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Master thesis

**The transformation of Northern Ireland after *the Troubles*: from
Good Friday Agreement to Brexit**

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1. INTRODUCTION

The democracies don't go into wars with each other, as it was argued by the theory of democratic peace. It could be that advocates of the theory of democratic peace came into a state of oblivion, because they managed to forget about the internal conflicts in democracies, such the one that was haunting the Northern Ireland, located in the United Kingdom, for the period of around 30 years.

The essence of the conflict in Northern Ireland is the division between two sides: Nationalists and Unionists. On one side there are Catholics, who are called Nationalists or Republicans as well, who were aiming at the unity of Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland. On the other side are Protestants, which can usually be described as Unionists or Loyalists, who wanted for Northern Ireland to remain in the United Kingdom (UK). Even though, these two sides are divided on the basis that they are Catholics or Protestants, in some cases individuals aren't religious, but they identify themselves as Catholics or Protestants in order to be part of a bigger group and feel protected. But when we look at the conflict we could identify three major opposed sides in the conflict: Loyalists, Nationalists and State security forces of the UK.¹

The main focus of my thesis will be the period after signing of the Good Friday Agreement, because I think that this period is of most relevance for being able to comprehend certain mechanisms of peacebuilding that took place in Northern Ireland and for the whole topic of peace studies. The agreement in Northern Ireland had certain characteristics of participative, direct democracy, which is of great importance for letting people at the local level decide about their own destiny, which helps in making all the voices being heard.

The main purpose of my work has been to identify the most important points of the Good Friday Agreement, which brought the end of the conflict to Northern Ireland besides the focal points of the initiatives taken by the EU. More than 20 years since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement has passed by and still there wasn't a return to the conflict on the territory of Northern Ireland, which is why there should be certain points and lessons taken for

¹ Mitchell, 2011 and Cillian, 2010.

peacebuilding from Northern Ireland's experience. The purpose of my research was distinguishing peacebuilding mechanisms undertaken and recognizing the role specific initiatives had with this aim.

On the other hand, I wanted to find out more about all the parts of the peace process that were not developed enough and that needed to be further improved if wanted to be applied in some other similar case. In spite of the fact that there wasn't return to violence in Northern Ireland, peace walls are still present, alongside with different ways of emphasizing the divisions between Catholics and Protestants, through education, work and activities related to free time of people.

The topic of conflict in Northern Ireland is of specific relevance today due to the fact the in 2016 majority of people that have voted on the referendum in the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. Membership in the European Union (EU) of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland together meant that there won't be any border between these two parts on the island of Ireland. Furthermore, EU has been serving as one of a conflict resolution actors, but also Northern Ireland benefited from the EU funds and initiatives taken aiming at reconciliation in the region. The question of the border on the island of Ireland was one of the main topics UK has been negotiating with the EU and it's making a concern, because of the possibility of returning back to violence in the region. Not having a border meant no partition on the island of Ireland and this change could be a source of dissatisfaction in the future.

Those mechanisms aimed at peacebuilding in the region included the referendum, where people had a chance to express their opinion, as well as a chance to choose their representatives which are later represented in the Assembly by proportional system and other institutions with an aim of cross-border cooperation and representing the interests of people from the whole island of Ireland, even though with the focus on Northern Ireland. The European Union has undertaken a number of initiatives to help the region recover after the „Troubles”, which included PEACE Programmes, Northern Ireland Task Force etc. Foundation of joint institutions between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, together with the common membership in the EU and participation in the EU bodies, had an important role in establishment of dialogue and cooperation between once the opposing sides in Northern Ireland.

I will divide my work in 3 main parts, with subdivisions. In order to be able to fully comprehend the events that made Good Friday Agreement (GFA) possible in 1998, and the events that followed the Good Friday Agreement, it's important to go back to history and the first beginnings of division on the island of Ireland. In first part I will make a short retrospective from the beginning of the „Troubles“ in 1960s to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. In this part I will focus on what caused the conflict and how the deep division between Unionists and Nationalists kept the conflict lasting for 30 years. The original division between Catholics and Protestants led to formation of different organizations and paramilitary units with members of certain community located in Northern Ireland. There were a couple of peace agreement initiatives, in the period from 1968-1998, but none of them was successful until the Good Friday Agreement.

Following this part I will further elaborate circumstances that led to the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 and that brought an end to 30 years of low-level conflict in the UK. Probably the crucial part that was important for this agreement and that ensured that conflict haven't re-escalated, was the inclusion of all relevant actors in the peace-talks. The Good Friday Agreement also included the Republic of Ireland and there were a number of institutions created between the Republic of Ireland and the UK. In this section I will go more in depth about the most important parts of the Agreement and the influence the Agreement had on the whole island of Ireland.

In the final part I will be dealing with all the outcomes of the peace process. This section will include the initiatives made by the EU and the British government, with an explanation of how this affected the lives of ordinary people after the conflict ended. Even though, the divisions are still present in Northern Ireland, the conflict hasn't erupted again after 1998 and that's the reason why some important lessons in peacebuilding could be taken from Northern Ireland experience. The EU has been launching PEACE programmes in Northern Ireland since 1995 with an aim of releasing tensions in the region and helping it reach stability after the conflict. Many initiatives taken at the local level helped people involve more in making interactions with people from a different religion group and that could be beneficiary in overcoming stereotypes they had about each other. Some certainly meaningful events happened in this century with an influence on the events unfolding in Northern Ireland. Among others, that was the 9/11 in the US, which completely changed the view of the US administration towards the terrorism in the

world, that lead to a significant drop in the support by the US to radical violence in Northern Ireland. The other crucial element was the decommissioning of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), which was important symbolically, but also it turned away radical dissidents from the violence. However, there are still many areas in which the society has still been divided between the two communities and many negative outcomes of the conflict haven't been tackled enough and in the right way. Also, I will offer a perspective on the most recent events that brought a new light on the whole Northern Ireland situation from the decision of withdrawal of the United Kingdom, often called Brexit, and its consequences for Northern Ireland, especially on its border.

2. THE „TROUBLES”

2.1. The analysis of the nature of the conflict in Northern Ireland

The analysis of the „Troubles” in Northern Ireland could lead us to a few conclusions about the nature of the conflict. The conflict in Northern Ireland has never become a civil war, because by definition civil war is an internal conflict with at least 1000 combat-related deaths per year.² With the number of 3532 deaths in total during the „Troubles” and the year with the most casualties was 1972, when 497 lost their lives, Northern Ireland couldn’t fall into the definition of civil war, even though the impact the violence has made on the lives of people living there was immense.³ The impact was visible also in the infrastructure and property damages, which was estimated to be in billions, alongside the loss of human lives and big number of injuries, which has been calculated to be 10 times bigger than the number of people who died.⁴

At the first glimpse the number of casualties don’t seem to be big, compared to some other conflicts and wars that took place around the globe, like the one in Rwanda, which took around 1 million lives by some estimates. However, Daniel Finn made a comparison between Northern Ireland and the United States, in which he estimated that the proportional conflict like the one that has happened in Northern Ireland would be equivalent to killing 600000 people and injuring around 9 million in the US, when looking at population numbers.⁵ This is only a comparison between people injured and killed, but it’s also important not to forget that many of the people living in Northern Ireland have been affected on a psychological level and they have been living in a fear of possible attacks in their surroundings. Furthermore, many people lost members of their families, friends or neighbors. Losing a member of a family could also lead to a traumatic experience, but in some cases it could also mean losing a source of income for the family.

² Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 565.

³ Cain web service. Date of access: 30.5.2020. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/sutton/tables/Status_Summary.html

⁴ Bloomfield 1997, 3.

⁵ Finn, Daniel. 2019. “Britain’s Troubles, Ireland’s Pain.” Jacobin, August 14. Date of access: 17.4.2020. <https://jacobinmag.com/2019/08/northern-ireland-troubles-operation-banner-fiftieth-anniversary-brexit>

There are a few trends typical for conflicts after the Second World War and especially after the end of the Cold War and that is that the most conflicts now are internal, they have a bigger number of civilian casualties and more conflicts are ended in negotiated settlements than in victories.⁶ This approach could be applied on Northern Ireland as well, because all the criteria for typical conflict after the end of Second World War are satisfied. Conflict has been happening only on the territory of one side, with some small exceptions usually when the IRA used the force outside of Northern Ireland. Secondly, the number of civilians killed in Northern Ireland made 52% of the whole number of people killed and lastly, conflict ended in signing of the Good Friday Agreement, which included both British and Irish governments, but also representatives from Northern Ireland.

Galtung makes a distinction between two types of peace: positive and negative peace. While negative peace by Galtung is defined as „an absence of war”, the positive peace includes in itself harmony and justice.⁷ It is important to emphasize that authors don't label the conflict as something that is bad by itself, because conflict can be good for the progress of a society, it is important just that conflict doesn't include violent means.⁸ Conflict can be seen as productive, when people are able to share their different ideas and opinions, especially when they are able to come to a common ground and evolve their opinion. Every society has a conflict, but the way how the conflict is being resolved is what matters the most, it depends on the will of people to negotiate and debate their needs and interests, but in some cases they tend to fall into use of violent means.⁹ Usually the occasion that leads to negotiations and settlement between the two sides is the stalemate in the conflict between them which make them search for alternative solutions and the common ground in their disputes.

These and definitions of direct, structural and cultural violence by Galtung are important in order to understand the conflict in Northern Ireland, which could be depicted as cultural violence after the conflict officially ended. Even though the conflict officially ended with signing of the Good Friday Agreement, not all the divisions have been erased and certain level of cultural and structural violence is still present in Northern Ireland. People are still being

⁶ Mack 2007, 5.

⁷ Webel 2007, 6.

⁸ Webel 2007, 8.

⁹ Morrissey and Smyth 2002, 85.

separated on Catholics and Protestants and question of which group they belong to continues to be asked. Despite that, schools remain to be largely segregated and children from early period on learn the difference between being a Catholic and Protestant, while this topic of identity can be seen as important even during the process of employment.

2.2. History of the „Troubles”

The history of the specific relation between the islands of Great Britain and Ireland could be traced to the 17th century, when the Plantation of Ulster happened, which lead to subordination of the island of Ireland under the English rule. Some people even put the beginning into 12th century, when Normans invaded Ireland.¹⁰ Kingdom of Great Britain and the Kingdom of Ireland were united with the Acts of Union from the beginning of 19th century, by which London got the upper hand in the areas of foreign policy, currency, taxation and access to ports.¹¹

Regardless of its beginnings, the situation dramatically changed after the First World War. The south part of the island made a decision to separate from England and the Irish Free State was created, by the Government of Ireland Act from 1922. This act separated the island of Ireland into two parts: the Northern part, which constituted of 6 counties and the Southern, which had been formed from 26 counties from the South, although the provision was made at the time for the future reunification between the two parts. That meant that 6 counties of previous 32 still remained a part of the United Kingdom (which later got this name) and are still part of it under the name of Northern Ireland.

In 1922 Northern Ireland was Protestant in majority, with around 1/3 of its population being Catholic, which differed to the south, which was 93% Catholic.¹² The further difference between the North and the South was also present in economic terms, because the larger part of the northern population was industrialized, compared to the south, whose labor force was mainly

¹⁰ Coakley 2001, 2.

¹¹ Edwards 2011, 15.

¹² Peled 2014, 17.

occupied in agriculture.¹³ Additionally, when Northern Ireland was created it enjoyed a substantial autonomy and it had its own parliament.¹⁴ Even though some of the differences between the two parts have been evident, it can't be said that they were crucial for their mutual co-existence.

There is no common ground for the year when the Troubles started, but a few events ignited the start of the conflict. One of the milestones was the civil rights campaign that started in the late 1960s. The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) held its first march with an aim of providing equal opportunities for housing and employment for people of both communities.¹⁵ NICRA was founded in 1967 and at the beginning it wasn't exclusively Catholic organization, because at first it contained a certain number of Protestants, but eventually these Protestants left the Association after a conflict occurred between the protestors and the police in October 1968.¹⁶ The year 1968 was famous for protests that happened around the world and they weren't typical only for Northern Ireland. Frank Louis Rusciano made a comparison between the civil right movement in the USA and Northern Ireland. He engaged in dealing with one important question, that many other authors were asking and that is: „How come that the civil right movement in the US resulted in reforms that guaranteed more human rights and that lead to a decrease in racism, while the similar protest that took place in Northern Ireland lead to „Troubles” and almost 30 years of conflict?”¹⁷ The response has been found, by theorists, in the fact that world opinion hasn't at the time yet formed itself into a consistent social force.¹⁸ That means that how the certain events would develop has mostly dependent on the context and occasions in one country.

