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Reproduction of the divided community

A theoretical approach to the reproduction of divided communities, with a focus on integrated and shared education in Northern Ireland

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Master thesis in Pedagogy ... May, 2015



*Hearts with one purpose alone
Through summer and winter seem
Enchanted to a stone
To Trouble the living stream.*

(Yeats)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION



1.1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the staff and children of the school I visited, for allowing me to take part in your day-to-day life within the school. This text would never have come to be, if not for your kind assistance.

I would also like to thank the very kind and hospitable people I met during my stay, who had the patience to explain to a foreigner, with a tendency to put her foot in her mouth, how you perceived the Northern Ireland conflict.

A thanks also goes to my family and friends for all their support. I apologize for all that I might have said during the last few weeks before the submission of this text.

A special thanks to Stine, Vegard and Anne for your constructive advice and encouragement whenever I wanted to give up.

A very special thanks to my supervisor, Vidar Vambheim, for putting up with me, even when I'm being self-assured and stubborn-headed.

Tromsø, May 2015

Siri Eliassen

1.2 SUMMARY

This text is a theoretical approach to the divided society in Northern Ireland, with a focus on how it is reproduced through the educational institutions and everyday practices, symbols and reproduction of attitudes within the respective communities. Through Bourdieu's educational sociology in combination with theories on diverse societies as well as qualitative methods such as participant observation and text analysis it explores the mechanisms maintaining the divided society as well as the role of integrated schools in the prevention of the reproduction of the divided society. It also discusses the approach taken by the Northern Irish executive pertaining to shared and integrated education, and the importance of sustained cross-community contact.

Though the text takes on a theoretical perspective, the methods employed are qualitative. However, the exploratory nature of the research means that the findings are not conclusive. This text does however provide a contribution to the discussion on the way forward, specifically pertaining to the day-to-day lives of children and young people in Northern Ireland.

1.3 INTRODUCTION

Growing up a 90s child, a part of generation Y, the millennial generation, the evening news more often featured terrorist attacks, bombings, shootings, wars and violent conflicts. There was the Rwandan civil war, the Croatian war of independence, there was the Bosnian war and there was war in Afghanistan. All far-off places, with the exception of one – the Northern Ireland conflict.

I remember getting the impression that the conflict was a religious one, between the Catholic and Protestant populations of an area in the northeast of Ireland. A misconception on my part, albeit a popular one. The conflict, disregarding minorities and immigrants of later days, is in essence a “clash between two competing national aspirations.” (McKittrick & McVea, 2012)

It has been more than fifteen years since the signing of the Good Friday agreement. Since then the violence and sense of unrest has diminished drastically, but the two communities Catholic and Protestant, while culturally not very dissimilar still carries the scars of three decades of unrest and violence. During a casual conversation an informant put it bluntly, saying there can't be reconciliation of parties while criminals are in power in Stormont.

The purpose of this text is not to provide the solution to the Northern Ireland conflict, nor is it a prediction of a conflict about to arise. It does however reflect upon the possibility of the rise of a conflict, and acknowledges the work already being done to heal the scars after.

On the 22nd of July 2011, I had just started my shift when my colleague came back from a break and told me that people were saying a bomb had gone off in Oslo. Our initial reaction – It *had* to be a bad joke. Only it wasn't, and we both started taking turns to go into the backroom and try to get in touch with friends and family in the area. I was grateful to find

that everyone I knew were doing all right and the closest any of my friends had come to the explosion was 200 metres. Then came the messages on Facebook from friends on the other side of the planet wanting to know if I was all right, and what was going on in Norway.

After that the discussions on who was to blame for the attack began, even with a few terrorist organization taking responsibility upon themselves. Facebook being one of the major platforms of communication became an outlet for many of the opinions on the subject, several suggesting that it was the work of Islamists and that “this is what we get for taking in all these foreigners”. The term *foreigner* referring not to Germans, Swedes, Italians, British, Russians or French, but people of Middle-Eastern, Arab and African origins. To put it differently, people who were visually different from the white majority, regardless of whether an individual had never been to another country, or had lived in Norway for longer than some of the commentators had been alive themselves.

Opinions such as these are nothing new. Upon a brief exchange with a German acquaintance regarding the shootings of 2011 and the connection to my thesis, she revealed information about her own community that I had not been aware of, specifically relating to social class and immigration.

I am living at [sic] a place where “rich people” live but down the hill there are “immigrant families”. In the house I am living, our post code belong to the one below and one street above the postal code changes. Kids are sent to school by postal codes and therefore our house was much “cheaper” than the one in the next street. Can you imagine that? People don’t want their kids to be involved with immigrant kids.

In Norwegian cities there are certain areas where *Norwegians* are the minority and the inhabitants are considered to be immigrants because their cultural forms of expression, and

sometimes appearance is different from the majority of the population. These are the aforementioned “foreigners”.

Accepting and acknowledging our differences, and building bridges across cultures and social class, even if the structures seem impossible to break, is of the essence if the goal is to build one peaceful society rather than the divided societies that are already in place or we are moving towards.

As the focus for this text is the divided community of Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, I have omitted the third divide that is racism. I refer to it here as a divide, as racism is a growing problem, and on a few occasions brought to my attention in unexpected ways during my visit, in spite of the increased efforts to teach respect and develop good relations.

It is difficult to give a thorough account of events where the Northern Ireland conflict is concerned in just a few paragraphs or even pages. Nevertheless, I have attempted to do so, in order for the reader to get an overview of the situation. Furthermore, “the nature of the conflict is such that *any* attempt to explain it could be construed as the product of bias. All terms of explanation “belong” to the vocabulary of one or the other conflicting groups.” (Saugestad, 1982, p. 133) It has never been this author’s intent to express a leaning towards one party or the other with regards to the conflict, and hope that the reader will not understand it as such.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

This paper explores the formation of group identity and culture, the divided society and the reproduction of the divided community, with a focus on the Northern Ireland conflict and the role of shared education and integrated schools.

This text started out from a desire to learn about integrated schools in Northern Ireland as a resource for bridging the gap between the two societies inhabiting the region. With the backdrop of the divided society, the initial objectives for the research has been:

- How is the children's interaction with each other affected by the conflict?
- How do they interact with their teachers?
- Which attitudes are expressed?
- Is the conflict an issue or theme in the schools, and if so, how is it adressed?
- A better understanding of the conflict and what it means today.
- A better understanding of the term integrated school.

As the research has been of an exploratory nature, however, I have chosen to set a narrower framework for the finished product.

“How can integrated schools contribute to the prevention of the reproduction of the divided society?”

As such we shall explore the following:

- What is the shared and divided society?
 - I found that the terms “shared” and “divided” are often used interchangeably. Nevertheless, it appears that they should be descriptive of two different societies, as “shared” implies that there is several communities sharing the same space, whereas the divided society constitutes contestation of legitimacy and space.
- The difference between an integrated school and a shared education.

- The vast majority of the population in Northern Ireland is positive towards reconciliation and change. Even so, most children attend schools that are either Catholic maintained or state schools, mostly populated by Protestant children.
- The ideas of habitus, capital, social violence and reproduction of inequality and attitudes.
 - Bourdieu has developed a sociology pertaining to the educational system and how it serves to reproduce inequalities. The socio-economic discourse is that the institution should enable social mobility in all layers of society, the structure primarily benefits those of the upper socio-economic levels.
 - I will argue that the same principles pertain to the reproduction of the divided society, and further discuss how an integrated education can prove an important tool in creating a shared, as opposed to a divided society.

During the time spent in the region it became clear that the general attitude was positive towards a more united community, with several projects working towards such goal. Initiatives span from the replacement of paramilitary murals by less sectarian themes or depictions of international issues, to groups from the respective communities using facilities, such as churches and lodges previously reserved for the other.

1.5 STRUCTURE

Chapter 2 informs the reader of the methods used in the creation of this text, with a focus on how the dispositions of the observer shapes the interpretation of that which is observed. Furthermore it gives the reasons for my choice of literature that the text is based around.

Chapter 3 concerns the definitions of ethnicity and culture.

Chapter 4 is to provide the reader with an insight to the conflict and thus the background for the division of the Northern Irish society. This has been included to give the reader an understanding of why there is such a focus in the curriculum of the region on good relations, and why there is a discussion pertaining to the forms of shared education.

Chapter 5 explains Bourdieu's terms of habitus, capital and symbolic violence, as these are essential in the explanation of how differences and perceptions of reality is reproduced, hence also the divided society. It also concerns the reproduction of the dominant culture within the educational institution.

Chapter 6 revolves around the concept of shared and divided societies, and the management of diverse ethnicities.

Chapter 7 gives an introduction to shared and integrated education as a means of alleviating some of the tension and build good cross-community relations.

Chapter 8 relays my impressions and thoughts concerning the school I visited, and a few of my experiences during the time spent there.

Chapter 9 is a discussion on the reproduction of the divided society and inequalities in light of the Northern Ireland conflict.

Chapter 10 is a discussion on the role of shared and integrated education in achieving the overall goal of a united community.

Chapter 11 is a reflection and final commentary on the main issues discussed in the text and a summary. It also includes a reflection on what shared societies elsewhere might take from the issues that the divided society of Northern Ireland.

2.0 METHOD

The concepts of what it means to be a shared, segregated or integrated school seems vague to a person who has spent the more than half her life in the educational institutions of Norway. While this text is primarily grounded in theory, I did spend some time visiting an integrated school in Northern Ireland, with the hopes of gaining an inside perspective of the integrated school.

Due to life circumstances, some sources I was originally counting on fell through, but as chance would have it, I was to meet others. People who had lived in the region during the time of the Troubles. Most of whom took pity on a young woman travelling alone from an obscure place in the far north, with a talent for putting her foot in her mouth. People who even after my introduction of myself, coloured by the casual language and chatter that will identify a Northern Norwegian anywhere to those who know what to listen for, and the purpose of my visit would chat with me and help shape “my Northern Ireland”.

2.1 PREPARATION AND SELECTION

Several methods would have been applicable for a text such as this one. Ideally individual interviews and group interviews of staff, pupils, previous pupils, politicians and

parents. However, finding schools willing to consider aiding me in my research, and getting in touch with organizations and parents proved somewhat difficult. In the end, only one school responded to my request of coming to visit for a time, and observe. As such, as, it can be referred to as a purpose selection for an exploratory study. Because of this, any conclusions drawn cannot be considered definitive, nor should they be generalized to the population at large.

The literature I've based the text around is centred around shared and divided societies, much of it relating in particular to the Northern Ireland conflict. David McKittrick has been party to several projects pertaining to the history and events in collaboration with such as McVea (2012) and Mallie (2001). The books *Making sense of the troubles* and *Endgame in Ireland* has provided me with an insight to the conflict and the peace process leading up to the Good Friday agreement.

J. Bowyer Bell's extensive work on the Irish Republican Army (Bell, 2000), gives a thorough description of the structures both leading to recruitment and the hierarchy within the "terrorist" organization. Smithey (2011) approaches the post-Good Friday Agreement Protestant community, and how conflict transformation is implemented at a grass-root level within the community.

Bourdieu's sociology on habitus, the forms of capital, social violence and reproduction of the dominant culture are essential to this text, as I link the continuous division of the society to these theories. Though we shall explore this in more detail later, the theme is that the educational institutions convey a perception believed to be the one true reality to students, who according to their dispositions are better or worse equipped for understanding and incorporating the knowledge presented.

2.2 PRACTICAL APPLICATION

The research for this text has been exploratory, and as such the text is to be understood merely as a suggestion or input in the discussion on the way forward in bringing together a divided society to create a united community. As the situation stands today, the two communities live in peace, but reconciliation between them is still a work in progress.

2.3 PRACTICE AND THEORY

The research for this paper has first and foremost been of an exploratory nature, and as such does not serve to give any definitive answers. At the same time, though, it provides an insight to a means of trying to manage the diversities of a shared society, and one that has experienced a violent conflict and is trying to reconcile the parties involved. It was uncertain what I would find, and what I would make of them when the time came for interpretation and review. In accordance with the qualitative method settled upon, even finding “nothing” in relation to the Northern Ireland conflict would in itself provide a find, and I was prepared to work from that perspective.

In the writing of this text I have employed two methods of gathering data, the most prevalent of which being qualitative content analysis. There have already been conducted several studies pertaining to the conflict and the Northern Irish society since the Good Friday Agreement that also concerns the attitudes in the divided society. In practice, it quickly became clear that the conflict was a non-issue in polite company, and as such analysing literature that describes the conflict and the means employed to reconcile the communities appeared the least intrusive or offensive method. Furthermore, it is a method well suited for exploratory research.

The texts employed have been reports of surveys, interviews and policy documents, as well as texts pertaining to the conflict itself. This material provides an insight to the lingering effects of the conflict, the measures taken to build bridges between the two communities, general attitudes and a sense of how it is affecting the children of today.

This method was combined with an intensive 6 weeks in Northern Ireland, 5 of which were spent at an integrated school. I've employed the method of participant observation in order to achieve a better understanding of the role that integrated education in the process of reconciling the two communities. I visited with a school that allowed me to observe the interaction between pupils and pupils and teacher, in class and during break time. As such, the focus is less on the perceptions of the individuals, but the social positions they ascribe to the self and others in the context constituted by the educational institution.

It was a long process of trying to get in touch with schools in the area. I contacted the Department of Education responsible for schools in Northern Ireland who in turn referred me to an online archive of schools and nurseries in the region.

After many emails, most of which I never got a response to, I received an email from the headmaster of a school saying that they would be happy to help me in my studies.

Rather than trying to discern what went on behind the children's faces, their thought processes and their perspectives – their inner selves – I sought to observe their actions and interactions within the social context. In this case the social setting is the school, with classmates, teachers and pupils from other classes.

One could say the observations in general are first and foremost focused on the front-stage in Goffman's analysis of (1959), where the actors behave accordingly to the discourses and conventions pertaining to the expectations set by the scene, in this case this primarily means the school setting. As such, I was only privy to their act as part of a team on stage. For

this text that means that my reflections surrounding back-stage life are rooted in theory and literature surrounding the symbolic landscape outside of the stage. However, off-stage “performances” were given through individual conversations with members off the staff, where they were not primarily in their role as a teacher or assistant, but would discuss this or that pertaining to the performance in class. This also means that I am not familiar with the children’s home relations. Nor do I have knowledge as to whether their parents are positively inclined towards the other community, which can be a contributing factor to both their attending an integrated school, but also which attitudes the children express.

To repeat that quote from my lectures at the University of Tromsø: “Man is an animal suspended in a web of significance he himself has spun and keeps spinning.” (Geertz, 1973, p. 5) The “web” this time is not the agents’ subjective perceptions, but how, through their interaction, they construct the social reality. My intentions as a researcher in this setting have been to study the social reality of the children and teachers as it is produced through their interaction.

One aspect that may have provided me with more information is language. Not in the sense that I didn’t understand the words spoken, but as have been mentioned previously, there are certain tells that divulges information on the individual which as an outsider I was not privy to. On the other hand, that knowledge may have affected my interpretations. Furthermore, this aspect might have caused me to miss potentially valuable clues regarding the positions of the agents.

During my stay, I got several opportunities for off-the record conversations with staff at integrated schools, as well as locals who were willing to explain some of the dynamics within their society, all of which were privy to the purpose of my visit. These conversations have been very valuable in my own musings and interpretations of the literature employed.

