p. 15;

degenerating from year to year. On several occasions, the Crown continued its project of Plantation, thus increasing tensions among the inhabitants of the island. With the *potato famine* of 1845, the island reaped many deaths. Both Catholics and Protestants felt abandoned by England, which had not provided aid to the hardships of its inhabitants.

In this desperate climate, the decision of not taking action in Northern Irish soil caused a strong sense of bewilderment among the Protestants, who saw the certainty of living next to the motherland staggering after long. Despite the lack of interest in the fate of the island, England did not loosen the grip, indeed it tightened it further. The intention to give a semblance of freedom came about when, in 1893, Ulster was granted the freedom to legislate, but under the strict control of Westminster.

Once again, violence exploded. Catholics revolted against the English stance, relying on the nationalist sentiment that, meanwhile, continued to grow in the insides of the Catholic society. With Catholics out of the major political and administrative offices and out of the most "noble" jobs, relegated to their ghettos and neighbourhoods, Protestants saw their economic importance on the island increase more and more. Furthermore, the prohibition for Catholics to attend Protestant milieux and schools, to trade and contract mixed marriages, allowed the Protestant class to rise abetted, thus becoming richer and leaving Catholics to poverty, to a feeling of powerlessness and inferiority.

1.2   A NEW CENTURY, AN OLD HISTORY

Assuming that one of the definitions of *nation* could be the people who share a common culture of language and religion, at the end of the XIX century in Ireland this concept was distorted, leading to dramatic consequences. Northern Irish Catholics, eager to return to be part of the island and no longer controlled by the English Protestant government majority, began to show attitudes of rebellion to the system. The general discontent of the Irish towards the British Crown reached its peak with the British decision to remove the entire island from the Irish government until 1921, the year of the *Partition*. With it, the six counties remained in the hands of the British and

only in 1922 the twenty-six counties of the South declared their independence from the Crown and gave birth to the Irish Free State.

In 1925 Ireland had two majorities: The South in the Catholic's hands, being a minority in the North led by Protestants. The Protestants, frightened by the possibility of losing their possessions, rights and favouritism, began to suffer from what was later recognized as *under-siege syndrome,* thus opening to a new strategy. In this period there was a shifting of the axis conflict: from a war fought to maintain rights and equality, to a religious and political conflict, which has seen the rise of different souls over the years, by Catholic nationalists who are still fighting today for a united Ireland free from any dominance, to Protestant unionists/loyalists who, on the other hand, have been struggling to remain politically linked to their British homeland, putting faith in the will and design of the British Crown to hold tight to Ulster, in order to keep its high profile in Europe and in the world as a bearer of peace and civilisation.

The Irish Question is rooted in a war whose objective is the constant re-affirmation of one position on the other. Since there are no tangible differences between the two factions, they must be differentiated forcibly and necessarily to guarantee themselves and their community the legitimacy to remain in this no man's land. In addition, the desire of Protestants to prevail over Catholics - a minority in Ulster, but a majority in Eire - is expressed in a spasmodic attempt to keep their privileges alive, in a continuous anti-nationalism and anti-Catholicism. The vicious circle over the years has reached very violent peaks, resulting in the marginalization of the Catholic community in Ulster[15].

The Northern Irish Civil War is the most concrete example of the constant search for legitimacy and for an identity of its own, even using unconventional weapons, such as colours, symbols, festivals and anniversaries, parades, mottos, all to demonstrate one's superiority over the other. The issue of Northern Ireland is a delicate and complex one. Each action still corresponds to a violent reaction, till the

---

[15] P. Gheda *I cristiani d'Irlanda e la Guerra Civile (1968-1998)*, Edizioni Angelo Guerini e Associati, Milano 2006- p.20;

explosion of another bomb in 2019 following Brexit[16]: as if the two factions were constantly trying to prove each other's dominance. The constant reaction to any event, shows that they have fallen not into a "simple" civil war, but into a conflict which goes beyond, much more rooted and ancestral, linked to the desire to prevail. The denial of the enemy would mean losing legitimacy. The constant frantic pursuit of supremacy and revenge, to "irritate" and to provoke a reaction, allows the protagonists of this ancient struggle to carry on their right to belong there, where they were born or were transplanted centuries ago.

1.3   FIRES LIT

It is possible to find the legitimation of Ulster civil war in the constant growth of an abandonment feeling on the part of the Irish government towards Catholics, and of that of London for Protestants. Discontent increased by the restrictive laws against Catholics brought to light various feelings of self-destruction for society: the fear of being constantly under siege and the natural and consequent desire to protect themselves, leading the two factions to build psychological walls first, and physical ones later. This tense climate has allowed the factions to proceed along the road of self-ghettoization, thus making the weakest faction once again succumb: Northern Irish Catholics.

<<For what concerns employment, the preference hiring people from their own community has been reported; regarding the unequal availability of homes for Catholics and Protestants in Ulster, political discrimination was perceived more evidently, rather than the strictly religious one, including healthcare and welfare>>[17],

---

[16] C. Cuccurullo, *"The Troubles": una profonda ferita nella storia del Nord Irlanda che rischia di riaprirsi,* in Opinio Juris 02.07.2019, available online at www.opiniojuris.it/the-troubles/ consulted on 5th December 2020;

[17] P. Gheda *I cristiani d'Irlanda e la Guerra Civile (1968-1998)*, Edizioni Angelo Guerini e Associati, Milano 2006-p.20;

until to ridicule Catholics' rights. A prime example is gerrymandering[18]. Strongly desired by the British Government during the election rounds, such counting of the votes guaranteed the majority of the seats to the Protestants, thanks to a deliberately unfair division of the electoral colleges that, in essence, always left the Catholics in the minority. Obviously, Catholics were not denied the right to vote, just as other rights, but because of strategic political games, the decisions and opinions of Catholics, in time, have counted little or nothing in Ulster.

If the British government continued its strategies to keep Catholics away from politics and labour, relegating them almost always to conditions of extreme poverty, Protestant and Catholic civilians in the meantime carried on their personal war, between riots and bonfires and fires, including the one that burned hundreds of Catholic homes in Belfast in 1969[19], to reach the notorious Bloody Sunday, on 30th January 1972.

1.4 THE TROUBLES: FROM WAR TO PEACE...

On 24th August 1968, during one of the many peaceful marches organised by NICRA to put an end to conflicts, to obtain equal rights, and to access employment, council house allocation, public education and mixed marriages, the First Battalion of the British paratroopers fired on the crowd, hitting 26 people. The city of Derry rose up, responding with further violence and deepening the ranks of the British paramilitary organizations. The conflict escalated echoing in the surrounding cities, till reaching Belfast. The Troubles had begun.

The advent of the infamous Iron Lady, Margaret Thatcher, was a wrench for the already exhausted island. With the suppression of all outbreaks of revolt by force, a major deployment of military forces in the six counties and the introduction of new weapons - rubber bullets - brought with them further closures of the two communities,

---

[18] Ivi, p.22;

[19] P. Palumbo, *La guerra segreta in Irlanda del Nord,* in Difesa Online 02.02.2018, available online at https://www.difesaonline.it/evidenza/approfondimenti/la-guerra-segreta-irlanda-del-nord consulted on 4th December 2020;

which were plunged into civil war, fought in the streets with bombs and barricades and thus leading the population to a sectarian and, once again, self-ghettoization behaviour.

If the enemy for Catholics was embodied by the figure of the then Prime Minister, for Margaret Thatcher the absolute evil was reflected in the political activist and volunteer of the Provisional Irish Republican Army, Robert "Bobby" Sands. Considered by Margaret Thatcher as one of Ireland's most dangerous criminals, he was captured and locked up in one of the eight H-Blocks of the Long Kesh Detention Centre, also known as Maze, in Antrim County, with other Irish paramilitary suspects detained by the British government without trial.

Even the cells, arranged in such a way as to confront Catholics and Protestants, offered no escape from the enemy. Sinn Fein's first Catholic political party member, Gerry Adams, who is still alive, in his autobiography "*Before the Dawn[20]*" describes the prisoner's conditions: they were at the limit of humanly bearable, internment without trial, expropriation of civilian clothes, once entered, on the captured paramilitaries were carried out experiments such as sleep and light deprivation. Stripped of any sign of identity, Catholics began to dialogue with each other in Gaelic, thus arousing the revolt of the opposite Protestants.

With the Prevention of Terrorism Act issued in 1974[21] the status of political prisoner was abolished. The affront of the UK was also strong for Protestants. So, in Long Kesh, prisoners started the protest movements to regain their right of political prisoners. In 1976 the blanket protest was held: deprived from their civilian clothes, men and women inmates covered themselves only with a blanket; in 1978 the dirty protest followed: <<worse than Calcutta slums>>[22]- with these words, Cardinal Thomas O' Fiaich described the inhuman conditions of H-Block cells full of stink for the excrements and urine from the cells, and the well-known hunger strike. With the "*No Surrender*" of the British government, Bobby Sands led a second hunger strike, to finally get answers to the five demands of the Catholic prisoners: freedom to wear

---

[20] G. Adams, *Prima dell'Alba*, Gamberotti Editore, 1999;

[21] P. Gheda *I cristiani d'Irlanda e la Guerra Civile (1968-1998)*, Guerini e Associati, Milano 2006-pp. 81 ss;

[22] Ivi, p. 84

clothes of their own, of association within the prison, to write diaries and memoirs, to have air hours and to be able to meet their families and write them letters. To these demands, the English behaviour became derisive. The only concession was to get back some civilian clothes, but they were all the same and not the prisoners' ones. Again, as happened with the gerrymandering, the deal was made, but in favour of British designs. On 5th May 1981 the whole of Ireland rose up against Britain, unleashing the fear of the Protestant-Unionists who were not accustomed to see themselves so under attack: the shocking death of Bobby Sands and, in the following days, of other nine young prisoners because of the hunger strike would have awakened the dark pride of nationalists. So, Margaret Thatcher about Sands' death:

<<Mr. Sands was a convicted criminal. He chose to take his own life. It was a choice that his organisation did not allow to many of its victims>>[23]

1.5   …AND THE BEGINNING OF A SHARED PATH

Over the years there have been countless episodes of murders, car bombs by the use of unconventional weapons, among them even innocent children who were helping people with the construction of barricades raised to protect their neighbourhood from assaults, and still the construction of *peacelines*.
The Troubles outbreak marks the loss of the strong British control, condemned to the recognition of institutional errors and a silence that has been - and continues to be disapproved by humanitarian organizations.

On the other side, even Ireland has assumed over time its responsibilities, especially for not having resolutely rushed to meet the demands of Northern Irish Catholics, and for the lack of timely intervention in the rare moments of interreligious dialogue between citizens. Heads of State and churches have sadly bowed their heads to organisations which have attempted to establish a peaceful and inclusive dialogue:

---

[23] Margaret Thatcher answering questions in the House of Commons on 5th May 1981, available online at http://bobbysandstribute.weebly.com/death.html consulted on 3rd December 2020,

listening, exchanging opinions and points of view have led, though for short periods, to intra-Community meetings.

The role of the lawyers of political prisoners[24], the opening to inter-ecclesiastical dialogue and the acceptance of mixed marriages up to now advised, or even forbidden, fuelled by false beliefs and slander towards the future Protestant or Catholic spouse by the two confessions, as well as the path of self-acceptance of their past and of the compliance with the cease-fire by Catholic and Protestant militias in the field, led to the Good Friday Agreements (or Stormont Agreement or Belfast Agreement) in 1998.

The signing of the peace treaty between the major parties in Northern Ireland and an international treaty between Eire and Ulster drove the island towards a new acceptance of its "double identity", a meeting between the two communities which set off a long and tiring journey of mutual recognition.

The dialogue experiences had already taken place almost clandestinely during the civil war, as it happened in the Clonard Monastery[25]: there friars and Catholic priests offered moments of encounter and listening between the two factions, who silently suffered in their own depths and in their own minds because of the conflict.

The work done in Clonard is the beginning of the inter-ecclesiastical dialogue. With the gradual acquisition of trust thanks to the help of humanitarian organizations and the opportunity to study and work beyond physical and mental walls, a large number of civilian groups have been formed that peacefully seek to work and ensure a more peaceful and secure future for the children of war. Certainly, the situation is not fully restored. There are so many instances of verbal and physical violence inflicted or self-inflicted that still occur in Ulster.

---

[24] Rif. P. Gheda, *Les Droits de l'Homme au service de la lutte politique. Les avocats dans le conflit nord-irlandais (1970-2000)*-Le Mouvement Social, n. 240 2012/3, pp. 49-65;

[25] P. Gheda, *Le Peacelines di Belfast. Quarant'anni di separazione tra comunità cristiane nella capitale dell'Irlanda del Nord (1969-2009)*, Muri in età contemporanea, Rivista di storia contemporanea, ed. 39/gennaio, Aprile 2012;

The problem of the Northern Irish community certainly lies in the heavy shared heritage. Even today there are active paramilitary groups, there are still many orange or green patriots, and the Orange Parade on 12th July, in memory of the Battle of the Boyne and the victory of the Protestant king William of Orange against the Catholic king James II keep arousing old memories of guerrillas ready to burst back.

<<The end of the parade is expected on Woodvale Road and it is here where the police hope the violence will not reignite. To try to prevent the situation, the agents are mounting mobile iron blocks in the middle of the road and, immediately behind, there are many armored vehicles.>>[26].

Once again, the ancestral necessity to demonstrate who leads in Ulster surfaced:

<<However, it is not just a celebration: with music and historical remembrance, they want to recall the British dominance on the island first ". "[…] A policeman, hit in the face by a huge stone, crumples to the ground. Meanwhile, in the Republican area, everything seems quiet until a sixteen-year-old girl is hit by a car driven by a member of the Orange Order. Only the immediate police action saves him from the lynching of the angry mob. […] The battle of the loyalists […] has more than thirty wounded officers and ten arrests>>[27].

On 13th July 2015 the journalist Fabio Polese, in loco during the events described in his book "*Strade di Belfast tra muri che parlano e sogni di libertà*", reports the endless war of The Troubles.