One of the most tragic days for the Catholic community was 30th of January 1972, the day remembered as „Bloody Sunday”, an event in which 13 civilians were shot dead and one died of the consequences a month later. This was only the beginning of the year 1972, that has been marked as a year with the biggest number of casualties in the whole „Troubles”. Just in

¹³ Peled 2014, 17.

¹⁴ Mac Ginty and Darby 2002, 15.

¹⁵ Finn, Daniel. 2019. “Britain's Troubles, Ireland's Pain.” *Jacobin*, August 14. Date of access: 17.4.2020. <https://jacobinmag.com/2019/08/northern-ireland-troubles-operation-banner-fiftieth-anniversary-brexit>

¹⁶ Edwards 2011, 27.

¹⁷ Rusciano 2016, 3.

¹⁸ Rusciano 2016, 3.

1972 the number of people killed was 497 and the number of injured as a result of „Troubles” is estimated to be 4876.¹⁹

More significant events took place in 1972. One of them is the abolition of Northern Ireland’s parliament and imposition of direct rule from Westminster²⁰ and the British secretary of state became responsible for the affairs of Northern Ireland.²¹ This intrusion in the initial years of the „Troubles” disrupted the idea that Britain could play the role of the mediator, because it became obvious that they were very much involved in what was happening.²² There were some attempts to restore the power back to Stormont²³, but the final settlement on this issue came only after the Good Friday Agreement. This whole process displaced the place where the decisions are being made from devolved government in Northern Ireland to London and that meant that the final say is no longer made at the local level.

Operation Banner, was put into force by the United Kingdom in order to tackle with the conflict. The deployment of the Operation was from 1969 to 2007, the longest in the British history. Not only that it was the longest, this operation have also had a great number of casualties estimated to 722 soldiers killed during this period, majority killed by the IRA, the number bigger than the casualties which British Army suffered while deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan.²⁴ At the beginning the presence of the British Army has been seen favorably by the Catholic community, who thought that their recruitment will be a shield for their community from the local Protestants. As the time passed their attitude towards the Army has worsened and they started to see the Army as an enemy. Many authors have been pointing out to the fact that Northern Ireland has been seen only as a one more colony in the eyes of London, which helps in explaining how little did the British Army knew about the situation in Northern Ireland. The Army has, at the beginning, been relying on the knowledge of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), which has been founded in 1970.²⁵ Edwards even

¹⁹ Edwards 2011, 38.

²⁰ Westminster is a formal capital of the Kingdom of England, located in London.

²¹ Mac Ginty and Darby 2002, 18.

²² Edwards 2011, 73.

²³ Stormont is the seat of Northern Ireland’s Assembly, located in Belfast.

²⁴ Finn, Daniel. 2019. “Britain’s Troubles, Ireland’s Pain.” *Jacobin*, August 14. Date of access: 17.4.2020. <https://jacobinmag.com/2019/08/northern-ireland-troubles-operation-banner-fiftieth-anniversary-brexite>

²⁵ Edwards 2011, 22.

go further and states an intimidating premise that the officers fighting in Northern Ireland, who were previously been fighting in the colonies, have a limited amount of knowledge about who was the real enemy in the conflict and what would be the appropriate use of force.²⁶ Therefore, it hasn't come as a surprise that animosity of Nationalists towards the Army was at the high level and that they didn't believe that the Army of their own state would protect them.

The conflict escalated even outside the borders of Northern Ireland and in some cases even outside of the United Kingdom. In February 1991 the IRA carried out an attack on 10 Downing Street, the headquarters of the United Kingdom's government, trying to kill the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. Due to the bomb-resistant windows nobody from the cabinet was hurt, but some of the people received minor injuries. Besides this incident, IRA has conducted a several attacks in other countries, including the Netherlands, Belgium and West Germany, where they claimed that they were attacking British soldiers, but in a number of cases they injured and killed citizens of other countries as well. Sinn Fein has argued that „One bomb in London is worth 100 in Belfast,” while the number of people killed outside of Northern Ireland reached more than 80 people and those injured has been at the number bigger than 1000 before the „Troubles” ended.²⁷ Therefore, the solution to the end of the conflict needed to be found not only for the sack of the people living in Northern Ireland, but also in all the countries that faced the violence as a consequence of dissatisfaction of Northern Ireland's Republicans.

One peculiar occurrence marked this period and that were hunger strikes organized by Republican prisoners. The first hunger strike took place in 1980 and lasted for 53 days, while the second hunger strike happened in the following year and resulted in death of 10 prisoners. The second hunger strike took away life of Bobby Sands, who was a sitting Member of the Parliament in Westminster at the time, whose death came as a great embarrassment for Margaret Thatcher because it caught an eye of the public world-wide.²⁸

There were a number of different initiatives aiming at finding a solution to end the conflict in Northern Ireland, but the majority of them failed. From 1974 to 1994 there were 7

²⁶ Edwards 2011, 33.

²⁷ Thomas, Jo. 1984. “This Time the IRA comes close to Thatcher.” *The New York Times*, October 14. Date of access: 2.6.2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/1984/10/14/weekinreview/this-time-the-ira-comes-close-to-thatcher.html>

²⁸ Mitchell 2011, 131.

initiatives, all of them London-led, which included the power-sharing between the Protestants and Catholics.²⁹ In spite of the fact that they failed, the effort of the United Kingdom's government to solve the issue is notable. Nevertheless, these initiatives at least gave certain ideas that were later enforced in the final agreement that brought peace to the region.

The first attempt to restore the power and introduce the power-sharing government was tried with the Sunningdale Agreement from 1973. The creation of the Council of Ireland was planned under the Sunningdale Agreement with representatives of both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in the domain of their shared interests.³⁰ The creation of the Northern Ireland Assembly with executive government was also planned to be created. The Agreement failed because Unionists were opposed to inclusion of representatives of the Republic of Ireland into their institutions.

Nationalist Member of Parliament later argued that the Good Friday Agreement is Sunningdale for slow learners.³¹ That conclusion is drawn from the fact that many of the core principles of Sunningdale agreement were also present later in the Belfast agreement. The idea of referendum that was held after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement was one of the parts in Sunningdale, where the Irish government committed to a majority decision if Northern Ireland wanted to seek an independence from the United Kingdom.³² The missing part in the negotiations about the agreement was that Sinn Fein hasn't been invited, arguing that their involvement would cause revolt among unionists and British representatives.³³

In the year 1985 one more important initiative was undertaken and that was the Anglo-Irish Agreement, signed between the representatives of the United Kingdom's and the Republic of Ireland's governments. Thatcher's³⁴ government made a tactical decision by involving Irish government and their aim was to improve the position of Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), which has been seen as a better alternative compared to the more radical Sinn Fein.³⁵ As a part of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, both governments found it noteworthy to include their

²⁹ Mac Ginty and Darby 2002, 19.

³⁰ Coakley 2011, 12.

³¹ Neumann 2003, 148.

³² De Mars and Murray 2018, 135.

³³ Kennedy, 2006, as cited in Barton and Roche, 2009, 14.

³⁴ Margaret Thatcher was the prime minister of the UK from 1979 to 1990.

³⁵ Simpson 2009, 16.

common commitment for working together inside of the European community.³⁶ For Unionists the Agreement was one step too far and they opposed it, on the grounds that it will give the Republic of Ireland too much of a say in Northern Irish affairs.³⁷ Even though, the role of the Republic of Ireland was actually only advisory without executive or veto power.³⁸ The Agreement hasn't come fully into force, but it had a significant impact on the final settlement of the conflict in Northern Ireland.

Both Sunningdale and Anglo-Irish Agreement were attempts of British government to include the Irish government in finding the solution for the Troubles.³⁹ For a long time the British government was defining the conflict as their internal issue which was being legitimized by big global actors, such as the United States. The realization that they can't tackle with the problems and find a solution by themselves was of great importance, because Republicans were predominantly relying on the Irish state for the support. The inclusion of Ireland and a creation of joint institutions have helped in final reconciliation in the region.

2.3. The most relevant actors during the „Troubles”

The state of not having confidence in its own police force, when it comes to protection and their imposition of rule of law, lead Republicans to back up the paramilitary organizations contained of members of their own community. Moreover, the paramilitary organizations have been made on the side of Unionists as well, because they wanted to ensure the safety of Protestants as well.

The paramilitary organization that has grown the most when it comes to its size and the popularity from the community was the Irish Republican Army, which was fighting for the Republicans in Northern Ireland. The IRA was growing in size and strength during the years. At the beginning IRA was operating with a small amount of weapons, but that changed, because

³⁶ Hayward and Murphy 2018, 279.

³⁷ Punch 2012, 64.

³⁸ Fitzduff 2002, 12.

³⁹ Edwards 2011, 73.

they got a source of finances and weapons from various sources abroad.⁴⁰ Some of the tactics used by the IRA were mischievous, such as the one where they used their female combatants in order to seduce soldiers and invite them to a house party, which was actually a trap that led to a death and serious injury of the soldiers.⁴¹ In 1970 IRA split into the Provisional IRA, on the one side, which was dedicated to violent and armed means of struggle, and the Official IRA, which dedicated itself to political means of struggle. One quite captivating thought by Maurice Punch is that IRA's transformation was quite successful from the picture of them as violent combatants to the legitimate political party that got its place in the spotlight of Northern Ireland's politics, while they have never been defeated by the British army.⁴²

On the opposite side of the IRA is Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) formed in 1966 and one of the main aims of the group was to fight the IRA. It has been estimated that the UVF killed more than 420 people during the Troubles.⁴³ Other loyalist paramilitaries groups were formed in this period as well, with an aim of helping local Protestants by protecting them from the Catholics and serving as an alternative police force.⁴⁴ As a result both sides had their organizations that were serving to protect their communities and it consequently brought a number of casualties to a bigger level.

Royal Ulster Constabulary, which was the police force of Northern Ireland formed in 1922, was one more cause of resentment among Catholic community. Catholics have grown aversion towards the Royal Ulster Constabulary for the reason that it was mainly comprised of Protestants, although the recommendation to include 1/3 of the Catholics in the RUC existed, but it was never filled due to political pressure and threats.⁴⁵ But, being part of a RUC was that much of a threat, that in 1983 Interpol characterized the Northern Ireland's police as the most dangerous in the world, with El Salvador on the second place which was half less dangerous

⁴⁰ Punch 2012, 17.

⁴¹ Edwards 2011, 36.

⁴² Punch 2012, 19.

⁴³ McKeown 2013, 9/10.

⁴⁴ Mitchell 2011, 56.

⁴⁵ Fitzduff 2002, 7.

compared to Northern Ireland's police force.⁴⁶ This animosity continued throughout the following years until the eventual reform and change of the name of the RUC in 2001.

The ignition of the conflict in Northern Ireland was not only the division present in the society between Catholics and Protestants, but also the differences were present between the two communities in different opportunities for education and solving the housing issues. As Audra Mitchell states an unfair redistribution of resources can lead to violence, as was the case in Northern Ireland, when one group wants to protect their resources and the control they enjoyed, while the other wanted to change the existent situation.⁴⁷ Loyalists wanted to maintain privileges they were enjoying and the overall better position in the society, apart from maintaining the position of Northern Ireland within the country where they form the majority of population. While the Nationalists wanted to reverse the whole situation in their favor. They believed that they would be presented with better opportunities and that they would be protected if they join the Republic of Ireland.

Rusciano highlighted the interesting argument that conflict between Unionists and Republicans could be seen as an example of a clash between imperialist powers and national liberation movement.⁴⁸ This interpretation of the conflict is quite engaging and it lines up with a perception that the conflict in Northern Ireland is Britain's last major colonial conflict.⁴⁹ These observations mark the United Kingdom as the oppressor in the conflict and the Northern Ireland, especially the Catholic community, is perceived as oppressed in the conflict. United Kingdom has a long history of being a colonial power in the world and by not being on the same island it could be observed that the island of Ireland is only one more colony in the eyes of the UK. Even though it's true that Britain has sometimes showing lack of interest for Northern Ireland, this argument is usually made by Nationalists in their attempt to characterized themselves as victims, despite the fact that most of the people killed in Northern Ireland were killed by Republicans. Nevertheless, both Nationalists and Unionists were trying to develop a picture of themselves as victims and they were identifying the other side as an oppressor.

⁴⁶ "Conflict and hope in Northern Ireland." *CNN*. Date of access: 2.5.2020.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20070829011121/http://edition.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2000/n.ireland/police.html>

⁴⁷ Mitchell 2011, 33.

⁴⁸ Rusciano 2016, 2.