2.4 BEING AWARE OF ONE'S OWN PRESUMPTIONS

Whatever field one approaches, one do so coloured by the sets of dispositions acquired throughout life. Bell (2000) writes on the subject of the perceived Ireland:

Those foreigners who are the alien experts on Ireland, contributors to the Yeats industry or reporters on the Troubles, readily find the Ireland that they know because they rarely look elsewhere. The National Library is not Ireland nor the Falls Road and Crossmaglen, yet these special Irelands are what the specialist has come for, what has organized their Irish time (p.26).

As previously mentioned, I had visited Belfast before on another occasion. Even so, I knew it would be a different city from the one I'd seen in summer during a time thick with celebrations and marches and as such tensions were heightened, resulting in a higher police presence in the streets at the time.

One of the dangers of approaching a situation as an outsider is misreading the field. As earlier mentioned, previous experience and perception is ingrained in our being, and will shape the way we perceive or act a given situation. That is, our understanding of a situation as it happens and in retrospect will be based off our past experiences and world view and also affect our behaviour in that situation.

Imagine you see two men. You can't hear the conversation going on between the two, but you can see one handing the other money. How do you understand the situation? There are plenty of possible interpretations. Perhaps one is giving the other a loan, or the other is repaying a loan. The money could be a gift from the one to the other, or it could be that you are witnessing a robbery. Human action does not take place in a vacuum, and it is necessary to take into consideration the context surrounding it.

Upon visiting a city in the south of Norway, I decided to contact a relative and some friends who had moved there for a meet up in the evening. As I am unfamiliar with the layout of the city, my cousin offered to guide me to where I was supposed to meet my friends. Just as we were walking through an alley I noticed a group of children that seemed to be bullying a child that was smaller of stature.

My cousin didn't seem to react to the situation, whereas I slowed down perplexed at how it appeared that one didn't intervene with these situations in larger cities. Furthermore I was shocked by the lack of reaction from my cousin whom I would have thought felt strongly about bullying as an issue. At the same time I was considering interfering myself, as I had experienced bullying while growing up and even to this day am well aware of the effects it has had on me. As I was considering the scene playing out in front of me, considering my approach, my cousin read my silence, and informed me that the children were shooting a movie, most likely for a school project.

The hardest part of my fieldwork has been to try not to interpret the situation, but simply observe it as it happens, and let understanding come at a later point. An example of this was when two of the children in class were told to switch places. The class then got one explanation for the move of just two pupils, even though they were all eager to move places, which I made a note of. Later on, the teacher let me in on the unofficial version of why the two children had to move seats.

2.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the meeting with children I knew I would be perceived as an adult and as such an authority of sorts. In addition to that, they are often curious and inquisitive as to who you are and what you are doing. Hence, they will come to you with questions and problems. With that

in mind I decided to opt for a participant observation approach to the field, and instilled myself on accepting the positions ascribed to me by the children. This position quickly became similar to that of an assistant, and was even let in on a few of the children's "secrets" that they wanted to share as well as being looked to for consolation. This gave me a more in-depth perspective as to the relations between the children, and between the children and the teachers.

This form of participant observation also meant that I had to be very considerate of how I affected the situations I was observing. I took care not to interview the children, as their parents were not present, nor ask questions relating to religion or the Northern Ireland conflict.

Any questions I asked were kept strictly related to the social context, and the conversation at hand. This was in part because it would be counter-intuitive to my role as observer as well as unethical, as this might contribute to the child consciously considering the implications of the divided society, and change behaviour according to that.

Furthermore, I did not want my observations and later interpretations of the social interaction I witnessed to be constructed in accordance with the knowledge of a child's faith. Because of this, my incompetence within the symbolic and linguistic field also served as an advantage in the role as a researcher.

2.6 REFLECTIONS AND SUMMARY

My manner of gathering data may not have been the most structured approach, however a very structured technique may too prove an imposition to the researcher, as "the more structured a technique, the less likely the researcher is to find facts whose existence he had not previously considered or to develop hypotheses he had not formulated" (Burgess,

1982). Even so, it was ever with ethical considerations and the privacy and anonymity of the informants in mind. Also adhering to the principle of not interpreting occurrences out of context or trying to shape incidents to fit in with a special scheme based on any particular dispositions of my own has been a focus in my field work.

3.0 CULTURE AND ETHNICITY

When talking about divided societies, or perhaps in many instances diverse societies might prove a more accurate wording, there are certain terms that should be discussed. The concepts of culture and ethnicity are rather vague, as they are so often used in their various forms interchangeably. What does ethnicity mean? What is culture?

3.1 CULTURE OR EXPRESSIONS OF CULTURE?

There are many examples of how humans seem to categorize each other in terms of belonging to this group or that, this society or that, based on factors such as appearance, behaviour in certain situations, language, use of language, which soccer team the other roots for or where you live. In casual discussion with friends some might speak of how excited they are to be experiencing a new culture on their travels, or getting their cultural fill from visiting a gallery or going to the theatre. Conversely, it is also culture that is to blame for honour killings, or terrorist attacks. "It's in their culture."

For a long time you would have trouble renting an apartment in Oslo if you came from the north of Norway, even in the mid-1900s. If, however, you were able to let an apartment and find a job you would be better off changing your manner of speech and dialect if you intended to work and live in the south of the country (Edvardsen, 1997). A lecturer at the

University of Tromsø mentioned an incident in which he had visited a clothes store and speaking in his northern dialect he asked the sales assistant, a woman, for help. The woman, speaking the local dialect and one considered at the time to be rather refined by comparison, replied, “Excuse me?”

Two words that might have meant a number of things, such as “I’m sorry, I didn’t hear you. Could you repeat that?” but her manner of replying, her body language and tone of voice expressed what the aforementioned lecturer took to signify “I’m sorry, but you must be in the wrong place.” The lecturer left the store empty-handed. I like to think of this situation as an example of how my lecturer’s cultural baggage contributed to his interpretation of the two words, while the sales assistant may have interpreted the situation differently, based on her own cultural baggage, which in turn contributed to her assessment of him.

The aforementioned lecturer was well known among his students for paraphrasing Geertz (1973): “Man is an animal suspended in a web of significance he himself has spun and keeps spinning. I take culture to be that web.”¹ From this is derived that culture is not naturally hereditary attributes such as colouring, bone structure, the shape of the body, or universal needs such as food and drink. The norms and rules that are taught, relates to culture, even unto what is edible and how food and drink is prepared for consummation as well as how it is consumed² relates to culture.

Dahl (2001) gives us further clarification that complements that of the aforementioned lecturer, in that he names the *significance* we ascribe to our practices, perceptions, thoughts and experiences as culture. The Japanese tea ceremony, the exquisite painting or the exclusion

¹ My translation

² Ex. the Japanese tea ceremony

of pork from the diet are *expressions* of culture, but it is the significance attributed to these that constitutes culture.

Even so, the thoughts of the individual does not always follow a specific pattern, which means that culture is descriptive of a pattern of thought that is shared by several individuals. In other words, culture refers to a common frame of reference within which the cultural forms of expression becomes significant for the many that constitutes a community. Culture is not the community or the separate individuals constituting the community, but they are carriers of the norms, rules, codes and symbols that are the expressions of culture.

An example of such an expression could be the harp. It has a function as a political symbol of Ireland, but it is also a symbol attributed in Christianity to angels. Beer drinkers might associate it with beers such as Haarp or Guinness, the latter of which is often itself associated with Ireland. To some the harp represents the lyrical arts, poetry and music. The point here is that a symbol will have different meanings depending on the significance attributed to it. The “correct” understanding of the symbol is acquired, exchanged, and sometimes changed, by the members of a community.

3.2 ETHNICITY

Ethnic is another one of those words that like culture is often in use, but in spite of its frequent appearance in everyday speech one oftentimes fall short of giving an adequate definition of the word. There seems to be a consensus in Norway, however, that when used in the context of a crime and the reporter says, “The perpetrator was of Norwegian ethnicity”, it means that the perpetrator belongs to the Norwegian, white majority whose family has

inhabited the country for several generations³. Geographic belonging seems to be one marker of ethnicity. Religion might be another.

According to Eriksen and Sajjad (2006) ethnicity refers to the subjectively perceived differences are continuously made relevant in relation to another group. Depending on where you are, these differences might include skin colour, language, or the aforementioned religion and geographic origins. Shared history and ancestry, even if it is of a rather obscure character (Eriksen & Sajjad, 2006), might also be a marker of ethnicity, in that it is something the members of the in-group have in common.

These differences are only important in the meeting between groups as that is when the members become aware of the markers that separates their group from the other. The group find common denominators that set them apart from the others, and as such, ethnicity is self-ascribed as well as externally assigned. In other words, the group itself puts emphasis on certain attributes to set it apart in the meeting with the other, while these features are less significant to members when interaction takes place between in-group members.

Where Northern Ireland is concerned examples of these markers might be difference in dialect, name or appearance. For the outsider, symbols such as these might provide little or no information. What is more, the information conveyed by these properties might be of little importance to the outsider, if any at all. As the “uninvolved” or uninformed of today, such as tourists, the worst consequence might be that they are discredited as conversational partners. For those involved, however, these attributes might inform an agent that the person in front of them is a member of the other group. In this case one might suppose the ethnicity is linked to territory and nationality – Those who wish to remain in union with Great Britain, and those who would like for a united Ireland.

³ Generally, this majority in this case seems to include the Sami and Kvens as well.

Someone would even say that in certain areas in Northern Ireland, the Irish language is considered a very important marker of them being Irish. So much so that the Irish-speaking⁴ of Northern Ireland are more proficient in their Irish than most inhabitants of the Republic of Ireland.

For our purposes, the focus of this text, and at the heart of the conflict is the two communities often labelled Protestant and Catholic. The seeming importance of this division to the members of the communities have even inspired several jokes, some more appropriate in polite company than others, some less so. Several of these, however, are based around the punchline “Yes, but is he a Protestant Chinese or a Catholic Chinese?”

This joke is an indicator of which features are graded as the most important ones when determining the ethnicity of the immigrant. It appears not to be whether the person in question is from Korea, Japan, China or even India, it’s not an ethnicity based on nationality that is in question. The question is whether the individual belongs to the in-group or the out-group. The one possessing the quality of being Catholic, the other Protestant, and positions these qualities as more significant than any other.

On a side note, this particular joke can be said to have some basis in truth, as paramilitaries and political parties during the nineties saw the value of recruiting the growing immigrant population to their respective causes.

As the ethnic identity of the collective is produced and reproduced in a contested field, that is to say, in the interaction between the in-group and the out-group, it is not static, but changes in the dialectic process of identifying similarities and differences. Parallel to the agent authorized by his or her habitus and capital to define and label within the field where this authorization is legitimate, so the agent of ethnic work operates within the boundaries set

⁴ Referring here to Gaelic Irish, not a dialect of English.

by his or her own ability to name and label aspects by which the collective is enabled to identify its own and its adversary. Names and labels – references - by which the individuals can construct a shared perception of reality.

3.3 SUMMARY

In this chapter we have discussed the meaning of culture versus ethnicity. These terms are often used interchangeably, however they do not necessarily mean the same. Culture refers to the shared pattern between several individuals that gives significance to their actions and perceptions of reality. How the world is perceived, norms, rules and actions can be expressions of culture. Not in the sense that, for instance, it is an universal need to consume food and water. To eat and to drink is not a cultural expression. *What* is consumed, or not, however is. *How* it is prepared prior to eating or drinking are expressions of culture.

Ethnicity, on the other hand is the ascribed and self-ascribed attributes that makes one group different from another, while simultaneously emphasizing the similarities of the members of the in-group. As such these attributes serve as references of identification in the meeting between members of the in-group and out-group.

Both terms are however most significant when people meet, and struggle to position and identify themselves and the other. They provide frames of reference for how to proceed in the interaction between humans, in particular those who seem to be different from a subjective point of view. It is easy to forget that it is not cultures or ethnicities that meet, but human beings, who carry these perceptions, expressions and attributes with them as they wander the earth.

4.0 SETTING THE SCENE

As previously mentioned, giving a full account of all the grievances and woes relating to the conflict would be a bigger task than is allowed for in a text such as this. Furthermore, giving an account of the Troubles without expressing oneself in a manner that might be construed as prejudiced towards one fraction or the other is challenging at best. Doing so in only a few pages, when whole dissertations and even books have been written concerning the Belfast Agreement⁵ alone, is difficult.

To cause further confusion, there is also the fact that Mairead will tell you one version of events, and James will tell you another. Up the road there lives Johnny who will gladly tell you all about how it really happened, but his wife, Rose, keeps correcting him because she too was there and knows exactly what went down. They are not telling high tales nor are they lying. They all tell you the truth, but it's the truth from their point of view.

I shall not endeavour to take on the role of a historian. Nevertheless, I deem a certain knowledge of the conflict necessary in order to set the scene and understand why the division of this particular society reaches beyond paramilitary activities, ceasefires, peace walls and political endeavours. It might be argued that the separated communities of today's Northern Ireland dates back, not just decades, but centuries with its origins in English colonialism and the subsequent Irish struggle for liberation. These are indeed events that are relevant to the power dynamics of the society, as well as crucial in the founding of the state of Northern Ireland. Even so, they are of less importance to the understanding of this text, and therefore I shall not linger overlong on events predating the state of Northern Ireland.

⁵ Often referred to as the Good Friday Agreement.

4.1 THE TROUBLES

The past is not inherited, but shaped for current usage: each generation gets the history not only that it deserves, but that it wants and writes. (Bell, 2000, p. 27).

Leading up to World War One, there had been an increased demand for Irish Home Rule, but after the war ended this demand was left in favour of a call for an independent Irish republic. The result was The Government of Ireland Act of 1920, and with it the division of the island with the twenty-six county Irish Free State in the south and the remaining counties Fermanagh, Armagh, Tyrone, Londonderry/Derry, Antrim and Down, where the demographic was made up by two thirds Protestant and one third Catholic (McKittrick & McVea, 2012), constituted Northern Ireland.

A Protestant majority rule put the Unionist party in power, and in the following half-century, it was kept in Unionist hands. Shortly after taking power, the Unionist party set about changing the voting system and redrawing local government boundaries, which in turn cost nationalists their majority in several councils originally in their control. The new arrangements brought forth the term gerrymandering.

The new state was characterized by distrust, with the Unionist community fearful for the very existence of Northern Ireland, while the Catholic community feared they would be discriminated against. Fears that would prove well founded (Fitzduff, 2002), as they indeed would be discriminated against under the new government with regards to jobs, politics and housing. With the new state came a new police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary with the idea that 1/3 of the employees should be from the catholic community. Under the circumstances, however, it ended up being in large made up by Protestants.

The 1960s saw an upsurge in civil rights movements, and in Northern Ireland it gave birth to the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA). The new organisation demanded, amongst other things, redrawing of the aforementioned boundaries, anti-discrimination legislation and a points system for housing allocation. The most crucial demand, however, was that of one man – one vote. When the proportional representation voting system had been abolished in 1922, it had been replaced by one in which subtenants and those living at home with their parents were excluded from voting, regardless of other manners of other eligibility. This system mostly affected the number of votes in the Catholic community, as economy and housing regulations meant that there were often a larger number of people inhabiting a single house than in the Protestant community.

