

NORTHERN IRELAND - GOOD FRIDAY/BELFAST AGREEMENT
A CASE OF SUCCESSFUL CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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A CASE OF SUCCESSFUL CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

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ABSTRACT

NORTHERN IRELAND - GOOD FRIDAY/BELFAST AGREEMENT A CASE OF SUCCESSFUL CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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This study will attempt to answer the question: “What were the endogenous and exogeneous factors which made possible to reach a successful conclusion as the Good Friday Agreement (GFA)/Belfast Agreement (1998) in Northern Ireland ending the period of ‘The Troubles’?”

This study argues that the presence and impact of all the internal and external factors at the right moment have been crucial in ending an intractable ethno-nationalist conflict.

This study will also put into a historical perspective the developments which culminated in a period of sectarian violence (The Troubles), and the circumstances which led to and the reasons behind the outbreak of the Troubles lasting for almost three decades and present the root causes within an appropriate theoretical context. While military and police measures failed to end this period marked by intense violence, political dialogue with all the parties to the conflict within the context of the peace process with the aim of bringing a lasting solution to this conflict, including mediation efforts of independent third parties will be examined.

This study will analyse the conflict resolution methods and the principles adopted for the success of negotiations, mediation, top-down (elitist) and bottom-up (grassroots) approaches, formal and informal/track II/ backchannel diplomacy methods and techniques that were used during the process as well as relevant theoretical approaches, including their limitations, applicable to different phases (the inception and the end product) of the process.

The Good Friday Agreement (1998), despite certain justifiable criticisms, was nonetheless successful in ending three-decade-long violence and provided a lasting period of peace and peaceful coexistence, avoiding at the same time hard border between North and South and survived also the Brexit.

Keywords: Good Friday Agreement, The Troubles, conflict resolution, mediation, peace process.

ÖZ

KUZEY İRLANDA – HAYIRLI CUMA/BELFAST ANTLAŞMASI BAŞARILI BİR ANLAŞMAZLIK ÇÖZÜM ÖRNEĞİ

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Bu çalışma, “Kuzey İrlanda’da, ‘The Troubles’ dönemini sonlandıran Hayırlı Cuma/Belfast Antlaşması (1998) gibi başarılı bir sonuca ulaşmayı sağlayan iç ve dış etkenler nelerdir?” sorusuna yanıt bulmaya çalışmaktadır.

Bu çalışma, doğru bir zamanda gerçekleşmiş olan iç ve dış faktörlerin mevcudiyetinin ve etkisinin, uzun süredir devam eden etnik-milliyetçi bir anlaşmazlığın sonlandırılmasında hayati önemi haiz olduğunu savunmaktadır.

Bu çalışma, etnik şiddetin hakim olduğu “The Troubles” döneminin başlamasına neden olan olayları tarihi bir perspektif içinde sunarak, yaklaşık otuz yıl süren bu olayların kökeninde yatan nedenler ve koşulları uygun bir teorik çerçevede analiz etmektedir. Bu, yoğun şiddet ile özdeşleşen dönemin askeri ve polisiye önlemlerle sonlandırılması başarısız olurken, barış süreci kapsamında, bu anlaşmazlığa kalıcı bir çözüm bulunması amacıyla, anlaşmazlığın tüm tarafları arasında gerçekleştirilen siyasi diyalog ve bağımsız üçüncü tarafların arabuluculuk çabaları incelenecektir.

Bu çalışma, anlaşmazlıkların çözümü yöntemlerini ve müzakerelerin başarılı olması için uygulanan ilkeleri, barış süreci boyunca uygulanan arabuluculuk, tepeden inmece

(elitist) ve ařađıdan-yukarı (toplumun tabanından yukarıya) yaklařımlar, resmi ve gayriresmi/ikinci kulvar/arkakapı diplomasi yöntemleri ve teknikleri ve sürecin farklı ařamaları (bařlangıç ve nihai sonuç) bađlamında tatbik edilebilecek teorik yaklařımları ve bunların sınırlarını analiz etmektedir.

Hayırlı Cuma Antlařması (1998), kabul edilebilir bazı eleřtirilere karřın, otuz yıl boyunca süregiden řiddeti sonlandırmayı, kalıcı bir barıř ve barıř içinde birarada yařama dönemini gerçekleřtirmeyi, aynı zamanda Kuzey ile Güney arasında fiziki sınırın (yeniden) tesisinden kaçınmayı ve Brexit sonrasında da hayatta kalmayı bařarmıřtır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hayırlı Cuma Antlařması, “The Troubles”, anlařmazlıkların çözüümü, arabuluculuk, barıř süreci.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS and IRISH NAMES

APNI	: Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (Centrist, bi-confessional)
BIA	: British-Irish Association (Grassroots organization in Northern Ireland)
CAIN	: Conflict Archive on Internet, Ulster University web site
DAIL	: Lower House of the Irish Parliament
DUP	: Democratic Unionist Party (hardliner) in Northern Ireland
FF	: Fianna Fail (Soldiers of Destiny) (Irish liberal-conservative and Christian democratic political party founded in 1926)
FG	: Fine Gael (Irish Family) (Irish conservative and Christian democratic political party founded in 1933)
GFA	: Good Friday Agreement
IBAD	: International Body on Arms Decommissioning
IICD	: Independent International Commission on Decommissioning
INLA	: Irish National Liberation Army
IRA	: Irish Republican Army (Military wing of SF)
MHS	: Mutually Hurting Stalemate (Ripeness Theory, Zartman, W.)
MEO	: Mutually Enticing Opportunities (Ripeness Theory, Zartman, W.)
MP	: Member of Parliament
MLA	: Member of Legislative Assembly (Member of Stormont/Northern Ireland Parliament)
NDNA	: The New Decade, New Approach
NICRA	: Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association
OIRA	: Official IRA
Oireachtas	: Lower House + Senate of the Irish Parliament (like US Congress)
PM	: Prime Minister
PP	: Peace People (Grassroots organization in Northern Ireland)
PIRA/Provos	: Provisional IRA
PSNI	: Police Service Northern Ireland