⁴⁹ Punch 2012, 11.

3. NEGOTIATING AND SIGNING OF THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT

3.1. Path towards the Good Friday Agreement

After 30 years of the conflict the time has come on 10th of April 1998 for the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, which has later been approved on referendums in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. But, the journey to the Good Friday Agreement was neither easy, nor short. It included negotiations, secret talks, a bit of a push from the side of the US and expulsion of Sinn Féin from the talks on the grounds that they were not willing to decommission. Although occasions were complicated when the agreement was signed and they still remain complicated, the most important part is that Northern Ireland hasn't faced the return to the conflict and violence.

As authors quite captivated notice the peace process is not only a feature of the period in 1990s, but the process of negotiations and discussions have been occurring since 1970s.⁵⁰ Not all the sides invested the same amount of effort to achieve peace, but the commitment to try to find a common ground is of large significance. Many initiatives were taken by the British government, which have attempted multiple times to find a solution that would benefit all the sides involved.

Despite the fact that both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland joined the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973 there was no mention of European dimension in Anglo-Irish Agreement, as Dennis Kennedy argues.⁵¹ This has been altering later on and especially during the 1990s. The revision also happened with signing of the Frameworks Documents in 1995, when European dimension was accentuated and the relevance of the opinion of Brussels and Washington was taken into consideration.⁵² This dimension is of relevance because both Ireland and the UK share membership in the EU and European Union has been significant as an important component for maintaining peace and helping in finding a resolution for conflicts.

⁵⁰ Deacon and Sandry 2007, 178.

⁵¹ Kennedy 2000, 152.

⁵² Kennedy 2000, 154.

It's also important to take a closer look at the world's occasions when the Good Friday Agreement was signed. It was after the end of Cold War when the political climate in Europe was rapidly changing while at the same time divisions and conflicts were ending. The US with the president Clinton was having an eminent role in trying to transform the conflict in Northern Ireland by encouraging Nationalists to drop down the weapons and get included into the peace negotiations.⁵³ However, the interest in Northern Ireland flattened out with Bush's administration and the shift happened in the foreign policy of the US during the Bush's governance, but all of that came later.⁵⁴ The important part at the time was that the progress was evident and the peace has been seen coming.

From the early 1990s more effort has been put in order to find a common ground and resolve the conflict. Peter Brooke made an initiative for the parties to join a dialogue in order to achieve mutual understanding and all the main parties were included, that meaning Ulster Unionists, Democratic Unionists, SDLP, Alliance Party.⁵⁵ But eventually Sinn Fein was suspended from the talks on the grounds that they backed up IRA's violence. The initiative of Brooke and Mayhew in 1991-1992 was significant for one more reason, which has been that the European dimension got more space and this can be seen as significant because both UK and Ireland were members of the EU, that can be seen as helpful in solving disputes between their member states.⁵⁶ The main objective of this initiative was for the government to be devolved back to Northern Ireland, because it hasn't been for more than 20 years.⁵⁷ The people of Northern Ireland needed to decide for themselves about the matters of their own affairs and sometimes London felt like a place too far away to be able to know the best interest of people living in Northern Ireland.

The talks about the agreement are important, but they must incorporate many things in order to be successful at the end. The first step taken by the IRA was a declaration of ceasefire in 1994 and it's important to stress the effort of the British government to make talks with the IRA, even in the times when the IRA was still using violence and armed struggle.⁵⁸ Not only that the

⁵³ Mac Ginty and Darby 2002, 25.

⁵⁴ Farrington 2008, 40.

⁵⁵ Bloomfield 1997, 96.

⁵⁶ Kennedy 2000, 153.

⁵⁷ Bloomfield 1997, 98.

⁵⁸ Coakley 2001, 14.

British government was involved in the secret talks with the IRA, but Hume was involved in talks with Gerry Adams as well, even though that led to the abandonment of the policy of not talking with the terrorists.⁵⁹ IRA was enjoying a huge public support and for that reason getting the IRA involved in the debate and negotiations was one of the crucial factors for the success of the agreement. British decision to give space to IRA showed that they can see the support IRA is having among the Nationalists in Northern Ireland and they couldn't deny the evident any more. Throughout the talks and negotiations it's decisive that sides are able to look at the longer terms of the benefits of the agreement and try to find what their share in common, instead of only focusing on their differences.

In 1995 Mayhew⁶⁰ made the demands to Nationalists to disarm and decommission, but this was too much of a challenge for them, however in the same year the first official talks between British minister and Sinn Fein took place since 1921.⁶¹ British government made decommissioning a necessary obligation in order for a side to be included into political talks, but IRA argued that on their side it's enough that they called a ceasefire.⁶² So, at the end it was hard to come to a solution that would satisfy both sides.

Due to the fact that only using military tactic was not sufficient in the struggle against Protestants, IRA evolved into Sinn Fein, which used political means to accomplish their intentions. Sinn Fein was able to gain legitimacy in the political world of Northern Ireland and it's now the party with the largest support among Nationalists in Northern Ireland. The president of Sinn Fein from 1983 until 2018 was Gerry Adams, who was denying his connections to the IRA, because of all the violence they committed.

The British and Irish governments issued the „Ground Rules for Substantive All-Party Talks” which included all relevant political parties and had to come to a common ground when it comes to how the election process will be designed.⁶³ These documents incorporated key principals that any issue could be addressed, even the constitutional issue, and that nothing is

⁵⁹ Mac Ginty and Darby 2002, 27.

⁶⁰ Mayhew was the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland from 1992 to 1997.

⁶¹ Mac Ginty and Darby 2002, 31.

⁶² Fitzduff 2002, 14.

⁶³ Consultation Paper: Ground Rules for Substantive All-Party Negotiations, (15 March 1996). CAIN Web Service. Date of access: 23.6.2020. <https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/events/peace/docs/cp15396.htm>

agreed until everything is agreed.⁶⁴ Additionally, the British and Irish government came to the middle ground by agreeing that the parties could be involved in the multi-party talks through the election to a Forum for Political Dialogue.⁶⁵ The Forum consisted of all the most important political parties in Northern Ireland and it included a specific way of including all the parties, by ensuring that two seats were guaranteed for ten parties that win the most votes.

Coakley emphasized a few important events that preceded the final resolution on the Good Friday Agreement. The Forum for Peace and Reconciliation from 1994 to 1996, proposed by the Irish government, included the parties from both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, but at the end unionists parties haven't attended the meeting.⁶⁶ The next step was the Northern Ireland Forum from 1996 to 1998, led by the British government with an aim of including all the Northern Ireland parties into a discussion, although it was boycotted by all nationalist parties, it helped in distinguishing the parties that will be included in the formal negotiations.⁶⁷ The inter-party talks were taking place at the same time as the Northern Ireland Forum, with all the parties incorporated in the talks, except for Sinn Fein, expelled from the talks on the grounds that the IRA hasn't decommissioned.⁶⁸ The final product of these talks was the Good Friday Agreement.

Good Friday Agreement is often explained by the authors as the agreement that came out of the stalemate between the sides in the conflict. The number of the casualties in the conflict has been at its peak in the 1970s and the number has been in a decline since then. The conflict wasn't that high in intensity at the end like it used to be during the 1970s, but that doesn't much change the situation in the minds of people and the uncertainty they were experiencing on a daily level. That stalemate was both military and political, in a sense that the IRA and the British army wear off their military means of fighting, while the same happened to unionists and nationalists in political means.⁶⁹ Both sides realized that not much more could be done in military way that could lead to a solution and for that reason it's good that they decided to immerse into talks and negotiations in order to find a common ground and bring peace back to the region.

⁶⁴ Mac Ginty and Darby 2002, 33.

⁶⁵ Mac Ginty and Darby 2002, 33.

⁶⁶ Coakley 2001, 15.

⁶⁷ Coakley 2001, 15.

⁶⁸ Coakley 2001, 15.

⁶⁹ Ruane and Todd 2007, 446.

The crucial part of the Good Friday Agreement was the inclusion of all key actors in the peace negotiations. When Sinn Fein was entering the talks they made a few demands. They asked that talks include other topics besides decommissioning and time limitation of the talks.⁷⁰ What was lacking in previous negotiations was no inclusion of Sinn Fein, as one of the key actors, in the process of negotiations even though the Sinn Fein wasn't present at the end, because their members haven't respected the ceasefire and they were still committed to violence. The fact that Sinn Fein together with IRA has been recognized as an important actor in the conflict and the resolution of conflict in Northern Ireland is of great worth for the whole development of peace process.

3.2. Signing of the Good Friday Agreement

Every household in Northern Ireland received their copy of the Good Friday Agreement. There are a few particular parts of the agreement that are compelling and that I would like to draw attention to and these are: the eradication of the clause in the Irish constitution in which they claim that Northern Ireland is their territory, which has changed the way how violence has being perceived and legitimized. In addition to this it has been decided that referendums will take place in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in order for the people to decide about their own destiny. Besides that, it was planned to create institutions with shared cooperation between the two affected countries, alongside with more specific clauses about how the institutions operating in Northern Ireland will function.

The final decision made by the Good Friday Agreement was that Northern Ireland would remain a part of the United Kingdom, unless a different decision about its status has been made by the people of Northern Ireland on a referendum.

British and Irish governments, SDLP, the Woman's Coalition and Alliance supported the agreement, while the Democratic Unionists Party (DUP) was against it and Sinn Fein didn't approve the fact that the claim that Republic of Ireland had for Northern Ireland is no longer

⁷⁰ Mac Ginty and Darby 2002, 36.

existent.⁷¹ Nevertheless, at the end Sinn Fein was campaigning for the agreement and many concessions were made towards Sinn Fein and eventually the DUP remained the only large opponent of the agreement.⁷² The DUP was dissatisfied with the role Ireland got in the internal affairs of Northern Ireland and for that reason they were opposing the agreement. However, their objection to the agreement didn't have the decisive impact on whether the agreement will be accepted.

Sides included in the negotiations of the final Agreement indicated that the essential part of inclusion in the talks was not being engaged in violence, however IRA was still connected with violence and on these ground Sinn Fein has been excluded from the talks.⁷³ A few more years passed by before the IRA fully decommissioned its weapons, but this condition has been significant, even though there is an option always for the IRA to get new weapons and ammunition.⁷⁴ The decommissioning has been seen as noteworthy due to the fact that it would mean that the IRA, and other groups that needed to drop their weapons, have decided to devote themselves to finding a peaceful solution for the end of conflict and not a violent one.

One component of the Good Friday Agreement was the release of the prisoners, who were connected to the felonies from the „Troubles”, but this measure was restricted only for the prisoners connected with organizations that respected the ceasefire. Many young people have chosen the violent path and became combatants, because they didn't have many other options and they could get the protection of the organizations if they join them. The crucial next step is their re-integration into the community and for that reason the Good Friday Agreement included the stressed effort of the governments in this field in order to help in the final resolution of the conflict. As Audra Mitchell argues, the transformation of ex-combatants is important for both the individuals and the community, on the grounds that they could preserve the violence and their transformation is indicative for the society in order for them to see that the peace is on the way.⁷⁵ This is crucial not only for the ex-combatants, who get a new chance, but also for all those people who wonder if they should have chosen the same path. By offering them a brighter future and more opportunities this helps not only the former fighters, but also the wider population.

⁷¹ Mac Ginty and Darby 2002, 41-43.

⁷² Mac Ginty and Darby 2002, 43-44.

⁷³ Mac Ginty and Darby 2002, 39.

⁷⁴ Farrington 2018, 9.

⁷⁵ Mitchell 2011, 118.

Nevertheless, many victims were against this release of the prisoners, because they wanted them to be punished for the killings and violence they did. A certain sanctions should be imposed, so that people don't think that they can get away with violence easily.

Even though the ceasefires were imposed by both Republicans and Loyalists, there were many subsequent issues after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. The whole peace process was devised and led by political elites and it was important to secure the support of the wider population, the ordinary people who suffered the most from the conflict.⁷⁶ The Unionists led by Ulster Freedom Fighters were opposing the peace agreement while condemning Catholics for „the ethnic cleansing of Protestants in North Belfast”, while reports from the same period state that the Catholics were the ones who were intimidated.⁷⁷ At the same time, certain radical Republicans were dissatisfied with the agreement which they think haven't achieved their goal of united Ireland and that caused new attacks.⁷⁸ DUP was opposing the interference of the Republic of Ireland in Northern Ireland's affairs, while Sinn Fein faced difficulties with the agreement in the new context where Northern Ireland is no longer claimed to be a territory of Ireland and they can't legitimize their use of force for the purposes of defending this claim.⁷⁹ Both sides weren't fully satisfied, but compromise and adjustment were requested from both Nationalists and Loyalists and it has been accepted at the end. Sometimes it's fundamental that one side knows that the other had to make a compromise as well so they are then more open to make it themselves, because they are aware that they both need to lose a little in order to gain.