---

[26] F.Polese, *Strade di Belfast tra muri che parlano e sogni di libertà*, Eclettica Edizioni, 2015 -p. 30;

[27] Ivi, p.32

Two researchers, Hayes and Mcallister, have estimated that in the Northern Irish conflict, in its thirty-year period from 1969 to 1999,

<<a total of 3289 individuals had died and more than 40 000 were injured. Additionally there had been approximately 15 000 explosions and more than 35 000 incidents involving a firearm. As of 1998, an estimated 20% of persons in Northern Ireland had a relation who had been killed or injured, thus, thousands of persons had direct or indirect experience with political violence[28]>>.

It is almost superfluous to say what the consequences of The Troubles may be, and which generations may be ruined by fear: PTSD effects (post-traumatic stress disorder), and even the exponential increase in drug use in the cities most affected by the inner conflict and suicides[29], these last ones in a slow but constantly growing curve.

Society and governments try to help as many people as possible to go beyond the condition of distress, but the situation's severity is very high and persistent. From the inter-ecclesiastical dialogues to the awareness of the two confessions which contributed in various ways to create a climate of strong suspicion, today the Northern Irish community, especially the less well-off classes including a sizeable Catholic majority, is reckoning and looking for the real culprit in such a tragedy.

Meanwhile, separate schools remain, but over time there has been a significant increase in mixed institutions. The creation of mixed workplaces is a big step towards the recovery of normality. It is not a simple context, at all. Companies and their leaders

---

[28] K. McElrath, *Drug use and drug markets in the context of political conflict: the case of Northern Ireland, Addiction*, Research and Theory, 2004; Available online at https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/6868/1/McElrath_4051_Drug_use_and_drug_markets.pdf

 consulted on 3rd January 2021;

[29] P. Curzi, *Irlanda del Nord, suicidi raddoppiati in tempo di pace dopo 30 anni di guerra civile. "C'è sete di giustizia. I poveri vittime di droga e alcol"*, Il Fatto Quotidiano 23.10.2020, available online at https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2020/02/23/irlanda-del-nord-suicidi-raddoppiati-in-tempo-di-pace-dopo-30-anni-di-guerra-civile-ce-sete-di-giustizia-i-poveri-vittime-di-droga-e-alcol/5694852/ consulted on 2nd January;

must constantly think about how to create favourable working climates, where employees may feel like people with a cultural and religious background that enriches the company. Businesses, firms and schools are constantly supported by listening and dialogue groups, in order to avoid the reopening of old grudges. According to evidence gathered by scholars of the Northern Irish conflict - mostly lecturers and university researchers who have offered their studies to organisations in support of companies – meetings have been organised several times a week, in order to understand which feeling prevails in the work context.

It's not an open, easy and linear road. If multicultural business in the rest of the world is aimed at globalization, and therefore at the opening up of multinational companies and companies in favour of cultural exchange, here globalization and multicultural or cross-cultural business in a land that still struggles against a high number of social problems, especially experienced by young people of school age and at the beginning of their working life, is not so relevant. In a continuous, gradual and fragile peace process that has lasted for twenty-three years, it is important to analyse the two antagonists' attitudes, their way of speaking, of interacting and of staying together during an ordinary day at work.

CHAPTER II

A DIFFICULT COEXISTENCE

<<[Researcher] Would you work in a Protestant area?

[Respondent] No, definitely not.

[Researcher] Why?

[Respondent] It's just the way I was brought up, never to trust Protestants. (CG, West Belfast, Catholic male)>>[30]

The new Northern Irish generation is the conflict's child and it bears the heavy inheritance of their parents, who are often linked to the paramilitary fringes or direct victims of terrorist attacks during the civil war. Most of the time, growing up in such a polarised environment does not allow a normal development of sociality and self-esteem, so the natural consequence of this attitude is what the new Northern Irish generation is still facing. The lack of trust in public institutions, in Stormont's government and in the church, in education and even in the role of work, concurrently with the strong sense of betrayal, have forged a generation who no longer has a specific ideal or a goal in life. People with a very low schooling and often unemployed fall easily into the drug and alcohol traps.

---

[30] O. Hargie, D. Dickinson, A. O'Donnell, C. McMullan, S. O'Hagan, L. Whitcroft, *Breaking Down Barriers: Sectarianism, Unemployment, and the Exclusion of Disadvantaged Young People from Northern Ireland Society. A Report on Research Funded by the Community Relations Council through the European Union Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland (Peace II Measure 2.1)*, University of Ulster 2006, p. 114; available online at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345606843 consulted on 5th December 2020;

In this way, the sense of abandonment and the *bubble syndrome*[31] go hand in hand with the discomfort and social degradation, which mainly affects the very young generations who have become part of the NEET, i.e. Not in Education, Employment or Training[32]. Although the percentage estimated of NEET has dropped considerably in the last decade - currently the estimates count about 21,000 NEETs, it means 10.7% in the 16-24 age group[33]. These data are like a portrait of the difficult social conditions so difficult to eliminate.

Some Professors from the University of Ulster[34]-School of Communication have studied the cause-effect connection linked to the violence suffered by their parents, and how sectarianism has influenced the younger generation. Furthermore, from the interviews with young workers, unemployed and NEET emerged that the lower is the level of education, the less young people are open to dialogue with the opposite community, due to some precarious social balance especially present in Belfast suburbs, or in the Catholic or Protestant's quarters strewn in Ulster.

The researchers have conducted the interviews dividing workers into age and employment status groups and a strong distrust of the other community spreads up again. There is a marked polarization made up of clichés and false beliefs. The negative experiences of families and the current strong paramilitary presence in the different areas of the cities, even those considered by Catholics and Protestants as "neutral"[35], have made the majority of the youth lose confidence. This polarized society

---

[31] Ivi p. XVIII ss.;

[32] Department for Employment and Learning (DELNI) (Northern Ireland), *Scoping Study of those young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in Northern Ireland*, corp. creator. (2010), available online at https://dera.ioe.ac.uk//622/ consulted on 2nd December 2020;

[33] J. Melgrew, *Number of Northern Ireland young people not in work or education drops slightly,* in Belfast Telegraph 28.05.2020, available online at https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/number-of-northern-ireland-young-people-not-in-work-or-education-drops-slightly-39240977.html consulted on 2nd December 2020;

[34] The study is referring to: O. Hargie, D. Dickinson, A. O'Donnell, C. McMullan, S. O'Hagan, L. Whitcroft, *Breaking Down Barriers: Sectarianism, Unemployment, and the Exclusion of Disadvantaged Young People from Northern Ireland Society. A Report on Research Funded by the Community Relations Council through the European Union Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland (Peace II Measure 2.1)*, University of Ulster 2006, available online at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345606843 consulted on 5th December 2020;

[35] Ibidem;

stands on strong social discrepancies, mainly dictated by the level of education and employment.

Currently, Catholics and Protestants admit their history, their heavy burden and lead a life dictated by the lack of trust on each other. But if this condition is now taken for granted, what Northern Irish society has to assimilate is the difference that emerges between the various souls of the same faction. This happens when the parents, and consequently the children, begin to look beyond the wall, giving way to curiosity to see if the neighbour is actually only a shadow of the past or a real person, who could be a schoolmate, a colleague, and even a friend.

2.1   THE SCAPEGOAT

Interviews carried out by the School of Communication researchers with NEET and workers of different age groups have taken place in several occasions during the 2000s, close to the tenth anniversary of the Stormont Agreement[36]. In ten years, tables have turned: civilians stand out with a strong aversion towards the paramilitaries, held responsible for the current social separation. If before they were considered as frontline fighters for the recognition of rights and defenders of freedom, today their figure is particularly controversial. It is mainly workers aged between 25 and 35 who do not conceive, or badly tolerate, the presence of the armed forces other than the police force. Both Catholics and Protestants surveyed say that paramilitaries have

<<pervasive and dysfunctional influences>>[37] ,

and

---

[36] Interviews refer to: D. Dickson, O. Hargie, A. O'Donnell, C. McMullan, *Learning to Deal with Difference in the Workplace: A report on Research Funded by the Community Relations Council through the European Union Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland (Peace II Extension)*, University of Ulster Jordanstown 2008, available online at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237615940 consulted on 2nd December 2020;

[37] O. Hargie, D. Dickinson, A. O'Donnell, C. McMullan, S. O'Hagan, L. Whitcroft, *Breaking Down Barriers: Sectarianism, Unemployment, and the Exclusion of Disadvantaged Young People from Northern Ireland Society. A Report on Research Funded by the Community Relations Council through the European Union Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland (Peace II Measure 2.1)*, University of Ulster 2006, p. VIII, available online at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345606843 consulted on 5th December 2020;

<<Sectarianism feeds power within the communities. Without the peace walls, paramilitaries would have no power. It gives them power, but then it creates divisions within their own communities (TP, Belfast, mixed organisation) […] There is a lot of sectarianism because there is a lot of paramilitaries (CG, South Belfast, Protestant organisation)>>[38].

These are just some of the testimonies collected during long interviews with people who work in Protestant, Catholic or mixed companies. The common feeling, despite the differences between the factions, is the same: sectarianism and paramilitaries are the main guilty party of the present Northern Irish society problems and of the distress of the elder generation, who tries to protect the younger generation from fear and from the unknown, even instilling false beliefs.

<<For some of the young people, these perceptions were a product of their upbringing and reflected their parents' and friends' views>>[39]

During the years of The Troubles the blame fell almost exclusively on Eire and on the British government, today it seems that the teenage generation grown during *Na Trioblòidi*[40] had an epiphany, revealing that the culprit is no longer the institution, but a physical person, a tangible real enemy. No matter which faction the paramilitary is from, they are considered responsible for the current daily situation. Actually, the paramilitary cause today is no longer so strongly felt, indeed it is often the younger generations who condemn these acts of violence, longing for a broader and a non-stereotyped view of the world.

The living conditions of Northern Irish families vary according to the social class they belong to. The social ladder is defined by the wealth and education level of course, but above all by the experiences lived in the past. It is precisely the shared experiences which have allowed inter-ecclesiastical dialogues first and the opening of schools and mixed companies then. It can be said that the higher the level of education, the lower the cases of sectarianism and of verbal and physical violence. In this way, social exchanges may occur in a very natural way, without the help and the mediation of institutions, churches and civilian organisations. This directly and

---

[38] Ivi p. 74;
[39] Ivi, p. 114;
[40] Irish Gaelic word for <<The Troubles>>;

inversely proportional relationship has allowed some organizations such as the Integrated Education Fund[41] to implement mixed education programs starting from primary schools. These kinds of programs are available at the request of the parents of sectarian school pupils: today the IEF plays an important ever-growing role for those families wishing for a better future and more social opportunities for their children.

Shared paths can lead to an openness towards dialogue, just as education from an early age can give rise to coopetition that will last into adulthood, then inserting itself into a mixed working context. School can be the gateway to an integrated and stable society.

2.2 TORCHES FOR THE FUTURE: THE ROLE OF POST-WAR GENERATIONS

The Good Friday Agreement was supposed to write a new chapter in Northern Irish history based on shared peace, tolerance and collective routines, but in recent times it has been losing this meaning and, once again, Ulster people's confidence in mutual respect and peace is suddenly falling again. Despite this further setback in the peace process, younger generations seem to react better to their parents' past. However, a strong dichotomy remains among young people: the level of education weighs heavily on the judgment they have towards the other faction and the military and non-military actions that have been undertaken over the years, with the intention of subjugating first, and living together later, together with the enemy. The harsh judgment of school-age young people has allowed parents to confront their fears, which are reflected, as a natural consequence, onto their children.

The researches mentioned earlier in this chapter have involved a total of 272 people from different areas of Belfast, from different cultural and educational backgrounds, more or less directly and indirectly involved in the civil war. They were also divided into age groups, work experience (from neophyte to seniors) and based

---

[41] More information about the Integrated Education Fund are available on https://www.ief.org.uk/ consulted on 1st December 2020;

on their duties in the company, this last one defined by the culture they belong to: Protestant, Catholic or mixed.

The study highlighted that the disturbing elements which do not allow a correct development of the cognitive and adaptive abilities of the worker is the lack of trust of parents towards their children, who are considered too naïve and unaware of the danger of relating to the 'enemy'. Therefore, the young workers' desire for openness to the world is often considered a danger to their children's safety. Many young people agree to work in mixed companies, as they find the environment more stimulating and often have not encountered problems in interfacing with the opposite culture, but many others, especially the very young, abandon this project because of their fear of the unknown. The own cultural background and direct experience in The Troubles is the cause of the stubborn closure of intercultural relations between neighbours.

2.3   SOCIAL INFLUENCES: WHEN THE PAST IS EVER-PRESENT

The past forges the present. However, Northern Ireland is stuck in time, carrying the heavy burden that often cannot be fully understood. Ulster society follows such complex patterns that at times they seem to be dictated by fate. People wishing to work on a peace process aimed at dialogue, often remain suspicious and closed to the vision of sincerity to the other, keeping high the pride of their religious and political deep roots.

In Ulster, everything has a voice, everything tells something about its history and present. Emblems, symbols, peace-walls and murals tell about the events that occurred in previous times. Everything remains static, almost dusty by time, but there is still no talk of a new Berlin 1989.

The barriers remain, overbearing towards the enemy and falsely protective for themselves. Perhaps they are not even a warning for the future: they are elements of security when the situation becomes complicated and unmanageable, when walking down the street an unknown face approaches.

It is said that once the fear is recognized and faced, it becomes a friend. This is what happens to those who decide to pursue a career in a mixed company. However, the path of this awareness does not arise from the normal continuation of life, but it is a path that must be already undertaken as children, within mixed schools and integrated education and environment. In this way, one day, the child will be able to analyse situations and events in a clear way, without any preconception and free from prejudice.

According to a recent survey by the British Government's Department of Education,

<<There are at present 62 grant-aided integrated schools in Northern Ireland (with a total enrolment of 21,956 pupils, or 7 percent of total pupils in 2014/15), made up of 38 grant-maintained integrated schools and 24 controlled integrated schools.>>[42].