PUP	: Progressive Unionist Party
RIRA	: Real IRA
RUC	: Royal Ulster Constabulary (Former Northern Ireland Police Service)
SDLP	: Social Democratic and Labour Party (Moderate nationalist party in Northern Ireland)
SF	: Sinn Fein (We Ourselves) (Irish republican, center left to left political party which enters elections both in Ireland and Northern Ireland)
Taoiseach	: Irish Prime Minister
Tánaiste	: Irish Deputy Prime Minister
TD	: Teachta Dála (Member of the Irish Parliament)
UDA	: Ulster Defence Association (Loyalist paramilitary group)
UDP	: Ulster Democratic Party (hardliner Unionist party)
UDR	: Ulster Defence Regiment (Unit of the British Army mainly with local recruits)
UK	: United Kingdom
UUP	: Ulster Unionist Party (Moderate unionist party in Northern Ireland)
UVF	: Ulster Volunteer Force (Loyalist paramilitary group)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Irish history is something Irishmen should never remember, and Englishmen should never forget.

Oscar Wilde

The end of the Cold War in the '90s and the breaking up of the Soviet Union, which meant the end of the bipolar international system with the United States as the only leading power, ushered in a period of relative optimism and created a propitious environment for the settlement of some protracted conflicts, though new ones erupted. The Northern Ireland conflict was among those to which a successful settlement could be worked out with the Good Friday Agreement/Belfast Agreement (1998).

Although this conflict is known with the ethno-sectarian violence which started at the end of the '60s, the root causes can be traced back to the second half of the 12th century, the starting point of the colonization of Ireland by England, and the difficult relationship between these two countries during the following more than seven hundred years.

Ireland becoming independent in 1921, but Northern Ireland (Ulster) remaining part of the United Kingdom has been an important turning point in the relationship of these two countries. The division of the Island, and the discriminatory treatment of the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland during this period (1921-1969) triggered first civil rights protests, which quickly evolved into the sectarian violence known as "The Troubles", and lasted for almost thirty years, claiming more than 3500 lives and many more wounded and disabled.

The main question which will be answered with this study is, taking into account the historical background of this conflict, what were the endogenous and exogenous factors, whose presence and impact have been vital in ending this conflict and achieving a successful, lasting settlement. However, what were the underlying causes for the start of this conflict and how it evolved, and how it was possible to find a solution, are also questions to be answered through facts examined with different analytical approaches.

In this first Chapter, the presentation of the theoretical frameworks, which will be applied to analyse different stages of the conflict, will be made. At the outset, the start of the violence will be analysed through the perspective of the relative deprivation theory (Birrell, 1972). Zartman's ripeness theory (Zartman, 2000) will be instrumental in explaining the beginning of the peace process and its evolution, and the settlement itself, which came into being with the Good Friday Agreement, will be presented as a successful case of consociational power-sharing model (Lijphart, 1969), despite its deviations from the original model, but also with additional assets it provided in the resolution of ethnic conflicts.

The second chapter will be devoted to the historical background of the conflict and the application of the relevant theoretical frameworks as explained in the previous paragraph to different phases of the conflict ending with the Good Friday Agreement. The third and fourth chapters will answer the main question of this study, the internal and external factors which made possible to achieve a successful and sustainable settlement of the protracted ethno-nationalist conflict in Northern Ireland. In this context, beside the conflict resolution methods and strategies that were used during the peace process, the main focus will be on actors, who have contributed the most to the final solution, and this main section will be analysed through the perspective of Lederach's theoretical framework and classification in the resolution of conflicts (Lederach, 1999).

The last chapter, as the conclusion, will include an overview of the contributions of the main actors to the successful settlement of the conflict, and after more than twenty-six years of its existence, recent developments in the implementation of the

Good Friday Agreement, particularly following Brexit. This very important and unforeseen development (Brexit) when Good Friday Agreement was crafted, as well as recent demographic and more importantly political changes in Northern Ireland will be briefly underlined, and their implications in the implementation of the Agreement and the unification of Ireland, might well be the subject of a future research.

I will also include in my analysis, my personal evaluation resulting from all the official and private meetings I have had with Irish government officials, politicians, members of Parliament and Irish friends in general, my attendance of the annual congresses of the main Irish political parties, including FG, FF, SF and my several visits to Northern Ireland including Belfast and Derry/Londonderry (Falls Road, Shankill Road, Northumberland Road, the murals; Peace Bridge) during my tenure for more than four years (November 2016 - April 2021) as the Ambassador of Türkiye in Ireland.

1.1. The Relative Deprivation Theory Explaining the Root Causes of ‘The Troubles’

This study will focus primarily on the developments which can be considered as turning points in this conflict. Following a difficult and bitter historical relationship between the UK and Ireland, the partition of the Island (1921) took place, according to which in the south Ireland (26 Counties) became independent and the North (6 Counties) remained part of the UK. This was a breaking point in the relationship. In the North, the ruling Protestant majority, which lasted uninterruptedly until 1972, discriminated against the Catholic minority and did not respond to their rightful grievances and complaints.