The power was vested to the people through the Good Friday Agreement, because the people of Northern Ireland should express their will on the final status of Northern Ireland. That meant that a referendum will be held where the citizens of Northern Ireland could vote if they wanted to stay within the United Kingdom or join the Republic of Ireland. The signed agreement also included the possibility for the future decision of the people of Northern Ireland to decide by the majority vote to leave the United Kingdom and become a part of the Republic of Ireland. Besides that, it was planned that referendum for acceptance of Good Friday Agreement will take place in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Their decision should be accepted by

⁷⁶ Morrissey and Smyth 2002, 22.

⁷⁷ Morrissey and Smyth 2002, 22

⁷⁸ Morrissey and Smyth 2002, 23.

⁷⁹ Mac Ginty and Darby 2002, 43.

both governments, regardless of their final commitment. This is an important step for getting more power in the hands of people, instead of putting all the power of decision making into the hands of political elites. But not only that, ability to alter the decision in the future is also significant for the Nationalists, because the status of Northern Ireland is not settled once for all and there is a possibility for their aspiration for unity with Ireland to be fulfilled.

By the agreement the people of Northern Ireland have their right to identify as Irish or British guaranteed. Besides that, they may obtain the British or Irish citizenship or both. Apart from Brexit, which came much later, this possibility of obtaining both citizenships gave Catholics in Northern Ireland a possibility to manifest their identity. But this part attracted attention, especially after the Brexit, because the citizens of the United Kingdom lost all the advantages they had as EU citizens, which could be retrieved if they are also the citizens of Ireland. Additionally, they can still feel the closeness with the Republic of Ireland in this way.

The constitution of democratic institutions has been planned under the Good Friday Agreement. Aside from the institutions within the jurisdiction in Northern Ireland there was also an arrangement of creation of cross-border institutions. The plan was to establish North-South Ministerial Council, which would encompass representatives from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in order to co-ordinate and make agreements about the common matters. Additionally, the British-Irish Council was to be established, under the GFA, with representatives of British and Irish governments, but also from devolved institutions in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and representatives of the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. The Council will be a place for the representatives to discuss and share ideas on the matters of shared interest, with the highlight on agricultural, educational, health and cultural issues among others. Lastly, the British-Irish Intergovernmental Council was also to be created, which will deal with the totality of the relations between the two countries.

The important part included in Good Friday Agreement when it comes to Northern Ireland Assembly is power sharing, which means that none of the parties should be predominant.⁸⁰ This is to be achieved with D'Hondt formula, which allocated the number of seats proportionally to the number of votes won, which enables that neither party is dominating

⁸⁰ Deacon and Sandry 2007, 167.

the Assembly.⁸¹ This type of system is of critical importance for highly divided societies, by using this method all the groups in society can be represented in directly elected bodies. By using the system „first past the post”, that is used usually in the UK, there would be a chance that the Assembly would represent only one group from the society, which needed to be avoided in Northern Ireland’s case.

The peace process, as explained by Mac Ginty and Darby, has certain crucial elements in order to be successful at the end. These components were present when discussing the Good Friday Agreement and they included all the key actors from the conflict, tackling the most relevant questions for the opposed sides and being committed to the peace process.⁸² That means that main actors don’t have to trust each other, but as authors notice, they must trust the process.⁸³ Coming to a common ground sometimes could take years, but the actors should stay dedicated to finding a solution that would have the most benefit for both sides. Likewise, the negotiations should incorporate those issues that were disputed the most and that need the closure so that peace can be reached.

The final say about the Agreement was put in the hands of the people of both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The idea of simultaneous referendums came from a mind of John Hume, who aimed at satisfying the Republican demand for self-determination of Irish people.⁸⁴ At the end the approval for the Agreement was wider among Catholic community, even though they haven’t reached what they were firstly asking for and that’s the unity with Ireland and they reached the consent in the community of the Republic of Ireland as well. The referendum in Northern Ireland got the support of 71% of those who voted, while the support in the Republic of Ireland was even greater with 94% of people voting in favour of the agreement. The acceptance of the agreement has led to an end of the long period of instability and offered a more prosperous future for the people in Northern Ireland.

⁸¹ Deacon and Sandry 2007, 172.

⁸² Mac Ginty and Darby 2002, 3- 4.

⁸³ Mac Ginty and Darby 2002, 3.

⁸⁴ “The Troubles A Secret History Episode 7 (BBC Spotlight)”. *Youtube*. Date of publishing: 23.10.2019.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6VEzJNcHnw>

4. NORTHERN IRELAND AFTER THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT

4.1. Initiatives taken to bring peace to the society of Northern Ireland

Various additional initiatives have been taken after the year of 1998, for the peace to be successfully established under the auspices of peacebuilding after the Good Friday Agreement. An aspiration of these initiatives was to find a common place for members of contending communities to come together and share their opinions, thoughts and find a mutual understanding. Some of the emerging issues they were addressing were politics, policing and questions of identity and equality, tackling with these issues was helped with the founding of more than 130 organizations with an intention to restore inter-communal dialogue.⁸⁵ Decision makers in Northern Ireland quite well noticed that one of the most effective ways to achieve the final reconciliation can be accomplished through the micro level, that meaning through influencing and changing the lives of ordinary people in Northern Ireland, so that conflict between them could be solved peacefully. The aim of these initiatives was to tackle some of the most important issues that have been concerning the Northern Ireland's occupants for many years and that were neglected. The time has come for finding a proper solution for them in order to bring peace to the local level, where it was needed the most.

First steps that helped in creation of the path that was going to secure the free flow across the border on the island of Ireland were already taken in the 1980s. To be precise, in the year of 1987 European Economic Community introduced a regulation that provided an ease on the way how goods have been carried across the border.⁸⁶ Although, Ireland and the UK are not members of Schengen area, they are parts of the Common Travel Area, which consists of the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. Under Common Travel Area citizens of the UK and Ireland can freely move across both countries without a passport, they also have the right to travel, live, work and study within the Area, besides having

⁸⁵ Fitzduff 2002, 35.

⁸⁶ Hayward and Murphy 2018, 279.

an access to healthcare and social benefits.⁸⁷ With these rights guaranteed the whole question of separation between the UK and Ireland has been largely unstrained, which benefited the people in Northern Ireland, because it makes it easier for them to be connected with Ireland and without a border between them reason for a violent conflict are slowly vanishing. But by withdrawing from the European Union the Northern Ireland is losing the money inflow, alongside with all the initiatives that were designed for peace maintenance in the region.

PEACE Programmes were developed to bring peace, what their name says, into the community and incorporate people into decision-making process. Furthermore, the EU has created Special EU Programmes Body in 1999 which is a cross-border body, with a purpose of directing and monitoring the EU funds in the right way.⁸⁸ Consequently after the Good Friday Agreement came the establishment of Equality Commission in 1999, with an aim of achieving equality in housing, voting, education, among other fields.⁸⁹

Probably the most compelling initiative taken by the EU were Peace Programmes which was aimed at helping the region financially, but also showed how the EU is supporting the peacebuilding in the region. Peace programmes are divided in: the Peace I programme (1995-1999), Peace II (2000-2006), Peace III (2007-2013) and Peace IV programme that started in 2014 and will last until the end of 2020, even though the UK has made its withdrawal from the EU. Under the first three programmes the contribution from the EU to Northern Ireland was worth 1.3 billion euros, while the PEACE IV has a financial contribution of 270 million euros.⁹⁰

Two main objectives of the programmes are cohesion between communities involved in the conflict in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland; and the economic and social stability.⁹¹ The Peace IV Programme area of interest is Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, which are: Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo; the aim of this Programme is shared education, helping the children and young people from marginalized

⁸⁷“Common Travel Area Between Ireland and United Kingdom.” Date of access: 15.6.2020.

https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/moving_country/moving_abroad/freedom_of_movement_within_the_eu/common_travel_area_between_ireland_and_the_uk.html

⁸⁸ “What is the SEUPB?” Date of access: 17.5.2020. <https://www.seupb.eu/aboutus/SEUPB>

⁸⁹ Fitzduff 2002, 28.

⁹⁰ “Northern Ireland Peace programme.” Date of access: 15.5.2020.

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/102/northern-ireland-peace-programme>

⁹¹ “Northern Ireland Peace programme.” Date of access: 15.5.2020.

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/102/northern-ireland-peace-programme>

groups, creation of shared spaces and services⁹²; and backing up of the projects that aim at establishment of positive relations between people coming from different communities.⁹³ In a nutshell the intention of the creators of PEACE Programme was to achieve the principle of the Good Friday Agreement and bring an end to the violence through transformation of Northern Ireland's society.⁹⁴ The programmes enhanced the transport links across the border and gathered the two communities in seeking joint funding.⁹⁵ Essential characteristic of PEACE was that economic assistance was conditioned with peacebuilding.⁹⁶ The creators of programmes recognized that a certain push in the right direction is needed from their side and that the money inflow should be depended on the efforts that have been taken to bring the peace back in the region.

As Audra Mitchell states the aim of PEACE Programmes was to transform the society from hostile to peaceful and one where democratic procedures have been followed.⁹⁷ Objectives of PEACE Programmes were encouragement of dialogue and education for peaceful interaction, alongside with the redirection of people from taking jobs in security sector to others.⁹⁸ The plan was to incorporate the important elements of peacebuilding and achieve inclusion of all people in the society.

Scope of PEACE I Programme has been wide in range, including many groups of the society, especially the small ones and some of them for the first time. Two thirds of all the activities were gathering people from both communities and for around 50.000 participants this was the first occasion when they took part in a cross-border activity.⁹⁹ The initiatives that were taken at the local level opened job positions for 6000 places at the community and voluntary sector, which helped in tackling with the unemployment that has usually been on a high level in the region.¹⁰⁰ Opportunities for children in schools were created with PEACE IV, in order to be

⁹² "Northern Ireland Peace programme." Date of access: 15.5.2020.

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/102/northern-ireland-peace-programme>

⁹³ "Peace IV Programme (Ireland/Northern Ireland) Date of access: 15.5.2020. <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/0dbc6f-irish-border-counties-peace-programme/>

⁹⁴ Mitchell 2011, 75.

⁹⁵ Tonge 2016, 8.

⁹⁶ Hayward and Murphy 2018, 279.

⁹⁷ Mitchell 2011, 75.

⁹⁸ Mitchell 2011, 78-82.

⁹⁹ Bush and Houston 32.

¹⁰⁰ PricewaterhouseCoopers 2003: 49 as cited in Bush and Houston 32.

able to build a relationship between children coming from different communities, which will include possibilities for children to play sports together and interact with each other.¹⁰¹ The success of the PEACE Programmes has been reflected in the bigger interaction across the community and chances for the voices of people that were mostly affected by the violence to be heard, sometimes for the first time.

Besides the PEACE Programmes, that have been largely helping Northern Ireland in its path to stability, the EU has also taken initiatives in cross-border cooperation. This included establishment of Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) which connects Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in cross-border cooperation.¹⁰² The SEUPB is in charge of carrying out the four PEACE Programmes by the EU in Northern Ireland and this body is in charge of the funds coming to Northern Ireland.¹⁰³ Any two countries that are sharing the border should try to develop good cross-border relations, especially the ones that have shared such a complex history like the one on the island of Ireland and these initiatives have been helpful for achieving it.

In 2007 one more important initiative has been taken and that's the one where Northern Ireland Task Force has been established. The proposal came from Barroso, former president of European Commission, with an aim of including Northern Ireland more in the process of decision-making and in order for the region to gain more from the whole process.¹⁰⁴ This kind of cooperation established with Northern Ireland Task Force was created with a goal to secure more jobs and have impact on the economic sector, in which it succeeded and it was growing in the size during the years.¹⁰⁵ Northern Ireland has been in this period more involved in relations with other countries, especially with the Republic of Ireland, which has been particularly important for exchange of information and development of better relations of Northern Ireland with outer world.¹⁰⁶ As Northern Ireland was in many cases seen as one of the least developed regions in

¹⁰¹ The impact of EU Funding on the Region 12-13.

¹⁰² Tannam 2018, 247.

¹⁰³ Tonge 2016, 7-8.