While network is important, it seems that the discrimination of the Catholics relates to a fear within the Unionist community in charge, that the Catholic community would seek to destroy the new state, that the British should relinquish the land to the Republic in the south or that the Republic should invade. The idea of Catholics as the enemy of the Protestant community and of the union with Great Britain was widespread amongst Unionists, and many felt justified in implementing the new systems and regulations.

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly when the Troubles began. Some traces is to 5 October 1968, when NICRA in spite of a Stormont ban (Limpkin, 1972) arranged a march in Derry/Londonderry that caused a confrontation between the marchers and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). The confrontation became violent, with the RUC using batons and water cannons on the seemingly peaceful protesters. The incident caused great outrage within the Catholic community.

The next big occurrence came in January of 1969, when loyalists at Burntollet Bridge in County Londonderry ambushed a civil rights march from Belfast to Derry. The event that McKittrick and McVea (2012) identifies as the spark that set the whole forest on fire was the

Apprentice Boys of Derry's 12th of August march that year. The parade, which commemorates the Protestant victory in the Siege of Derry in 1689 would march through the city, including the Bogside, an area at the time under Catholic control. Confrontation ensued, with the government bringing in military forces and the violence spreading to Belfast as well as other areas of the state. The military forces brought in were there to protect both communities, as the Catholic community had little faith in the Royal Ulster Constabulary, which was largely made up of members from the Protestant community.

After the initial outbreak, however, the Catholic community looked more and more to the Irish Republican Army for protection. The IRA at the time, however were never as organized, nor as large as some Protestants would have believed (Bell, 2000). The organization did however benefit from the riots in terms of recruitment, and soon IRA propaganda caused for the military forces meant to protect the Catholic community, to find themselves viewed upon as enemies of the very same community.

IRA were not the only paramilitaries in play, and the mid-sixties, before the spark became a full-scale fire, saw the emergence of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) in response to the reforms implemented by the O'Neill government (1963-1969) at the time. Prime Minister Terrence O'Neill 1969, O'Neill tried to improve community relations, and to better the economic situation of the society through inviting outside industry to Northern Ireland. This was only effective to some extent. The reforms employed in order to build bridges between the communities, however, seemed to the Catholics inadequate, as they did not serve to tackle the problems that the unrest of the time was a symptom of (McKittrick & McVea, 2012). Eventually it was too little, too late. For the Protestant community, though, it seemed too much too soon, and the community feared for their sovereignty (Fitzduff, 2002).

The areas where unemployment were the highest and economical means the lowest in both communities coincided with the areas where the respective paramilitary groups found the

most support. Often in the form of unemployed, young men happy to get a purpose. Delighted to be fighting for their version of Northern Ireland (Bell, 2000) and relief from idleness. Perhaps one might say this lends support to the old adage of “idleness is the root of all evil”.

Aside from the varying accounts of events over the next three decades, the violence, the paramilitary organizations, the dead and the wounded, the attempts at peace, there are certain truths that most should be able to agree upon that still holds relevance, as put forth by Saugestad (1982, p. 133):

1. There is a situation of conflict in Northern Ireland. This conflict is of long standing. It concerns such basic questions as the legitimacy of the state and its ruling bodies, its right to claim loyalty from the citizens of Northern Ireland, and the question as to whether all citizens of Northern Ireland are able to exercise fundamental civil rights.
2. It is a characteristic of the conflict that regularly over the years physical violence has been used as a political weapon.
3. This division overrides all other differences of class and culture in the province. The two groups are all-embracing and see each other as mutually exclusive; the committed adherents of each do not recognise in-between or neutral categories.
4. The two groups are conveniently labelled “Catholics” and “Protestants”. Status as Catholic or Protestant is ascribed to the individual at birth and on baptism, and is independent of his actual religious practice.

The Unionist government after the establishment of the new state discriminated against the Catholic population, and in general most positions of power, including the more prominent business owners were inhabited by Protestants. It is not unreasonable to view the

conflict as a clash between two ethnic groups (Saugestad, 1982) or even two competing nationalities, one British, one Irish.

The labels “Catholic” and “Protestant” are useful when referring to the two ethnic groups. The implication, however, is that the conflict is of a religious nature, when it first and foremost is a political one, with religion as a secondary factor that in large appears to coincide with the former. Therefore it makes more sense to speak of the conflict as being twixt Nationalists/Republicans or Unionists/Loyalists. One who puts this quite aptly, as well as recognizing that not everybody was involved in the conflict, is Tommy Sands. In 1974, a Protestant friend of his was killed, and when the Loyalists came to the Catholic community seeking revenge, they killed a man who happened to be a friend of the original victim.

For the ground our fathers plowed in the soil is just the same,
And the places that we say our prayers have just got different names,
We talked about the friends who died and we hoped there'd be no more,
It was little then we realized the tragedy in store.

[...]

Alan was my friend he cried, he begged them with his fear,
But centuries of hatred have ears that cannot hear,
An eye for an eye was all that filled their mind,
And an eye for another eye till everyone is blind.

(Sands, 2005)

Nevertheless, it is possible, albeit unusual, for a Catholic to be a Unionist and a Protestant to be Republican. Then there is another possibility – that of not feeling particularly strongly about either faction. That said, Fitzduff (2002) writes “Almost all Catholics want a united Ireland, [...] Almost all Protestants still wish to retain the constitutional link with Britain (pp. 9-10).

A blow was struck at the British government from within prison walls at the beginning of the 1980s in the shape of hunger strikers. In protest of being denied status as political prisoners in the late 1970s, republican prison inmates conducted several protests. Incidentally, these would get wide media coverage, however to no avail. This was when the prisoners employed what would prove a fatal tactic for some – the hunger strikes. The hunger strikes not only served to give the prisoners media coverage, but also the sympathy of the republican and nationalist community as well as the international community. Bobby Sands⁶ in particular became the image of the hunger strikes. Appearing rather charismatic and more of a victim than a terrorist (McKittrick & McVea, 2012) his death caused outrage as well as international criticism of the Thatcher government that was in power at the time.

Republicans on the outside saw the political value of the media coverage and the attention directed at the hunger strikers, when few days before his death Sands had been elected Member of Parliament. While he never got the chance to take up his seat, his electoral victory prompted the IRA into exploring further the political processes they had previously been wary of. Accordingly, they developed Sinn Féin into a fully-fledged political organization that rapidly gained followers, also amongst those who had sympathized with the cause, but were opposed to join the IRA. 1983 saw Gerry Adams elected Westminster MP for West Belfast, and by 1985, the political party was the fourth largest party in Northern Ireland.

A piece to the puzzle was put in place 1985, with the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which among other things stated that the Republic of Ireland did indeed have a legitimate claim to the area. Even so, there would be no changing the status of Northern Ireland as a part of the United Kingdom until the majority of its population consents to it.

⁶ Commanding officer of the IRA prisoners in Long Kesh and leader of the hunger strike.

Furthermore, the devolved government set into place should be chosen to secure acceptance between both communities (Fitzduff, 2002).

The way to peace in Northern Ireland have been a long-winded one, and one that has had to be laid down piece by piece. One in which even small displays of empathy and cooperation between politicians could cause public outrage. Thus a small group constituted “the link” between the authorized members of the communities, in this case Martin McGuinness and Gerry Adams on the Republican side, and the British government on the other.

1994 saw a ceasefire from both Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries in favour of – and in exchange for - participation in political talks regarding a peace treaty. However, a requirement of decommissioning as a condition for involvement in the political process did not sit well with the IRA, who in 1996 ended their ceasefire.

When agreement was reached in 1998, it was essential that the final treaty address injustices and equality issues, as well as investigations into several incidents that occurred during the Troubles. Perhaps more important in the long run, meaning no disrespect to the victims and bereft, is that any issues of major relevance to both communities would need consensus from both communities

It has taken a long time, and the shaky peace of the aftermath was marked by several episodes of violence on either side. Nevertheless, Northern Ireland has since settled into a form of peace with only the occasional riot and incidents of violence related to the conflict. There are even plans of, given mutual consent from the communities, tearing down the peace walls that have been preventing or limiting sectarian violence since 1969.

The older generations still carry the marks and scars left by the conflict, but new generations are growing up that have not experienced the sectarian violence. The violent

times of the Troubles are over, but the conflict is not entirely at an end. The younger generations are still affected by a society that bears the characteristics of deep divisions that is constructed and reproduced through language, symbolism and education.

5.0 THE DIVERSE AND SHARED SOCIETY



In the modern world, there are few homogenous states or states almost void of other ethno-cultural groups. As such, governments have had to address how to best manage the ever-increasing diversity of the state, in the hopes that their approach will result in a stable society overall. However, it would be naïve to think that a society is void of conflict, regardless whether the population is a mixture of ethnicities or not.

Conflict is a part of every social relationship (Nagle & Clancy, 2010), and can just as easily be over inequalities concerning gender or economy. As such, it might bring about a

change for the better. As previously mentioned, the cause of the Northern Ireland conflict is not as much different faiths, but dissimilarities between the two societies that were addressed in a manner that exacerbated the issues, rather than resolving them. As such, the conflict was pre-existent to the Troubles. When the Catholic community increasingly addressed the inequalities, the response was violence, which perhaps in turn drove the wedge deeper.

Over the years, states have tried out several options for managing diverse ethnicities within their borders, ranging from separatism to consociationalism to integration. The following gives a run-down of the various methods, with an emphasis on the divided society of Northern Ireland. .

5.1 MANAGING DIVERSITY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

The Good Friday Agreement recognizes that for the two communities, the Protestant and the Catholic, to come together and agree upon a common identity simply is not in the cards in the near future (Nagle & Clancy, 2010). In light of the events preceding the agreement, considering how one saw it necessary to create physical barriers such as the peace walls as a protective measure for inhabitants on both sides, one might understand how those who negotiated its wording might have considered co-existence a reasonable and achievable goal.

Separatism refers to a separation of a group that is religiously, ethnically or culturally different from a larger group (Fitzduff, 2013). Gender and sexual orientation might also provide a basis for the separation. The apartheid of South Africa and United States are examples of separatism. In the case of assimilation, however, the goal is to replace the existing policies of the group with those of the group in power.

An example that lies close to home for this author is the treatment of the Sami and Kven populations of Norway, particularly in the northern region becomes relevant. With the purpose of absorbing these peoples into the Norwegian population, from the mid-1800s to well into the twentieth century they were encouraged to learn the Norwegian language (Jensen, 2005). In some cases by means such as free magazine subscriptions, but a policy of compulsory school attendance meant that many had to leave their homes in favour of Norwegian boarding schools. According to the stories, these were generally an unpleasant experience for the children who were strongly discouraged from speaking the Sami or Kven languages while in school.

The government employed these methods, in part out of fear of a Finnish invasion, but part of it was that they deemed the Sami people a primitive folk that would become extinct unless taught the ways of the more evolved and refined Norwegians. Just as there was a stigma to being Indian or Afro-American in the United States, there was a stigma connected to being Kven or Sami in Norway, and many denounced their status as Kven or Sami in favour of becoming a Norwegian citizen.

A third approach that became more common as minorities and immigrants started fearing for their cultural identity becoming lost in that of the larger group is multiculturalism. Commonly, this means that the state accommodates of the needs of the minority, though policies might vary from a focus of equal respect for both groups, to promoting cultural diversity. The policy is often referred to as a “salad bowl” or even “cultural mosaic” (Fitzduff, 2013), with the hopes that the resulting society carries the best characteristics of both the minority group and that of the dominating group.

The vision of a cultural mosaic or the salad bowl has been the dominating policy in many western countries for quite some time, though not without opposition as some groups are under the impression that multiculturalism sometimes puts too much emphasis on

intercultural communication, equality and good relations, without addressing the injustices prior to the implementation of this policy.

Tonge (2014) describes the cross-community power-sharing government of Northern Ireland as “a rare triumph of consociationalism” (p. 114). The initial attempts at cooperation between the two rival factions after the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement fell into ruin few years after its conception. Notwithstanding this, with a few modifications to the original agreement the power-sharing executive was reinstated in 2006. Even so, and in spite of this form of management has been accused of reinforcing sectarian divisions and weakening democracy (Nagle & Clancy, 2010), Northern Ireland appears a prime representative of consociationalism. This system of governance grants equal recognition to the political factions that can come together for the benefit of the societies, while acknowledging the elephant in the room. In the case of Northern Ireland, that is the two communities that are deeply divided in both public and private spheres.

5.2 THE SHARED SOCIETY

A friend from the south of Norway visited Tromsø in the north. She was very excited, as she had never been so far north. Furthermore, she exclaimed happily that she had seen Sami people. An exclamation that earned her a resounding laughter amongst those present, and a question if she had ever been to Oslo, where is said to live the highest population of Sami, though according to the stereotype they inhabit the northernmost counties of Norway. What she had meant, however, were Sami peoples dressed in traditional garb.

Her visit to the north coincided with the celebration of the Sami National Day, with several activities taking place in the city centre. To her, and probably the tourists visiting from all over the world, this event were a fun and exotic rarity, much in the same way the re-

enactment of the Battle of Clontarf would be to the visitor in Dublin. While acknowledging the presence and the rights of the indigenous people of Norway, during such times it is easy to forget the assimilation politics of the past, and the consequences and the repercussions of that, which can be seen even today.

When this writer attended secondary school, just after the turn of the millennium the children had numerous insults to choose from. There were the well-known name-calling, preferably reinforced by a descriptive swearword, of “idiot” and “fool”. However, there were also others, such as “negro”, “gay” and “Sami”. Sometimes used jokingly, but mostly in an offensive manner. Prejudice and stigma surrounding these labels being prevalent, with some who were known to be of Sami descent most often at the receiving end of the Sami insult than others. It is significant that most of the children, and for that matter the population, of the region at the time were of Sami descent, as well as probably having roots elsewhere around the North Calotte. Norwegian writer Bente Pedersen even put a most apt name to her heritage, calling herself a North Calotte cocktail, due to the mixed heritages that many inhabiting the northern regions of Norway might claim.

Other manifestations of the discord between the Sami and the Norwegian rears its head once in a while. An example was a football match between a team from the north of Norway and one from the south in mid-April 2015. The tension between the teams got high during the match, and the air was thick with name-calling and offenses. This was when one of the players from the southern team referred to the presumed Sami heritage of a player on the other team in a most degrading way, causing for sanctions from the referee.

Halfway across the world, in Central America there is a struggle to be the whitest person in the room. The Spanish conquistadors were wealthier and more powerful than the indigenous peoples of the region were. They were also fairer of skin, which in turn has led to the association of fair skin with wealth and power (Lancaster, 1991). Over time, the

indigenous population mostly assimilated to the Spanish culture and language, with a fair skin tone being a desirable quality. This lends a sense of status to the person with the fairest skin, which in turn might give cause for a family to treat their children differently according to skin tone. While the darker skinned child often gets the tougher chores around the house, the fairer child is more often on proudly put on display for instance by being sent out to play. The competition is to be less “*indígena*” in appearance, a discourse generally accepted to the point where a child can point to a European’s skin and name it “bonito” as opposed to its own, which is “feo”⁷.