The study will try to put into historical perspective the root causes and sectarian discrimination and political and socio-economic inequalities which were behind this conflict and will offer a theoretical approach within the context of relative deprivation theory.

A group may be said to be relatively deprived when a comparison is made between its situation and that of another identifiable group and it is shown to be at a

disadvantage. However, there might be a difference between the extent to which a group estimates itself to be deprived compared to another, and the actual extent of difference. Other scholars make distinction between objective and felt psychological deprivation. (Allen, 1970, pp. 1-18)

Runciman identifies three areas of inequalities: economic inequalities (e.g. differences in income levels, opportunities for upward mobility, security of employment) social inequalities such as in education, lifestyle, type of job; political inequalities, position of the group in the hierarchy of power (Runciman, 1961) (Birrell, 1972, p. 318).

As it will be analysed in detail in the next chapter, that although there are some scholars who are sceptic of the connection between the start of the violence and the grievances of the Catholic community, Birrell states that the connection between relative deprivation and protest movements is not difficult to understand (Birrell, 1972, p. 331). Moreover, in the Report of the Commission appointed by the Governor of Northern Ireland with its Chairman Lord Cameron, dated September 1969, known as the ‘Cameron Report’, it is stated in the 127. paragraph that

“...The weight and extent of the evidence which was presented to us concerned with social and economic grievance or abuses of political power was such that we are compelled to conclude that they had substantial foundation in fact and were in a very real sense an immediate and operative cause of the demonstrations and consequent disorders after 5th October 1968...” (CAIN Cameron Report, 2024).

Therefore, it would be correct to conclude that the discrimination of the Catholic minority and the socio-economic and political inequalities endured by this group were the underlying causes of the civil right protests and these findings correspond with the assertions of the relative deprivation theory, and the fact that nothing was done to redress these inequalities further aggravated the resentment of this group.

1.2. Theoretical Framework on Conflict Resolution

Conflict Resolution (CR) is a relatively young but fast growing and one of the most interdisciplinary academic fields which begun to emerge in the 1950s. As a matter of fact, after the First World War in the United States and Europe proponents of peace

undertook efforts to initiate institutions to promote peace which led to the establishment of the League of Nations which was included in the President Woodrow Wilson's 14 points. Although the League was weakened by the absence of the US as a member as well as by the terms of the Versailles Treaty, it became a precedent for strengthening of international institutions and prepared the groundwork for the establishment of the United Nations after the Second World War. (Cortright, 2008, pp. 17-18)

In the post war period, efforts were undertaken by governments and nongovernmental institutions to prevent wars, foster reconciliation and promote cooperation in various fields by creating international institutions as the United Nations, UNESCO, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, European Coal and Steel Community which evolved into the present European Union. Concurrently, in this period, scholarly endeavours increased to establish research centres for CR. In this context, the Centre for Advanced Study in the Behavioural Sciences at Stanford, California played an important leading role with scholars like Herbert Kelman, Kenneth Boulding, Anatol Rapoport, Ludwig von Bertalanffy, who contributed to this new emerging field. Boulding, Rapoport and von Bertalanffy joined other scholars to initiate *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* in 1957 and established the Center for Research on Conflict Resolution at the University of Michigan. In Europe, the pioneers of such institutions have been the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo, Norway founded in 1959 with Johan Galtung as Director, who also founded the *Journal of Peace Research* in 1964, and in Sweden, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) set up in 1966 (Kriesberg, 2009, pp. 18-20).

During the 1970s and 1980s, CR advanced considerably in becoming institutionalized in universities, government agencies and also in the nongovernmental circles which were increasing their influence in this period. After the end of the Cold War and the breaking up of the Soviet Union some of the protracted conflicts were settled by negotiated agreements, but also new ones erupted (Wallensteen, 1994).

Post Cold War period witnessed an expansion and diffusion of CR worldwide. At the same time, there was an ongoing discussion as to the universality of CR theory and

practice (Avruch, 1991). Every conflict possesses unique features; negotiating, mediating, settling conflicts may differ among distinct national cultures, religious traditions, including individual characteristics. However, as underlined before, CR is still a relatively young field of study, and it is a field in continuing evolution.

CR is a field where theory and practice are inextricably linked. The word ‘conflict’ comes from Latin word ‘confligere’ which means ‘to strike together’. There are four conditions for defining a conflict: the existence of two or more parties, a situation where there is resource and position scarcity, the presence of behaviour designed to hurt the other side, and mutually opposed goals (Mack & Snyder, 1957, pp. 212-248). Individuals, groups, organizations or states can be parties to the conflict, where following issues may be at stake: a) resources, b) sovereignty, c) survival, d) honour and e) ideology (Bercovitch, Kremenyuk, & Zartman, 2009, p. 7).

Conflict resolution, in the final analysis, is an effort in the forms of prevention, management, resolution and transformation. If prevention is not successful, at first, conflict management could be given priority in order to reduce violence, but it removes the pressure to resolve the conflict, which is a paradox. For those conflicts that cannot be prevented the next tool of CR is negotiation. Mediation is another tool which is less frequently practiced than it could be. A mediator can help the parties to craft an agreement between conflicting demands of peace vs justice (Bercovitch, Kremenyuk, & Zartman, 2009, pp. 340-357).