The difficulty of opening or converting an institution into a mixed school resides once again in the distrust of the population majority: often the inhabitants of the sectarian neighbourhoods do not tolerate the enemy presence, as they perceive this chance not as an opportunity, but as an offence and a return to the *under-siege* syndrome. Emblematic was an episode that saw the appearance of a British flag, to the detriment of the upcoming opening of a mixed school, in a neighbourhood where the percentage of people in favour of taking advantage of mixed education was 86% of the locals:

<<One of these is Carrickfergus Central Primary, a Protestant school in a predominantly Protestant town just north of Belfast. Nuala Hall, the principal, arrived at Carrickfergus Central in 2015, after 19 years of working at an integrated school. Shortly after she took the job at Carrickfergus Central, she was driving near the school with her husband. They saw the red, white, and blue telltale bunting of the UK flag. In Northern Ireland, territory marking is common, and any native instantly recognizes that such bunting marks an area as overwhelmingly Protestant. "My husband joked, 'Well, there won't be an integrated school here anytime soon,'" Hall recalls. "At that point, I

---

42 Department of Education, data available online at https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/integrated-schools consulted on 24th January 2021;

agreed with him." Yet in February of this year, parents at Carrickfergus Central voted 86 percent in favour of integration.>>[43]

However, the institutional and governmental efforts of the most active fringes of society in resorting to mixed schools, whose registration still remains optional today, postpone not exactly positive results. Once again, prejudices and myths are the main characters of this story. Probably, most Northern Irish people are still fighting an internal war, convinced that the *under-siege* has never ended. It is no longer the enemy to throw a Molotov bomb at: the underlying reason why, more than twenty years after the *Comhaontú Bhéal Feirste[44]*, we are still in this situation dates back to not knowing how to manage a hitherto unknown situation and is perceived by not wanting to go beyond, both in the figurative and concrete sense, the safe boundary of their own home

<<They believe that if they leave this area, their lives are under threat>>[45].

<<Twenty years on from the Good Friday Agreement—the keystone of Northern Ireland's peace process—51 percent of people in Northern Ireland, according to a recent poll, reported having few or no friends from the other side of the religious divide. Among 18-to-34-year-olds, the figure was even more worryingly high, at 58 percent.>>[46].

---

[43] A. McGibbon, *Northern Ireland's Schools Still Aren't Integrated*, The Nation 09.09.2020, available online at https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/northern-ireland-integration-schools-lagan/ consulted on 24th January 2021;

[44] The Irish Gaelic word for Good Friday Agreement (1998);

[45] O. Hargie, D. Dickinson, A. O'Donnell, C. McMullan, S. O'Hagan, L. Whitcroft, *Breaking Down Barriers: Sectarianism, Unemployment, and the Exclusion of Disadvantaged Young People from Northern Ireland Society. A Report on Research Funded by the Community Relations Council through the European Union Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland (Peace II Measure 2.1)*, University of Ulster 2006, pp. 60-62, available online at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345606843 consulted on 5th December 2020;

[46] A. McGibbon, *Northern Ireland's Schools Still Aren't Integrated*, The Nation 09.09.2020, available online at https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/northern-ireland-integration-schools-lagan/ consulted on 24th January 2021;

Although human relationships are based on socialization, for the Northern Irish this action becomes very complicated, due to the socio-cultural differences between one faction and the other. This difference still remains well established in the Ulster territory and in the way people act and behave. Even today, the two factions fight, although on a different level than The Troubles, in the defence line. The problem of this attitude is dual: the bad tolerance of mixed schools in neighbourhoods not considered neutral[47] once again reveals the massive presence of doubts, moreover it isolates the two communities by increasing the effects of the bubble syndrome. This syndrome is a state of mind for which:

<<the young people limit their life choices in part as a result of perceived, and indeed, real barriers they face and their 'fear' of entering into the domain of the 'other' community to access shops, services, schools and employment>>[48].

This syndrome is the safe haven for most Northern Irish people: fear of the unknown, physical, verbal and psychological violence is part of the daily flow. Since the 1980s, during the cruellest and most violent phases of The Troubles, there have been many attempts to make this bubble burst, convinced that, once the enemy was recognized and legitimized, the war would be over.

The inter-ecclesiastical dialogues first and the organizations born spontaneously in the territory later, have educated to sociality and mutual respect. During the years the efforts have paid off. The establishment of mixed schools and the reintegration of mixed marriages have meant that some families, especially the economically more advantaged and educated ones, finally bring their children to mixed environments.

---

[47] Belfast city centre is considered a neutral and safe place for both communities;

[48] J. Bell and N. Jarman, *Beyond Belfast: Contested Spaces in Urban, Rural and Cross Border Settings, Report Commissioned by Community Relations Council and Rural Community Network,* Researchers, Institute for Conflict Research Brian Harvey, 2010 available online at http://conflictresearch.org.uk/reports/sectarianism-segregation/CRC-Beyond-Belfast.pdf consulted on 21st January 2021;

School, sport and hobbies are the areas where children and young people can meet in a safe environment, undertaking a shared path, shared by parents too, who in turn become protagonists of an exchange of opinions, views and above all experiences with other parents. Therefore, it can be said that thanks to the children, the generations that descend directly from the civil war can begin to truly put themselves in the shoes of those they pointed to as an enemy, thus discovering that much more often than they believed, the experiences of violence and profound malaise, a sense of disorientation and incomprehension are actually also inherent in those who are confronted.

At this point, it seems possible to affirm that dialogue is the key to definitively close these very violent and absurd chapters. In reality, the growing loss of trust of the older generations towards institutions and laws increases the fear that their actions will backfire against young people, who are forced once again to choose which side to take, preferring the safe nest of home, thus leaving open the possibility of breaking down any type of physical and psychological barrier.

<<Walls are in people's minds. If we don't try to break them down, we won't break the bricks and mortar down>>[49].

2.4 PEOPLE WITHOUT PEACE

Whether school or work, the social *milieu* where people grow up forges their personality, just as the education received can be the engine of social change and reduction of prejudice[50]. All efforts to establish a dialogue between the two factions have not been vain, but they have not yet reached their full potential. Northern Irish society is still strongly divided and polarized due to its long-lasting sectarianism. Every dividing element in society leads back to sectarianism, which has also greatly

[49]D. Blevis, *Belfast: a city still divided two decades after the Good Friday Agreement*, Sky News, 10.04.2019, available online at https://news.sky.com/story/belfast-a-city-still-divided-two-decades-after-the-good-friday-agreement-11317515 consulted on 22nd January 2021;

[50] B.C. Heyes, I. McAllister, L. Dowds, *Integrated Education, Intergroup Relations, and Political Identities in Northern Ireland*, University of Aberdeen 2007, available online at https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffpages/uploads/soc207/integrated_educ_social_problems.pdf consulted on 24th January 2021;

influenced the already unstable Northern Irish economy. Since the Plantation, the Northern Irish have seen their wealth decrease significantly, up to today, with an uncertain economy that is trying to offer limited work and survival opportunities for families.

The concrete consequences of sectarianism are not only impoverishment and therefore the decline and flattening of the differences between social classes: poverty, underemployment and early school drop-out have continued to keep society polarized, increasing even more the opportunities for self-segregation. Once again, Prof. Owen Hargie together with other researchers, collected the testimonies of the workers who participated in the study *<<Breaking down barriers: sectarianism, unemployment and the exclusion of disadvantaged young people from Northern Ireland society>>*[51] and the results are remarkable, especially about the attitudes and fears by employees of mixed companies or of a single religious colour experience in dealing with everyday working life.

Certainly, the level of education and the school attended greatly affect the personality of the worker, who may be more or less open to change, to work side by side with a colleague of a different colour, but all of them still stated their fear of being victims of mobbing and physical and/or verbal attacks one day. Employees who work in mixed companies are able to collaborate thanks to the maintenance of a serene and cordial atmosphere, where the joke is allowed and the political issues are preferably left outside, in order to avoid offensive surprises in the workplace. Often those who work in mixed companies come from a mixed institution, and therefore have already been accustomed since their childhood to respect the different habits of the other faction. But it is never simple nor easy.

---

[51] [51]O. Hargie, D. Dickinson, A. O'Donnell, C. McMullan, S. O'Hagan, L. Whitcroft, *Breaking Down Barriers: Sectarianism, Unemployment, and the Exclusion of Disadvantaged Young People from Northern Ireland Society. A Report on Research Funded by the Community Relations Council through the European Union Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland (Peace II Measure 2.1)*, University of Ulster 2006, pp. 60-62, available online at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345606843 consulted on 5th December 2020;

However, the situation changes when the interviewees come from closed districts, where the *peacelines* still divide the Catholic and Protestant sidewalks today, and the symbols of belonging become so important that they become the identity emblem itself. Workers in mixed companies or with a single religious colour have never been in touch with the opposing faction before joining the company staff, they think it is better to self-isolate (in a sort of <<self-apartheid>>[52]) to avoid any kind of reprisals or confrontations. According to researchers, such great distrust is to be found in school education, since most of the time it is not adequate and does not help students integrate. Although the school is mixed, the prevailing line remains only one: either Catholic or Protestant. Once again, the two factions do not reconcile. Even in protected situations such as in school and in work environments, one faction tries to prevail over the other, like an endless race, but obtaining poor learning results.

<<Some of them can't even write a sentence, they really have very poor literacy and numeracy (TP, South Belfast, mixed organisation)>>[53].

---

[52] ibidem;

[53] Ivi p. 116;

CHAPTER III

ULSTER: WHERE WORDS COME BEFORE WORK

<<They said to us at the induction "Watch what you say because people can take offence, maybe not sectarian issues, even the likes of name-calling, or if you're slagging somebody… It may be fun and games at the time, but not to the person, you might be hurting them (Male, Protestant, North Belfast, neophyte)>>[54]

Education and the guarantee of equal opportunities in the workplace are concepts for which there had been a lot of struggles. In some contexts, they are taken for granted: society coexists harmoniously in respect of different cultures and shade of thinking considering all of this as enrichment. However, where two souls of the same person coexist, it becomes very complicated and difficult to adapt, to understand the sensitivity of the words to speak and that of the unspoken, avoiding jokes or phrases that can suddenly trigger a riot or an act of sectarian violence. Reaching the end of their tether at the conclusion of The Troubles, the promise of the Good Friday Agreements, together with the long-awaited decommissioning and the ceasefire by the paramilitary fringes, should have represented the starting block for a new society aimed at tolerance and mutual recognition, but the Northern Irish have not reckoned with their heavy legacy. Starting to rebuild a non-existent social fabric means sitting at the table and looking for coexistence solutions that, even today, are late in coming.

More than twenty years after the exhausted request for peace, the faint flame of a matchstick is enough to light a fire capable of reviving the spirit of The Troubles. In order to avoid bad awakenings, Northern Irish Catholics and Protestants have had to learn again to communicate according to new rules of civil coexistence.

---

[54] D. Dickson, O. Hargie, A. O'DOnnell, C. McMullan, *Learning to Deal with Difference in the Workplace: A report on Research Funded by the Community Relations Council through the European Union Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland (Peace II Extension)*, Jordanstown 2008, p. 39, available online at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237615940 consulted on 2nd December 2020;

The goal of re-educating the whole society, from the oldest to the youngest generation and from the richest to the poorest social class, involves a considerable effort, since it means setting the whole social order on a new anti-sectarian communicative level. The use of some idioms, slangs and accents become the lead which tends the rope towards openness to dialogue, or to war. After the violence of The Troubles, the two factions found themselves having to rebuild not only houses and neighbourhoods, but also their identity and, above all, their way of interfacing with others. Becoming aware of that new reality showed them the consequences of a sectarian division so deeply rooted in the workplace to be hard to eradicate. And so, together with the bricks, Catholics and Protestants began to build shared paths in school and work environments.

Despite the commitment and immense efforts of the majority of the Northern Irish people, there are still too many cases of violence against workers and employees whose only fault is to have a name that can easily be attributed back to one of the two communities. For its part, the Northern Irish government has promoted training courses for managers and business assistants - and continues in this direction -, to maintain a steady social cohesion within the company where they work. On their side, the listening and self-help associations born during The Troubles have continued their activity, implementing it considerably and offering their precious help both to employees and to employers who often find themselves in conditions they are not able to manage. The particular state of affairs requires a work of extreme patience and *savoir-faire*, especially on the part of employers and managers, who must contribute by creating a job in which the worker can feel protected, regardless of the religious affiliation of the company staff. To facilitate the task of management and to keep a firm point on the progress achieved by government and associations, specific practices, vade mecum and business processes have been outlined, in order to involve workers even in their private life. They have to start to live together even in not-controlled situations.

If it is true that work must not interfere with the person's private sphere, it is also true that workers should feel safe not only when they are in the workplace. For this reason, some practices have become customary within business life and they are reflected in the private sector. Social experiments, opportunities for interreligious dialogue and discussion during working hours, the presence of psychologists together

with listening and dialogue associations, as well as conduct and sanctioning protocols which workers must respect are aimed not only at keeping the corporate environment calm and risk-free, but also to demonstrate that competing for a single and common goal is not only the prerogative of the company, but it can even be an aim in private life.

3.1   THE PAST KNOCKS BACK

The bubble syndrome is closely related to the sentiment of second-class citizenship, which in turn arose with the construction of the *peacelines*. Built by the Catholics to protect themselves from Protestant attacks, the walls ended up becoming an element of absolute and definitive division between the two factions. The walls cut off all contact with the rival community, greatly increasing the depth of the rift between Catholics and Protestants. Self-isolation caused the loss of all forms of contact, thus increasing the feeling of abandonment more and more. At this point, the two factions have created the bubble they still struggle to destroy today. The bubble syndrome allows the person to live without taking risks, even if it means losing a considerable number of opportunities and social occasions, and above all work. The two communities are often moved by a sense of self-compassion and self-commiseration. It is not a deliberate behaviour, but it is the result of a lack and involves very serious problems that lead to the impossibility of working.