Similarly to the struggle to position oneself far from the stigmatized status of *indígena* there are many who, due to Norwegian assimilation politics, shed their Sami identity in favour of becoming proud members of the Norwegian society. It is unknown if this were the mechanism that caused for road signs in the Sami language to seemingly be used for target practice around the turn of the millennia, or more than a decade later vandalize signs in the Sami language by other means (Mikalsen & Hansen, 2014), or if prejudice were to blame. It could also be a fear similar to that of the Unionist community in Northern Ireland after the founding of the state, one of over time losing one’s identity as Norwegian or becoming a minority, with one’s own rights being set aside to benefit the out-group, in this case the Sami.

While Norway is often regarded as a very peaceful society, there is the occasional conflict between those considering themselves Sami and those who does not, conflicts that are often related to the use of land but also discrimination, such as the incident with the football teams. As such, it provides us with an example of the shared community, and one where integration has become the gold standard. Those Norwegians who are of Sami descent are still Norwegians, although on certain occasions they are as exotic or even more so to a compatriot

⁷ “Bonito” – beautiful.
“Feo” - ugly

than those new citizens hailing from the Middle East, South America, Asia or even African countries. Nevertheless, as previously mentioned, conflict is not necessarily good or bad. It all depends on how it is handled.

5.3 THE DIVIDED SOCIETY

Those to whom integration seems the best form of managing a society in which there are two or more conflicting ethnic groups consider consociation inefficient at best, arguing that a holistic approach, starting at the grassroots is more efficient than one working from the top down, beginning with the power sharing elite. What is more, the approach employed in Northern Ireland is sometimes accused of contributing to the divide by institutionalizing the segregation, simultaneously as it is accused of not adhering to the theories regarding consociational power sharing arrangement (Nagle & Clancy, 2010). The latter is because the power sharing of Northern Ireland has been adapted to the specific context, and as such is more liberal than other models of consociationalism.

Another common claim is that the consociational arrangement are a form of a benign apartheid or institutionalisation of sectarianism, while also causing for a weakening of the democracy (Nagle & Clancy, 2010). The accusation has basis in politic systems that appears to favour nationalist and unionist parties, while cross-community parties are at a disadvantage. What such critiques however fail to recognize is that years of violent conflict has served to crystallize the ethnic identities, making them very difficult to reconstruct. As such, it is argued that the arrangement “merely legislates for what is already there” (Nagle & Clancy, 2010, p. 56), and recognizes the divisions in order to transform the community in the long run.

A testament to my role as an outsider in Northern Ireland was the little clues that I would to this day remain oblivious to – not in the sense that I did not know of their existence, but I was unable to read them. For those who know what to look for, however, it is easy to identify which category the other falls into without bringing up neither themes of religion nor politics.

There were certain hints that were more obvious than others. For instance, an elderly man who had formerly worked as a police officer were likely to be from the Protestant community, as before and during the Troubles there had been very few Catholics employed within the police force. In addition, Catholic teachers usually trained at one college, while Protestant teachers got their education at another. Of course, neither of these could be said with absolute certainty, and asking outright would be considered rude.

Nevertheless, these were clues that might come up in conversation and give a clue as to the faith of a conversation partner, though that in itself would not divulge information regarding their thoughts around the conflict or their position. In addition, as has been mentioned earlier, some Catholics would like for the six counties to remain part of Britain, some Protestants would like to be part of the Republic of Ireland, and some inhabitants do not carry particularly strong feelings either way.

A conversation in Derry a few years back led me to the conclusion that it, for instance, would not be particularly wise to hum “The wind that Shakes the barley” while walking down a road decorated in red, white and blue. Even so, an elderly man divulged that though he had played in a flute band – according to him the Protestant community’s counterpart to the Irish session – he had always had a preference and love for Irish music. What we can take from this is that music preference seems to provide a less reliable indicator of political orientation where those who do have a sense of commitment to either cause is concerned.

There are however other telltale signs, some more obvious than others. In the event of a chance meeting, one might strike up a polite conversation about background and network, without ever bringing up religion or politics. Even so, one might through this cautious probing ascertain the others' position (Saugestad, 1982).

It has been established that by the age of eight, many children have learnt to tell the difference between a Catholic and a Protestant, through having learnt the subtle combination of accent, name, and background clues that ensures such "telling" (Fitzduff, 2002, p. 31).

This is supported by a research study commissioned by BBC in 2007 (Connolly, Muldoon, & Kehoe) on attitudes among children growing up in segregated communities. The survey, conducted amongst a selection of children born in 1997, found Catholic children to be more likely to identify themselves as Irish than Protestant children, who in turn largely identified as British. Further, the research indicated that the children showed a preference for their own community in favour of the other group.

Since the eighties games traditionally associated with the Catholic community have received a wider broadcast than previously experienced, while newspapers have increased their coverage of sporting events relating more to the other community.

In spite of the work being done to bring together the communities over sporting events, they sometimes serve to reinforce divisions. A visitor to Norway from Glasgow could confirm that indeed supporters of Rangers and Celtic often travelled from Northern Ireland to sporting events in Scotland. It is not uncommon for violent displays of sectarianism to break out between hooligans inside the arena and outside of it. With that in mind, it might be safer for the respective communities to enjoy the sporting activities of the others' at the safe distance provided by the increased media coverage. With other projects taking place in the

sporting communities, such as teaching sports on a cross-community level, and schools including sports relating to both communities in their curriculum, as well as sporting activities with no connotations to either community.

A woman I talked to felt that in the event a Catholic child, especially one wearing a Celtic shirt (green), would walk into a Protestant area the child would quickly find itself unwelcome there. Quite conversely, a Protestant child dressed in the blue Rangers shirt would likely find itself less out of place in a Catholic area. She speculated that it was not so much that the child looked less out of place there, but that the Catholic community knew so well discrimination and stigma. Because of this, they would not respond by sanctioning the Protestant child to the same degree.

There are indeed findings to suggest that the Catholic community is less negatively disposed towards the opposite community (Connolly, Muldoon, & Kehoe, 2007) It should, however be stressed that the children of both communities who participated in this survey appeared to be not so much opposed to the other community. Rather, their responses can be interpreted as a partiality towards their own community.

School uniform might also “reveal” one’s identity to the other, as the short film “In Peace Apart – Teaching divided histories”⁸ shows. Four youths from separate sides, two Catholic, two Protestant have come together as part of The Nerve Centres’ Teaching divided histories project with the documentary “In Peace Apart” as the result. The film shows two 17-year old girls from separate schools, one Catholic the other attending college in a mainly Protestant area of the city. The girls talk about how the city’s divisions – not just by walls or the river Foyle, but also into Catholic and Protestant, Irish and British, green and blue, the latter referring to the colours of their uniforms.

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQF3oz6L8PQ>

In the documentary, the youths reflect over how, in spite of them being the same age, it is likely that they would not have met if not for the project and that they have had little contact with “the other side”. They pose questions regarding the future and how *not* growing up in separate areas and attending separate schools might affect generations to come, and they take a walk in one another’s shoes, or uniform to be precise.

The young moviemakers state that “Our generation has not seen the violence and conflict of the past with our own eyes, but we have been shaped by its legacy. We live in peace, but we live apart.” And what is more, “If we had met as children I’m sure we would be friends. It would have been good to have had the chance.” (“In Peace Apart - Teaching divided histories,” 2014)

The peace process in Northern Ireland has been a long-winded one, with the power-sharing between the two competing factions of Unionists, mostly represented by the Democratic Unionist Party, and Nationalists, in large represented by Sinn Féin, as its outcome.

What is required is not merely contact across divides, but a holistic approach containing positive programmes of action requiring different communities to interact on a consistent basis, as the only viable means of diminishing inter-communal difference and achieving social transformation. [...] Consociation is, at best, a modest form at the top, whereas what is required is horizontal integration throughout the rest of society (Tonge, 2014, p. 48)

Given the past, establishing a consociating or power-sharing executive was at the time of the Good Friday Agreement considered the only viable arrangement that would take the state forwards into peace. What is more, while not always in agreement – to the point where

some would say one party would oppose the other out of spite – the two fractions now find themselves working in cooperation to govern Northern Ireland.

As part of a program to unite the communities, the executive have created a strategy around a vision to create:

A united community, based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and reconciliation - one which is strengthened by its diversity, where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced and where everyone can live, learn, work and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance.

(OFMDFM, 2013, p. 11)

This acknowledges that while there is peace, Northern Ireland has not yet achieved reconciliation between communities. It also acknowledges the role of schools, workplaces and neighbourhoods in achieving the goal of a cohesive, tolerant, inclusive community, with reconciliation, equality and good community relations at its core.

5.4 DISCUSSION

The terms “shared” and “divided” society seems to be frequently used interchangeably. However, when looking at the communities in Norway and the communities of Northern Ireland, and how the diversities of society is managed, one gets the sense that the words indeed refer to two different sets of managing the diverse societies.

That is not to say there are no conflicts between the Sami community and the Norwegian community. Nonetheless, the divisions run deeper within Northern Ireland, with the two communities maintaining public rituals that are exclusive to one community and flags

and emblems that contest the nationality of areas. Even what newspaper one buys or where one shops for groceries is a way of confirming and constructing identity.

Within the divided society, there is a struggle for legitimacy, from the recognition of cultural expressions to access to social space. In Northern Ireland there has been established a Parades Commission (Fitzduff, 2013) in response to complaints from the Catholic community that the parades of organizations such as the Orange Order is an affirmation of dominance. The task of the commission is to assess the parade and tensions, and consider whether it is to be allowed to proceed as is, re-routed or even banned, as well as negotiate other possible terms for the parade to take place.

As a result of the conflict, and events predating it, the history of Northern Ireland for the purposes of education is a subject that should be approached with caution. It has been said of the Omagh bombing⁹ that everybody knew somebody. In Northern Ireland that is in many ways the situation, with the families of victims sometimes living only a short walk from a loved one's killer, and as such there are many of the themes relating to the conflict might also be part of family history for some.

Part of the work to reconcile the two communities have been to negotiate and settle upon a history of Northern Ireland that does not polarize one community or the other. Member of Parliament and Sinn Féin member Michelle Gildernew said in her speech given at the Hunger Strike anniversary march in August 2014:

It is clear to all of us that we are never going to share interpretations and sentiments about many historical events and issues which divide us. At times our communities have deliberately hurt each other, at others we have simply

⁹ 15. August, 1998.

misunderstand the other. Our history is shared and yet deeply divided.(Gildernew, 2014)

In the past, state schools had mostly focused on the history of Britain, largely disregarding Ireland in the narrative (Fitzduff, 2002), while Catholic maintained schools often put a negative emphasis on the British role in Ireland. Since 1993 this curriculum, which is the work of members from both communities, has been implemented in schools in favour of a one-sided account decided upon by the dominant culture.

Even so, children living in segregated societies grow up under quite different influences. Research has found that Catholic families and Protestant families often keep different newspapers, watch different television and radio broadcasts, visits different places on a local level as well as for summer holidays and engage in different sports (Connolly et al., 2007). The various arenas these represent also provides the respective societies with their own separate authorities on legitimacy.

To the international world, the media depicted a Northern Ireland of constant unrest, punctuated by times of escalating violence. An image that has proven itself a lingering one, with several members of my own social circle expressing worry upon my travelling to Northern Ireland. The media, however, as a conveyer of language and worldviews, chose to emphasize this aspect in their representation of the area on the news. By exercising its power to define and label, naming the paramilitaries as terrorists, even if they themselves may have seen their part differently in what they perceived to be a war, the media also exercised a form of symbolic violence.

Life in Northern Ireland was however quite different from the media's representation, as confirmed by a woman who grew up in Belfast during the Troubles. She explained that the city centre was mostly considered neutral ground. Nevertheless, her family only went there if

they had to and it was not something she had relished doing, though it was less because from fear of the paramilitaries than it was due to the time-consuming security checks.

5.5 SUMMARY

There are several ways of managing the diverse communities of a society. In this chapter, we have briefly covered some of these. Furthermore, we have explored the divided society of Northern Ireland and some of the mechanisms contributing to the division, as well as maintaining the impression internationally of Northern Ireland as a deeply divided society. A lot of work has been and is being done in an effort to build a more cohesive society. From creating a historical curriculum within the educational institutions that does not polarize one community or the other, to sharing in sports and venues.

6.0 THEORY



The following chapter gives an introduction to Bourdieu's sociology pertaining to his terms of habitus, capital and social violence. Bourdieu explores the phenomenon of how human behaviour and thinking are moulded into societal structures. Using terms such as field, actors, habitus and capital, his sociology describes the mechanisms behind the reproduction of power balances and social class.

Though the theory can be generalized, it should be noted that it is not without exceptions, with the sociologist himself being a prime example of the adverse, considering he started out the son of a postal worker in rural France (Wilken, 2008).

6.1 THE FORMS OF CAPITAL

The term *habitus* refers to a set of dispositions that promotes a certain behaviour in a human being. It is a person's way of being as is developed throughout life and provides the

basis for the individual's perception, worldview, taste, language and manners of communication. The formation of the habitus is not a conscious process of verbalization of direction (Bourdieu, 2009), as much as it is transmitted as non-verbal responses to actions. Perhaps a hard look when the child is running down the hallway, or a raised eyebrow as the child slouches at the dinner table suggests a change in behaviour as much as the verbal "Sit straight". The habitus is incorporated through the most mundane practices of everyday life. It is the culture incorporated in the individual and its expression in social practice.

In other words, it is a reflection of the social conditions under which an individual is raised. They are ingrained in the very being of the agent though not consciously gained or expressed. These dispositions are transposable to other fields than the one in which they were originally acquired (Bourdieu, 2009).

Accordingly, habitus shapes the agents behaviour, perception, responses and expressions, a sense of how to act, even in circumstances that are different from those under which the dispositions were attained to begin with. That said, the practices and perceptions of the individual is not so much the product of habitus. An individual does not act in a vacuum. Actions take place in social context. Therefore an action might be viewed as the product of the relation between the habitus (Bourdieu, 2009, p. 14) and the field within which it plays out.

On a side note, the term *field* refers to the arena or setting in which capital is acquired, distributed, converted and maintained. When the individual, or in Bourdieu's term *agent*, has a common interest with that of an institution it creates a field, that is further maintained by being a common interest of the agents and institution. An example would be the field of social studies. It is not the University that is the field, but the institution and the agents that shares an interest and struggles to acquire knowledge, maintain what is considered to be legit

knowledge or perhaps even change what is. It is also the field for another struggle, that of those who are in possession of one form of capital and strives to exchange that for another.

The term capital is one borrowed from Karl Marx, and does not refer to the capital of economics, though Bourdieu does not disregard the value of money or material goods. In the context of his sociology, however, capital is more akin to various traits or qualities that a person is in possession of that is of more or less value within a field and enables the agent to move with more or less proficiency within that same field. And so, economic capital and material means aside, Bourdieu names the three forms social, cultural and symbolic capital. In the following, we shall explore these terms further.