Within this context, instead of the mediation, judicial methods of resolving conflicts can be resorted to, but in this case, the parties delegate the authority to resolve the conflict to a higher authority. Special courts and arbitration also may be mentioned in this context. Finally, the increasing role of international organizations, and NGOs on the global and regional level, and ‘Track II’ diplomacy as well should be included among our research topics. Once a resolution is reached, peace building should be taken into consideration. In fact, peace building is a post-conflict resolution structural approach, which is important for the sustainability of the peace process.

Galtung emphasizes the necessity to transform the root causes of a conflict to terminate it and establish peace (Galtung, 1965, p. 354). Burton examined conflict

resolution as a problem of transforming it from a zero-sum-game into another level where both sides can have some gains and reach at least part of their aims making practical cooperation (Burton, 1986, pp. 125-130). These were all state-centric approaches and based on mutual agreement. Later on, the introduction of an independent third party in a peace process was emphasized by some scholars (Fisher, 1983, pp. 301-334) (Kelman, 1996, pp. 99-123).

Conflict resolution in the traditional sense focuses on conflicts between states with or without the mediation of a third. However, since the end of WWII, this has changed with the rise of non-state actors in conflicts particularly in ethnic and religious wars. The Northern Ireland case relates to an armed conflict between the state security forces and sub-state armed groups, therefore, to strike a kind of balance between the parties in the conflict is necessary to avoid a zero-sum game. At this point the role of a third party becomes a key factor in reaching a settlement, which was the case in Northern Ireland (Kadioğlu, 2020, p. 16).

Other scholars as Babbitt and Hampson analysed conflict resolution as a constructivist theory dividing it into two approaches: Conflict resolution as a settlement and as a transformation process which investigates the perceptions, beliefs and attitudes of the parties in conflict (Babbitt & Hampson, 2011, pp. 46-57).

John Paul Lederach's classification of conflict resolution can be considered as a more useful approach to analyse the Northern Ireland case because in this model it is possible to identify all the actors/factors which are mentioned in this study, who have contributed to the final settlement. It is also possible to analyse with this model the interaction between the different actors positioned at different levels and the direction of their influence (bottom-up / top-down) depending on the different phases of the peace process. As a result, it can be argued that while other approaches focus more on different aspects and/or mainly on the substance of the negotiations, Lederach's model includes all the actors, the interaction among them at all the stages of the negotiating process as well as the tools used, i.e. negotiation, mediation, secret direct and indirect (through an intermediary) channels, Track II diplomacy.

Lederach classifies approaches to peacebuilding in three levels: top, middle-range and grassroots. These are identified by other scholars as top-down and bottom-up approaches.

In Figure 1 below, Lederach examines conflict resolution approaches at three levels.

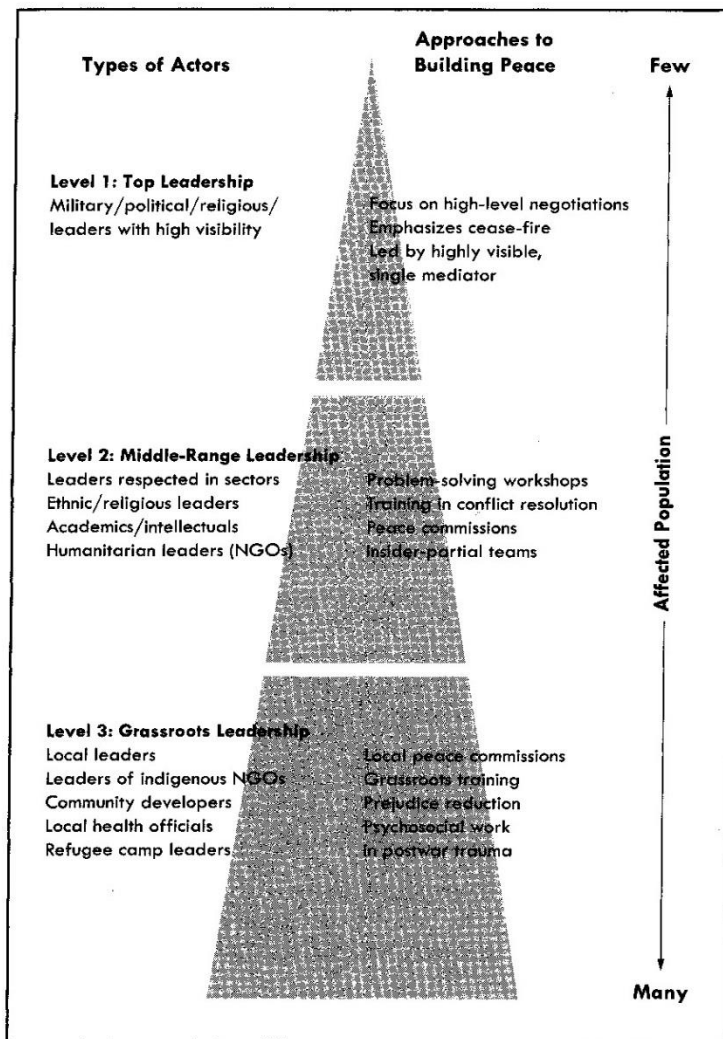


Figure 1. Actors and approaches to peacebuilding

Source: (Lederach, 1999, p. 39).

As it can be seen from the above Figure 1, different actors at each level use different tools aiming at building peace and there is a vertical connection between actors and goals. Lederach's classification allows a better understanding of the relationship between the levels and purposes of each level in comparison with other approaches shortly mentioned above (Lederach, 1999, p. 39).