¹⁰⁴ "Northern Ireland Task Force." *European Commission*. Date of access: 18.6.2020.

https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/what/glossary/n/northern-ireland-task-force

¹⁰⁵ Northern Ireland Task Force. Date of access: 23.6.2020.

https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/themes/northern-ireland-peace-programme/

¹⁰⁶ Hayward and Murphy 2018, 281.

the Western Europe, any initiative aiming at its development and towards the economic growth has been seen as significant.

Among the initiatives aimed at helping people in Northern Ireland to overcome the traumas caused by 30 years of the conflict two more organizations are to be mentioned: Families acting for Innocent Relatives (FAIR) and Have Your Tomorrows (HURT). FAIR is an organization established in 1998 which is aiming at helping those people who have been victims of terrorism or have close connection to acts of violence and who have for that reason gone through a major stress periods.¹⁰⁷ HURT and FAIR have been together focusing their attention to early prisoner releases and lobbying politicians on this question, because they were thinking that the releases were happening way too soon.¹⁰⁸

Additional initiative was Peace Impact Programme (PIP), established in 2013 aimed at areas in Northern Ireland that haven't experienced significant level of peacebuilding.¹⁰⁹ It's goal was to make a change in those parts of society that haven't felt real progress and improvement, focusing on economic and social sector, especially working with young people. The programme is funded by International Fund for Ireland, founded by the governments of UK and Ireland in 1986, together with United States Agency for International Development (USAID). PIP was implemented from January 2013 to March 2015 during the time of political stalemate in Northern Ireland with rise of the violence on the streets and lack of opportunities for economic development of citizens. The programme's objective was to open a dialogue in the community and to build better relations between communities, while focusing on the local level.¹¹⁰ This initiative managed to deal with and to fund projects straight at the ground, the aim was to include those excluded groups in the society, with special attention to those young people that are „at the risk” of taking a violent path.¹¹¹ The projects that have been undertaken received a strong approval from the people they were impacting. The support has been around 90% and they achieved progress in a number of areas from engagement of those who were against the peace

¹⁰⁷ Victims Service. FAIR (Families Acting for Innocent Relatives). Date of access: 30.5.2020.
https://victimsservice.org/vss_support_group/fair-families-acting-for-innocent-relatives/

¹⁰⁸ Morrissey and Smyth 2002, 9.

¹⁰⁹ Peace Impact Programme. International Fund for Northern Ireland. Date of access: 4.7.2020.
<https://www.internationalfundforireland.com/peace-impact-programme>

¹¹⁰ International Fund for Ireland Peace Impact Programme: Final Evaluation Report 4.

¹¹¹ International Fund for Ireland Peace Impact Programme: Final Evaluation Report 4.

process to improvement of job-related skills.¹¹² Their projects at the local level were including both individual and work with wider communities, while adjusting to a surrounding they were performing their activities.¹¹³

The most relevant part of an initiative should be the consequences and advancement it caused in one community. Many initiatives just remain being „good on paper” and at the end they don’t manage to bring a real change to people at the local level. Peace Impact Programme benefited in making more interactions between people from different communities in Northern Ireland, furthermore it helped in skills development and improved the way how people see their contribution to the society.¹¹⁴ Different specific projects aimed at raising cultural awareness, help people tell their stories how conflict affected their lives and enhance opportunities for young people.¹¹⁵ Besides that, on a community level the rise of paramilitary organizations has been prevented, through offering an alternative path to young people who were prone to joining them.¹¹⁶

Some usually beneficial ways of bringing peace into a community was through sport. However, at the times that was not the case for Northern Ireland. One research about the situation there stated that sport is bringing more division than closeness and the usual scenario is that Catholics games are broadcasted on television.¹¹⁷ The issue in Northern Ireland was that many sports were perceived to be strictly either connected to Protestants or Catholics. Hockey, rugby and cricket have been considered to be related to Protestants, while Gaelic games are typical for members of Catholic communities.¹¹⁸ A meaningful effort has been put to bring different sports and communities together. It has been tried to incorporate more inclusive sports, such as basketball and it has also been tried to merge sports traditional for only one community together.¹¹⁹ Besides that, there are more inventive ways how this matter is being addressed, which includes having the games typical for both communities taught together, especially in

¹¹² International Fund for Ireland Peace Impact Programme: Final Evaluation Report 6.

¹¹³ International Fund for Ireland Peace Impact Programme: Final Evaluation Report 20.

¹¹⁴ International Fund for Ireland Peace Impact Programme: Final Evaluation Report 29.

¹¹⁵ International Fund for Ireland Peace Impact Programme: Final Evaluation Report 31.

¹¹⁶ International Fund for Ireland Peace Impact Programme: Final Evaluation Report 34.

¹¹⁷ Sugden and Harvie, 1995, as cited in Fitzduff 2002, 42.

¹¹⁸ Mitchell, Somerville and Hargie 2016, 984-985.

¹¹⁹ Fitzduff 2002, 44.

integrated schools.¹²⁰ The purpose of this endeavour is to bring more inclusivity into the society through more non-formal fashion, which includes activities of people they do in their free time. These kind of initiatives, that are not at the first hand looked at as the ones that have peace and reconciliation like their main goal, but having fun and bringing people closer together, sometimes have more impact and more influence to the final settlement than those taken on political and elite level.

4.2. Political parties in Northern Ireland

To be able to understand the occasions and politics in Northern Ireland in the best possible way it's of great relevance to take a closer look at the political parties that have been experiencing the largest amount of support in the period of the „Troubles” and onwards.

The political climate in Northern Ireland has been transforming after the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. The change happened on both sides of the political spectrum in Northern Ireland. The Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) has lost a significant support from their community in the years after the conflict ended and the votes for them have been mainly transferred to the DUP. It was argued that the DUP has taken a steadier attitude towards the IRA's terrorism, while the UUP has been more moderate which made Unionists lose trust in them.¹²¹

On the Unionist side there are a couple of parties that have been enjoying a significant support from the people. The party with the largest number of seats in Northern Ireland Assembly, even though it's only one seat more than Sinn Fein had won, is Democratic Unionist Party. It has been founded during the Troubles by Ian Paisley, who had been leading the party for years. DUP was in certain situations somehow hypocritical, because on the one hand they were campaigning for the „Leave”, but on the other side they were approving the EU when they were focusing their funds on Northern Ireland.¹²² Nevertheless, the party managed to remain its position in Northern Ireland, with the largest support among Unionists.

¹²⁰ Fitzduff 2002, 43.

¹²¹ Farrington 2018, 66.

¹²² Burke 2016, 5.

On the other side, the Republicans have over the years developed a greater support for Sinn Fein in the opposition to the more moderate SDLP. Albeit the Sinn Fein has been associated with IRA for years and for that reason they were often being criticized for IRA not dropping weapons and it even lead to suspension of Sinn Fein from some of the most important talks in Northern Ireland. Even though Gerry Adams, Sinn Fein's party leader for years, has been denying any connection between himself and the IRA, the suspension of Sinn Fein from the talks because of IRA not decommissioning was happening. Sinn Fein became a legitimate political party with the biggest support among Nationalists in Northern Ireland, the party managed to achieve a lot and many of their demands were fulfilled, even though not the one for united Ireland.¹²³ Sinn Fein is now a party with the greatest support among Nationalists in Northern Ireland.

Social Democratic and Labour Party is a left-wing party, aiming at the union of Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland and the party is a strong supporter of the EU. This support for the EU spread its influence to the proposal made by SDLP in the 1990s that the EU Commission should have a direct role in running the Northern Ireland.¹²⁴ For years SDLP enjoyed the largest support among the Republicans, however this changed after the „Troubles” ended and Sinn Fein took a lead.

It's interesting to observe how the opinion of some parties transformed during the years. The Sinn Fein was a strong opponent of the European integration during the vote for leaving of the European Community in 1975, but their position converted during the 1990s.¹²⁵ Whereas in the time of 2016 referendum the main parties advocating for the remain were Sinn Fein and SDLP together with the Green Party and the Alliance Party, opposite of them were the Democratic Unionist Party, UK Independence Party (UKIP) and Progressive backed up the leave vote, while the Ulster Unionist Party supported remain position but made space for their supporters to make up their mind.¹²⁶ The reasoning behind a support for Remain was mostly based on the grounds that EU was recognized in some situations as the crucial factor in establishment and maintenance of peace in Northern Ireland. This was made possible by the

¹²³ Punch 2012, 19.

¹²⁴ Tonge 2016, 6.

¹²⁵ McCann and Hainsworth 2016, 2.

¹²⁶ McCann and Hainsworth 2016, 2.

funds and support that EU was showing throughout the years, notwithstanding the fact that being a part of the EU together with the Republic of Ireland helped members of community to feel closer together and in certain situation feel like they are living in the same state. However, the proportion of people living in the Northern Ireland is small in comparison to the UK as a whole and their contribution to one option was insignificant, regardless of the fact if they voted for Remain or Leave. When they were voting for Remain or Leave, voters were usually going with their preferred party's attitude, except for the UUP's supporters.¹²⁷ This occasion has been taken as an opportunity by Sinn Fein to put the question of Irish unity again on the table, because the majority in Northern Ireland voted for Remain, which they think means that they would also get the majority voting for the unity with Ireland on a referendum.¹²⁸

The issue that is still haunting Northern Ireland is also choice of people to vote for parties that are made of representatives from their ethnic community. There are barely few cross-community parties in Northern Ireland that represent and seek for votes from both Catholics and Protestants. This polarity among political parties that is very much alive even after more than 20 years that conflict ended is not helping the region achieve the final reconciliation. All kinds of separations regardless if they are in education or choosing which party person will give its vote for are not beneficial for resolving the issues this region is facing.

4.3. Divisions present after the „Troubles” and endeavors to overcome them

The conflict ended in Northern Ireland, but not all the wounds have healed from the conflict. When living in a situation of social deprivation people try to find explanation for their situation and why they ended up in that position. In many cases it's explained by accusing the opposing side in the society. This explanation is often exploited by politicians when they use it to manipulate people and they find in this explanation an easy justification for the complex things such as recession and unemployment in accusing the so-called other side in the society. That was also the case in Northern Ireland where differences between Catholics and Protestants were exaggerated and led to 30 years of uncertainty and violence, but changes happened with the

¹²⁷ Gormley-Heenan and Aughey, 2017, 8.

¹²⁸ Gormley-Heenan and Aughey 2017, 9.

Good Friday Agreement and initiatives that followed. Mac Ginty and Darby explain the reason for the struggle of Catholics by two approaches. In the first Catholics were fighting for their self-determination and in the second they were fighting against supremacy and corruption of the Unionists.¹²⁹ Still, these sources of resentment are present among the Catholics in Northern Ireland, even though the conflict has ended in the year of 1998.

As Smithey stated what happens when people went through trauma is that they develop different mechanisms to cope with all the stress that they survived and that can at the end lead to creation of defensive attitudes and stereotyping of the other side.¹³⁰ People then tend to feel the biggest connection to their own group and it's really hard to abandon the group one was a part of for years.¹³¹ This group brings a sense of meaning to all the things in life and abandoning it would make individuals feel like they are alone and they want to preserve having that social net they can rely on. While these groups can contribute to individuals, they are also able to amplify the existent differences and put too much stress on differences, instead of trying to find things people in one society share in common.

As Oliver Richmond asserted that peace can mean different things depending on the context and occasions in one society, unique occurrence happens when interventions from outside are blended with specific local part-takers.¹³² In Northern Ireland's case the situation was that internal groups from the society were quite traditional and loyal to their own communities, which was making finding the solution more complicated, because interests of all the sides needed to be incorporated, while they were strongly devoted to their own community's values.

One way of avoiding accountability for what happened during the Troubles was blaming the other side and also taking a role of the victim, Loyalists were complaining that they were targets of the IRA and victimized by them, while Nationalists claimed they were victims of British imperialism and Loyalist's violence.¹³³ This has just been leading to responsibility shifting from one side to another. The figures show that the majority of deaths have been caused by Republicans, but paradoxically the Catholics have been those who endured the greatest

¹²⁹ Mac Ginty and Darby 2002, 11.

¹³⁰ Smithey 2011, 11.

¹³¹ Smithey 2011, 13.

¹³² Richmond and Mitchell 2012, 1.

¹³³ Morrissey and Smyth 2002, 5.

number of deaths and injuries in the period of Troubles.¹³⁴ However, both sides should take responsibility for felonies they committed.

The need to avoid the other side can sometimes lead the people to travel a few kilometers more in order to escape conflicting situations that could occur with trespassing through the territory of the opposite side in the community.¹³⁵ The separation is sometimes present in the simplest things that many of us take for granted, such as choosing a place where one would go to shop or places where people find work. In occasions when divide is such deeply rooted into the society, the peacebuilding must also have a deeply imbedded role to fulfill its goals.