Starting with the term *cultural capital* this refers to knowledge or skills that enables the agent to move within the field where this is practiced and valued (Wilken, 2008). This can take the shape of education, abilities or another form of competence that the agent is in possession of which in turn might prove a resource in certain contexts. An example of this is the language used within academia. The more proficient the agent is in understanding and employing the language considered legitimate within his field of study, for instance economy or sociology, the more the agent is likely to profit from this capital. In this case the profit is gained is represented in terms of good results in tests and exams and perhaps even social capital as the agent displays his mastery of the dominant culture. Those who show less proficiency in the field are often found to have a shorter lifespan within that field. This goes in particular for the field of education, which in turn is where the dominant or legitimate culture is reproduced. We shall explore the implications of this further later on in the text.

The social capital is linked to how an agent benefits from his or her social connections and the network the agent partakes in. To give a crude example, the agent is a physics student who is having problems understanding a passage in a book. But his aunt is a science professor

at another university, so he calls her on Skype and she explains it to him in a way he understands.

Social capital is the resources the agent is in possession of as a member of a specific group, and the agents ability to profit from these resources (Järvin, 1996). What is more, the relationships implied within the group needs tending to continuously, in order for the agent to have continuous access to these resources, even though it is rare for agents to make a conscious effort at investing in and accumulating social capital.

I will try to exemplify the terms by using an example from a rural district. There are many smaller farms in the area, and all the farmers know each other. The institution in our example is the idea of farming, and the farmers are the agents. Without either the field that is the practice of farming, be it potatoes, cows or sheep, can't be constituted. In *this* particular field, being in possession of a Da Vinci painting, which could be viewed as one form of cultural capital, is of little value lest it enables the farmer to profit from it, perhaps by selling it to purchase something that he might benefit from in his work on the farm.

The farmers provide each other with a social network – resources, in that they can exchange experiences and help one another when it is needed. As members of the network, though the farmers themselves would not see it as such, they are in possession of social capital. When they ask one another for help, they profit from that capital.

Further, each farmer has special knowledge or skills, ranging from a knack for fixing a tractor that's malfunctioning to shearing sheep and even unto how to take care of a sick animal or hunting foxes that threaten the animals. They all are in possession of the skills needed, but some are more skilled in this or that than the others, and sometimes one just needs another set of hands that knows equally well what to do.

The competence the farmers are in possession of can be viewed as cultural capital – useless in the halls of the Parliament, but invaluable in the field that the farmers inhabit. Conversely, a highly skilled debater would have little use of his ability come harvest time at the farm.

There is however, one farmer who, while quick to ask for assistance, himself, is less willing when asked and seldom offers. The other farmers are annoyed by this, as they seldom receive any help in return and as time goes by they become less inclined to aid this farmer. This farmer has failed to tend to his network and so his social capital has decreased, as he is no longer able to reap the benefits from it.

The last form of capital, in Bourdieu's terms, is symbolic capital. This might refer to the agent's ability to convert one form of capital into another. The aforementioned skilled debater has been able to profit from his ability to argue for his views by gaining a standing within the field. Nevertheless, in the world of the farmer, this would bring him little or no reward, and he would benefit far more from an ability to learn from the farmer whose very being has been shaped over the years by working the farm.

In this particular field, that rare Da Vinci mentioned earlier is of little value, however it would be a marker of prestige and distinction hanging in the manor of an agent inhabiting the higher reaches of society. Or, for that matter, in the event that the farmers also have an interest in art, however that would bring on a change of field and not be of value for the agent in his position as a farmer.

The owner gains symbolic capital by having ownership of this material good in a field where it is valued. Not because he or she is in possession of a material good in itself, but because it is a representation of distinction and good taste. Likewise, being a professor at a university is another form of symbolic capital – the prestige and repute accompanying the

cultural capital the agent is in possession of by holding a specific knowledge at a level that is recognized and valued within the field.

6.2 SYMBOLIC POWER AND SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE

This brings us to the next point of order within Bourdieu's sociology: Who determines what is to be recognized and valued within the field? The answer to this is to be found in Bourdieu's theory of "symbolic violence". Symbolic violence does not constitute an act of intimidation. Moreover it is the power to impose one perception of reality as objective and real without those involved recognizing that the reality in question is quite random, nor that alternative perceptions have been excluded.

"Those involved" refers to both the dominant classes as well as the subordinates, which in turn means that neither the dominant party nor the oppressed are aware of the oppression being imposed. In fact, it is not even recognized as domination and oppression. In the eyes of the actors involved, there is only one perception of reality and worldview and it is accepted as the way of things, as undisputable as the laws of nature. The exercise of symbolic power is in other terms the authority to apply names and labels and through that naming establish the structure of the agents' perception of reality.

Within a society, there is a consensus on the meaning of symbols, which in turn enables communication between members of the same group (Bourdieu, 2009). The meaning of the symbols, however, is constructed in favour of the dominant culture that further legitimizes the established social order and the dominant class. Sub-cultures are then established within the hierarchy by how they relate to the ideology of the dominant culture and by how they diverge from it. The symbolic power is a transformed from the various forms of capital, and as such is rendered unrecognizable. In accordance with this, it is not the words

or symbols themselves that hold power, but the belief in the symbols and the authorized agent who expresses them.

There is no social agent who does not aspire, as far as circumstances permit, to have the power to name and to create the world through naming: gossip, slander, lies, insults, commendations, criticisms, arguments and praises are all daily and petty manifestations of the solemn and collective acts of naming, be they celebrations or condemnations, which are performed by generally recognized authorities. (Bourdieu, 2009, p. 105)

An example of such authority is educational institutions and by Bourdieu's analysis, every pedagogical act is an act of symbolic violence as this indeed names a perspective, knowledge or perception of reality as true and legitimate, in favour of another. This does not exclude neither nursery nor university. Palludan (2006) found that through the interaction between children and caregivers certain frameworks were established, and through the caregivers' responses, the children were subtly, and in any likelihood not consciously so, encouraged to behave in certain ways.

Those who managed to appropriate the legitimate sense of practice, that is to say the preferred manner of behaviour, employed a certain way of moving and expressing themselves. When interacting with the caregivers these children more often were treated as peers by the adults. Further, the dialogue between child and caregiver were characterized by a sense of equivalence, rather than the instructional tone the children who failed to appropriate this manner of behaviour received.

What is more, Palludan found that the children who were most adept at assuming the behaviour that earned them a status in the dialogue as an equal conversationalist, as opposed to the pupil-teacher relation, were usually children of the Danish majority. Conversely,

children of minority backgrounds appeared to struggle to position themselves as coequals in the interaction between caregiver and child. It appeared that the minority children's attempts at positioning themselves as equals deviated from the legitimate practice and consequentially the caregivers failed to recognize their efforts and grant the desired response.

One might suppose that the majority children through their habitus, that is to say, not by the quality of being members of the majority group but through the transposal of previous experience, generate a practice that is recognized and valued by the caregivers.

The minority children possess a different set of dispositions, a different habitus, and while valid currency in the market that is constituted by the practices in that community, it is also one that is not appreciated nor acknowledged by the caregivers as legitimate practice. Part of the process involved relates closely to Bourdieu's theory on reproduction, which we shall explore further in relation to the Northern Ireland conflict.

Social interaction constitutes the social reality. If we think of speech as an action, the construction of reality is a struggle for legitimacy. It is a struggle to position one statement to be more valid than another, and for this statement to be perceived as real and true.

That said, it is not necessarily the language or symbols used that in themselves constitute the symbolic power, but how they are used and by whom that lends the power. Likewise, the agent's social position also serves to govern the words he or she has to the legitimate speech of the institution. It is only when used by the appropriate agent the words hold power, and any performative utterance by the unauthorized will fail to receive recognition (Bourdieu, 2009).

The authorized agent might be a professor giving a lecture at a University, or a reporter on television. The doctor when examining a patient is an authorized agent by the capital he or she has gained by being in the possession of the cultural capital, as well as the

social capital of belonging to the group that is doctors. The realization of the Belfast Agreement¹⁰ provides us with another example of how the term works out in practice. In order for the Good Friday Agreement to happen, negotiations had to go through the correct channels, the authorized agents. A recruit of the IRA would not be in a position to call for a ceasefire, however the appointed leaders of the organization at the time were.

Likewise, and additionally as we have touched upon earlier, it also takes the authorized agent to define the markers that constitutes the ethnic identity, as the definition of the ethnic identity also necessitates recognition by the collective. This means that the construction of ethnicity, too, is an act of symbolic violence.

A very powerful conveyer of perceived legitimate reality is the media. Through television and radio broadcasts, newspapers and magazines, web sites and blogs particular perceptions of the world is distributed to the masses. Which stories to deign attention and which stories should be left untold, and just as important, the angle of the story are in large in the hands of the media. This is in part why some people might believe Norway to be the capital of Sweden¹¹, or that all Scandinavians are blonde Vikings who spend their spare time gazing at the northern lights.

6.3 THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION AS A FIELD OF REPRODUCTION

Education is often touted as the potentially most powerful tool to handle social inequalities. Ideally, the educational system serves as a foundation for socio-economic mobility, that is, the ability to move in terms of social or economic level, and counteract

¹⁰ The Good Friday Agreement.

¹¹ It is a standing joke in Norway that many Americans have very little geographical knowledge and believe that Norway or Oslo is the capital of Sweden.

poverty. The United Nation's declaration of Human Rights states that all humans are "born free and equal in dignity and rights" (UN, 1948). Furthermore, it states that:

Article 26.

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

This makes up the basis for Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act:

(1) A public authority shall in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity—

(a) between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;

(b) between men and women generally;

(c) between persons with a disability and persons without;

and

(d) between persons with dependants and persons without.

(2) Without prejudice to its obligations under subsection (1), a public authority shall in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland have regard to

the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

("The Northern Ireland Act 1998 Section 75," 1998) From these legislative works, we can deduce that the educational institutions shall work towards promoting relations between the divided society of Northern Ireland. Additionally, it shall encourage self-growth and be beneficial towards the promotion of the child's "talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential" (UN, 1989).

It is my understanding that these frameworks does not mean to say that the educational institutions shall work to promote equality, but should give each and every agent inhabiting the institutions equal opportunity towards achieving the highest academic goals in accordance with their abilities, while also encourage respect for its fellow human beings.

In Northern Ireland equal opportunities are addressed through the Equality scheme (DENI, 2013), which is based around the idea that every child or young person should achieve their full potential at their respective stage of development. This presupposes the acknowledgement of a performance gap, and the recognition of the aspects in the agents' lives that may contribute to this. The Department of Education lists three priority areas to focus upon in bridging the gap and ensuring that pupils from all backgrounds will achieve their potential. These relate to the development of the workforce, in that teachers should be professionals and efficient in delivering the curriculum. Second, the educational facilities have to be suitable for their purpose, and preferably provide opportunities for shared education. Lastly, the governance of the school should be "modern, accountable and child-centred and that education services are delivered efficiently and effectively in support of schools" (DENI, 2013, p. 2).

It does however appear that this show a degree of disregard of the learner's conditions outside of the educational facilities, such as what "language" they are used to and their options for getting help with homework. These are factors that fall under Bourdieu's terms of habitus and capital, and might influence the learner's performance within the educational system.

A lot of friends are made within the workplace, and as such there will be a lot of similar knowledge within that social circle. This means that children growing up in that milieu will most likely overhear the particular linguistic terms and concepts relating to the workplace of their parents and their friends. The child models its manner of expression, wording and behaviour upon that of its parents and their peers, as well as other influences in their social environment. Along with the directions, sanctions and corrections the child gets, for instance the mundane "sit straight", "close your mouth while you're eating", the positive reinforcement the child is subject to shapes its habitus (Bourdieu, 2009). It helps the child develop a sense for what is in good taste, or practice, if you will.

This does however signify that children with well-educated parents develop a habitus quite different to children of parents with lower education. This is because their parents have acquired the dominant culture through their own time in academia. A culture that in turn will affect the preferences in the home and as such the child growing up is likely to have already incorporated the legitimate cultural capital or at least are better able to recognize the language and distinctions that are part of said culture even at a very young age. Accordingly, they are, at least in theory, more able to adapt their schemas to the field and thus achieve better results within the field than those who fail to do the same.

This is a result of the legitimate knowledge conveyed through the educational institutions is the knowledge the dominant classes deem worthy of reproducing. Consequently, the culture of the dominant class is simultaneously recognized and elevated as

desirable. What is more, the educational institution is inhabited by people who are in possession of the cultural capital specific to that field. That is to say, they know how to behave and express themselves in the legitimate, desirable wording and manners, as well as how to exchange their cultural capital for symbolic capital within the field.

They have internalized the dominant culture, the legitimate capital, and as such are aware of what is in good taste, and recognizes and prizes the learners who demonstrates that they too are privy to the dominant culture.

In other words, within the educational system, there is a certain language, a certain manner of expressing oneself, that is considered to be in better taste than others. Those who aspire to proficiency within the field adjust their use of language and their style accordingly. This is rewarded through grading of exams, with those failing to successfully decipher the “codes” of the field eventually finding themselves with a shorter lifespan within the system.

The manner in which curriculums and knowledge are delivered are better suited for some social classes than others, which in turn sets limitations on how much children from families of lower socio-economic standing benefits from the education. Further support for this is given in the Report of the Ministerial Advisory Group (2013) on advancing shared education, which found that the vast majority of the children who were entitled to free school meals ¹² did not pursue grammar school after the age of 11. Furthermore, upon taking the General Certificate of Secondary Education exam, similar results were found, with the youngsters entitled to Free School Meals being less likely to achieve the basic standard of five GCSEs Grades A*-C¹³, which in turn is the most desirable in terms of employment and application to higher education.

¹² A frequently used indicator of socio-economic status, in that the FSM entitlement suggests low income.

¹³ On the scale A* to G, where A* is the highest achievement

Because the authorized agents inhabiting the educational field is the very same who have been shaped by it (Broady & Palme, 1995), who are skilled at moving within the field and recognizing what is in “good taste”, they also recognize those other agents who are able to move with proficiency within that field. These agents are then rewarded for their prowess within the legitimate culture. There is, however, a tendency for those agents who are best equipped for the educational system to be the same whose parents have a higher education, or show great skill at socio-economic mobility.

This phenomenon relates to habitus, and how the agents who succeeds within the educational field experience less of a discrepancy between the legitimate capital within the educational field than those who come from families of a lower socio-economic level. To a larger degree, the latter finds that the preferences and practices of the educational system does not reflect those which they are familiar with on a micro level and struggle to position themselves as competent actors within the field. As such, the educational institution shows little regard for the learners’ economic or social standing outside the structure, and its effects on the acquisition of knowledge

An example of this is again found in Palludan’s (2006) research from Danish kindergartens. She reported in her article that minority children appeared less competent than the Danish majority at attaining the desired response from the caregivers. As such, the interaction between minority child and Danish caregiver were characterized by an instructional tone from the latter. Conversely, the Danish majority children found it easier to acquire a behaviour that granted them a higher degree of equality in the dialogue with the caregivers.

The process is not intentional on behalf of the teaching staff. However, learners who prove the most adept at recognizing and internalizing the manner in which the knowledge is communicated receive that same sense of favouritism from the educators. At the same time,

those who are able to attain the legitimate knowledge, as well as those who struggle to do so, reinforce the position of the authorized agent (Bourdieu, 2009) that is, in this instance, the teacher.