Coleman supports Lederach’s classification and argues that there are three levels of conflict resolution: top-down, middle-out and bottom-up. The top-down (elite level) approaches exert strong influence in decision making (parties to the conflict); whereas the bottom-up (grassroots level) approaches involve a large number of local actors and address changes in personal and/or group attitudes and behaviours, but it takes a longer period to emerge. The middle-out (middle-range level) approaches involve mid-level leaders like religious personalities, academicians, community-based institutions and NGOs (Coleman, 2006 , pp. 340-341).

A conflict resolution process has mainly two major stages: the pre-negotiation and negotiation stages, as seen below in Figure:2. The negotiation stage consists of official negotiations between the two or more conflicting parties and mediation by an independent actor as the elite level of CR process. The pre-negotiation stage instead, entails secret and/or informal communications between the conflicting parties and intermediaries (Kadioğlu, 2020, pp. 32-33).

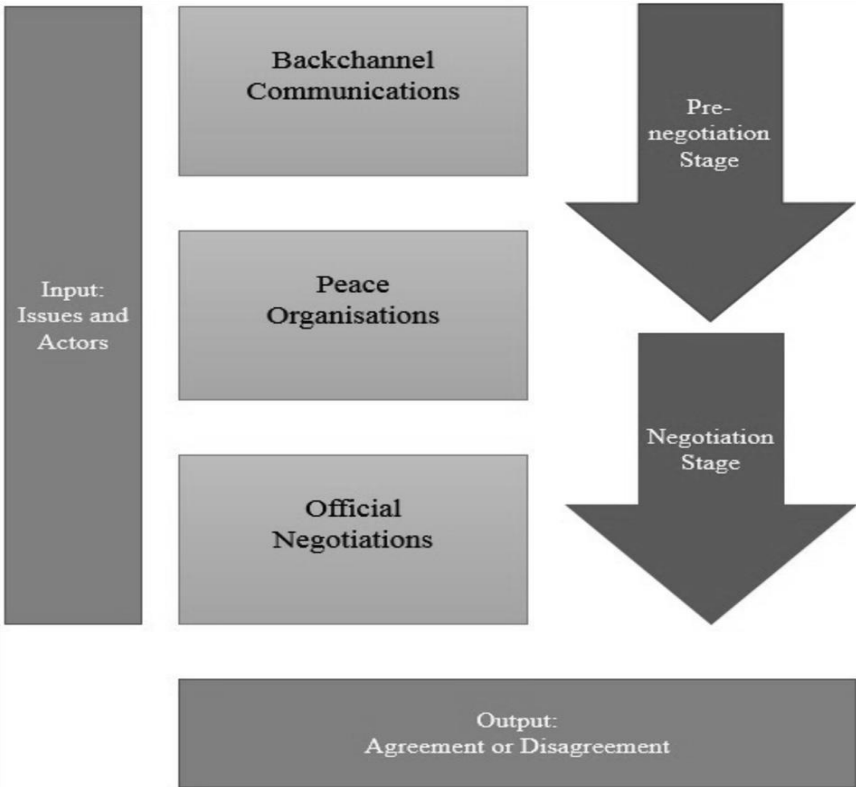


Figure 2. Conflict Resolution processes

Source: (Kadioğlu, 2020, p. 33)

1.3. The Ripeness Theory (I. William Zartman)

At relatively early stages of the conflict what were the first attempts for a solution? Why did they fail and why the Good Friday Agreement was successful? This study will try to identify the reasons behind. Moreover, it will also examine the factors that made it possible for the peace process to pick up, and make the analysis of this phase through the perspective of the Ripeness Theory (Zartman, 2000).

Zartman argues that there are essentially two approaches to the study and practice of negotiation with or without mediation. One asserts that the substance of the proposals is the key for a successful resolution of the conflict. Parties to the conflict reach an acceptable agreement for both more or less at the midpoint between their positions. The other one maintains that the key for a successful resolution lies in the timing of efforts for resolution. Parties resolve the conflict when they are ready to do so, when alternative means of achieving a satisfactory result are blocked. This school maintains that substantive answers are fruitless until the moment is ripe (*ibid*, pp. 225-226). However, analysing substance is also valuable because although timing is important for the start of the negotiations, along the process substance becomes essential for continuation of negotiations toward a successful conclusion. The idea of a right moment is something that diplomats are expected to feel and sense correctly. Henry Kissinger himself recognized that “stalemate is the most propitious condition for settlement” (*ibid*, p. 227).

Close examination of the meaning and dynamics of ripeness exposes that ripeness is only a condition. It is not self-fulfilling or self-implementing. It must be seized either by the parties themselves or through the persuasion of a mediator. However, not all negotiations might be the result of a ripe moment. This could be a tactical move by a party to the conflict for different reasons. Moreover, ripeness theory is not predictive, that is, it cannot tell when a ripe moment will appear in a given situation. However, it is predictive in identifying the elements necessary for the productive start of negotiations (*ibid*, pp. 227-228).

What are the components of Ripeness? The concept of a right moment focuses on the perception of the parties of a mutually hurting stalemate (MHS). This perception

might be associated with an impending, past or recently avoided catastrophe (precipice). In other words, when the parties find themselves locked in a conflict and both feel that they cannot win and this deadlock is painful to both of them, hence they seek a way out. The other element necessary for a ripe moment is the perception of a way out. This does not mean that they already identify a specific solution, but they sense that a negotiated solution is possible, and the other party also shares this feeling. At this stage, Zartman formulates his definition of ripe moment as: “If the (two) parties to a conflict (a) perceive themselves to be in a hurting stalemate and (b) perceive the possibility of a negotiated solution (a way out), the conflict is ripe for resolution (i.e., for negotiations toward resolution to begin)” (ibid, pp. 228-229).