A study conducted in 2011 by the Commission for Victims and Survivors[55], which was attended by doctors and professors from the University of Ulster Mental Health and Wellbeing centre and the Northern Ireland Centre for Trauma and Transformation, highlighted the consequences of The Troubles, defining its characteristics and the estimated percentage of people affected by disorders resulting from traumatic events and post-traumatic stress disorders. If traumatic events can be

---

[55] Bamford Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing at the University of Ulster in Partnership with the Northern Ireland Centre for Trauma & Transformation and Compass, *Troubled consequences: A report on the mental health impact of the civil conflict in Northern Ireland, prepared for the Commission for Victims and Survivors*-Belfast, 2011 available online at https://www.cvsni.org/media/1435/troubled-consequences-october-2011.pdf consulted on 17th January 2021;

<< […] experiences that are highly unusual, unexpected or overwhelming, and on experiencing them a person may have a deep sense of powerlessness or helplessness or may strongly believe that they, or others close to them, are going to die>>[56]

and whether post-traumatic stress disorder (also known as PTSD) can be defined as

<<Re-experiencing of the event such as nightmares or flashbacks; Avoidance of things that remind the person of the event and numbing of emotions and responsiveness; Hyper-vigilance symptoms such as jumpiness, irritability and sleep disturbance>>[57],

then we can well understand the conditions of daily life of the Northern Irish people. The generations who have personally experienced the conflict are now adults and, in turn, have given birth to the new generation who live by reflection in the fears and effects of the mental disorders of their parents. The high percentage of people directly involved in conflicts can make us understand the complexity and difficulty of living within a dimension of the conflict that goes beyond bombs, sieges and violence:

<<Muldoon et al. (2003) similarly explored the breadth of conflict experiences in a representative sample of the population in Northern Ireland and Border counties of the Irish Republic. Overall, 50% of respondents reported having some direct experience of the "Troubles" during their lifetime. The three most prevalent events were experiencing a bomb (21.5% of men vs 18% of women), a riot (26.2% of men and 13.1% of women) or intimidation (25.3% of men vs 15% of women).>>[58]

---

[56] Ivi, p. 15;
[57] Ivi, p. 16;
[58] Ivi, p. 13;

The fear for the older generation to return to a few decades before is very strong and it does not allow a normal development of the social and working life of their children, who live the condition of parental discomfort as ordinary.

The Northern Irish social plagues hindering socio-economic development are far from being healed. Indeed, in recent years we are witnessing a strong return to the past with new riotous movements and the thickening of the paramilitary ranks also due to Brexit which has contributed to increase the feeling of abandonment of Protestants by "their" British motherland. Not long ago the European Union has asked its officials in Ulster not to go to work because of the threats deriving from Unionist circles, in whose neighbourhoods have arisen:

<<Graffiti opposing the Irish Sea border have been painted in some loyalist areas of Northern Ireland in recent days, referring to employees as "targets". Staff reported suspicious activity - including apparent attempts to gather personal information, such as vehicle number plates. Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) Assistant Chief Constable Mark McEwan told the BBC there was no evidence to corroborate an anonymous claim that any of the main loyalist paramilitary groups were behind this. Mr McEwan said that "individuals or small groups of people" were involved in incidents of graffiti or intimidation. He said there was no evidence that car registrations of staff were being gathered, adding that there was nothing to suggest an attack on anyone was imminent.>>[59].

This episode demonstrates how England's *iter* to leave the European Union, now almost completed, has brought the peace process, together with the path of integration and confidence-building, to a halt. The Protestant faction returns to its second-class status, feeling abandoned in a territory predominantly occupied by the enemy. The episode reported above is a power demonstration: the unionist-loyalist spirit against Republicans still burns under the ashes and shows this conflict is not only a nostalgic memory of the struggle for an ideal and an identity affirmation which survived only in the grandparents and parents of the present and future generation.

---

[59] J. O'Neill, *EU condemns Northern Ireland Brexit port staff 'threats'* BBC News 02.02.2021, available online at https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-55901429 consulted on 6th February 2021;

3.2 SOCIAL SCOURGES: SECTARIAN MESSAGES FROM THE FAMILY

The very recent news of the officials invited not to go to work witnesses the discontent deriving from Brexit. In fact, such episodes happen every day in companies in Northern Ireland mainly due to the discomfort and malaise that the workers suffer at home which is then brought to the workplace.

The family plays an absolutely fundamental role in the social and cognitive development of children. Disorders such as those outlined by the Commission for Victims and Survivors are not isolated compartments concerning only the people who suffer from them, but strictly involve every person belonging to the family unit. Some interviews and surveys conducted over time by study groups and researchers have shown how the common feeling of their own community and family members frames the young worker or student in assuming sectarian behaviour or not. The statement of a Protestant teacher from a Catholic secondary school is a stark reminder:

<<I remember that one of them said to me at one time… "Miss, are you anything to Mick [K.] who has the car place up there?" And I said "No". And one said, "Wise up! Mick [K.] is a Protestant, he wouldn't be any relation of hers!" I did not think that my name would 'out' me but there was an initial cautiousness from staff… But the parents took to Facebook – identified me by name – identified me by where I live – my position within the school>> [60].

If in this case the teacher has not suffered retaliation from colleagues for working in a Catholic school despite her different confession, the sectarian thrust comes directly from children, who have absorbed sectarian discourses within their family.

The poorest neighbourhoods are those most affected by the civil war and they hide the highest number of violent sectarian episodes, while within the economically more affluent social classes the problem does not arise in such a powerful way, also thanks to the economic strength and wealth they have.

---

[60]M. Milliken, *'Are you a Fenian, Miss?': inside the sectarian classroom*, RTE, 28th January 2020, available online at:https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2020/0128/1111407-are-you-a-fenian-miss-inside-the-sectarian-classroom/ consulted on 6th February 2021;

The lack of education in first place, followed by the lack of work have a negative effect on the human mind, thus leaving the path to drug dealing, alcoholism and eventually suicide. Due to social unease and the common feeling of having no way out of the condition in which they live, it is especially NEETs and Young Never Employed (YNE) to pay the consequences. In the new generations the ghost of civil war appears: the indirect consequences of the conflict faced by their parents make their children grow up in blind fear. Parents' post-traumatic stress disorders are reflected in their children's daily lives: they will therefore be detained to go beyond the walls. Protected inside the nest, they are not inclined to confront each other in inter-community and inter-religious experiences: suffering from the condition of their parents, they often find once again in the opposed faction the culprit of their own status quo. The real problem of Northern Ireland generation away from the civil war is precisely the eternal return to the past:

<<Research shows that mental illness and trauma exposure in parents and grandparents increases the risk of mental illness in the next generation, mainly through the impact on parenting behaviour, and economic factors," [...] "We now have a generation of young people who have been raised in environments and families who have had these difficulties, and in communities who suffer the legacy of the Troubles.>>[61]

Not surprisingly, Northern Ireland is the country with

<<the highest recorded rate of post-traumatic stress disorder of any studied country in the world.>>[62].

Despite the commitment of state institutions, hospitals and associations such as the Victims Survivors Service[63] there is still a long way from offering real and concrete support to families who are victims of attacks, suicides and alcoholism.

---

[61] S. Fenton, *Mental health problems the hidden legacy of the Troubles*, The Irish Times 03.09.2019, available online at https://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/mental-health-problems-the-hidden-legacy-of-the-troubles-1.4005470 consulted on 17th January 2021;

[62] Ibidem;

[63] More information available online at https://www.cvsni.org/;

3.3 FROM SCHOOL TO WORK: THE NEW SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Referred to young people:

<<They're socially excluded in general because inner cities areas, areas of high unemployment, areas that exude all the problems of inner city, from broken families to drugs, alcohol abuse, physical abuse, problems of debt, problems of shortage of money. In some instances, children are kept at home to mind younger siblings while the parent goes out to work. So, they are socially excluded. The parents cannot afford to have their children minded any other way. The children are denied the opportunity of training in a centre (TP, WB, Catholic organisation) [64]>>

While the old generation influences the new one through the resistant fear of reliving the cruellest moments of the war, young people have no reference or example outside the community they belong to. The fear of leaving the house without finding their own identifying symbols, nor someone belonging to their own community and being alone in that new condition lead the individual to take up a self-protective attitude, thus fomenting their anxiety looking at the others with suspicion, together with the family's strain to know their children in a place not considered safe, eventually lead the young person to avoid any kind of contact of their social circle. Early school leaving and even the decision to avoid work are the darkest aspects of the condition of Northern Irish youth. In some interviews conducted on a sample group[65] it was found that the lower the level of education, the greater the prejudiced responses to the interviewer. On the other hand, the higher the level of education, and the frequency of mixed environments, the lower the sectarian attitude towards not only the researcher, but the worldview itself. This double vision of life, almost as if it were a double

---

[64] O. Hargie, D. Dickinson, A. O'Donnell, C. McMullan, S. O'Hagan, L. Whitcroft, *Breaking Down Barriers: Sectarianism, Unemployment, and the Exclusion of Disadvantaged Young People from Northern Ireland Society. A Report on Research Funded by the Community Relations Council through the European Union Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland (Peace II Measure 2.1)*, University of Ulster 2006, p. 114; available online at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345606843 consulted on 5th December 2020;

[65] Ibidem;

interpretation of the same side of the coin, suggests how the social circle and one's education affect the vision of one's life condition. Young people who have traumatic events behind them or directly involved in attacks, have the disillusionment that, by now, nothing or little of their life matters both to their family and to the company where they were called to work. There are not a few testimonies that the young Catholic and Protestant absolutely do not want to cross the border of their neighbourhood: many would even leave their job not to meet a colleague with a different colour. As mentioned, the higher the level of education, the greater is the mental openness towards a working occupation in a mixed environment even where the worker involved would be the minority; moreover, there is more confidence to face the challenges that the workplace offers. But the possibility of enjoying economic independence and therefore of getting out of one's bubble is not enough: the sectarian sub-culture does not always allow a linear path towards self-realization. The YETs and NEETs hardly escape the limbo of poverty and uncertainty they live in. The main reason why they do not undertake a school or work career is to be found in self-exclusion, frightened by the sectarian and violent episodes that are told by friends, relatives and newspapers.

<<[Researcher] If your ideal job came up in a Catholic area would you take it?

[Respondent] No.

[Researcher] Even with lots of money?

[Respondent] No.

[Researcher] Why not?

[Respondent] We just wouldn't get on, we hate each other (TP, East Belfast, Protestant male)>>[66]

To understand it better, most of the time the interviewees speak mainly for clichés, for false beliefs inherited from the old generations, where only the mixed education school or an integrated workplace within their neighbourhood could defeat it. Sectarian hatred is almost an appendage of the two Protestant and Catholic subcultures: in the same report from which these two interviews were reported, a

---

[66] Ivi, p. 135;

worrying factor emerges: 36 employees witnessed 45 direct and indirect sectarian incidents.

3.4 ACCIDENTS EN ROUTE

While the under-siege mentality is typical of the Protestant view, it is Catholics who report a greater number of incidents linked to physical and verbal violence. However, everything rests on such a subtle balance easily upset at any moment. Over the years, the Protestant majority has been distressed several times by the growth of the Catholic percentage: the swing has always fluctuated in perpetual motion between one faction and another, without however ever creating large differential arcs.

To the detriment of the third principle of dynamics whereby two equal and opposite forces cancel each other out, in Ulster the Catholics usually paid the most labour, wages and rent pledge:

<<Catholics generally are excluded from skilled and semiskilled jobs in shipyards and linen mills. They historically were restricted to menial jobs on the docks, earning lower wages than the Protestants who worked in skilled jobs and management positions. Ulster Unionists tend to own businesses. Many Catholic Republicans are unemployed.>>[67]

The cause of certain sectarian behaviours is to be found once again in both the two factions. Even if mixed work environments are considered safer by institutions and by the employer, sectarian events persist and they influence the life of the worker. As a result of this uncertainty, every enterprise must write the statutory anti-sectarian protocols, which must be strictly followed by workers. Despite the law and the disciplinary sanctions, there are still episodes which totter the worker certainty of being in a safe work. Protestants and Catholics do not deny that they find it difficult to bear the presence of others, especially in the neighbourhood they belong to. Many young workers would have no problem working in environments considered neutral by both

---

[67] Countries and their cultures, culture of Northern Ireland available online at https://www.everyculture.com/No-Sa/Northern-Ireland.html#ixzz6l7wZwhQ5 consulted on 7[th]March 2021;

sides - such as central Belfast - as they would not feel pressured and under siege. Once again, murals, symbols, colours, ways of speaking and even smartphone ringtones play a fundamental role in corporate wellbeing. Each identifying symbol becomes a reason for discrimination or demonstration of one's superiority in an environment where there should be no gender, age, sex or racial-religious difference. Although there are episodes in which private companies tend to hire personnel of their own religion, there are many companies that try to work on guaranteeing an adequate working system, in order to integrate the two enemies thus contributing, as far as the possibilities of the employer, to create a climate of tolerance.

Even though the employer tries to impose an adequate and civil code of behaviour within the company, the employees often continue their struggle, frustrating the attempts to bridge the gaps of such a divided culture. The cross community should represent, as well as the workplace

<<an environment where members of both communities do come together and associate>>[68].

When this element is lacking, the entire community suffers, returning to the tunnel of guerrilla warfare and self-destruction. In recent years there has been a return to sectarian violence which worries the institutions as the prelude to a sectarianism comparable to that of The Troubles.

<<The new report also warned that if organisations do not learn to deal with difference and promote shared workplaces, they may "unwittingly but effectively" oversee an increase in sectarian segregation in Northern Ireland.>>[69]

To avoid this menace, numerous variables return to the playing field on a relational level, especially the workers' behaviour and the different levels of communication to show tolerance and respect.

---

[68] D. Dickson, O. Hargie, N. Wilson, *Communication, relationships and religious difference Northern Ireland Workplace: a study of private and public sector organizations*, in Journal of Applied Communication Research, Vol. 36 N. 2, May 2008, p. 129 available online at http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00909880801922847 and consulted on 8th December 2020;

[69] V. O'hara, *Revealed: the alarming extent of sectarianism in Northern Ireland workplaces*, The Belfast Telegraph 16.05.2012, available online at https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/revealed-the-alarming-extent-of-sectarianism-in-northern-ireland-workplaces-28749666.html consulted on 31st January 2021;

3.5 COMMUNICATION AS A WEAPON FOR SECTARIANISM

Communication within Northern Irish companies is not exclusively about employment. Actually, the whole Northern Irish civil war has been focused on the communicative level too: from verbal to non-verbal communication, through the visual one, the two factions have learned to interact without necessarily having to say a word. In Ulster the colours, the symbols and everything that can recall the identity and belonging are powerful communicative elements. In a small or medium-sized Northern Irish company, business communication is not so much about the relationships it maintains with other companies to trade, as about the communication it develops with its employees. The difficulties that the employer encounters on a daily basis are within their environment: maintaining social and human relationships with employees, rather than guaranteeing them fairness and justice in the treatment are the challenges that the manager must pay close attention to. Therefore, it is necessary to avoid displaying identifying elements, colours of belonging and to use a rather formal language, without using idioms or proverbs; these are the fundamental rules that they must respect within the company, in order to prevent any offence which could trigger an internal revolt.