6.4 SUMMARY

This chapter explains some of the terms in Bourdieu's educational sociology, habitus, capital, symbolic violence and power and the authorized agent. However, to give the short version, habitus is the culture incorporated in the individual, shaping how the agent thinks and acts. It also colours the metaphorical glasses through which the individual sees the world, shaping his or her perception of reality. The forms of capital are divided into cultural, symbolic and social capital that is exchanged and acquired within a field through the agents' relations to other agents. Symbolic violence is to exercise the symbolic power one has as an authorized agent in the dominant culture, legitimizing one worldview and one sense of what is desirable, while simultaneously and unconsciously excluding all other alternatives. Thus, in a way, the authorized agent can affect the aforementioned glasses.

The reproduction of culture within the educational institutions is based around the dominant culture being what is taught and considered desirable. However, it isn't merely the official curriculum the agents need to master, but also the appropriate manner and language. Those best suited for this tend to be members of the dominant class, which incidentally is the class whose worldview, languages and preferences hold the most resemblance to that within the institution. Members of sub-classes tend to have shorter lifespans within the educational system, and are eliminated through the rewards-system of grading, or by withdrawing themselves from the educational field. As we shall see later, this relates to other aspects of the agents' lives.

7.0 EDUCATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

A fundamental basis for the education of children is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This treaty was signed by the UK in 1990, with it being enforced since early 1992 ("Policy: Equality," 2010) In accordance with this, primary education is mandatory and free for all. Furthermore, it should seek to promote the child's self-esteem, confidence and abilities, as well as respect for the self, parents, cultural identity and values, language and national values. Likewise, it should also promote respect for others and their cultural identity and values.

Additionally, the child's education shall comply with article 29 d), which states that:

States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: [...] The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin (UN, 1989).

Though there is a variety of schools in Northern Ireland the education system is highly segregated, with a vast majority of 92.6% of children in 2013 (Connolly et al., 2013) attending either a maintained or a controlled school. The controlled schools are under the management of a board of governors, while Catholic maintained schools are managed by the Roman-Catholic church. There are also other maintained schools, as well as integrated schools and institutions of higher education. In spite of controlled and catholic maintained schools alike being open to all faiths, the majority of Catholic children attend schools Catholic maintained schools, whereas Protestant children dominate the numbers in controlled schools.

7.1 SHARED AND INTEGRATED EDUCATION

In the 1970s arose the demand from parents for a different approach to education – one in which children from both communities would be taught together. The fall of 1981 saw the opening of Lagan College in Belfast as the first intentionally integrated school, its ethos to promote tolerance and respect (Fitzduff, 2002). Since then the numbers of integrated schools in Northern Ireland have grown to 62, with 7% of pupils in Northern Ireland in 2014/2015 enrolled in an integrated school (D. o. E. N. I. DENI). The establishment of integrated schools has not been without obstacles, though state funding has been available since 1989. Fear of losing the support of the communities has over the years made churches in Northern Ireland, with the Catholic church in particular, opposed to the founding of integrated schools (Fitzduff, 2002).

According to a poll by Lucid Talk for the Integrated Education Fund (LucidTalk, 2013) 63% of participants felt that the segregated education system contributes to the conservation of the societal division. A poll conducted amongst youths in the ages 16-24 years the year after indicated that 83,8% felt that an education system where all children attended the same schools regardless of faith would be an “important step in combating sectarianism” (LucidTalk, 2014, p. 6) . Furthermore, a study in 2011 reported that 91% of respondents were positively inclined to a form of shared education, with 88% in favour of integrated education (Perry, 2011). However, an approach where minimal contact is implied seemed to generate more support, as 95% were positively disposed towards shared educational facilities as a one-off project. Even so, this is an increase compared to the “approximately 70%” reported by Fitzduff in the book “Beyond Violence” (2002, p. 55) to be desirous of an integrated education.

In July 2012 the Minister of Education appointed the Ministerial Advisory Group on Advancing Shared Education, with the purpose of identifying how the minister might proceed in order to best “meet the needs of all learners and to provide for children and young people from a variety of backgrounds”(Connolly et al., 2013, p. x) through a shared education. A shared education by the definitions provided the group should ensure learners from all socio-economic backgrounds and regardless of gender, ethnicity, ability or sexual orientation to be educated together.

Shared education involves two or more schools or other educational institutions from different sectors working in collaboration with the aim of delivering educational benefits to learners, promoting the efficient and effective use of resources, and promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.

(Connolly et al., 2013, p. xiii)

By this definition “shared education” does not necessitate for the various institutions, be it school or other educational institution, to share a roof or that the various groups of learners are consistently educated together in the curriculum they have in common. Though in their terms “collaboration” calls for the institutions to *sustain* activities where teachers and students alike meet, interact face-to-face and work together to achieve the aims set forth in the group’s definition.

The primary goal of shared education in Northern Ireland is to reduce tensions between the two majority groups of Protestant and Catholic, as well as promoting equality, respect for diversity and overall good relations. It is however, essential that the cross-community contact be continuous, as inconsistent and low frequency of positive contact between communities has been counter-productive in establishing dialogue across the divide in the short term (Fitzduff, 2002).

A teacher mentioned that he would have liked for his daughter to attend the integrated school where he worked. Conversely, it was not doable in practice. For her to attend that school it would mean spending a lot more time travelling back and forth than her parents deemed reasonable for a child her age. Furthermore, there was the social aspect to take into consideration. Taking her out of her current school, or having had her enrolled in that school to begin with, would in its own way mean removing her from the local environment and the friends she knew. It would have an impact on her social circle at a micro level, as none of the neighbouring children would be attending that same school, meaning she would find herself an outsider and not privy to the happenings in school upon meeting her peers after school was ended for the day. Moreover, the children with whom she would be spending a large share of her day with, would most likely, like the school, be quite far from her home, making after school play something that would have to be planned with regards to transport and arranged between the parents.

It is not unlikely that many parents choose schools in a manner similar to that of this family. Not necessarily considering so much, whether the staff of the school is Catholic or Protestant, but how far the child will have to travel, and whether or not the child would have friends in school from the local community, regardless of faith. Transport itself might also be an issue as not all areas are serviced by the school bus, and while several parents drove their children to the school I visited, not everybody has those kind of resources. What is more is that some parents live in areas that are very segregated, and they would rather not be the one family to stand up against the majority and do something different, such as sending their child to an integrated school.

It appears that the choice of a post-primary school is very achievement-oriented, in that the schools demanded a very high score in the admissions tests. By choice, it is meant that the parents can express a preference, however if there is limited places available, the

results of tests such as the one the class was preparing for would play a part in admissions. This too has an influence on the choice of schools, along with whether the school is well-established, school economy and if they are known for getting good results.

The government acknowledges that education has an important role in shaping the future society, and that an education with minimal meaningful exposure to different ethnic identities is counterproductive towards the overachieving goal of building a united society. It is, however, suggested that “Greater social mixing can contribute to greater tolerance, and, through raised expectations, improve educational performance for our most deprived pupils” (OFMDFM, 2013, p. 48).

This is supported by studies implying that the sustained contact between children in a shared education programme, in this case including integrated and mixed-religion schools, contributes to a more positive attitude towards the out-group. That said, the parents play a big role in that they have a right to choose which school their child should attend. As such it is also the right of the parents whether or not the child should attend an integrated school or any of the other options available. Nevertheless, the executive plans to ensure that every child has the option of participating in shared education.

What is more, the Ministerial Advisory Group appointed by the executive in July of 2012, reported findings to suggest that attendees of integrated schools hold a more positive attitude towards the opposite community. However, the research on the subject have not been able to determine if the positive attitude to the out-group is a result of integrated education or families already being predisposed towards intercommunal relations cf. Bourdieu and habitus.

7.2 DISCUSSION

One may wonder why, in spite of the numbers of respondents positively inclined towards integrated education, such a small share of pupils across the region are enrolled in integrated education. There are several possibilities. One reason might be the observer effect that knowing their answers would be used in a report respondents' answers were influenced by what they thought the researcher wanted to see.

If the sample surveyed was chosen at random, there is a chance that a majority of respondents had first-degree experience with an integrated school by ways of having attended, themselves, worked at one, aspired to work in one or even had children attending an integrated school. Or perhaps the respondents simply were predisposed towards integrated education as a means of ending segregation.

In a conversation with a researcher at Stormont, I suggested that part of it might be related to distance between home and school. After all, in 2013 there were 1219 schools in Northern Ireland, with approximately 5% of these being integrated, it potentially leaves a lot of distance between the integrated schools and the potential students' homes. As such, attending an integrated school might not be practical or compatible with parents' desire for a school close to home. My theory got some backing by a parent explaining why his child did not attend an integrated school, in spite of this parent being employed at one. Then there is yet another possibility, of the integrated schools in existence simply finding themselves unable to cater to the numbers of applicants.

8.0 THE SCHOOL

Child 1: “Our school is the best!”

Siri: “Really? Why do you think that?”

Child 1: “Because it’s integrated?”

Child 2: We don’t think it’s the best. We know it!¹⁴

One of the first things I noticed in the school was the decorations. Everywhere there would be colourful decorations created by pupils hanging on the walls. There are flags representing a number of nationalities and greetings in various languages. The bright decorations follow you into the classrooms, where there will be boards in the school colours as well as others, with posters of traffic lights as a reminder to show self-restraint when angered, and representations of faces identifying emotions. In some of the classrooms are boards highlighting representations of different types of intelligence.

The school seems to put a focus on human rights, through theme work, through project participation and in assembly. After-school activities, such as football, cross country running and choir appeared to be inclusive of all the pupils who wished to and had the opportunity to partake.

The school also made use of “reading buddies”. The older students would visit one of the younger classes and read together with their designated reading buddy. This practice is to promote reading ability and vocabulary in both the youngest child and the elder child, but it also provided a basis for friendship between the two. Furthermore, it appears a way of preventing the older children bullying the younger.

¹⁴ One of the first things a small group of children told me after my introduction when I arrived at the school.

There appeared to be very little focus on religion during my visit, with the only occasion it being a theme was during one assembly that was led by a man from one of the nearby churches. The man mostly focused on the importance of being grateful and doing what is right going by the individual's conscience.

8.1 THE CLASS

There was little that would suggest to the outsider that the children in the class with which I spent the majority of my time came from different layers of society and in the end I found myself asking staff members about the social and economic situation of the parents in general. There was also little to suggest the presence of varying faiths of the pupils with the exception of a raise of the teacher upon one occasion asking some of the pupils if they would be taking communion that year, which is a sacrament largely associated with the Catholic Church. Other than that, there was no mention of the background of each child pertaining to the divided society.

Within the class there were discernible fractions, in that there were some pupils who were usually seen in the company of certain others, but there was nothing to suggest that these divisions had to do with ethno-political or socio-economic environments. An observation I daresay was supported by the interchangeability within the fractions, meaning to say the members of some of the fractions would change without the occurrence of in-group conflict.

At times some of the pupils would leave the classroom to work in a smaller group. These pupils were in need of extra assistance with regards to their appropriation of the curriculum. This group of pupils also seemed to benefit the most from the presence of the teacher's assistant who were with the class most of the time. Especially as the small group

would sometimes work on different tasks while the teacher presented other materials to the remainder of the class.

Between humans, it is not uncommon for conflict to arise. And my immediate reaction when the teacher decided to move one of the children from one of the tables to another, telling the child he apparently didn't seem able to sit together with his peers at that table, was that there was probably something more to the move. Indeed, the teacher on a later occasion explained that the child had made some insulting remarks. Some might have assumed that these remarks considered the divided society in terms of Catholic and Protestant. But let us not forget the part of the observer and the importance of context. While the divided society is our backdrop, there are also socio-economic divisions as well as the increasing diversity of the overall society, with racism being a growing issue over the last few years. In this case the remarks pertained to the latter.

The teacher knew the child's parents well enough to say that they were not in the least likely to express such attitudes in the home. The teacher could only imagine where the child had picked it up, though he suspected it could be from an online forum of sorts.

I chose not to press the issue, even though I was somewhat uncertain as to exactly how moving the child to another table might help the issue. If I were to speculate, however, I would assume it had to do with the group dynamics at each table, and the table the pupil was moved to were less likely to reward their classmate with the attention he/she appeared to seek.

Many of the children in the class spent a lot of time preparing for a transfer test, the results of which would have an impact on their application for post-primary school. The preparation for this test was not a mandatory part of the curriculum, however good results on the test meant better opportunities with regards to choosing a post-primary school. Therefore, if the school didn't focus on the test, many parents would choose other schools that did. Some

of the tasks in the practice tests meant that the children would need skills that they were not supposed to have learned until later in the year, yet at the same time it also meant that parts of the curriculum were given a lower priority. It was quite interesting, however, to see how the teacher used humour in an attempt to alleviate nerves and encourage a class that was growing impatient to keep doing their best.

8.2 PATHS PROGRAMME

The school I visited participated in what is called the PATHS programme. PATHS being an acronym for Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies. This programme is not specifically linked to the Northern Ireland conflict. Moreover it is a movement aimed towards children in order to teach respect of themselves and others and make mindful, conscious choices – even in a conflict. As such it provides a useful tool, not merely in relation to children growing up in the two communities of Northern Ireland, but also with regards to racism, bullying and interpersonal conflict in general.

The parallels between PATHS and “Steg for steg”, a programme we had used while I was working in a kindergarten in Norway were quite clear. Upon returning to Norway I got confirmation that it was indeed the same programme, but developed for older children than those I had previously worked with.

A part of the programme is taking the time to discuss emotions and case scenarios with the children, and trying to figure out what is the best way to manage certain situations in order to achieve better social skills.

The teacher of the class with which I spent the majority of my time with expressed that due to some upcoming, very important tests, time was short and as a result parts of the programme was given low priority in favour of preparing the children for the tests. The school

had quite recently started the programme, so the general sense was that they were still working on including it in their day-to-day work.

It did however appear that being “Pupil of the day” was something the children took pride in and looked forward to. The tasks included could include, in addition to selecting their team, performing tasks such as handing out notebooks or running small errands during the day in order to help everyone settle down effectively, but the Pupil of the day also might get a bit extra responsibility if there was something particular happening. At the end of the school day the Pupil of the day would select his or her successor for the next day. The part about being Pupil of the day that the children and teacher alike seemed to find the most enjoyable as well as challenging was the compliments.

Before the end of the day, the teacher would write Diploma for The POTD on which were written a number of compliments from the pupils’ peers. Most importantly, though, the pupils had to think of a compliment for him- or herself.

Acknowledging one’s self-worth and telling others too that “This is something I take pride in” can sometimes be hard – as anyone familiar with the Norwegian society and *Janteloven/ The Law of Jante*¹⁵ will tell you. Furthermore, the teacher had to give a well thought-out compliment as well. One of the teachers expressed that this was the part he liked the most because it made him consciously think of each and every child in his class and put into words just what he appreciated about that child and what characteristics set him or her apart.

¹⁵ A commonly used reference to a fictional place in the book «En flyktning krysser sitt spor» by A. Sandemose (1933). The idea is that the collective discourages the success and achievements of the individual.