Zartman argues that the basic reasoning behind the MHS, in fact is a cost-benefit analysis. An MHS contains objective and subjective elements, of which only the latter are necessary and sufficient to its existence (ibid, p.229). A model of a theory of ripeness in which ripeness is located as both a dependent and an independent variable is displayed in the figure below.

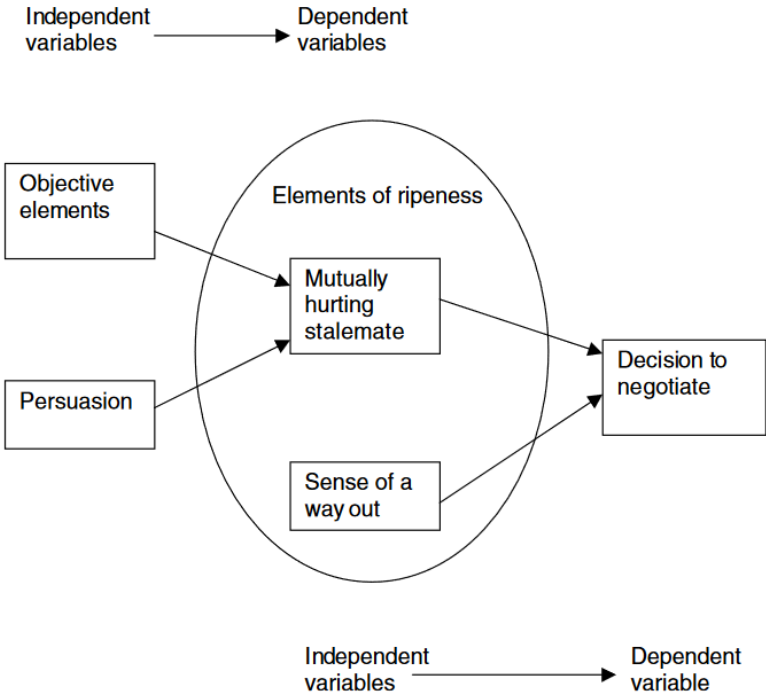


Figure 3. Factors affecting ripeness, elements of ripeness, and the decision to negotiate.

Source: (Zartman, 2000, p. 230).

Zartman asserts that since an MHS is a subjective matter, it can be perceived at any moment, but in many cases a long period of conflict is required before the MHS sinks in. That perception can occur at a low level of conflict, but conflicts which are not treated early may require a high level of intensity for an MHS to be registered (ibid, pp. 229-230).

The other component of a ripe moment is the perception of the parties of a way out. This means that one party senses that the other party is ready and willing to repay concessions with concessions and this is termed *requitement*. At this stage it is possible to make the following proposition: “If the parties’ subjective expression of pain, impasse, and inability to bear the costs of further escalation, related to objective evidence of stalemate, data on numbers and nature of casualties and material costs, and/or other such indicators of an MHS can be found, along with expressions of a sense of a way out, ripeness exists (ibid, p. 231).

In cases where there is a mediator, the relationship of mediator tactics to ripeness can be explained with the following proposition:

“(a) Once ripeness has been established, specific tactics by mediators can seize the ripe moment and turn it into negotiations; (b) If only objective elements of ripeness exist, specific tactics by mediators can bring the conflicting parties to feel/understand the pain of their mutual stalemate and turn to negotiations” (ibid, pp. 230-232).

There have been refinements and criticisms levelled vis-à-vis the ripeness theory by many scholars, but an important one is by Dean G. Pruitt, who has extended the notion of ripeness into the negotiations calling it “readiness theory”, which asserts that

“a party will move toward resolution of a heavily escalated conflict (entering negotiation, making concessions, etc.) to the extent that it is (a) motivated to achieve de-escalation and (b) optimistic about finding a mutually acceptable agreement that will be binding on the other party.” (Pruitt, 1997, p. 239).

There are other criticisms to the ripeness theory stating that in order to reach the right moment, one must raise the level of conflict until a stalemate that begins to hurt. This

is almost an equivalent of brinkmanship, which does not take into consideration pre-emptive conflict resolution and/or preventive diplomacy. Another limitation to the theory is that it addresses only the opening of negotiations, it does not explain the successful conclusion of negotiations once opened. Instead of waiting for the push of a MHS, what about the pull of an attractive outcome. At this point, the notion of Mutually Enticing Opportunities (MEO) is called into play. MEO is important in the broader negotiation process and has its place in extending ripeness theory (Zartman, 2000, pp. 241-242).

MHS is a necessary but insufficient condition for negotiations to begin, during the process the negotiators must provide the prospects for a more attractive future to pull them out of the conflict. In other words, the push factor should be replaced by a pull factor.