There are still not many companies able to maintain a completely serene rapport. The manager or the employer, in turn, must instruct the worker on the basis of certain procedures, which however, most of the time, are not assimilated. Cases have been documented in which workers were retaliated because they had a certain ringtone on the phone, or because they wore a certain type of clothing or were offended by a "simple and innocent" joke. Probably, Ulster can be the perfect setting where the art of speaking and communication finds its full expression. Over the years, sectarianism has come its way and today it continues to dig its tunnels so dark and deep that they are not visible. Although Northern Ireland is aware of its need to get out of this absurd situation and that it will benefit from the good relations between the two factions,

<<sectarian differences may impact upon day-to-day communication patterns in share worksite>>[70]

Thus, leaving unfinished a work of social construction that begun decades ago.

<<We still live in a world of politeness, denial and avoidance and don't talk about anything controversial. It is important that this research can open up a proper debate on sectarianism. (Joe Law, co-director of Trademark)>>[71].

According to Joe Law, the report conducted on 2,500 respondents may make both citizens and institutions reflect on how little has been done to avoid abuse and sectarian behaviour in Northern Irish public and private companies. It is true that violence and physical retaliation have decreased, but the conflict has shifted to an even more dangerous level: the psychological one, severely aggravating the post-traumatic effects already there.
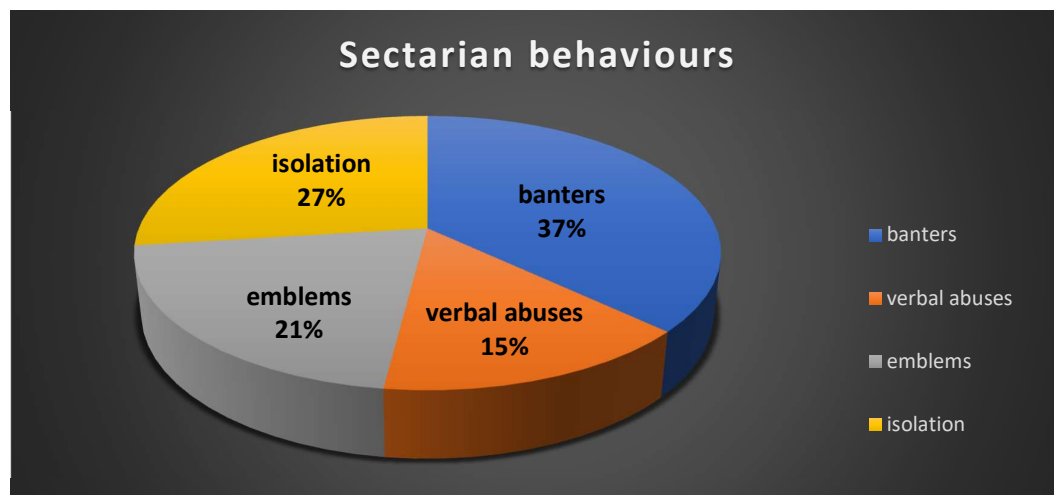
Data from 2012-Belfast Telegraph;[72]

---

[70] D. Dickson, O. Hargie, N. Wilson, *Communication, relationships and religious difference Northern Ireland Workplace: a study of private and public sector organizations*, in Journal of Applied Communication Research, Vol. 36 N. 2, May 2008, p. 131 available online at http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00909880801922847 and consulted on 8th December 2020;

[71]V. O'hara, *Revealed: the alarming extent of sectarianism in Northern Ireland workplaces*, The Belfast Telegraph 16.05.2012, available online at https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/revealed-the-alarming-extent-of-sectarianism-in-northern-ireland-workplaces-28749666.html consulted on 31st January 2021;

[72] Ibidem;

CHAPTER IV

THE PRECARIOUS BALANCE

<<There is no place in society for intimidation and threats

against anyone going to their place of work.>>[73]

4.1 TOGETHER IN SECTARIAN WORKPLACES: THE EMPLOYEES INCLUSION

Humankind is made of creatures who need to compete and collaborate to reach a common goal more quickly and easier. This vision finds its best expression in working relationships. Just think about temporary business associations, corporate networks or joint ventures: two or more companies share their know-how and their economic and human resources to build a project which, otherwise, would not be feasible thus improving the industrial knowledge of the clusters involved. The more companies are involved in a pattern of coopetition, the greater the possibility of increasing the business and workers' skills and success will be.

If the company has a good internal rapport, employees can carry out their duties in a peaceful working environment, living their routine without running into accidents that may hurt the personnel, and eventually the corporate will trust their staff and make competition among colleagues more stimulating, encouraging the workers to get involved, to really exploit all their skills not to prove they are better, but to make all their potential available to the company they work for.

---

[73] The Executive Office, *Executive condemns threats against workers*, 02.02.2021, available online at https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/news/executive-condemns-threats-against-workers consulted on 7th February 2021;

Of course, the employer must keep control of the business, as an interested nurturing parent figure. While workers must complete their tasks with a certain level of independence and collaboration with other business spheres, the employer's role should resemble the <<good father of the family>>[74], who must have a caring attitude but at the same time firm and decided. In the relationship among colleagues and between workers and employers various factors come into play: from personality to the way of speaking, formal or informal register, to the vision of work itself. All these facets of corporate life are pawns on the same chessboard, that can advance and gain power if they move wisely and with unity to protect the company.

When the game moves into a complex setting such as Northern Ireland, the rules may change drastically. Obviously, there are customs and ways of acting to do business, but the heterogeneity of the context does not allow a linear and progressive development.

The problems that Ulster companies have to face are various and do not exclusively concern corporate life, indeed most of the time they touch the private sphere of the workers, in order to teach them - or remind them - that the person they are working with is the same one who lives behind the wall. Although in the last decade the sectarian climate is slowly giving way to more or less well tolerated cohabitation, it is very complicated for companies to offer a stable and safe work environment. Just as multinationals tackle the issue of multicultural and cross-cultural business, Ulster is experiencing the difficult challenge of a peaceful coexistence of diametrically opposed cultures and absolutely different work ethics, but the competing actors are people belonging to the same cultural root.

---

[74] Reference to the Italian Civil Code - the diligence of the good father of the family: "Il "buon padre di famiglia" è colui che "ci tiene" e che è premuroso, colui cioè che fa di tutto pur di realizzare l'interesse dei figli." Available online at https://www.laleggepertutti.it/225153_buon-padre-di-famiglia-significato#:~:text=Il%20%E2%80%9Cbuon%20padre%20di%20famiglia%E2%80%9D%20%C3%A8%20colui%20che%20%E2%80%9Cci,pi%C3%B9%20possibile%2C%20il%20risultato%20promesso consulted on 7th February 2021;

Since the years of *Plandáil Uladh*[75], Catholics have had to face an indefinite number of harassments due to religious affiliation. The two Protestant and Catholic confessions heavily undermined their mutual credibility. Especially with regard to work ethic, Protestants have always considered Catholics as:

<<They were dirty, for example […] Similarly old fashioned but popular notions included the belief that Catholics were lazy, slothful and feckless.>> [76],

to whom therefore no "worthy" task could be entrusted. For these reasons, Catholics have often been excluded from working careers, from leadership and decision-making posts, rather than from public office, thus worsening the image of the Catholic more and more, relegated to jobs related to the primary sector. The exclusion of Catholics from the opportunity of career-making or from earning a workplace they aspired to, has resulted in a whirlwind of

<<negative stereotypes, and pejorative beliefs>>[77],

going to sink permanently the dignity of the worker, who

<<at the level of the social structure, anti-Catholicism expresses itself in patterns of indirect and institutional discrimination and social disadvantage experienced by the Catholics because they are Catholics>>[78].

Therefore, Catholics have always been kept in the rear, forcibly entrusting the whole sphere of the *res publica* in the Protestant hands.

---

[75] Irish Gaelic word for <<Plantation>>
[76] J. Brewer, G. Higgins, Anti-Catholicism in Northern Ireland 1600-1998, The Mote and The Beam, Macmillan 1998- p. 100;
[77] ivi, p. 2;
[78] ivi, p. 2;

During the years of The Troubles, the Catholic awareness set the bar higher: by no longer recognizing Protestant institutions, no more able to accept that the power still remains in the hands of the opposite faction, Catholics began to wage a considerable number of revolts, even involving the respective Churches. With the opening of dialogues and work for peace, Catholics have managed to obtain rights and to revolt against Protestant oppression and derision, managing to find a legitimate place in the social life of the nation.

Despite the difficulties, today in Ulster there are both Catholic and Protestant companies, making lots of efforts, in order to guarantee equal job conditions. From gender equality to fair treatment for religious affiliation, since 2017 there has been a marked improvement in Northern Irish corporate life. In 2012 the annual monitoring report carried out by ECNI (Equality Commission of Northern Ireland, see 4.2)[79] demonstrated that the Catholic workforce was going through a phase of slow but constant growth in the employment of private jobs in response to a greater Protestant presence with a minimum percentage gap:

<<This trend is also reflected in the breakdown of people appointed to jobs - Catholics (52.1%), Protestant (47.9%).>>[80],

while in 2016 the Irish Times[81] showed an analysis of the data collected and examined by the Labour Force Survey Religion report[82], which brings to the attention that:

---

[79] More information about ECNI available online at https://www.equalityni.org/Home consulted on 21st January 2021;

[80] BBC News, *Report shows Protestants still majority in workplace* 18.12.2012, available online at **https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-20756129** consulted on 20th January 2021;

[81]The Irish Times, *Catholic and Protestant workforce in North at 50:50 for first time Catholic and Protestant workforce in North at 50:50 for first time,* 29.03.2016, available online at **https://www.irishtimes.com/business/economy/catholic-and-protestant-workforce-in-north-at-50-50-for-first-time-1.2589891** consulted on 20th January 2021;

[82] The executive Office, *Labour force survey religion reports,* more information available online at https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/labour-force-survey-religion-reports consulted on 20th January 2021;

<<The working population was estimated to comprise 50 per cent from the Protestant community and 50 per cent with a Catholic background.>>[83].

These data mean that the full-time Northern Irish workforce has managed to reach a milestone that had remained floating in the limbo of impossibility for years. This implication has caused an echo of optimism among workers of the two communities (especially the Catholic one) and by the various civil associations that have always fought to see equality recognized in the workplace. The data go further and tell how, in the meantime, the corporate structure has changed. Until a few years ago Catholics were employed in activities belonging to the agricultural and industrial sector, but now, the Labour Force Survey Religion reports a reversal of duties

<<the sector with the highest proportion of workers from a Protestant background was agriculture, forestry and fishing, while a significant number of Catholics were employed in the construction, finance and insurance, education and health and social work sectors.>>[84].

This phenomenon should be found in the will of young Protestant students who want to pursue their careers in British faculties, giving rise to an important migratory flow from Ulster to the mother island and there, once they accomplish their studies, they find a job. The non-return of Protestants to Northern Ireland thus allowed the Catholic faction to take its place among the university benches, then going to specialize and occupy those Protestant posts that are now vacant[85].

---

[83]The Irish Times, *Catholic and Protestant workforce in North at 50:50 for first time Catholic and Protestant workforce in North at 50:50 for first time,* 29.03.2016, available online at **https://www.irishtimes.com/business/economy/catholic-and-protestant-workforce-in-north-at-50-50-for-first-time-1.2589891** consulted on 20th January 2021;

[84] Ibidem;

[85] R.Bentley**,** *Northern Ireland: Is there still a big divide between Protestant and Catholic workers?*, Personnel Today, 06.03.2007, available online at https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/northern-ireland-is-there-still-a-big-divide-between-protestant-and-catholic-workers/ consulted on 24th January 2021;

We may assert that over the years the working situation in Ulster has remained almost unchanged. Actually, the data for 2017 show that Catholics and Protestants have comparable employment rates and the distribution of work in different sectors is homogeneous:

<<Employment rates among Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland are now level, with both communities evenly matched in most types of jobs, according to a report>>[86].

Even according to the 2017 estimates reported by the Belfast Telegraph:

<<the present rate of youth unemployment was higher for Protestants than Catholics, at 24% compared to 18%.>>[87]

and if we add to this other analytical data for which professional work was held for 19 % by Catholics and 18% by Protestants, while skilled work was led by Protestants with 27% followed by Catholic with 24%, it is possible to understand how the Northern Irish labour market has changed, thus allowing an important slice of Catholic workers to become part of their country's working life, no more banished to thicken the ranks of the unemployment counts of Ulster, which were around 18% for Catholics and 9% for Protestants, down to 6% at the time of this survey. The key to understanding this thinning of the lines of the two factions can be found not only in the cross-cultural integration and in business strategies, but in what can be considered as a loss of interest in religion. Indeed, the poll responses reported by the Belfast Telegraph indicate:

<<In 1992, 6% of the population described their religion as 'other/non-determined' though that percentage had reached 12% by 2015.>>[88].

---

[86] M. Canning, *Protestant and Catholic employment rates level for first time in Northern Ireland*, Belfast Telegraph, 26.01.2017, available online at hhttps://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/protestant-and-catholic-employment-rates-level-for-first-time-in-northern-ireland-35398733.html l consulted on 7th February 2021;
[87] Ibidem;
[88] Ibidem;

The increased percentage of people who do not declare their religion or their belonging to another faith demonstrates how the Northern Irish religious order has changed: today the six counties of the Emerald Isle have a Catholic majority. Probably, the new generations, and therefore the new employees, go beyond the wall: it is true that the mistrust absolutely remains, but it is likely that it tends to be more a question of honour and pride, rather than the real motivation for which conflict turns out to be the only way out of oppression.

It is even curious to evaluate the question of wages, which, once again, are almost equal between Catholics and Protestants now:

<<The report also looks at who earns more and the answer, reassuringly, shows there is little difference. In 2014, the median hourly wage rate for working age Protestants was £9.23 while Catholics earned £9.63.>>[89].

Even the Northern Irish Police have changed its internal organisation, in order to guarantee the various denominations present in Ulster to participate in military life. Furthermore, the ex-Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), which has become the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) following the entry into force of the Police Northern Ireland Act of 2001, has changed the recruitment criteria of its military corps to ensure a balance of law enforcement and an end to feelings of under-siege: 50% of law enforcement must be Catholic and the remaining 50% must be "*non-Catholic*"[90].

