

UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

Faculty of Political Science

Belgrade, August 2020

At the meeting of the Department of International Studies, held on 18 June 2020, the Master Thesis Defense Commission (hereby the Commission) for the candidate Nevena Marinčić was formed with the following members: prof. dr Nemanja Džuverović, doc. dr Ivana Radić Milosavljević and doc. dr Goran Tepšić. The Council for the Second and Third Cycle of Studies has accepted the proposal made by the Department.

After reading the master thesis, the Commission is submitting the following report.

REPORT

The master thesis of Nevena Marinčić, entitled “The transformation of Northern Ireland after *the Troubles*: from Good Friday Agreement to Brexit” analyses the process of peacebuilding in Northern Ireland after the signing of peace agreement in 1998 – namely, its actors, mechanisms and initiatives, with the special emphasis on the role of European Union and the issue of Brexit. The main purpose of the thesis is to identify the incentives of peace process in Northern Ireland and assess their relevance for peacebuilding in general. Master thesis is consisted of 3 parts, besides the introduction and conclusion. Historical aspects and what lead to the conflict known as „Troubles” is being discussed in the first chapter of the thesis. Following this part the emphasis is on the circumstances that lead to signing of the Good Friday Agreement, that ended the „Troubles”, and what was included in the agreement. In the third part the focus is on the aftermath of the conflict and how society in Northern Ireland is developing after the Good Friday Agreement was signed, with the most recent issue of Brexit.

In the introduction, the candidate elaborates the problem statement, the main purpose of the research, and gives an overview of the whole paper. The introduction elucidates the context of the research and frames it into the notions of deeply divided society, conflict management, peacebuilding and reconciliation.

The first section of the thesis is dedicated to consequences that led to start of the conflict in Northern Ireland. This part encompasses the explanation of the conflict in Northern Ireland

that lasted for 30 years between two communities in Northern Ireland: Nationalists and Unionists. On one side there were Nationalists, aiming at the union of Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland, while Unionists wanted for Northern Ireland to continue being a part of the United Kingdom. The essence of the conflict in Northern Ireland is being explained and put into the wider context of the field of peace studies. Besides that this chapter also includes the explanation of historic development of events that have led to conflict eruption, alongside with the more in-depth explanation of the most relevant actors included in the conflict.

While in the next part of the work there is a more comprehensive approach to Good Friday Agreement. This part includes mentioning of all the most relevant negotiations and initiatives that preceded signing of the Good Friday Agreement. Furthermore, some of the most important parts of the agreement were explained in this section alongside with the mechanisms for peacebuilding. This part also contains explanation of how successful was the Good Friday Agreement and for what reasons. Those explanations include referendum, where people could express their opinion about the acceptance of the agreement as well as the final status of the region of Northern Ireland alongside with establishment of joint institutions between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

In the last chapter of the thesis the emphasis is on the period that followed signing of the Good Friday Agreement. It's starting with elaboration of initiatives that were undertaken by the government of the UK and the Republic of Ireland, together with the EU and initiatives that have been locally led. Initiatives have been more thoroughly explained in a way how they were funded, what their aims were and what they managed to achieve.

Furthermore, in this part of the thesis there is a more in-depth analysis of the main political parties that were having the biggest support in the period of Troubles and at the beginning of the 21st century. It's being explained how the political parties in Northern Ireland have developed through the years and how much support were they enjoying through the years.

In the next segment of this chapter the main area of interest is the development of Northern Ireland after the Troubles with description of how the divisions in society are usually developed, which is being applied to Northern Ireland's society. The main areas that are still facing divisions after the conflict ended were also further explained in this section together with the ways how some of the divisions are being overcome by the people living in Northern Ireland.

Next section elaborates on the issue of terrorism that was still present in Northern Ireland after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. It offers examples of terrorism and the ways how this issue was tackled in the case of Northern Ireland. Besides that, this part also involved some of the mechanisms of peacebuilding that were used to achieve reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

The last part of this chapter includes the most recent events that are a matter of concern for Northern Ireland and that has been Brexit, the decision of United Kingdom to leave the European Union. Relations between the UK and the EU are being further explained in the context of Brexit. This section also elaborates the options of imposing the border and the place where this border would be, alongside with the outcomes any of those solutions would have.

The last chapter is followed by conclusion, which recapitulates the whole research and its main findings. It emphasizes positive impact of different peacebuilding mechanisms, but also their shortcomings and divisions they made. Furthermore, the conclusion stresses the importance of Northern Ireland case for peacebuilding in general, both theoretically and practically.

The Commission is convinced that the candidate Nevena Marinčić has shown good understanding of the conflict and post conflict process in Northern Ireland, and its theoretical and practical relevance for the concept of peacebuilding. Also, the Commission is satisfied with the analytical contribution of the paper and the capability of the candidate to accomplish the main goal of the thesis – to identify and assess the main mechanisms of peacebuilding in Northern Ireland – although the thesis lacks a chapter on theoretical aspects of the problem.

Turnitin program recognised 15% overlap. After the detailed check, it is concluded that overlaps includes common phrases and quotations from internet and other sources that are acknowledge in the footnotes. Based on this, the Commission concludes that the master thesis “The transformation of Northern Ireland after *the Troubles*: from Good Friday Agreement to Brexit” by Nevena Marinčić fulfils all the formal criteria for the public defence.

The Commission

prof. dr Nemanja Džuverović

doc. dr Ivana Radić Milosavljević

doc. dr Goran Tepšić