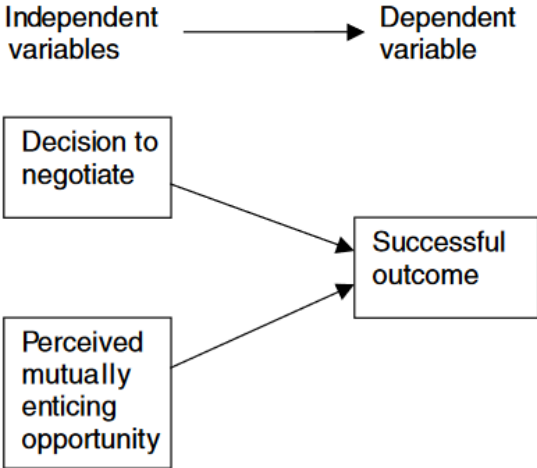


Figure 4. Conditions for a successful outcome of negotiations.

Source: (Zartman, 2000, p. 242).

When the case of Northern Ireland conflict is analysed with this approach, it is possible to say that the two main components of this theory can be easily identified. The first one is the perception of both parties that they are in a stage of mutually hurting stalemate (MHS), that they are locked in a conflict and they feel that they cannot win, therefore, they seek a way out. As it will be detailed later in this study that beginning from the first half of the ‘90s the British authorities realized that security policies involving also the army were not bringing an end to the conflict, and that there was a need for a negotiated settlement, which is the second component of

Zartman's theory, that is, the belief that exists a way out (Powell, 2008, p. 310). Similar feeling emerged almost at the same time at the republican side, as Adams, who received a US visa from President Clinton in 1994, in a statement he made in New York, he said that it was their (republicans) intention to remove the gun permanently from Irish politics (Adams, 2004, p. 159), and after twenty-five years of the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, commenting on his visit to the US he stated that this (the fact that he was granted a US visa from President Clinton) showed that they could now build an alternative to armed struggle, and gather support from powerful people in the USA (Simpson, 2019). As a matter of fact, the same year IRA declared a ceasefire.

The application of this theory at different stages of the conflict will be underlined in the appropriate sections, but also attention will be drawn to early attempts for a solution to the conflict between the British and Irish governments, as it was the case with the Sunningdale Agreement (1973) and Anglo-Irish Agreement (1983), which were not successful because of the strong reactions from the unionist side. From the perspective of the ripeness theory, the time and conditions were not ripe yet. These cases of failure also constitute valid arguments of the relevance of this theory in this specific case.

1.4. Consociational Theory

In the post-Cold War period a new era of sociopolitical transformation has emerged in the world and parameters like social inclusion, politics of participation, social justice began to be taken into account by the practitioners of conflict resolution (Bercovitch & Rubin, 1994) (Lederach, 1996).

GFA is one such an example of this new approach. As it was partly explained before, but it will be analysed more in detail, the complementarity between elite power-sharing and grassroots contribution to the end result is essential for reaching a sustainable peace and accommodate both traditions especially in protracted ethno-political conflicts as it was the case in Northern Ireland.

Consociational theory is an empirically grounded normative theory that, through promoting power sharing of a specific kind, promises a democratic solution to

societies confronted by durable ethnic division and political conflict. Consociationalism represents one of the strongest and widely discussed research programmes. Consociationalism is one of the leading models of managing ethnically divided societies. It has been formulated and developed most notably by Arend Lijphart in his article entitled “Consociational Democracy” in *World Politics* in 1969 (Lijphart, 1969).

Arend Lijphart, after articulating the political criterion defining consociation as a grand coalition cabinet, expanded his definition, and added three more criteria, as mutual veto on the part of the coexisting groups, proportionality as the principal standard of political representation, civil service appointment and allocation of public resources, and a high degree of segmental autonomy (Lijphart, 1977, pp. 25-47).

However, how successful is the Northern Ireland case, and how long will it last, and despite its imperfections and certain shortcomings, could the Good Friday Agreement be qualified as a successful and sustainable solution? These are all legitimate questions. One of the criticisms directed at this approach is that, it does not provide critical intent to move beyond political accommodation and conflict management to integration and transformation (Taylor, 2001, pp. 37-52).

However, Taylor himself, argues that consociationalism is at the heart of academic and political debate on the Northern Ireland conflict. He goes on further asserting that this is also due to the efforts of two highly regarded political scientists, John McGarry and Brendan O’Leary. Taylor also maintains in the ‘Introduction’ of the book entitled “Consociational Theory, McGarry and O’Leary and the Northern Ireland Conflict”, that the relative success of consociationalism in Northern Ireland has led McGarry and O’Leary and other scholars to argue that it is becoming as a preferred tool for conceiving democratic institutional alternatives for ethnically divided societies in conflict and for moving them towards peace (Taylor, 2009, p. 9) (McGarry & O’Leary, 2009).

McGarry and O’Leary argue that while consociation was and is vital for a political settlement in Northern Ireland, it had to be complemented by key binational

institutions, referring to North-South Ministerial Council and the British-Irish Council and the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, and that these institutions addressed the national dimension of the conflict, that is, unionists on the British side and nationalists on the Irish side (McGarry & O'Leary, 2009, p. 26). As McGarry and O'Leary argue that these variances from the original theory of Lijphart, were necessary to meet the expectations of nationalists on both sides, O'Leary once described the settlement as "power-sharing plus" (O'Leary, 1999).

Other scholars also assert that consociational power-sharing is the most effective means of managing conflict in divided societies, and in Northern Ireland it has facilitated cooperation between unionists and nationalists. While the Good Friday Agreement contains provisions beyond the framework of the original consociational theory, it is ultimately an accommodative settlement (Jarrett, 2018, p. 162).