To support the working population and avoid the suffering from any type of violence or harassment, the Northern Irish government has over time launched a new legislation *corpus*, which supports and legitimizes the Equality Commission of Northern Ireland, in charge of monitoring the behaviour of Northern Irish companies. All this legislation is to protect both the worker - private or public - and the employer, who can find guidelines and vade mecum to improve the company climate and thus avoid riots, reprisals or even more unpleasant events.

---

[89] Ibidem;

[90] J. Bell, *Voice for All, General Overview Report: Northern Ireland,* Institute for Conflict Research, 2008, p. 15- available online at http://conflictresearch.org.uk/reports/equality-diversity/Malta-General-Overview-Report.pdf consulted on 7th December 2021;

4.2   EQUITY GUARANTEES

The Fair Employment Code of Practice is the code which offers the employer concrete help on the anti-discriminatory management of the staff, in order to avoid sectarian episodes, which would affect both the quality of work and the work environment. Therefore, the task of the Fair Employment Code of Practice is to

<<promote a good and harmonious working environment and atmosphere in which no worker feels under threat or intimidated because of his or her religious belief or political opinion>>[91].

The Fair Employment Code of Practice was born in 1989, with the entry into force of the Fair Employment and Treatment Northern Ireland Order (or FETO), which states that companies with more than ten employees, must be registered in the Equality Commission of Northern Ireland (or ECNI). In case the company does not fulfil its task of communicating the data relating to the personnel who work for the company (including the number of employees and the breakdown by sex, age, religion)

<<can incur a £2,000 fine>>[92].

The ECNI role is to monitor the behaviour of employees and prevent the outbreak of sectarian episodes within companies. The birth of ECNI is a natural extension of the anti-discrimination laws, which are aimed to guaranteeing an adequate workplace for both employees and employers, assuring the respect for ethics, socio-cultural difference and dialogue among workers and employee-employer rapport.

---

[91] The Equality Commission of Northern Ireland, *Promoting a Good & Harmonious Working Environment, A Guide for Employers and Employees*, 2009, p. 1-available online at https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Good andHarmoniousWorkplace.pdf consulted on 7th February 2021;

[92] J. Bell, *Voice for All, General Overview Report: Northern Ireland,* Institute for Conflict Research, 2008, p. 13-available online at http://conflictresearch.org.uk/reports/equality-diversity/Malta-General-Overview-Report.pdf consulted on 7th December 2021;

Although there are many bureaucratic tasks a company has to deal with, employers are very diligent on this charge, precisely to avoid retaliation by their employees. It is not easy for an employer to treat all the employees fairly and equally: the human side often overrides the professional one, but no human error is admissible in a Northern Irish company, especially if it includes a percentage of religious workers. different from the predominant one:

<<Make no mistake, these can be difficult and sensitive issues to deal with, as indeed are so many issues falling within the scope of the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998, the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 and other anti-discrimination legislation>>[93].

ECNI is therefore the predisposed body to draw up vade mecum and conduct codes, thus creating habits and procedures within companies, which, if respected, should guarantee a positive progress of company life. Workers therefore work better, not only on the purely productive and economic side, since greater serenity implies greater production and profit. Nothing is left to chance: by making the employer and the employee responsible, each company body has in mind what its rights are and how far it can go without incurring any sanction for incorrect behaviour. Some of the rules set by ECNI do not allow any nuances: clear and precise, they leave no space for interpretation, in order to avoid or allow all the staff of all Northern Irish companies to behave.

<<It is important for an employer to keep in mind not only the corporate or collective image that is created by presenting displays or emblems associated primarily with only one community or part of the workforce but also the impact these actions may have on good employee relations. […] The use of languages other than English, for example in corporate logos and communications, will not, in general, constitute an infringement of a good and harmonious working environment. […] These include: • Football shirts, e.g., Rangers and Celtic • Badges and insignia linked to

---

[93] The Equality Commission of Northern Ireland, *Promoting a Good & Harmonious Working Environment, A Guide for Employers and Employees*, 2009, p. 10 -available online at https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Good andHarmoniousWorkplace.pdf consulted on 7th February 2021;

paramilitary or political organisations, e.g. buttonholes, tattoos • Badges and insignia, e.g. Easter Lilies, Orange symbols • Posters, displays, tracts, emblems, screensavers, ringtones etc. linked to the above>> [94].

Since they refer to compliance with the equality and non-discrimination values, the ECNI rules and provisions are not valid for the United Kingdom, but only for Northern Ireland. In addition to the tasks outlined above, ECNI also takes care of evaluating the documentation produced by the compulsorily registered companies. Actually, the company is required to produce corporate behaviour policies, including the Equality Impact Assessment, a document assessing whether and to what extent its anti-sectarian policies are effective, what impact they have on corporate daily life and on what employees and employers must work for improving anti-sectarian behaviours, in order to always guarantee a peaceful and open to dialogue workplace.

ECNI is legitimized by section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998). This section of the law allows the public authority to evaluate and act in cases where the principles of non-discrimination are not respected both on a religious basis and on the human and private sphere of the individual

<<places a statutory obligation on Public Authorities to carry out their functions with due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and good relations in respect of religious belief, political opinion, gender, race, disability, age, marital status, dependants and sexual orientation.>>[95]

The Northern Ireland Act Section 75 has been in force since 2000 and works continuously to ensure equal opportunities in a state that, up until that year, had experienced the bloodiest implications of the civil war.

---

[94] Ivi p. 6 ss;

[95] Department for Communities, *Equality scheme,* available online at https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/dfc-equality, consulted on 1st February 2021;

If we consider ECNI's birth year, rather than the entry into force of Section 75 and compare it to the birth of the first spontaneous civil associations, we notice the delay of Northern Irish institutions in deciding which rules should be followed, which bureaucratic document the company must produce to demonstrate its work of implementing anti-discrimination measures. These delays have been considered serious by the Northern Irish company, which had been calling for such a body of law since before the outbreak of The Troubles. Basically, it was necessary to wait for a few years before the signing of the Good Friday Agreement: it is true that great changes were taking place in the political and economic structures, but all this slow progress has made the population lose confidence in the institutions. For this reason, companies have implemented their behavioural protocols over time, in order to adapt them to the principles dictated by the Government.

4.3 AMBIGUITIES

Finally, Northern Ireland has undertaken a virtuous path to give its people a glimmer of normality and, above all, to restore the economy of the British state on the Irish land. Unfortunately, this is not the finishing line, but a setback. While the public sector manages to coexist with many souls within, the private sector especially linked to the reality of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) still remains in a state of hypnagogia.

The activities implemented by both the Government and the community with the institution of a listening and monitoring association do not appear to be the winning way to bring them back on their feet. These are not economic considerations, as Northern Irish SMEs still manage to live by trading goods and services especially to the Republic of Ireland and, in part, to the United Kingdom, with a good level of exports also sent to other European countries. Provided that anti-sectarian controls are on the agenda in the public - as entities directly controlled by Stormont Government - anti-discrimination laws and ethical and behavioural protocols are well defined. All this gets lost when it enters the private sector where all the responsibilities and state provisions must be transferred to the employer, who in turn must educate the employees to tolerance and sociality.

Despite the great work done by institutions and workers, there are still many sectarian episodes that are reported to the employer or told by the worker in the family. According to some research carried out over the years by University Professors and ECNI reports, it is noted that especially neophytes and workers with lower levels of education trigger or suffer sectarian episodes.

This behaviour is attributable to the social environment where the person grew up and, when neophytes, most of the time they are still too young and without any experience in the workplace nor in coexistence among colleagues and thus the element of discrimination re-emerges on the basis of false beliefs and commonplaces. Once workers adapt to the environment and begin - even unconsciously - to interact with the work environment, then their vision changes, thus accepting the differences of their co-workers.

There are rare recorded cases in which a person does not voluntarily integrate into the environment, but many cases where exclusion comes from the colleague who avoids spending breaks together are still common.

<<Only Catholics in private organizations wanted significantly higher levels of quality in their relationships with Protestants, whereas in public organizations it was only the Protestant section of the workforce that registered such a desire. […] Catholics in private firms, though, expressed a significantly higher need for improved quality of contact with their Protestant co-workers […]>>[96].

---

[96] D. Dickson, O. Hargie, N. Wilson, *Communication, relationships and religious difference Northern Ireland Workplace: a study of private and public sector organizations*, in Journal of Applied Communication Research, Vol. 36 N. 2, May 2008-p. 147 available online at http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00909880801922847 and consulted on 7th December 2020

CHAPTER V

BEYOND WALLS: REHEARSAL FOR NORMALITY

<<Trade union leaders in Northern Ireland today called a half-day stoppage in protest at the murder of a young Catholic postal worker. Union leaders met them to discuss the murder of Daniel McColgan (20) at a postal depot in the loyalist Rathcoole area, and the death threats on Catholic teachers at the weekend. […] The killing was claimed initially by the Red Hand Defenders, but the UDA later claimed the murder in its own name, an unusual move that may signal a new determination by the organisation to step up its campaign of sectarian attacks. […] Earlier Sinn Féin president, Mr Gerry Adams, […] "There is a marked reluctance to face up to the UDA because there is a different attitude to violence when it comes from loyalists and because many of those involved in that organisation are in the pay of the British government.">>[97]

5.1 WORK BEHIND PEACE: FROM ASSOCIATIONS FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS TO THE *PEACE IV* PROGRAM

The episode reported at the opening of this chapter dates back to 2002, but it still continues to have strong media redundancy, been repeatedly taken up as an example for the drafting of inclusive labour policies, in order to guarantee and support an egalitarian distribution policy in the workplaces of Northern Irish companies.

Since 1998, many paths have been taken to restore an illusory tranquillity among Ulster people, to assure a stable social and working life. Over time, Stormont government and its parties have issued behavioural, ethical and moral guidelines, mostly supported by the civilians, who are still exhausted by the conflict but finally

---

[97] P.A., *Unions call Friday stoppage in protest over Catholic's murder*, The Irish Times, 14th January 2002, available online at **https://www.irishtimes.com/news/unions-call-friday-stoppage-in-protest-over-catholic-s-murder-1.410195** consulted online on 13th February 2021;

ready to work in mixed and protected environments, to go beyond their fear and feel free to walk in any neighbourhood.

The Northern Irish people have been victims of the civil war, and even of the mistakes and betrayals acted by the Government and the paramilitaries of both factions who, on several occasions, have managed to undermine the peace process. So, some civilian fringes have always tried to ensure a safe and secure environment from attacks and violence. The associations in support of families, equality and equal work are an indefinite number: in 1967 the Northern Irish Civil Rights Association-NICRA[98] was born with the aim of guaranteeing civil rights and normal everyday life in the name of mutual tolerance. The remarkable work of NICRA during the years of The Troubles brought with it a social re-education, aiming above all at the younger generations of the time. Over time, NICRA has evolved, changing its status of association in the recognised committee.

Despite the formal change, NICRA is still composed by the children of war, who remind and teach the new generations the value of inter-community dialogue, sharing their history together with the enemy faction, thus demonstrating that the sectarian violence was strongly experienced by both civilian factions alike, with the same intensity and left the same sense of powerlessness and dismay. Today, movements born spontaneously among civilians also take part in the political life, and struggle peacefully to obtain equal opportunities in the workplace, equal rights in public life and a homogeneous economic development, which will compensate for the imbalances left by the war and kept standing by the lines of peace, physical barriers that prevent the free movement of things and people.

Some associations are known even abroad because of their remarkable commitment in their mission. For example, the non-departmental state public body such as the aforementioned ECNI, or the Northern Ireland Commission for Human Rights (NIHRC), which is an independent public body. Furthermore, this is the United Nations accredited national human rights institution funded by the United Kingdom and grounded in the Good Friday Agreements. The NIHRC seeks to offer support for the

---

[98] More information on NICRA available online at http://www.nicivilrights.org/;

reconstruction of the Northern Irish social fabric after traumatic post-civil conflict events. Moreover, it seeks to uphold the standards outlined by the Belfast Agreement, empowering the population with human rights, their protection and the consequences in case of their violation, offering training and education based on mutual respect. In addition to the social outlook, the NIHRC works closely with the British government, the Executive and the Northern Ireland Assembly to ensure that every right enshrined in the Peace Agreements is constantly respected, by monitoring the body of laws and the various national and international treaties signed by the Crown and Belfast[99]. Funded by Peace IV and the Victims and Survivors Program (VSS), the Ulster Human Rights Watch (UHRW) Advocacy Service carries out ongoing support work for Northern Irish families who are physical and psychological victims of the Troubles, terrorist attacks and sectarian reprisals[100].

5.1.1 Peace IV and Interreg VA: the contribution of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

Considered a tumultuous border hotspot, Northern Ireland is also the protagonist of many attentions by the European Union. During the 70s and 80s of the last century, the international community compared the *Irish Question* to an uncomfortable taboo. 1999 can be considered as the turning point, with the signing of one of the agreements which would mark the beginning of a new era and the demonization of paramilitary terrorist acts. Following the British-Irish agreement which established the implementing bodies in common agreement between the Republic of Ireland, Ulster and the UK, Ulster has seen a significant deployment of economic resources deriving from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), especially regarding the development and maintenance of peace. The initiation and maintenance of territorial cooperation between the border regions of Ulster, respectively appointed by the European Union programs Peace III and Interreg IVA, were focused on accompany Northern Ireland in an internal situation of normal coexistence, and to include Ulster in

---

[99] More information available online at https://www.nihrc.org/ consulted on 13th February 2021;
[100] More information available online at https://www.uhrw.org.uk/ consulted on 13thFebruary 2021;

economic and social inclusion programs, to avoid the exclusion of a chaotic portion of Europe. Furthermore,

<< The Peace Programme was initially created in 1995 as a direct result of the EU's desire to make a positive response to the paramilitary ceasefires of 1994. >>[101]

The European cross-border programs are managed by the *Comhlacht na gClar Speisialta AE* or the Special EU Programs Body (SEUPB), one of the six cross-border bodies deriving from the British-Irish agreement signed on 8 March 1999, whose fundamental role is to improve the discomfort deriving from the border situation and the civil conflict. Started in 2007 and concluded in 2013, the Peace III and Interreg IVA programs gave way to the Peace IV and Interreg VA programs, which ran from 2014 to 2020. The first program, with an investment of 270 million €, carried out the European initiative to support peace and reconciliation in Ulster, to which were added 229 million € disbursed through the ERDF, in which the British and Irish governments participated with an amount of 41 million € in support of the cause. For the second project, 283 million € were allocated, useful to overcoming the problems arising from being a troubled border area. The desire of the European Union is to offer what was lacking till 1999: concrete help for economic growth and the acknowledgement of being a border area and the difficulties deriving from a conflict only recently recognized as such[102].