In addition to this there are still peace walls which first started being built in 1970s in order to divide Catholics from Protestants and try to stop spread of the violence.¹³⁶ There are still around 100 peace walls in Northern Ireland, although the government in Northern Ireland claimed that all the walls will be removed by 2023.¹³⁷ The walls are helping people feel more secure and they got used to seeing them on a daily basis, but sometimes they just serve as a reminder of terrible events of violence that happened on the streets. Also, they are a barrier for people to get to know each other and their neighbours who live on the other side, which can be helpful for the final reconciliation in the region. If the peace walls continue to exist on the territory of Northern Ireland it will be difficult to say that all the divisions are settled and to achieve the final settlement.

Parades are one more thing that has been discussed, but that's a quite essential part of Northern Ireland's tradition, even though there are parades organized by both nationalists and unionists they are usually characteristic for Unionists. Orange Order has been in charge of organizing parades that were causing tensions in the region.¹³⁸ The importance of parades was

¹³⁴ Morrissey and Smyth 2002, 10.

¹³⁵ Richmond and Mitchell 2012, 281.

¹³⁶ Grattan, Steven. 2020. "Northern Ireland still divided by peace walls 20 years after conflict." *The World*, January 14. Date of access: 28.5.2020. <https://www.pri.org/stories/2020-01-14/northern-ireland-still-divided-peace-walls-20-years-after-conflict>

¹³⁷ Grattan, Steven. 2020. "Northern Ireland still divided by peace walls 20 years after conflict." *The World*, January 14. Date of access: 28.5.2020. <https://www.pri.org/stories/2020-01-14/northern-ireland-still-divided-peace-walls-20-years-after-conflict>

¹³⁸ The Orange Order was established in 1795 to pay tribute to the 1690 victory of Protestant King William of Orange over Catholic King James II in the Battle of the Boyne. Even though it has been endorsed by British and Irish governments as an important contributor to the peace process, there are many controversies connected with the

distinguished and for that reason the Parades Commission was established in 1998, with an aim of controlling the parades and restricting those that can be seen as problematic. The role of the Commission can be to impose a restriction on certain kind of music during parade or to re-route it if it's going through certain areas where they can escalate to violence, in some cases Commission can ban certain individuals from attending a parade.¹³⁹ While the opinion of Catholics have been that the parades should only be restricted to Protestant areas, the position of Protestants have been that they have a freedom of choice which route they would take.¹⁴⁰ This clash of opinion often leads to fierce debates and the issue is that in Northern Ireland there is still no complete acceptance and respect towards traditions of the other religious community. Overall, it has been argued that parades are more peaceful nowadays and that there hasn't been many issue with flags from specific communities, which makes situation in the region quite easier.¹⁴¹

That the division is not over can also be noticed by taking a look at Belfast and Derry/Londonderry, the two largest cities in Northern Ireland, which were largely segregated during the conflict and it continued to be like that also after the conflict ended. As Mac Ginty emphasizes some cities managed to avoid violence and casualties, even though their countries were affected with wars and violence, because of strong connections people from opposing sides built at the local level.¹⁴² However, that was not the case for Belfast and Derry/Londonderry. The city that has been the most affected by the violence was Belfast, especially North Belfast, because it has been a region with diverse members, from both Catholic and Protestant community, which made a murder rate high.¹⁴³

In the city of Derry/Londonderry the river Foyle is serving as a border between Protestants and Catholics and the city is still largely segregated. The official name of the city is Londonderry, but many people call it Derry. Nationalists are the one who avoid using the name Londonderry, because they associate it with colonialism and the prefix London was added in 17th

Orange Order. Membership in the Order is only allowed to men and Protestants, anyone who is Catholic or married to a Catholic can't be affiliated to the Order.

¹³⁹ Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998. Date of access: 1.6.2020.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/2/enacted>

¹⁴⁰ Mac Ginty 2011, 200.

¹⁴¹ International Fund for Ireland Peace Impact Programme: Final Evaluation Report 16.

¹⁴² Mac Ginty 2014, 3.

¹⁴³ Fitzduff 2002, 37.

century, because many London companies were opened there.¹⁴⁴ Derry has been characterized as a city where Troubles started and it still faces many obstacles in unemployment, especially among young people and brain drain.¹⁴⁵ The city still remains segregated and there was no economic progress in the area, but it went through physical transformation in order to apply for the candidacy to become the UK's City of Culture in the year of 2013.¹⁴⁶

Notwithstanding the impact that the Troubles had in terms of people killed and injured, the repercussions the Troubles had on the mental health of the people are also alarming. The region of Northern Ireland has for years been one with the highest level of unemployment in the United Kingdom¹⁴⁷ The correlation between deprivation and higher levels of violence committed during the Troubles has been detected.¹⁴⁸ Many people have been dependent on social help, with high suicide rate, lack of job opportunities and low incomes.¹⁴⁹ Many women were dealing with trauma by misuse of alcohol and unprescribed medications.¹⁵⁰ Living in the constant fear for your own life and lives of your close ones must have compelling side effects for the ones going through such kind of experience. By some estimates the society of Northern Ireland is one with the highest number of mentally ill in the whole United Kingdom and it is argued that Northern Ireland is one of the world's biggest consumers of antidepressants and one of the regions with the highest suicide rate in the world.¹⁵¹ Moreover, citizens of Northern Ireland also experience a high level of misuse of alcohol and drugs that has been noticed among both men and women, which have been providing a sort of escapism from obstacles occurring on a daily basis.¹⁵² Many Northern Ireland inhabitants have been fighting their own private battles in order to overcome

¹⁴⁴ Doak, Peter. 2019. „Derry: a city still haunted by rigid segregation and poverty” *The Conversation*, April 25. Date of access: 29.6.2020. <https://theconversation.com/derry-a-city-still-haunted-by-rigid-segregation-and-poverty-115936>

¹⁴⁵ Doak, Peter. 2019. „Derry: a city still haunted by rigid segregation and poverty” *The Conversation*, April 25. Date of access: 29.6.2020. <https://theconversation.com/derry-a-city-still-haunted-by-rigid-segregation-and-poverty-115936>

¹⁴⁶ Doak, Peter. 2019. „Derry: a city still haunted by rigid segregation and poverty” *The Conversation*, April 25. Date of access: 29.6.2020. <https://theconversation.com/derry-a-city-still-haunted-by-rigid-segregation-and-poverty-115936>

¹⁴⁷ Morrissey and Smyth 2002, 148.

¹⁴⁸ Morrissey and Smyth 2002, 154.

¹⁴⁹ Jones and McCoy, 1989; Robson et al., 1994; Brown, 1996, as cited in Morrissey and Smyth 2002, 154.

¹⁵⁰ Smyth, 1998, as cited in Morrissey and Smyth 2002, 156.

¹⁵¹ Laird, Nick. 2020. “Krv i brexit.” *The New York Review of Books*, January 23. Date of access: 20.4.2020. <https://pescanik.net/krv-i-brexit>

¹⁵² Laird, Nick. 2020. “Krv i brexit.” *The New York Review of Books*, January 23. Date of access: 20.4.2020. <https://pescanik.net/krv-i-brexit>

the difficulties they've been facing. The methods of healing the wounds were not always efficient and it can be argued that the government of United Kingdom together with devolved institutions and organizations haven't done enough in supporting its citizens in their struggle with psychological problems.

The figures from 2001 show that 66% of people in Northern Ireland were living in territories that where almost entirely consisted of population that was 99% Catholic or 99% Protestant.¹⁵³ Meanwhile, pretty captivating inquiry shows that the percentage of children going to segregated schools is at the level of 95%, which doesn't offer a possibility for the crucial reconciliation and the push in the direction of the unity in a right way.¹⁵⁴ The original idea of segregated schools came in 1922, when it was argued that Catholics and Protestants were fundamentally different and for that reason can't attend the same schools.¹⁵⁵ In order to achieve the final reconciliation the initiative for peace should come from the local level. Improvement in this area has been undertaken and 45 integrated schools were established by 2000, but still the number of children attending them makes only 4%.¹⁵⁶ Data collected by Irwin reflects that children attending the integrated schools are more likely to make friends with members of other community and this is later expanded in their adult lives.¹⁵⁷ One of the ways that tried to bring children from different groups together is through organization of holidays where they would go together on a vacation, especially during marching season, when clashes between the two communities are often happening¹⁵⁸ Marching season in Northern Ireland is referring to a period from April to August, when a series of parades are being organized by the Orange Order in order to mark some of the most significant events connected with Protestants community.

One survey that is strongly provoking attention is the one from 2014, which presented the statistics that young Protestants are more likely to be unemployed than young Catholics, in percentage it's 24% of chance for Protestants and 17% for Catholics, at the same time young Protestants were in comparison to young Catholics less content with their politicians.¹⁵⁹ This research shows how opportunities and position of Catholics and Protestants have switched in the

¹⁵³ Smithey 2011, 16.

¹⁵⁴ Smithey 2011, 15.

¹⁵⁵ McClenahan, 1995, as cited in McKeown 2013, 38.

¹⁵⁶ MacGinty and Darby 2002, 18.

¹⁵⁷ Irwin, 1991, as cited in McKeown 2013, 40.

¹⁵⁸ Robinson and Brown, 1991, as cited in McKeown 2013, 44.

¹⁵⁹ Stevenson 2017, 117-118.

period after the „Troubles” ended. Before and throughout the „Troubles” Catholics were the ones who experienced many obstacles when it comes to finding a job or they were more socially deprived in comparison to Protestants.

The North South Ministerial Council was set up in 1998 and the main areas of cooperation, where the common policies were to be established, are in the fields of education, agriculture, tourism, transport, health and environment. The gatherings of the Council were actually meetings of ministers from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland with 12 areas of cooperation, in half of them they must come together to an agreement, but the decisions should be implemented individually. But, one argument that is stating why Northern Ireland was facing many flaws after the Good Friday Agreement is the fact that the institutions of Northern Ireland were not operating long after the Agreement was signed.¹⁶⁰ Even though, the Republicans were always the ones to blame for infringing the peace by breaking ceasefires, but in this period, after 1998, the ones who were to be blamed for frequently breaching ceasefires were Loyalists.¹⁶¹ The normal functioning of the institutions is crucial for the development of rule of law and rise of trust of people into their government, which often leads to drop of the support paramilitary organizations representing divided group in the society have.

The issue is that many people living in Britain don't pay enough attention on what's going on in Northern Ireland. The ordinary people are not well informed about the conflict and all what happened after the conflict ended, alongside with politicians who don't put Northern Ireland as their matter of interest.¹⁶² Lack of sincere interest in the matters of Northern Ireland has resulted in both losing the confidence among people in Northern Ireland that UK will help them and secure the stability in the region. On the other hand, the failure to be more involved in trying to find a solution for the problems made an outcome in which occasions are having too much slow of a pace for improvement.

The matter of identity and separation between Catholics and Protestants takes a wide scope of space in Northern Ireland's affairs, which has to be changed in order to achieve the final peace reconciliation. That means that all stereotypes and animosities have to be reversed, in

¹⁶⁰ Farrington 2018, 16.

¹⁶¹ Farrington 2018, 16.

¹⁶² Cohen, Nick. 2019. "The Troubles with Brexit." *The Spectator*, November 17. Date of access: 14.6.2020.
<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-troubles-with-brex-it>

order to build healthy relations throughout the region.¹⁶³ The EU has been encouraging the peace process in Northern Ireland through support of the collaboration between the UK and Irish government, but also that the identities of nationalists and unionists should be expressed peacefully.¹⁶⁴

Little things are important not only for happiness, but also for a peace process. Many of the things happening at the local level are important for the overall success of peace process and more must be done among ordinary people, instead of political elites, if one aims at final reconciliation in a region. Even though, the number of the sectarian murals that depict the period of Troubles and divisions are still present across Northern Ireland, an important move to change this has been taken by local artists. The mural of Ulster loyalist Billy Wright was changed with a mural of local football player from West Belfast and many similar transformations took place in order to erase connections with violence present in murals that people see every day.¹⁶⁵ Changing them with protagonists that are important for the whole local community is bringing people closer together, instead of dividing them.

The current situation when it comes to demographics in Northern Ireland is that neither group is making the majority, there is not a one religious group that make more than 50% of population.¹⁶⁶ This state of affairs is quite similar to a stalemate during a conflict and it makes sides immerse themselves more into a dialogue and trying to find a common ground for the difficulties and problems they want to resolve.