9.0 REPRODUCTION OF THE DIVIDED SOCIETY



Though the problem began centuries ago, it survives today because bigotry, persecution and mistrust have been handed down to each successive generation with a fervour that only religion can create. The children learn to hate before they've learnt to read. (Limpkin, 1972)

It has been mentioned previously that prejudice and nationalism can manifest at early stages of childhood. The unintended practice of symbolic violence instils in children a preference for one community or the other. Additionally, the majority of children in Northern Ireland attends separate schools, and have a tendency to lead segregated lives with different knowledge of the world. This chapter explores how certain physical structures and symbols contribute to the production and reproduction of the divided society. Just as there are “two sides of the house” (Saugestad, 1982) there are at least two histories of Ireland and Northern Ireland (Bell, 2000) and two versions of the events during the Troubles.

9.1 THE WALL

Coming to Belfast, I spent the first couple of days walking around the city centre and adjacent streets, just getting to know my way around. I attended a walking tour of the Falls road and Milntown cemetery guided by a former prisoner of the H-blocks. The tour was arranged by the organisation Coiste¹⁶, which specializes in relaying the story from the view of republican ex-prisoners.

Admittedly, the tour provided a partisan account of events, which is one aspect that should not be forgotten. As such I tried to find a similar initiative that would do guided tours on the other side of the wall, but in the end had to settle for a black taxi tour. Nevertheless, initiatives such as these are useful as they provide a way of reintegrating former prisoners in the community as well as relaying one of the many truths present within the state.

Participants, however, need to be aware that the particular story they are made privy to is just one of many histories of the conflict.

During my previous visit to Northern Ireland I had noticed a huge amount of decorations in red, white and blue, and the Union Jack flag, I had not thought much of the absence of the Irish flag. Walking through a road well known for being a Catholic area with strong Republican ties, the absence of this marker of nationality stood in stark contrast to the amount of decoration hanging from lampposts in Protestant areas, even in October. Many of the few flags hanging in the Catholic area, however, were Palestinian, and several murals expressed support for the Palestinians in Gaza.

Upon remarking this to the guide and asking him what he thought of this difference, he admitted he didn't precisely know the reason for it. For him personally, though, he had no interest of flying the Irish tricolour at all times out of respect and deference of the flag.

¹⁶ <http://www.coiste.ie/history/>

“I don’t want to have it hanging up there in all sorts of weather because it gets tattered and filthy and ruined.”

My thoughts were brought back to a visit to Derry, where one of the many murals around the city read “*Londonderry West Bank Loyalists still under siege. No Surrender*”. That the flags, the murals, and the marches are a way of saying “We are here. We’re British, and we’re not going anywhere.”

The end of 2012 saw a change in flag policy, as a ruling vote decided the flag would fly no more than 18 days from Belfast City Hall, restricting the flying of the Union Jack to designated days such as birthdays in the Royal Family. The policy was passed to the dismay of groups within the Unionist community, who responded with riots upon the day of the voting as well as in the time that followed.

Walking through the Republican areas there are the occasional public gardens. Some might have benches for visitors, and there would be lists of names within the gardens. These were set up by the local communities in remembrance of the republican dead and Catholic victims of the conflict who lived on that street. The guide of the tour explained that these memorial gardens were funded and tended by the people living in that street, without state support.

The guide further explained that many of the British or Unionists who were killed during the Troubles, were either killed while in service or had roles within law enforcement simultaneously as they were members of Loyalist paramilitary groups. While the Catholic dead, including many of the civilians, were said to be working against the government. Thus, the Protestant dead were honoured by the state as victims to the republican paramilitaries, murdered because of their service to their country. Conversely a Catholic victim rarely was

considered worthy of note to the government. As such, the Catholic community took matters in their own hands to show respect to the victims of the conflict.

This provides us with an example of symbolic violence, in that the dominating authority decides which account of the history is legitimate. As such, it is also the dominating authority who names the martyrs, the heroes and the criminals. It also is an example of how the dominating authority within one field, might not be considered authorized in another, as several of the victims might have been portrayed as vile criminals by the state, however within the community they were innocents, heroes and martyrs. Other examples are found relating to members of the Loyalist community, who were not acknowledged by the state as heroes, but are honoured within their respective community by murals.

My first visit to Belfast was in 2012 during a three-day tour of Northern Ireland and part of it included a Black Taxi tour of the murals of neighbouring roads Falls and Shankill, populated by Catholics and Protestants respectively. In between houses on the Shankill Road there was a big, open lot, surrounded by murals. Pictures in commemoration of events, legends, heroes and victims important in UVF¹⁷ lore. Two years later the very same lot was a building site, and small posters depicting the previous murals that had been substituted in favour of less sectarian imagery had been placed next to it. This had been done as a part Belfast City Council's Re-Imagining Communities programme.

The significance of the murals disappears when taken out of context. Out of context they are merely decorations at best, however to the involved it is informative in that it denotes the identity of the area. Meaning to say, if you are a tourist, visiting Belfast, seeing the Shankill Mona Lisa is a curiosity, as a Republican however, the image of the sniper with his

¹⁷ Ulster Volunteer Force

rifle is a message that you are not welcome. To the Unionist however, it is someone watching over you, someone who's got your back until you're home safe.

When speaking of the conflict, informants emphasized that yes, the situation was bad, even to the point that patrons became subject to security checks before they were allowed entrance to some of the pubs, Nevertheless, the media largely exaggerated, giving the international community the impression that the violence was a lot more widespread and perpetuating than it appeared to themselves.

On one of my first nights in Belfast, I met a couple in their early thirties. The woman's father had long since brought their family to England, and they had fallen out of touch with their relatives in Belfast. They were now visiting with the hopes of reconnecting with family she had fallen out of touch with, until recently, and was bursting with hopes and fears for the meeting that lay ahead.

When I asked her about the Northern Ireland conflict, she told me that it had not affected her directly. Conversely, she had mostly fond memories of the place, although the rather unpleasant memory of the bus stop blowing up just as their bus left had stayed with her ever since.

She and her husband had attended one of the Black taxi tours available in the city. As they were sitting in a pub, exchanging impressions of the Shankill road murals and the peace wall with another couple they noticed a group of people staring at them intently in a way that made them feel uncomfortable. When that group left the pub, they too decided it might be a good time to leave, for fear that "they returned with any repercussions."

While a source of income through "conflict-tourism", the peace walls are also a topic of debate. In 2013, the consociating government could inform the public of plans to have the walls down by 2023. This is in spite of the expressed worry of those living in close proximity

to the walls (Sommers, 2014). There are some who feel that their security is at risk, and fear that they will be exposed to vandalism from members of “the other side”. However, as much as the walls provide protection, they are also a reminder of the conflict, and of two communities struggling to reconcile with each other.

As previously mentioned, the Northern Ireland executive hopes to have the peace walls removed, gradually and with the consent of the communities, by 2023. It appears that the government believe the peace walls have served their purpose, but now only serve as a reminder of a painful past as well as leading to the belief that they still are beneficial to the neighbouring communities. In addition to that it is also felt that the peace walls are exacerbating the division, impeding the development of good relations between the communities, as neighbours are kept apart and live separate lives because of the structures, and feed the fear of the unknown that is on the other side of it.

Another factor is the international community that is clamouring for the peace walls to come down. The wall is often compared to the wall in Gaza and the Berlin wall. This indicates a somewhat lacking understanding of why the walls still stands. Nevertheless, as much as they are preventing violent clashes, the peace walls are also preventing neighbours from meeting and getting to know each other on friendly terms. Those neighbours in the closest proximity to the walls can report finding various items in their backyard, items tossed from the other side of the wall, a factor that causes for further worry of the people living on the other side. One might however wonder if the smashed beer bottle would have made its way there had the neighbours on the other side known the family living there. Alternatively, if the act of throwing something over a wall might be a bet in a drunken competition as much or even more than an act of opposition or sectarianism purposefully and intentionally directed at the people who lives there.

9.2 REPRODUCTION OF ATTITUDES

The children growing up in Northern Ireland today, nearly 20 years after the Good Friday Agreement are still living in a contested landscape. Imagine waking up, having breakfast and head into school. Every day it is the same. Out the door, down the road, meeting your friends heading to the same school, passing by the same murals depicting martyrs and heroes. Sometimes, tourists come in taxis to photograph the murals and learn about the conflict. On the way you pass by large gates in a wall. You don't know the children on the other side of the wall. Even though there are probably children there, the same age as you. You could have been friends, but you live in two different communities, and attend different schools.

In the modern society celebrities and models are often criticized for promoting an unhealthy, underweight body type, while video games are accused of promoting violence. These are expressions of a dominant culture. This is also the case with the murals.

Limited intercommunity contact is a contributing factor to the reproduction of the division in society. However, the symbolic landscape too must be addressed the building of a cohesive society. As much as Belfast's murals are a statement, a territorial marker and expression of the community, they can also function as a tool in the process of transforming the conflict and bridging the divide. As such, the Re-Imagining Communities programme (Smithey, 2011) is not so much about removing propaganda – there are several examples of murals around the city that have been removed only to be repainted or re-interpreted by the local community – as it is about changing the perspective of the collective. In a way, the murals are as much a part of the conflict as Gerry Adams, Johnny Adair or Ian Paisley, to name but a few who figured prominently over the years, and thus also a medium of reproducing the attitudes and sentiments that pertains to the conflict.

Accordingly, redesigning the murals and exchanging them for more inclusive themes. The murals are a form of cultural expression, largely utilized in Loyalist areas, representing Loyalist symbols. The representations shape the memories and stories of the area, for instance by recounting the tale of a Provisional IRA attack and listing the names of the dead and simultaneously discrediting the Republican struggle. Loyalist paramilitaries are valorised, and even the Irish-Celtic hero Cú Chulainn is appropriated as a symbol of Ulster Loyalists' devotion to the cause of defending Ulster from Republicans and remaining in union with Britain.

However little significance the same murals would have had in Norway, or Germany, or in Central America, in this landscape the symbolism, often of a political nature, is not lost on those involved. Just as a driver's licence signifies that the holder is in possession of the legitimate abilities to be allowed to drive, or a doctor has her diploma that identifies her as a doctor hanging on the wall in her office, the documentation is not to be mistaken. This is not merely an area where Protestants live. It is a Protestant area. Hence, it follows that if one intends to change the mind-set of the agents, one must employ the symbolic landscape surrounding them. Smithey (2011, p. 98) writes:

Murals have provided one avenue for experimenting with the reframing of Loyalist identity, and loyalist paramilitary organization in some areas have agreed to relinquish militant murals to be replaced by "cultural murals" that present historical themes or other features of communal life that loyalists can claim as their own.

The fact that paramilitary organizations have permitted for the redesigning of the militaristic murals of the past is an indication of a growing understanding and acceptance within the community that the way forward is through consociation and politics. Many, though not all, of the redesigned themes serve to identify the community through historical

events not pertaining to the paramilitary defence of the local community or to the out-groups. More than that, the murals are a way of identifying the community to itself (Smithey, 2011). That said, the cooperation of the community in closest proximity is essential in the re-designing of the murals. Not just because of their symbolism within the community, but because without this consent, any re-design would most likely be vandalized or painted over in turn. It would be an attack on the cultural expression of the identity of those in the surrounding area. Changing the message of the murals, changing the symbols means changing the symbolic landscape. Remembering the '69 gold rush¹⁸, which is an event that affected the Protestant community, is far less polarizing than the elevation of the Scottish Brigade or other Loyalist paramilitary organizations.

During a conversation with an elderly man he expressed that he were positively inclined towards the changes in the community and the cross-community work being done around the city. Even so, when we got onto the subject of the other side, I noticed his face contorted briefly. Perhaps because it was a subject one normally would not discuss openly, but there is also the possibility that it was a result of a dominant culture within which there was a widespread and explicit negative attitude towards the other community. That said, he did not speak negatively of the other side. This conversation may however have been very much influenced by the observer effect, and the man was informed of why I was visiting the area.

The ethnic identity of the group is still being communicated, but there is a shift of what is desirable and thus of what is legitimate culture. Going by projects such as these, the current dominant culture is one working towards avoiding armed conflict, and instead bring

¹⁸ After the demolition of a building in 1969 gold sovereigns was found in the rubble.

about a shared community where the respective identities do not feel threatened in the presence of the other.

The areas where the paramilitaries found the most support were the very same in which the unemployment was highest, and the inhabitants the most deprived. Because the educational institutions reproduces the dominant culture, which in turn is that of the dominant class, in a way that favours “its own” the inhabitants of these areas are likely to face a harder struggle in achieving mobility within the social hierarchy. Findings suggest that children that had a right to free school meals (Connolly et al., 2013) are less likely to achieve the desired grades that is sometimes needed when applying for higher education and is sometimes even a demand in the job market.

The Northern Ireland executive recognizes that a child’s early years are very formative with regards to attitudes and opinions, and how this might influence their behaviour in later years. Hence, while there already is a curricular focus on good relations, the executive works toward the implementation of a buddy scheme in nurseries and primary schools, in which children from different ethnic groups are paired with each other (OFMDFM, 2013). This is a move to facilitate possible friendships at best or positive sustained contact with a child of another ethnicity. This project goes beyond the two societies, extending into a third issue that is not covered here, namely racism.

All in all, there are many factors beyond the segregated educational system that plays a part in the moulding of identity and attitudes. The symbolic landscape a child moves in, be it posters of successful, happy people driving Volvo, or a model or celebrity, the message is “be like these people, and you will be happy.” In a similar way, a message is conveyed through murals. “These are admired for their sacrifice.” “These are our protectors.” “This is what one should aspire to.” These are expressions of the dominant culture that is incorporated in the agent and shapes his or her perception in a way that

9.3 SUMMARY

“Man is an animal suspended in a web of significance he himself has spun and keeps spinning” (Geertz, 1973). In the symbolic landscape of Northern Ireland this quote rings true, as the significance of symbols are produced and reproduced in the communities. The murals are more than the territorial markings of Loyalist and Republican paramilitary groups. They are expressions of the dominant culture of the area, and as such a signal that this or that is considered desirable. In a survey from 2007 it was found that children from the Protestant community had little or no awareness of certain prominent Republican politicians whereas the Catholic children had a wider knowledge. That is not so much a reflection of lacking interest or attention, but what is a theme around the house and in the nearby community. It is a reflection of the dominant culture the child grows up in, and part of what the child experiences as the preference of the home, incorporating that, along with the other influences – murals and television broadcasts, sports teams and newspapers – and even the language the authorities in the child’s microenvironment.

10.0 TEARING DOWN THE BARRICADES



The communities of Northern Ireland are divided in many aspects of their day-to-day lives. In some areas there are physical walls keeping neighbours from knowing each other. Children grow up perhaps never knowing a potential playmate who lives less than five minutes' walk away. Protestant families visit different places for their holidays from the places visited by Catholic families. The communities keep different newspapers, vote for different politicians and watch different television broadcasts. This is not without exceptions, but the point here is that the new generations grow up within the same state under very different circumstances and influences and meeting different preferences.

Additionally, the vast majority of children attend separate schools where their own culture is dominant. This separation contributes to the reproduction of the divided society in Northern Ireland. It appears that the Northern Ireland executive has come to terms with the possibility that the two communities are not likely to unite in the foreseeable future, and are

instead implementing policies that might in the first instance aid the processes of reconciliation and building bridges. One of these is to have the peace walls removed by 2023.

Perhaps the international critique of the peace walls and the call for the walls to come down is rooted in associations with the Berlin wall, more than an understanding of the walls' purpose as it stands today. Nevertheless, as it stands, it is also contributing to the upkeep of a discourse that the peoples living on the other side is to be feared.