---

[101] Special EU Programmes Body, available online at https://www.seupb.eu/piv-overview consulted on 29th January 2021;

[102] More information on SEUPB and Ulster are available online at https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/0dbc6f-irish-border-counties-peace-programme/ consulted on 29th January 2021;

5.2   NEW CHALLENGES FOR ULSTER

Research, innovation, business development, environment, sustainable transport, cross-border health and social care[103], development of the Mid-Ulster region defined as the incubator of innovative start-ups in Northern Ireland as outlined in the 2015-2020 Economic Development Plan of the Mid Ulster Council[104]. These are the challenges that Ulster has accepted with a great spirit of competition and desire to emerge from its tormented past. Northern Ireland has long remained unaware of what was happening in the outside world: it has failed to develop a strong and robust economy capable of competing with the phenomenon of globalization, nor to grow "in time" work areas, sectors and places coveted by the interculturalism businesses.

The war has atrophied Northern Ireland, which, during the years of The Troubles, could barely trade with the twenty-six sister counties and Great Britain. As reported by ECNI's 2019-2020 Annual Review[105] drawn up in September 2020, during the four-year development program 2019-2022 Ulster will have to be able to guarantee not only the development of a fertile territory for Northern Irish companies, but it must also be attractive to those companies which may decide to invest or settle in Ulster. For this reason, social inclusion must go hand in hand with the training of Northern Irish employees, so that they can live together in a peaceful and anti-sectarian climate, free from any prejudice.

ECNI is still working to reach most of the active population, in order to train employees, company supervisors and employers to create a harmonious and secure workplace. The data reported by ECNI in the period 2019-2020 are encouraging:

---

[103] More information available online at https://www.seupb.eu/piv-overview consulted online on 10th February 2021;

[104] Mid Ulster Council, *Our Plan for Growth: Mid Ulster's Economic Development Plan executive summary 2015-2020*, available online at https://www.midulstercouncil.org/MidUlsterCouncil/media/Mid-Ulster-Council/Econ%20Dev/Publications/Economic-Development-Plan-2015-2020-2.pdf consulted on 7thDecember 2020;

[105] More information available online at https://www.equalityni.org/AboutUs;

<<212 employers took part in 10 seminars on promoting a good and harmonious inclusive workplace. […] We ran 2 inhouse training sessions for 46 attendees in the FE sector […] We supported 10 cases relevant to this objective>>[106].

5.3 DOUBLE VISION

Before looking at globalization and impetuously entering international markets, it is important that Northern Irish companies have to be actually and truly ready for this change.

Workers and staff lines are preparing for the challenge of opening to globalization, somehow managing to appease the spirit of war. There are still, perhaps, too many cases of sectarian exclusion in the workplace, up to physical violence: it is almost as if one's job must be earned and not deserved. A joke, even an innocent sentence, is enough to awaken the pride of belonging to the community.

On the one hand, the institutions are aiming for projects that can lead Northern Ireland to compete with the rest of the world, but they probably forget that the balance between internal and external relations of Northern Irish companies stays in the hands of the people, who are trustful when involved in development and integration projects, but then diminish their enthusiasm when it is time for inter-community discussion.

This behavioural dualism between institutions and civilians reflects the ancestral discrepancy between the almost unreal optimism of the former in handling the Irish question and the disillusionment of the latter, aware that they, in the first person, have to face the hard peace process involving a precedent situation of fratricidal guerrilla warfare.

---

[106]Equality commission for Northern Ireland, *Annual Review 2019-2020,* p. 7, September 2020, available online at
https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Corporate/Annual%20Reports/AnnualReview2019 -20.pdf consulted on 10th February 2021;

Over time, the institutions have succeeded in their intent to make orange and green people dialogue and cooperate, but much of the credit is given by the workers, who have followed courses in empowerment and in work ethics. This is the most important step in the process of creating fair jobs, the biggest and most important challenge of all. State organizations and bodies responsible for maintaining peace and adequate corporate welfare have been trying to teach since school what "good behaviours" are and must be maintained, not to offend and not to incur in disciplinary and pecuniary sanctions for fostering a sectarian working climate.

In Northern Irish companies, habits have been established whereby the physical and moral respect of one's colleague comes even before the success of one's work. Actually, the worker must not only deal with learning a new job, but must also be aware of the workplace, the sensitivity of the different souls within the company and the different cultural heritage they come from.

Vade mecum and ethical codes are the lifeblood of the maintenance of good relationship among colleagues, even if many of them are not aware of these regulations, thus making every teaching, every company training course useless, but most of the time these are seen only as subtraction of time otherwise useful to carry out work's duties, some bureaucracies that must be faced and not as an opportunity to strip life, once and for all, of the shadow of sectarianism. The concern for the failure of the projects set up by organizations for peace and civil coexistence comes from young people. Neophytes who have just entered the world of work, do not recognize its importance, especially if they are children of families still considering conflict as the only possible cultural defence:

<<Researcher: Do you know what would happen if a member of staff made a complaint of sectarian harassment? Respondent: Do I know what would happen? Honestly, no. I can't say (Female, Protestant, North Belfast, neophyte)" […]
Last year, we had an Ethics course… that everyone had to do online. We got a certificate at the end of it. And then this year, there was a follow-up, well, in 2007. It was all questionnaires, asking you about religion, different things, not just religion,

about gay people, racism, everything, like that there (Female, Catholic, North Belfast, established employee)>>[107].

The lack of compliance with the ethical-moral code of the company leads to the imposition of more or less expensive fines, up to the dismissal. This process is part of a complex procedure of socialization and integration within the workplace, and can be formal, i.e., dictated by labour legislation and by the employer, or informal and in this last case we refer to all those episodes of spontaneous association among employees that arises in moments of sharing and comparison. Despite the hard work done, many companies find it difficult to avoid the blast of small or medium outbreaks of physical or verbal violence which often end up outside the perimeter of the company. Aware that a single joke can cost them their job, often cases of discrimination do not reach the top floors of the corporate hierarchical pyramid, but remain only known to employees, who are careful not to report it to avoid being considered a spy, a traitor. Thus, the code of silence takes its course, frustrating the progress made towards achieving the objectives set by the state.

It is interesting to find the behavioural dualism outlined above[108] even between employer and employee. Often and willingly, the employers describe their company as a safe workplace, which respects all the anti-sectarian protocols. Conversely, the workers describe a couple of cases of sectarian violence that happened directly to them or to an acquaintance of theirs. The double vision of the corporate atmosphere is an obvious distortion of points of view: the employer is not informed of what happens "on the lower floors" and so it is almost obvious that he/she cannot deny the opposite.

Here comes the ability of the employer not to be just a boss, an entrepreneur, but to be almost a parent or guide who nurtures the children, in an attitude of care and attention. The company leader guides the business together with the employees, listens to them and provides help and advice, but he/she also knows how to be strict and fair. The strong gap that exists between employer and employee does not help in

---

D. Dickson, O. Hargie, A. O'DOnnell, C. McMullan, *Learning to Deal with Difference in the Workplace: A report on Research Funded by the Community Relations Council through the European Union Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland (Peace II Extension)*, Jordanstown 2008, p. 42-45, available online at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237615940 consulted on 2nd December 2020;
[108] See p. 60;

communication. In this case, the right means seems to lie in the employer's ability to guide the company towards the principles of tolerance, without being the first to create differences and preferences in the staff.

In turn, the staff is called upon to manage their human relationships within the working environment without nullifying the efforts made to create a climate of mutual respect, where the differences so hated up to that moment can become a meeting point of exchange and cultural enrichment, even more so since, in any case, they are branches of the same tree.

The main problem of the failure of companies to welcome employees in a safe and secure place is given both by the behaviours they assume at the workplace, by the lack of communication - or communication that is too formal and not suitable for the work environment thus creating distance - and from the fear of any type of reprisal in case of reporting immediately sectarian episodes in the first or third person. Episodes like that of Daniel McColgan[109] or the teacher accused of being Fenian[110] or the case of the officers sent home from work because of graffiti against them[111] are children of a cultural heritage still far from being a faded warning.

Verbal communication, and especially all non-verbal communication, in Northern Irish companies influence any type of relationship, including that with the customer and with the boss. Everything that has so far been put in place to elude unpleasant and violent situations has not been enough, otherwise no controlling institution or corporate moral code subject to annual control would be necessary[112]. If *consuetudo est servanda*, in the six northern counties this does not apply. The improvement path of the Northern Irish living conditions must pass through an openness to spontaneous dialogue that is still scarce. As communication crosses the corporate hierarchy, most of the message gets lost before reaching its destination or

---

[109] See p. 55;

[110] See. p. 35;

[111] See. p. 34;

[112] In Ulster, companies are subjected to annual ethical checks and are required to produce documentation relating to the environment and corporate welfare. However, this rule only applies to companies that welcome a minimum number of ten workers. As the Northern Irish market is populated by small businesses, these institutional controls do not involve the majority of companies, thus leaving them at the mercy of the common sense of workers and civil coexistence. Most of the time, some protocols are taken from the institutional ones and rely on civil associations to obtain help and moral support and to manage sectarian episodes and promote civil and peaceful coexistence.

its recipient. The majority of workers strongly perceive the gap between their position and that of the employer, which eventually undermines the quality of life of the worker within the company staff and greatly affects work performance as well. The frustration for not being heard or understood sticks on the feeling of rejection from corporate life. In this way, the vicious circle begins anew whereby exclusion concerns one's religious affiliation.

To overcome the problem of communication, workers often require greater interaction with their area manager or directly with the employer, who acts as the glue between the employee and the company. The approval of the employer is not exclusively linked to one's own work but concerns a more intimate and profound aspect: that of acceptance as a person and not only as a worker within the company, thus in society. This factor often emerges in business meetings, during which workers request:

<<less hierarchical/authoritative approach to the dissemination of information (i.e., information relayed by memo). Communication by memo was described as impersonal)>>[113].

Being affected by authority does not mean not to recognize it, but in the Northern Irish case it is the desire, if not the need, to go beyond a colour, a symbol, a walk, a ringtone, a joke and a wall, to find the human side where it has almost disappeared.

---

[113] A. Dickson, O. Hargie, *Cross Community Communication in the Northern Ireland Workplace: A scoping study, a report on research funded by The Central Community Relations Unity*, Jordanstown, 1999,p. 22-available online at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265115600 consulted on 5th December 2020;

CONCLUSION

PEACELINES SHADOWS

<<Our flag is NOT the tricolour - the tricolour belongs to a different country called EIRE! The flag of the UK to which we belong is the Union Jack and long may it fly in pride over our land.

Stephen Brimstone, Northern Ireland>>[114]

2021 marks the centenary of the Partition. The dismemberment of the six northernmost counties - which are even geographically closer to the UK - has determined the birth of a physical and, mostly, psychological impassable boundary. Despite the relentless time passing by, it seems that nothing - or very little - has changed since. The conflicts for Ulster supremacy have pervaded this land, making it a place far from reality.

Borders have always aroused considerable interest among researchers, because boundaries are considered meeting places of two cultures, of two different visions of living life. The border is no longer seen by the inhabitants as a weakening of identity, but as an enrichment of their own culture, which absorbs and forges new thoughts and new ways of being.

This concept finds a stop in the Irish Question. Actually, Ireland had never really been involved in the decision to cede six of its counties to the British government. It is almost as if the *críochdheighilt na hÉireann*[115] had been submitted as a matter of fact and this has never unquestionably been accepted by the local population.

---

[114]BBC News, *Should the flying of flags be controlled?,* 4th July 2000, available online at
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/talking_point/806821.stm consulted on 14th February 2021;
[115] The Irish Gaelic name for "Partition";

Due to its geopolitical connotation, the Irish island was in all respects independent: actually, its island conformation guaranteed autonomy in the development of its own strong uniqueness, which was then upset by the events that Irish history taught us. The imposition of one law on another, of one state on another, has triggered a series of events that have permanently destabilized the construction of identity. If the *peacelines* were initially built by Catholics in an attitude of self-designation and self-segregation to protect themselves from external attacks, today they are the emblem of a sectarian culture so deeply rooted that it hasn't been eradicated yet.

The wealthier social classes have been affected less or only partially by The Troubles, but it must be considered that the productive plots of society, those that always do "the dirty work", are still imbued with opposing colours: orange or green. Undoubtedly, the two social classes' point of view changes according to the step you are on: executives, managers and entrepreneurs, as well as employers, have a more open vision compared to workers, neophytes and those who come from a lower cultural background than the former. While the former ones have had the opportunity to attend mixed schools or to study abroad, coming from mixed neighbourhoods or from the neutral areas of the cities of Derry and Belfast, the latter have not received any external stimulus to recognize the other as part of their own identity and not the enemy.

Premature school dropout, low levels of education in sociability and tolerance, as well as the perennial climate of under-siege are the main causes of a lack of re-education among the young generations. The generational clash typical of "healthy" societies, in Ulster occurs only in the most highly placed social classes, or in those families where sectarianism has left a window opened up to new opportunities in life. Most young people still prefer to work in environments belonging to their community of origin and the possibility of moving to mixed companies only appears if the work environment is considered safe; then it is well understood that the Northern Irish Company has failed.

Indeed, the peace process that began in 1998 with the coexistence of two governments has worked in politics, but not in real life. People are still very hesitant towards the policy of sharing and political cohabitation in a single territory - among other things not very extensive - and, towards everything that concerns a life shared with the other faction. The physical walls that still remain more solid than ever, erected in the memory and in the warning of what was, are the evidence of this split identity.