New occurrence has been the development of Northern Irish identity opposed to choosing either British or Irish identity. A survey showed that this identity is mostly prevalent among young, middle-class Protestants.¹⁶⁷ The emergence of this specific identity can be meaningful for finding something in common for people living in Northern Ireland, even though it can be risky for a possible division of Northern Ireland separately from Ireland and the UK, but this scenario is very unlikely. Even some researches showed that this identity can be perceived as the one that emerged from Protestant community, but still many Catholics use it, which is of greater

¹⁶³ Spencer 2012, 209.

¹⁶⁴ Hayward 2006, 262.

¹⁶⁵ Smithey 2011, 3.

¹⁶⁶ McKeown 2013, 55.

¹⁶⁷ Trew, 1996; Bull 2006, as cited in McKeown 2013, 28.

importance.¹⁶⁸ People who have chosen this identity were more likely to support integrated schools, as well as other places where people coming from Protestant or Catholic community would interact.¹⁶⁹ The future evolvement of Northern Irish identity can be viewed as a step towards final settlement and crucial identification of people with the region they are inhabiting.

The connection between the island of Ireland and Great Britain can be seen in a fact that the air corridor between Dublin and London is the busiest in Europe.¹⁷⁰ Many young people from Northern Ireland both Catholics and Protestants choose London as a place where they would study. The whole change after the Brexit must take in mind those people that are already used to moving back and forward between these two islands.

The opportunity to maintain dual citizenship has become especially important after Brexit, because those coming from Northern Ireland could still take the best of all the opportunities that are accessible for citizens of the EU if they maintain the citizenship of Ireland. Those rights include enjoying all the rights citizens of both UK and Ireland and additionally they have a right to vote in local, national and European elections.¹⁷¹ This feature may be the one that would have a crucial effect in the future for maintenance of peace, because those who identify themselves as Irish could still freely cross the border and make the use of their right to vote.

4.4. Terrorism and measures to counteract terrorism and violence

Issue that has been worrying many EU member states for years has been the issue of terrorism, which hasn't skipped Northern Ireland. For this reason many countries wanted to have the control over their borders again in order to tackle the matter of terrorism.¹⁷² The similar opinion was prevailing in the United Kingdom as well and it can pose an obstacle in the future development of finding the final solution for the border issue. At the same time, the other

¹⁶⁸ McKeown 2013, 28.

¹⁶⁹ McKeown 2013, 30.

¹⁷⁰ Coveney, Simon. 2020. "The special bond between Ireland and the UK will not be undermined by Brexit." *The Guardian*, January 31. Date of access: 26.4.2020.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jan/31/ireland-uk-brexite-peace-good-friday-agreement>

¹⁷¹ De Mars and Murray 2018, 15.

¹⁷² McCall 2018, 295.

solution that has been getting more attention in recent years is the idea of digitally monitoring the border. When a large majority of people use their mobile phones it's quite easier to follow the movement of people, besides that all the motion and traffic across the borders can be controlled through cameras and electronic devices. One way of monitoring and controlling people in order to avoid violent incidents has been accomplished through placement of cameras in some of the areas where violence has been occurring in the past. That example is the area of North Belfast where 44 cameras were placed as a form of surveillance that was strongly rejected by citizens in the beginning, who damaged some of the cameras.¹⁷³ This is not surprising, as people commonly don't easily accept interference into their private lives, especially when they are prone to conflicts and violent ways of solving them. Even though these ideas are only in development, with the advancement of technology this solution is getting more attention, especially in a complicated situation like the one present in Northern Ireland, when imposing a hard border could lead to escalation of the issues.

Shortly, after the Good Friday Agreement was signed, in August of 1998 the Real IRA organized an attack on the streets of Omagh and it resulted in the death of 29 people, while more than 200 people were injured. This was their way of spreading the message that they are not satisfied with how the conflict ended and that their aim of achieving united Ireland is still not fulfilled. Despite the fact that the conflict has ended the division in Northern Ireland is still alive. Between the years of 2002 and 2012 by some estimates there were 70 deaths connected to the conflict.¹⁷⁴ These data suggest that more effort is needed in order for the division and conflict to be finally resolved, so people could feel safe despite the conflict that they have survived.

In County Armagh, when one Irish Republican group left a bomb, they informed the police via phone, even though the police needed a week to find it, they haven't activated the bomb.¹⁷⁵ Sometimes that was what IRA and Nationalists rebel groups were doing. They just wanted to show that they are still capable of committing violence and that they should be considered as a threat.

¹⁷³ Richmond and Mitchell 2012, 283.

¹⁷⁴ Sutton, CAIN, as cited in McKeown 2013, 11.

¹⁷⁵ McCall 2018, 294.

One more condemnation of the IRA happened in August 2001, when some of their members were accused of contributing to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)¹⁷⁶, terrorists in Columbia, but at the end they were only accused of traveling with fake passport and not for offering a support to terrorists.¹⁷⁷ Anyhow, this whole situation also contributed to the IRA's further loss of credibility and any move in the wrong direction and towards violence was closely monitored and tried to be prevented.

During the years the conflict also attracted the attention of the wider international community, including United States, the place where a large Irish diaspora lives. From time to time Irish diaspora was a significant source of funding of the dissident groups in Northern Ireland, mainly IRA, who used this income in a large extent to attack police and military targets.¹⁷⁸ IRA had to decommission its weapons, after the „Troubles“, which was not completely carried out years after the conflict has been settled. Far-reaching event for decommissioning came with the 9/11, when coordinated attacks of terrorism happened on the US soil. This event altered the way how the US was approaching terrorism around the globe. The tactic of bombing that the IRA has been using for years was strongly condemned following the events in the US and that lead to a ban by the US on Sinn Fein's fund raising in 2005, because of their connections with crimes.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, the United Kingdom has been seen in the eyes of the United States as one of their most important allies in the world and any attack on them would be firmly denounced by the US administration.¹⁸⁰ The whole unfolding of events put IRA in a difficult position and they needed to decommission, because they lost almost all support for their armed struggle. Furthermore, their decommissioning was for long time been anticipated by UK government alongside with Loyalists in Northern Ireland.

The importance of decommissioning could be seen in establishment of Independent International Commission on Decommissioning, with a role of overseeing this important process in Northern Ireland. Martti Ahtisaari, former president of Finland and Cyril Ramaphosa, South African politician, were put in charge of the Commission and during the years a couple of reports have been presented by the Commission. Even though both Loyalists and Nationalists had to

¹⁷⁶ FARC was a guerilla movement that was fighting in the Colombian civil war

¹⁷⁷ Schmitt in Farrington, 2018, 64.

¹⁷⁸ Punch 2012, 17.

¹⁷⁹ Schmitt in Farrington, 2018, 57.

¹⁸⁰ Schmitt in Farrington, 2018, 57.

hand over their weapons the main obstacle for the final solution was on the side of Republicans, specifically the IRA. The final decision of the IRA to decommission came in 2005 and it helped in ending the stalemate that was at the time present in Northern Ireland with suspension of the Northern Ireland's Assembly.¹⁸¹ Unionists have been using the argument of IRA's rejection to decommission as an excuse for not implementing the parts of the agreement they found problematic, while Republicans have been for a long time using terrorism as a threat to the other side.¹⁸²

The peacebuilding in South Africa included truth and reconciliation commission, but also the public confessions of perpetrators of violence and the victims. The extensive public inquiries have been broadcasted on television in order to have a bigger impact on the overall community. There wasn't a truth commission in Northern Ireland like in the South African case, but one similar attempt, of a less scale, of publicly inviting victims to tell their stories has been tried in Northern Ireland with a television programme broadcasted on the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). In 2006 there was a three part series called „Facing the Truth” on BBC, which had Desmond Tutu, South African cleric who won Nobel Prize for Peace in 1984, as one of the presenters and the aim of it was to look similar to South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission because there were the victims and perpetrators from the Troubles that were meeting for the first time.¹⁸³ Victims of Northern Ireland's „Troubles” were invited to share their experiences of the „Troubles” and how the conflict affected their lives.¹⁸⁴ This idea has helped a lot in progress in South Africa, but the circumstances that lead to the conflict were not the same that were present in South Africa, where all the sides wanted for the apartheid and conflict to end, but in Northern Ireland that wasn't the case because SDLP and Sinn Fein thought that Irish unity should be their main goal.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ Farrington 2018, 9.

¹⁸² Farrington 2018, 34.

¹⁸³ Guelke in Farrington 2018, 73.

¹⁸⁴ Morrissey and Smyth 2002, 15.

¹⁸⁵ Kennedy, 2004, as cited in Guelke as in Farrington 2018, 85.

4.5. The relations with the EU and United Kingdom's decision to leave the EU with its outcomes

Authors argue that the process of European integration has enhanced cooperation across borders between countries.¹⁸⁶ The process that's taking place once a country joins the EU is the one in which more and more decisions have been made at a level that's above the country. That means that decisions made in institutions and bodies of the European Union have a direct effect on what's going on in a member state. Countries, as members of the EU, need to cooperate to make decisions in the EU institutions that would satisfy all the member states. Besides that, EU has its own agencies in various states and EU is representing countries in international organizations and other international bodies. The whole EU has been formed to avoid the conflict on the European continent, after two wars that have devastated the region, it was then when they saw how countries and their nations need to unite in their diversity to achieve the most. Anyhow, the EU was not able to prevent all violent conflicts from happening, like the one in Northern Ireland.

The EU has been the largest export market to Northern Ireland, which makes the region dependent on the countries of the EU for their economic income. This dependency can have an indirect influence on the decisions being made in one country or region, even on some decisions that at the first glimpse are not considered to be economic. Politics and economics have always been intertwined and especially smaller countries and regions need to be careful when making decisions that could have an effect on all sectors in their society.

The role of the European Union in Northern Ireland should not just be seen as a source of funding for the people living there, but also as a mediator between the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom. There are a variety of possibilities only limited to members of the European Union, such as cross-border cooperation between different regions and cities among other funds and chances to share the knowledge and information. Although Ireland and the UK are not part of the Schengen area their citizens are able to take advantage of many other opportunities across the EU that are only open for EU citizens, except that the citizens of the UK are now slowly losing their privileges.

¹⁸⁶Hayward and Murphy 2018, 279.

Something that hasn't been tackled in the right way for the years in the United Kingdom was the fact that people there haven't identified enough with Europe. For years people have been looking for the final word to London, instead of Brussels. By Eurobarometer from 2015 British citizens are the ones from the European Union who are least likely to identify themselves as European.¹⁸⁷ When looked at the data the least likely citizens that identify as European are in the UK, Cyprus and Greece, those countries on the edges of European Union.¹⁸⁸ The United Kingdom has been skeptical towards the EU since joining and it can't be seen as strange, because of its specific position, on the island, that is not bordering other countries except for the Republic of Ireland only on the island of Ireland. The challenging part that should have gotten more attention in the case of Northern Ireland was not enough unbiased media that's reporting about the EU and there weren't enough meaningful discussions about the EU.¹⁸⁹ It became problematic, because citizens of Northern Ireland were only looking to the leaders and politicians from Northern Ireland when it comes to developing an attitude towards certain questions that are the EU's concern.¹⁹⁰ The influence of political parties was way too big and they were misusing it for their personal interests.

The EU has for years been a conflict-resolution actor for the people of the conflicted region, which has been in certain parts lost once the United Kingdom has left the EU.¹⁹¹ The role that local level of peacebuilding and conflict-prevention has in the overall improvement in the community has also been seen by the EU.¹⁹² For that reason the European Union has been providing funding to civil society, alongside with shared knowledge and developed cooperation, all in order to guarantee the existence of peace on its continent.¹⁹³ This has also been the case in Northern Ireland where various initiatives have been undertaken at the local level.

¹⁸⁷ Holodny, Elena and Kiersz, Andy. 2016. "This chart shows which Europeans are the least likely to consider themselves European." *Business Insider*, June 28. Date of access: 12.5.2020.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/survey-data-on-how-europeans-identify-themselves-2016-6>

¹⁸⁸ Holodny, Elena and Kiersz, Andy. 2016. "This chart shows which Europeans are the least likely to consider themselves European." *Business Insider*, June 28. Date of access: 12.5.2020.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/survey-data-on-how-europeans-identify-themselves-2016-6>

¹⁸⁹ Hayward and Murphy 2018, 278.

¹⁹⁰ Hayward and Murphy 2018, 278.

¹⁹¹ Stevenson 2017, 111.

¹⁹² Juncos & Blockmans 2018, 6.

¹⁹³ Juncos & Blockmans 2018, 6.