As much as the peace walls are keeping potential vandals at bay or violent clashes from occurring, they are however also preventing the meeting of neighbours on friendly terms. The neighbours in the closest proximity to the walls can report finding various items in their backyard, items tossed from the other side of the wall. One might however wonder, if the smashed beer bottle would have made its way there had the neighbours on the other side known the family living there. Alternatively, if the act of throwing something over a wall might be a bet in a drunken competition as much or even more than an act of opposition or sectarianism purposefully and intentionally directed at the people who lives there.

There is still fear and mistrust attached to “the others”. Hence, while the population in general is positive towards conflict transformation and bridging the divide, the Northern Ireland executive is taking a “peace by piece”(Fitzduff, 2002) approach to building a shared community.

For this reason the peace walls that have been separating the communities since the outbreak of the Troubles will be removed in in sections and in comparable silence to the media coverage and commotion surrounding the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. Perhaps this form of xenophobia is a contributing factor as to why the government, when looking to build a more unified school opts for shared education as opposed to the integrated approach. As such it appears that the implementation of these policies and projects are not merely to induce

cross-community dialogue under controlled circumstances, but also a gradual approach to eliminating that xenophobia. Perhaps the shared education appears less frightening to the two communities it concerns to the most, and therefore they are more positive towards that than integrated education.

After all, research indicates that the population is positive towards integrated and shared education, but a larger portion favours the shared education approach. Hypothetically speaking, this might seem like the lesser evil as the arrangement that is shared education does not constitute permanent sharing of learning space and classes. As such, in the event that a conflict should arise with a pupil from the other community the students still will not share the majority of their time in the institution, which in turn gives less opportunity for the conflict to build. However, conflict is a part of any society, whether the society is created in the educational field or within political or geographical borders. What matters is how it is handled when it arises.

The principal of an integrated school implied that there were those school leaders who did not perceive the difference between the approach of integrated education and shared education. From the outsider point of view, however, the most important difference is that the integrated school does acknowledge the faith of each and every child and encourages diversity and the acceptance of diversity in a more holistic manner than the shared education appears to. Both approaches do indeed educate children together, but the togetherness is more thorough and permeating. The children take all mandatory classes together, and participate in after school clubs organized by the schools, regardless of where they live or their parents' political stand.

Treating someone differently makes them different. An example of this is seen in the mechanisms behind the construction of ethnic groups, but I've also had personal experience with this. In one incident I was working in a store as a sales assistant, when a mother and her

child came to the checkout counter. Children tend to ask a lot of questions about the till, the alarms, and the holes in the counter where we discard the alarms, and this child was no different. Or so I thought, as I answered the child's questions the best I could. Just as the transaction was finished, the child ran off towards the exit. This was when the mother smiled and thanked me for being so patient and answering all the child's questions. I had thought nothing of it, but smiled and replied that it was as it should be. This was when she implied that usually the child's questioning was a result of a form of autism, and that it was usually met with annoyance, before hurrying after her child. To my eyes the child was as any other and I treated it as such.

Just as autism is a label, so is Catholic and Protestant, and they all have stereotypes and prejudices attached to them. This necessitates the question of the kind of "good relations" the Northern Ireland executive wishes to achieve by advancing a shared education over integrated schools. While research has shown that sustained positive intercommunity contact has a positive effect on attitudes towards the other, it does not appear that building lasting friendships across the divide is a goal. The answer to this is that the shared education is a way of leaving the boundaries between the two traditions as is, but create connections that in time will permeate the society until there is no sense of need for a segregated system. At which point it will either be a case of transforming all schools to integrated schools, or even that the system will have transformed itself to an integrated system (Gallagher, McCusker, & Stewart, 2012b). By this theory, it can be argued that opting for a shared education provides an approach that is easier for the majority of parents to get on board with compared to mainstreaming the integrated model. It is more of a peace-by-piece approach than integrated education. What is more, is that the shared education model promotes collaboration and exchange of school workforces, which means that for a school that is not achieving the desired results it might be an option to collaborate with one that is in order to improve results.

That said, there is little to suggest that the integrated sector would impede such collaborations, when in fact there are personnel within the integrated sector that has been approached by other schools, seeking to adopt the integrated approach and recognition as integrated schools.

As there is a relation between cultural capital, socio-economic status and academic prowess, the improved education that such collaborations have a potential for might prove an important contributing factor in tearing down the divisions in society. In particular as a move towards ensuring equally good teaching in all schools, including schools that may have less recognition than schools known for their good results in exams.

During an interview conducted by the Advisory Ministerial Group (Gallagher, McCusker, & Stewart, 2012a) it was indicated that there were indeed several schools that had contacted members of the integrated sector requesting their advice on how to proceed in order to achieve recognition as integrated schools. This suggests that there is a process already underway towards integrated schools, though it was suggested in the same interview that the process of acquiring recognition as an integrated school was complicated and time-consuming and should be made easier.

For the government of a country with a number of schools, many of which will not be viable in the long run due to economy and low numbers of enlisted pupils, shared campuses for education is more economically sound in a state where the majority attends segregated schools. That is to say, for instance compared to the option of maintaining the segregated schools in existence in addition to establishing integrated schools in interface areas. The movement for integrated schools started, after all, as a parent initiative, and it is the parents' right to choose a school. As such, integrated education is not likely to become the mainstream approach unless a legislative move is made towards this in favour of the suggested shared education. The Ministerial Advisory Group (Connolly et al., 2013) suggests that there are

economic benefits to a “more integrated system (p. 56)” compared to the current system, however, their conclusion is that this should be implemented as shared education.

It is possible that the group landed on that conclusion in part because it does not call for major upheavals of the structure as the two communities know it, and not because they consider integrated education to be a lesser alternative to the current segregated system. Implementing integrated education as the official standard might appear to some as a very dramatic change, whereas, as have been mentioned previously, it is hoped that the shared education will grow into integrated schools over time. As such it is an approach that might be easier to get parental support, than integrated schools, taking into consideration the parents’ rights to choice of school and opposition from religious groups.

That said, the shared model appears to show some disregard for another aspect pertaining to the role of the parents as the primary authorized agent in a child’s life, which in turn means that the attitudes expressed by the parents influences the child’s perception of the world.

Interfaces in particular constitutes contested spaces, with those who live in close proximity to peace walls fearing vandalism and fights to ensue upon their removal. Would it not be more reassuring to the neighbours of the walls, if they already knew one another from parents meetings’ in the school where their children attend the same classes full-time?

That said, the Ministerial Advisory Group reported that the majority of their selection were positively inclined towards advancing shared education, though parental involvement and collaboration is deemed crucial, even to the point where some suggested that parents be educated on how to deal with their own prejudice before it is reproduced by their children.

In the event that cross-community friendships were founded through a shared education programme, the home environment might still impede its flourishing in that the

parents might be less open for visits outside of the school, as they do not know the parents. In an integrated school relations between parents might be easier to establish, as the children attend the same classes, and thus they themselves will attend the same meetings. That said, this is where some of the benefits of removing the peace walls can be found. Not only might that provide an easier route for cross-community friends to meet than the current status, but the walls will no longer be a hindrance to the meeting of the children's families. What is more, is that a removal of the peace walls ideally would allow for the children to meet before starting school. .

11.0 CONCLUSION AND FINAL COMMENTARY

In this text we have explored the importance for the researcher to be aware of the way his or her own presumptions influences their understanding of the situation at hand.

We have further argued that the Northern Ireland conflict is not a religious conflict, but one between two ethnic groups in a struggle for legitimacy and retaining their identity. The society is not so much shared at grass-root level, even though the executive is a form of consociationalism that has been adapted to this particular situation, and as such I have chosen to refer to it as a divided society throughout.

I have explained the terms habitus, capital and social violence and power as they are used in Bourdieu's educational sociology, and further how they relate to social reproduction. The educational institution reproduces the dominant culture. Because of this the performance gaps in the schools are exacerbated, which in turn manifests itself in higher education as well as the job market (Connolly et al., 2013). This further reproduces the inequalities in the society. Roughly speaking, and not taking into account the few that proves themselves most adept at social mobility, the rich stay rich and the poor stay poor.

It is noteworthy that the areas in which the paramilitaries gained the most support during the Troubles, and the areas where the military saw the most need for setting up barricades, coincided with the areas of low employment and low socio-economic status. Many of the new recruits were young, unemployed men who were happy to find a vocation and purpose (Bell, 2000). This suggests, as is suggested time and again, that idleness is the root of all evil, as the saying goes. As such, the importance of diminishing the performance gap increases as better academic results potentially can lead to more opportunities for the agent in the job market.

The Northern Ireland executive is mainstreaming a more integrated approach to education. This, however does not mean establishing more integrated schools, encouraging shared education. That is, education where the learners spend a limited amount of time together in the institution, as opposed to integrated education where the learners share all classes. A focus for both approaches is encouraging good relations and respect for diversity, however it appears that an integrated approach could prove more efficient in achieving the overall goal than shared education, which incidentally has a form of integration as its secondary objective.

The symbolic landscape of Northern Ireland has in the past served to further crystallize the two ethnic identities, making them less susceptible to reconstruction. There are however programmes in place that are working to change the landscape, and by doing that change the dominant culture within the respective community Murals have served to identify the people living in the area, telling the stories of the community in ways that serve to legitimize the community's claim on the area as well as encouraging specific perceptions and attitudes as opposed to the other, often portrayed in dehumanizing and alienating manners. Some of these have been substituted for a different imagery that still serves to identify the

community, but it is an identification that is independent of the other and relating to events that are interpreted as having no association with the conflict.

Another aspect of the symbolic landscape that is being addressed is the peace walls, between communities. Walls and fences that started out as barricades at the outbreak of the Troubles but grew as the violence and sectarianism escalated. The government is aiming to have these removed over a ten-year period from 2013 – 2023 (OFMDFM, 2013). In a way, this is the executive saying that they are ready to move on and go forwards.

Because the conflict escalated into violence the ethnic identities that are the focus of this text became further entrenched. More than fifteen years after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, there are children growing up without knowing others from the other community. The inhabitants of Northern Ireland appear in general to be positively inclined to building bridges across the divide, but building a cohesive society is very difficult when generations of children attend separate schools, live in different symbolic landscapes and in general are subject to very different influences. Northern Ireland has peace, but they have not yet reached reconciliation.

11.1 CONCLUSION

It would be easy to say that this or that approach is better in creating a cohesive society, but within the context there are many aspects to take into consideration. Integrated education might provide faster results in that it brings together children and parents from both traditions. But the families that currently subscribe to the integrated sector might already be positively inclined towards both traditions rather than opting for an integrated education out of a desire to change mind set. That said it might be difficult in heavily segregated areas to be the one family that breaks away from the norm, and rather than going down the traditional

route of subscribing to the school generally considered the most relevant within their community enrol at an integrated institution.

The discrepancy between the numbers of children and young people attending integrated schools (roughly 7%) and the expressed attitudes towards integrated education (88%) reports positive inclinations, (Perry, 2011) might be influenced by a number of factors. Beyond the researcher or observer effect, these range from oversubscription to the 62 formally integrated schools which means that a number of applicants have to be declined, to distances between the home and the integrated institution. Another reason might be that there are other schools that are more established within the communities and because of that get more applicants. Then there might be several schools that live up to or are working towards the integrated ethos, but are not formally recognized as such.

In this respect, the establishment of integrated schools in the interface areas might prove the more efficient means, as these are the areas where the division is most profound. That said, these might also prove the areas that are the most susceptible to a shared education as the mainstream option by comparison, because the ethnicities here are the most crystallized, and therefore, in practice, less inclined to a change of mindset and perception. The overall goal of both models is to bring up children in a culture that has good relations and respect for the other at its core, but it appears that the shared model has the secondary objective of evolving into something akin to the integrated model. Furthermore, the goal is to influence them not only to build friendships across the divide, but over time become adults that have incorporated this culture for the next generation to inherit and reproduce, and change the messages ingrained in the symbolic landscape.

To sum it up, integrated education, or even a shared education that over time might evolve into an integrated education, is an important step towards building a cohesive society and impeding the reproduction of sectarianism. Integrated education provides positive

experiences together with the other in a learning environment that can serve to inhibit the reproduction of negative attitudes towards ethnicities different from one's own. What is more, however, is that it encourages positive experiences of the other that are incorporated and shapes the perception of the agent who then constructs future behaviour and perception accordingly.

11.2 THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER COUNTRIES

Conflict in a society is unavoidable, whether it concerns resources or cultural expression. The Northern Ireland conflict is an example of how a conflict escalated into violence causing for to separate ethnic identities to further crystallize. There used to be areas where Protestants lived and areas where Catholics lived, but with the outbreak of the Troubles these areas became Protestant and Catholic areas respectively (Ross, 2009).

There are other shared societies, such as Germany or Norway, where the minority populations are increasing. The new compatriots are settling in areas that are becoming ghettos where the majority population is becoming a minority, and to the outsider it appears to be growing into a community of its own within the legitimate state.

Countries where unemployment and social disadvantages are a growing problem and where young adults look to organizations opposing the legitimately acknowledged state such as IS (Foss & Dokka, 2014) should look to Northern Ireland, and the issues that the divided community there have faced and are still facing. The community has been through a violent conflict, and more than a decade later finds itself still in the process of healing.

For those that live in communities such as my German friend I mentioned in the introduction, the community might already seem more divided than shared. This too, strikes me as the case with areas in the larger cities in Norway where the various communities are

settling in certain areas, leading to these communities growing with little outside interference, and what could have been the utopian community of integrationist theory is becoming increasingly segregated.

Especially in Norway, the principle of equality has been touted as a pillar of the educational system, even so there are wide gaps in performance as well as in the society, with the socio-economic disadvantaged falling ever further behind those inhabiting the upper strata of the society.

There is much for other communities to be learned from the process Northern Ireland have gone through and is going through with regards to reconciling the divided society and building bridges. Both in terms of what they themselves must do differently, but also what works towards creating a more cohesive society.

11.3 FINAL COMMENTARY

The process of writing this text has been a learning experience. As I was preparing myself for the fieldwork, I was well aware that I might not find anything at the school pertaining to the divided society, which indeed was the case. Even so I came away from my visit with a new understanding of the changes being made in order to try to build a cohesive society.

At the conclusion of a project one is always given the gift of hindsight. If I could have done it all over again, I would have stayed for a longer period of time, which in turn would have given me the opportunity to make use of some of the resources I was made aware of during my field work, but could not as I was pressed for time. I would also have tried to make arrangements for visiting shared schools, even just for interviewing staff members, in the event that I was not allowed to sit in on classes.

It would be ever so poetic to write that a shared community has risen from the rubble left behind after the bombs and guns were silenced. But it would not be true, nor is this poetry.

The divided society did not come to be as a result of the Troubles. Moreover was it part of the cause, and the Troubles served to further entrench that divide. The Good Friday Agreement brought peace to a war-weary people, but reconciliation has proven harder to come by. The integrated model provides children and young people with a perspective in which diversity is both encouraged and practiced, and inter-communal relations built and maintained on a daily basis. The children are educated, not in a tradition that is mostly Catholic or Protestant, but one that recognizes all faiths and none equally, and treated as equals regardless, in the hopes that reconciliation can be achieved and the two communities can go forward together.

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