Working in mixed environments means having a great mental openness towards acceptance and comparison, elements that still struggle to be and become a solid foundation of Ulster society. The strong presence of the British Crown and the weak attempts of the Irish Republic to take its counties back have caused Ulster to lose faith in institutions, thus weakening its socio-economic structure. Failing to guarantee serenity and both mental and physical safety at home and in the workplace strongly highlights the shortcomings of a stable, strong government that should protect its citizens. The institutional deficit in having long neglected the gravity of the Northern Irish question has triggered a series of interlinked events that culminated in the lack of guaranteed welfare in all social strata. The consequence is to find themselves in a phase of "self-arrangement", in a do-it-yourself way to create a social well-being designed and tailored for Northern Ireland.

The reconciliation works born spontaneously in communities and in families have bypassed the government: it is enough to count the high number of self-help associations - both religious and secular - to demonstrate the weakness of the government strategies for the rehabilitation of society.

Since communication in medium-low social class families is once again aimed at sectarianism and a lack of trust in each other, it must be the educational context of schools and work to teach ways of acting and communicating in tolerant mixed environments. The hundreds of difficulties that mixed schools in non-neutral areas have to face every day, as well as companies trying to move from a single colour to a mixed context, are evidence that Northern Irish society is not yet totally ready and open to autochthonous multiculturalism. Protestants and Catholics are proudly attached to their past and their Loyalist-Unionist or Republican roots that they do not allow a natural and peaceful transition towards a solution that goes beyond the cohabitation government.

Ulster needs to change, but it finds itself in a perennial stalemate. On the one hand the institutions and universities see and aspire to positively exploit the economic potential, especially in the Mid-Ulster area, from which one could start to give a broad breath of social innovation. On the other hand, those who experience the environment first-hand working are reluctant to believe in the projects designed for the revival of Northern Ireland.

Ulster people blame the institutions for not having a real knowledge of what is really going on in the former hotspots. For this reason, riots and protests are often around the corner. The reality of Ulster is suspended between dream and reality. To make the two truths coincide, it is necessary to undertake a path that starts from communication and not from the economic or political context.

Communication in the workplace is usually complicated. The messages that workers send are sometimes misunderstood and here the role of the company leader comes into play to settle disputes and to listen and interpret the workers' requests and needs that come out. In Ulster, employers must even be able to train and educate their workers on the possibility of dealing with colleagues and clients belonging to the other faction and, for the good of the company, workers must be professional in any context. Precisely to guarantee good employee behaviour, they are subjected to questionnaires and business ethics tests. Precisely in this context, psychologists, scholars and associations come into play once again, whose task is to ensure a serene tolerant working climate, involving workers in training courses but, above all, becoming aware of their responsibilities and actions.

The need to always refer to a corporate ethical and moral code that goes beyond the mere working context and therefore touches even the private sphere of the individual is an indication of how much Northern Irish workers are involved in this process of change and improvement of their own life condition. The message that the associations convey is in close correlation with the social life of the individuals, as they are not only the workforce, but also people with their own sociality. The social education that the worker acquires during inter-community dialogue meetings in the company becomes a shared experience in non-working contexts, and thus leads to an opening of views and an acceptance of one's sectarian condition.

The real problem of the younger generation, and therefore of newcomers to work, is the inability to foresee a future for themselves. Coming from medium-high range British or Irish families, they escape from the reality of the North, going to study and work abroad, in the UK or in the richest areas of the Republic of Ireland, in cities such as Cork and Dublin. In the sectarian areas the poorest young people, often coming from paramilitary or activist families who lived the years of The Troubles, have no choice to leave their homeland. As it is conceivable, from the lack of an escape path, the feeling of under siege turns stronger. Like a vicious circle, it is difficult to get out of a similar condition and it is for this reason that the new generations do not know how to react and interact in mixed environments and therefore they prefer to refrain from any possibility of contact with the enemy.

Excluding corporate executives, employees of mixed companies still face serious difficulties in initiating and maintaining long-lasting and anti-sectarian communication. Since it is forbidden by law to have sectarian behaviour at the workplace, most of the time they behave as if such laws did not exist: the feeling of identity revenge is so strong that it cannot be repressed even in the protected workplace. Most of the time the employers or managers are unaware of the abusive attitudes held by employees towards one another and continue to believe that sectarian episodes never happened in their company and praise their company as a free zone. This false belief stems from the fact that workers keep silent about these incidents, for fear of both retaliation from colleagues and losing their jobs. To overcome the problem of silence in Northern Irish companies, over time the associations and institutions have begun to work on the transparency of human relationships, in order to push people to denounce sectarian episodes experienced in first or third person without fear of suffering harmful consequences. It is from here that the communication flow restarts to go towards the employer, who must be made the supervisor and guarantor of an unbiased working climate.

The cumbersome past, the feeling of impossibility of change, the lack of trust and dialogue, the fear and thus the preference to live in a protected context absolutely closed to any changes and the social experiments of unification of the two factions are elements that still survive today as features of Northern Irish society, being part of the identity of a divided island.

Communication in Northern Irish companies is changing, trying to go beyond borders, climbing walls. The sense of social belonging clashes with the national identity, so weak and left at the mercy of events especially after Brexit. Six counties that have grown up in the ambiguity of who and what to be, have given birth to frightened generations, in the exhausted but continuous search for their own path of professional and, above all, personal growth.

Northern Irish history teaches that walls and murals, flags and hymns, clothes and ringtones, jokes and dialects refer to the clear and unequivocal belonging to one of the two communities that cannot mix, cannot find a meeting point. Governments, institutions and all religious and laic associations can try to bring the two communities together by implementing social experiments of encounter, dialogue and tolerance. But the sectarian fervour still lingers, leaving the fear of the other awake. Years of constant state of guerrilla warfare have stirred up spirits towards the evocation of ancestral memories that not even the state authorities dare to really challenge.

Meanwhile, the *peacelines* continue to tower over the heads of Unionists-Loyalists and Republicans, both aware that building a future above the rubble of neighbourhood boundaries could lead to a definitive solution in favour of one of the two factions.

In a hundred years an indefinite number of attempts at reconciliation and peace have been undertaken, but they have always failed. Hence, the peace-*walls* continue to cast gloomy shadows over the streets and people of Belfast and Derry.

.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

♣ P. Gheda, *I cristiani d'Irlanda e la Guerra Civile (1968-1998)*, Edizioni Angelo Guerini e Associati, Milano 2006;

♣ P. Gheda, *Les Droits de l'Homme au service de la lutte politique. Les avocats dans le conflit nord-irlandais (1970-2000)* - Le Mouvement Social, n. 240 2012/3 ;

♣ P. Gheda, *Le Peacelines di Belfast. Quarant'anni di separazione tra comunità cristiane nella capitale dell'Irlanda del Nord (1969-2009)*, Muri in età contemporanea, Rivista di storia contemporanea, ed. 39/gennaio, Aprile 2012;

♣ J. Brewer, G. Higgins, *Anti-Catholicism in Northern Ireland 1600-1998, The Mote and The Beam*, Macmillan 1998;

♣ G. Adams, *Prima dell'Alba*, Gamberotti Editore, 1999;

♣ G, Cettineo, *I muri di Erin,* Edizioni Saecula, Rende, 2017;

♣ F.Polese, *Strade di Belfast tra muri che parlano e sogni di libertà*, Eclettica Edizioni, 2015;

WEBLIOGRAPHY

♣ https://irishstudies.sunygeneseoenglish.org/bobby-sands-and-the-hunger-strikers/

♣ https://studybuddhism.com/it/studi-avanzati/storia-e-cultura/dialogo-interreligioso/creare-una-societa-sana

♣ www.opiniojuris.it/the-troubles/

♣ https://www.difesaonline.it/evidenza/approfondimenti/la-guerra-segreta-irlanda-del-nord

♣ http://bobbysandstribute.weebly.com/death.html

♣ https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/6868/1/McElrath_4051_Drug_use_and_drug_markets.pdf

♣ https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2020/02/23/irlanda-del-nord-suicidi-raddoppiati-in-tempo-di-pace-dopo-30-anni-di-guerra-civile-ce-sete-di-giustizia-i-poveri-vittime-di-droga-e-alcol/5694852/

♣ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345606843

♣ https://dera.ioe.ac.uk//622/

♣ https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/number-of-northern-ireland-young-people-not-in-work-or-education-drops-slightly-39240977.html

♣ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237615940

♣ https://www.ief.org.uk/

♣ https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/integrated-schools

♣ https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/northern-ireland-integration-schools-lagan/

♣ http://conflictresearch.org.uk/reports/sectarianism-segregation/CRC-Beyond-Belfast.pdf

- https://news.sky.com/story/belfast-a-city-still-divided-two-decades-after-the-good-friday-agreement-11317515

- https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffpages/uploads/soc207/integrated_educ_social_problems.pdf

- https://www.cvsni.org/media/1435/troubled-consequences-october-2011.pdf

- https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-55901429

- https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2020/0128/1111407-are-you-a-fenian-miss-inside-the-sectarian-classroom/

- https://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/mental-health-problems-the-hidden-legacy-of-the-troubles-1.4005470

- https://www.cvsni.org/

- https://www.everyculture.com/No-Sa/Northern-Ireland.html#ixzz6l7wZwhQ5

- http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00909880801922847

- https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/revealed-the-alarming-extent-of-sectarianism-in-northern-ireland-workplaces-28749666.html

- https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/news/executive-condemns-threats-against-workers

- https://www.laleggepertutti.it/225153_buon-padre-di-famiglia-significato#:~:text=Il%20%E2%80%9Cbuon%20padre%20di%20famiglia%E2%80%8

0%9D%20%C3%A8%20colui%20che%20%E2%80%9Cci,pi%C3%B9%20possib

ile%2C%20il%20risultato%20promesso

♣ https://www.equalityni.org/Home

♣ https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-20756129

♣ https://www.irishtimes.com/business/economy/catholic-and-protestant-workforce-

in-north-at-50-50-for-first-time-1.2589891

♣ https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/labour-force-survey-religion-reports

♣ https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/northern-ireland-is-there-still-a-big-divide-

between-protestant-and-catholic-workers/

♣ https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/protestant-and-catholic-

employment-rates-level-for-first-time-in-northern-ireland-35398733.html

♣ https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20

Service%20Providers/GoodandHarmoniousWorkplace.pdf

♣ http://conflictresearch.org.uk/reports/equality-diversity/Malta-General-Overview-

Report.pdf

♣ https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/dfc-equality

♣ https://www.irishtimes.com/news/unions-call-friday-stoppage-in-protest-over-

catholic-s-murder-1.410195

♣ http://www.nicivilrights.org/

♣ https://www.nihrc.org/

- https://www.uhrw.org.uk/

- https://www.seupb.eu/piv-overview

- https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/0dbc6f-irish-border-counties-peace-programme/

- https://www.midulstercouncil.org/MidUlsterCouncil/media/Mid-Ulster-Council/Econ%20Dev/Publications/Economic-Development-Plan-2015-2020-2.pdf

- https://www.equalityni.org/AboutUs

- https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Corporate/Annual%20Reports/AnnualReview2019-20.pdf

- https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Delivering%20Equality/Employment-KeyInequalitiesStatement.pdf

- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237615940

- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265115600

- http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/talking_point/806821.stm

- https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2013/05/10/irlanda-del-nord-addio-apartheid-religioso-stessa-scuola-per-cattolici-e-protestanti/585721/

- https://www.secularism.org.uk/opinion/2019/02/northern-ireland-where-protestants-and-catholics-dont-need-to-be-protestants-or-catholics

- https://alphahistory.com/northernireland/northern-ireland-civil-rights-movement/

- https://factcheckni.org/articles/communal-counting-the-northern-ireland-census/

- https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-19/edition-1/shifting-patterns-social-identity-northern-ireland

- https://www.assemblenetwork.org/catholics-and-protestants-working-together

- https://www.gty.org/library/articles/A149/evangelicals-and-catholics-together

- https://www.irishnews.com/business/2019/12/17/news/latest-discrimination-case-a-cautionary-tale-for-employers-1788008/

- https://www.res.org.uk/resources-page/new-research-finds-that-protestants-and-catholics-have-a-similar-work-ethic.html

- https://tfn.scot/news/stamping-out-sectarianism-in-the-workplace

- https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/two-tribes-a-divided-northern-ireland-1.3030921

- https://parliamentofreligions.org/blog/2020-05-21-1300/protestant-and-catholic-irish-teens-work-together-texas

- https://www.fenews.co.uk/featured-article/57955-colleges-a-lot-to-learn-from-northern-ireland-and-a-lot-for-northern-ireland-to-learn

- https://www.ulster.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/410227/A-Review-Addressing-Sectarianism-in-Northern-Ireland_FINAL.pdf

- https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/news/we-must-break-down-equality-barriers-workplace-fearon-and-ross

- ♣ https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/news/good-relations-indicators-2019-update-report

- ♣ https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/news/minister-announces-introduction-early-conciliation-northern-ireland-employment-related-tribunals

- ♣ https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/article16017238.ece

- ♣ https://jech.bmj.com/content/57/7/474

ICONOGRAPHY

- ♣ https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/northern-ireland-integration-schools-lagan/;

RINGRAZIAMENTI

Grazie alle mie amiche di sempre: Angelica, Federica e Roberta. Come sorelle, mi avete teso la mano nei periodi più bui e mi avete insegnato a volermi bene e a crederci sempre. Ve ne sono immensamente grata. La vostra amicizia è un bene prezioso che custodirò con cura e amore.

Grazie a Giada e Alessandro, Daniela e Fabrizio che tra un Monopoly, una grigliata e un giro in moto mi avete fatto capire che l'amicizia è un sentimento semplice, che non ha bisogno di grandi dimostrazioni, ma solo di esserci.

Grazie a Martina, la mia insuperabile compagna di studi e lacrime di ansia e angosce pre-esame: condividere con te cinque anni di università mi hanno fatto capire che un aiuto e una parola di conforto non si dimenticano mai.

Grazie ai miei relatori la Prof.ssa Chantal Morosso e il Prof. Paolo Gheda. In questi anni mi avete insegnato che la conoscenza è mossa dalla passione e dalla dedizione per il proprio lavoro. Vi ringrazio per avermi accompagnata sin qui, per la seconda volta. Porterò con me il bellissimo ricordo e l'onore di aver collaborato insieme a Voi.

Al popolo che, nel suo eterno vagare,

ricerca ancora la sua Itaca.