The referendum when the sides were divided was not only after the signing of Good Friday Agreement, but the parties had to once again state their position regarding the emerging issue of Brexit, like they were forming it when the topic was the acceptance of the Good Friday Agreement. The issue during the referendum time for UK's leaving the EU has been the lack of knowledge of general public about what this move would enact in the future, but it has also shown how little concern people of United Kingdom have towards Northern Ireland.¹⁹⁴ For the citizens of the UK it could be said that their main focus of interest when it comes to making a decision about remaining part of the EU was the matter of border. For the citizens of Great Britain the main focus of interest was border, but because of large influx of migrants from both the EU and outside of Europe. The main concern for the people of Northern Ireland when it comes to Brexit was the border question, however in a different way, due to the fact that membership in the EU it kept it open to Ireland in the south. Additionally, funds they were getting from the EU were important for Northern Ireland as well, but they weren't as much concerned about the issue of migrants, as was the rest of the UK. The number of immigrants has never been enormous in size, as it have been in Great Britain, on the other hand people in Northern Ireland were more worried because the remembrance of conflict period has still been vivid in the heads of people there and imposing the border again would possibly have many consequences for them.

To fully comprehend the most recent unfolding of the events which brought the ongoing destabilized position of Northern Ireland and the UK as a whole, it's important to examine the reasoning behind the decision of the UK to leave the European Union. The European Union is a supranational body capable of making decisions that should be further implemented in every member state. Even though, the decisions are usually being made by consensus, occasionally compromise is needed to achieve a decision. The argumentation made by the people of the UK is that the European Union is interfering too much in their personal affairs and that they „want their country back”.

The decision about the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union hasn't divided only the Northern Ireland, but the whole United Kingdom. Although the UK already had a similar referendum in 1975 when, after only two and half years of a membership, the UK carried

¹⁹⁴Hayward and Murphy 2018 282.

out a referendum on a question if the UK should remain a part of the European Communities and the final result was 67,2% in favor of remaining. However, the final outcome of the referendum about Brexit in 2016 was 51.9% voting to Leave and 48.1% voting to Remain in the EU. After the results have been revealed the defeated, although tiny, minority has made a series of protests in revolt towards the referendum results. The majority in Northern Ireland, to be precise 55.8% and in Scotland the majority of 62% voted to remain in the EU, but the decision has mainly been decided by those living in England, who were in majority voting to leave the EU.¹⁹⁵

A solution for the issue of border was found by May's government and the European Commission in the backstop. The backstop meant that Northern Ireland would remain part of certain areas of the Single Market and the UK would stay in the same common customs territory with the EU. This proposal offers an intermediate period until the final resolution is achieved. The backstop has been replaced in 2019 and by the new protocol the whole UK comes out of the EU Customs Union and Northern Ireland will be included in any future UK trade deals.¹⁹⁶ Tariffs would need to be paid for commercial goods coming from Great Britain to Northern Ireland from some other countries, except for the cases when it's determined that these goods are for the use only in Northern Ireland.¹⁹⁷

The pro-Leave camp wanted to cease the influx of migrants that have been coming to the UK for years. As Cameroon stated, the prime minister of the UK in the time of referendum about membership of the UK in the EU, the biggest problem doesn't come from outside of the EU, but from EU member states.¹⁹⁸ That was one of the causes that made Cameroon promise in 2013 a referendum about the membership in the EU. Cameroon made this decision in spite of the fact that he was opposing the withdrawal from the EU and that the future for the United Kingdom would be uncertain if the UK intended to take this path. When he made this proposal politicians and the whole public were not aware of the consequences this move could rise in the future. To put this statement into the context, the Brexiteers were mostly dissatisfied with those coming

¹⁹⁵ "UK votes to leave the EU. *BBC*. Date of access: 17.5.2020.

https://www.bbc.com/news/politics/eu_referendum/results

¹⁹⁶ "Brexit: What is in Boris Johnson's new deal with the EU?" 2019. *BBC*, October 21. Date of access: 13.6.2020.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-50083026>

¹⁹⁷ "How is Boris Johnson's Brexit deal different from Theresa May's?" 2019. *The Guardian*, October 17. Date of access: 13.6.2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/oct/17/how-is-boris-johnson-brexit-deal-different-from-theresa-may>

¹⁹⁸ McCall 2018, 296.

from recently joined countries. Ten new countries joined the EU in the year of 2004 and this led to a massive migration of people living in these countries towards countries in the West of Europe, including the UK. Even though, at the beginning migrants were usually finding jobs that weren't quite well paid, during the time they managed to secure for themselves better positions in the society and they integrated more. The comparison can be made with the trend popular among the world, where migrants are being looked at with revulsion and people often argue that migrants are taking away their jobs.

A few options for the solution of the border issue emerged with the United Kingdom leaving the European Union. The analysis of the options is of relevance because any of these would have an effect on how the whole situation would be dealt with in the future. Also, it's meaningful for the purpose of consideration of possible return to the violence if the border would again be imposed. These options can be shortly presented as a border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, along with the bordering of the United Kingdom and the last one is bordering the United Kingdom and the island of Ireland. As Gormley-Heenan and Aughey would argue the significant problem that's coming back with the UK leaving the EU is the border in the mind of people.¹⁹⁹ The border is bringing back all the bad memories to citizens of the Northern Ireland and it's distancing the connection they had with the Republic of Ireland. Furthermore, the border is making harder the life of people who cross border on a daily basis to commute to work, which has been estimated to be around 30.000 on a daily basis.²⁰⁰ For these reasons United Kingdom has seek to find the most painless solution for the border issue.

The first solution and the one that most people in Northern Ireland are skeptical about is the land border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. This is the only place in the United Kingdom with the possibility of a land border, but there are many arguments against imposing the border here. The main argument is that without the border many disputes had finally been resolved and that the border would only disrupt the good relations that are currently in place. On the contrary imposing the border will settle one of the main reasons why United Kingdom left the European Union in the first place, which is the huge influx of migrants from the EU, but also from other countries, which UK wants to avert. The option of the border on the

¹⁹⁹ Gormley-Heenan and Aughey 2017, 6.

²⁰⁰ NIAC, 2018a, paras 5–7, as cited in De Mars and Murray 2018, 11.

island of Ireland is disputable on few grounds. One concerning evidence is that the island of Ireland has the densest road network in Europe and the border is going through towns, farms and houses, imposition of a border would interrupt the everyday life of people living in the border region.²⁰¹ Besides that, the border has brought a lot of turmoil in the region since its creation. Getting a border again on this territory would be a quite risky move that could cause many unforeseen issues in the future.

The second solution to border issue would be to border Britain, which means that the border would be in the sea between the islands of Ireland and Britain, meaning that between Northern Ireland and Britain there would be a border. In that case the citizens of Northern Ireland as well as everyone else would have to show some sort of legitimation when entering the Britain.²⁰² The border on the island of Britain would be beneficial because it would satisfy those who voted for Leave from the EU on a basis of big influx of immigrants, also it would be less costly and it would prevent the return to violence in Northern Ireland.²⁰³ However, this kind of border would divide territories of United Kingdom, because Northern Ireland is not located on the island of Britain and that would mean that citizens of the same country would have a border between them.

The third solution would be bordering both islands of Britain and Ireland, although these two countries already share a lot of information through intelligence agencies and this would help in prevention of a large inflow of migrants.²⁰⁴ On the other hand, setting the border here would be problematic for the citizens of the Republic of Ireland, who agreed to mobility of EU citizens and workers, and they still remain part of the EU.²⁰⁵

Many critics point out to the fact that the referendum about leaving the EU was not binding and all the consequences of leaving the EU were not explained in details to the ordinary citizens. As Gligorov argues the process of leaving the EU should have been more like the process of joining, which means that first step would be for a country to negotiate the agreement of joining and then when the final agreement is settled it goes to vote of the people living in that

²⁰¹ McCall 2018, 297.

²⁰² McCall 2018, 299.

²⁰³ Harris, 2017, as cited in McCall 2018, 300.

²⁰⁴ McCall 2018, 301.

²⁰⁵ McCall 2018, 301.

country.²⁰⁶ The United Kingdom left the EU other way around, where the first step was a non-binding referendum which led to negotiations about the terms of the country's withdrawal from the EU.²⁰⁷

The confirmation came from the EU and the UK that in the case of a decision of Irish unification Northern Ireland would become again a part of the EU.²⁰⁸ This decision should calm down the Nationalists, who were principally opposing the determination to leave the EU. As the Good Friday Agreement this decision also put the final determination on the status of Northern Ireland into the future.

This whole situation of vagueness was of significant value for Northern Ireland, the place of only land border in the United Kingdom and where 30 violent years took place before the final settlement. Many things were negotiated and decided in haste, due to a deadline for leaving the EU, instead of a thorough process of examination and finding the best possible alternatives and solutions.

²⁰⁶ Gligorov, Vladimir. 2018. "Brexit – javni trg vs. politicko trziste." *Pescanik*, December 13. Date of access: 19.4.2020. <https://pescanik.net/brexit-javni-trg-vs-politicko-trziste>

²⁰⁷ Gligorov, Vladimir. 2018. "Brexit – javni trg vs. politicko trziste." *Pescanik*, December 13. Date of access: 19.4.2020. <https://pescanik.net/brexit-javni-trg-vs-politicko-trziste>

²⁰⁸ Hayward and Murphy 2018, 287.

5. CONCLUSION

Second half of last century has seen outburst of violence on the streets of many cities in Northern Ireland and exaggeration of differences between Catholics and Protestants. Following that, the people were experiencing constant fear for their own lives and the lives of their close ones, which at the end lead to a development of many psychological, besides physical and material, consequences of the struggle they went through. At the final part of the century divided communities in Northern Ireland managed to achieve a common ground with a help of government of the UK and the Republic of Ireland and Good Friday Agreement was signed. At the end the century ended in the good and peaceful way for the people living in Northern Ireland.

The afterwards of the „Troubles” had its ups and downs, but the conditions have changed for the better for the people living in Northern Ireland. From the money inflow and the funds the EU has directed towards the region of Northern Ireland to initiatives aimed at development of cooperation and bringing people closer together. Dialogue and mutual understanding can be made possible through establishment of common institutions between Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom’s government. This enabled the flow of ideas that helped in achieving progress in peace reconciliation.

What has been provoking attention is that at the end Nationalists, who were aiming at unity with Ireland, were more satisfied with the Good Friday Agreement than Unionists, who were skeptical about interference of Ireland into affairs of Northern Ireland. Nationalists were satisfied, because they could count on Ireland for their support and protection if the UK was to make unilateral decisions. A number of institutions with shared cooperation between Ireland and the UK have been founded, which helped the Nationalists in Northern Ireland in feeling closer to the Republic of Ireland. Also, without a border on the island of Ireland and with equal opportunities for citizens of both Ireland and the UK to freely move and work across the region, there are no reasons for dissatisfaction and call for violence on the side of the Nationalists. On the other hand, Loyalists managed to maintain their position inside of the United Kingdom, which should be seen as a success for them.

However, conflict has in certain areas brought divisions that are hard to overcome in only a couple of years. Conflict that lasted for 30 years, with division beginnings that can be traced in further past can't be resolved with one agreement. The divisions still remain to be present in the minds of people, as for some of them who have been born in 1960s and 1970s the conflict have been always present while they were growing up and they didn't have an alternative to it. The partitioning was developed in life of both Nationalists and Loyalists from the early period of their lives and it has been following them throughout their adulthoods.

The society managed to transform from a hostile to peaceful, with small outbursts of violence, but overall the violent part of the conflict has mainly ended with signing of the Good Friday Agreement. However, divisions remain present in the schools children attend, besides the jobs people take and peace walls that are not dismantled yet. A number of initiatives taken on the grounds of Northern Ireland enhanced cooperation between members across the society and there were new opportunities established for cross-border dialogue and meeting between the members of previously opposed sides.

The usual way how political scientists approach the topics of their interest is by stressing all the things that can be further improved and that haven't been done in given case in the best possible way. For that reason, usually the things that are emphasized are those that still are not quite corrected and repaired. Northern Ireland managed to get itself out of a conflict that lasted for a long period of time and also succeeded in focusing on formation of peace initiatives that would bring new opportunities to people that have been affected by the hostilities. Because of that, the way how the governments succeeded in bring the conflict to an end should be closely observed and lessons for other countries can be taken from their experience.

Nevertheless, the Northern Ireland's society should be closely monitored in next years for a possible outburst of the conflict and violence in the region. That is due to the fact that United Kingdom decided to leave the European Union, where both Ireland and the UK were members and which can have further consequences towards the question of border between the two countries. The situation has remained relatively stable through the negotiations on the final withdrawal agreement, but the new circumstances could come out in the future and the region should be monitored for the precaution.

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