In conclusion, it would be correct to argue that although the Good Friday Agreement contains elements which can be considered as variations from the original consociational theory in the strict sense of the analysis, and that it does not incorporate segmental autonomy either, but as to the power-sharing system it has set up, including mutual veto on the part of the coexisting groups, proportionality as the principal standard of political representation, civil service appointment and allocation of public resources, it conforms with its main tenets.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. The Genesis of the Conflict

The roots of the conflict in Northern Ireland go back to the arrival of Normans in county Wexford in 1170 (CAIN/Irish History 1169-1799, 2024), and followed by the establishment of the authority of Henry II, King of England over Irish territories in 1171 (Madden, 2010, p. 9). Norman settlers penetrated westward from Leinster and Ulster and established powerful earldoms (Bourke, 2016, p. 4). Colonization of Ireland continued with settlers coming mostly from Scotland and elsewhere in England. Ultimately Henry VIII declared himself the King of Ireland in 1541 (CAIN/Irish History 1169-1799, 2024).

Declarations of allegiance from the part of Irish nobility did not prevent rebellions which provoked in return new waves of colonization from mid-16th to early 17th century. This was happening along with the spread of Protestant reformation, dividing the religious royalties of new English planters from the Catholic native Irish. Munster and Ulster plantations committed to English government and Protestant faith in 1586 and 1606 respectively (Bourke, 2016, p. 4).

Colonization was part of the conquest intended as an instrument of pacification. However, though this strategy made possible to secure the territory, it made the country more difficult to control. During the 17th century expropriation and sectarian animosity caused further disaffection among the Catholic population. Pacification sparked rebellion leading to new demands. A process of action and reaction became entrenched. The process of evicting Irish Catholic farming communities from their land in Ulster and imposing the settlement of English Protestant or Scottish

Presbyterian landowners began in 1610 and was followed by the Cromwellian plantation (1652) and the Williamite Plantation (1693) (Mac Annaidh, 2013, p. 218). In the aftermath of 1641 Irish rebellion against English and Scottish settlers, a major push for a final conquest was launched which caused a Catholic rebellion against the administration in Ireland which peaked in acts of atrocity against English and Scottish planters. This insurgency caused a rather brutal military retaliation by Cromwell between 1649 and 1653. At this time Irish Catholics still held nearly two-thirds of the land. Following the Cromwell campaign, which was accompanied by a huge series of confiscations, Irish Catholics land ownership dropped dramatically (Bourke, 2016, p. 5). However, the accession of James II, a Catholic monarch on the British throne brought the chance to reverse this trend, but the defeat of the deposed King of England, Scotland, and Ireland James II by the new King William III at the Battle of Boyne on 1 July 1690 vanished all the hopes for the Catholics (Mac Annaidh, 2013, p. 29).

Confiscations continued, and at the end of the century lands owned by Catholics were reduced to twelve percent. Between the last years of the century until 1728 number of laws were adopted in the Irish parliament which restricted Catholic's rights to purchase property and finally denied even the right to vote in elections to parliament (Bourke, 2016, p. 7). Following the influence of French Revolutionary ideas, the Society of United Irishmen emerged in 1791 seeking parliamentary reform and in 1794 it went underground. Irish hostility toward Britain sparked a rebellion in 1798 which spread to several cities but was subject to brutal recrimination. Act of Union was introduced by the British which came into effect on 1 January 1801, the Irish Parliament was abolished, and Ireland was given 100 MPs at Westminster. (UK Parliament 1800, 2024)

Throughout the eighteenth century the colonial establishment displayed antipathy to the mass of the population it governed and Protestants acting as local agents without final responsibility lacked the motivation to seek rapprochement with Catholics. They also acted as a screen between the London government and its Irish subjects, leaving most of the population without representation (Bourke, 2016, p. 9). This fact exacerbated sectarian politics in Ireland and resulted henceforth in the rivalry between unionism and republican separatism.

The Great Famine (An Gorta Mór) between 1846-1852 had a huge impact on social and political relations in Ireland. Autumn of 1845 a potato blight spread through northern and central Europe and in a year, it affected great majority of Irish population who depended on potato as staple food. As a result of famine, disease and emigration Ireland lost three million people in a decade. The population continued to decrease because of emigration in the following decades and decreased to four and a half by the 1911 census from around 8 million at the beginning of the famine. It is worth remembering at this point, the financial (one-thousand pounds) (Ottoman Imperial Archives, 2024) and in kind (three shipload of food) help that Sultan Abdulmajid provided to the Irish people (Matthews, 2014), (Şiviloğlu, 2023, pp. 35-53).

Under the influence of campaigns for national freedom on the European continent, members of the Young Ireland movement undertook an abortive rebellion against the British rule in Ireland during the 1840s, but it failed. Afterwards, the Irish Republican Brotherhood was formed in 1858 with the ideal of democratic self-government. British government had agreed to make some concessions in terms of devolved self-government or “Home Rule” for Ireland through a constitutional procedure in 1912, but the provision was suspended in the face of emergency presented by the First World War.

2.2. Easter Rising 1916 / Proclamation of the Irish Republic

The seven members of the military council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood¹ (Ó Beacháin, 2010, p. 3) joined by the leaders and members of Irish Volunteers staged the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin, and Pádraig Pearse read out the Proclamation of the Irish Republic (Poblacht na hÉireann) on 24 April 1916 (The Provisional Government of the Irish Republic, 2024) from the stairs of the General Post Office in Dublin centre which they had occupied. The leaders of the rebellion had hoped that this would turn into a general uprising, but it was crushed by the British army in a matter of days and fifteen leaders of the rising were executed (Ó Beacháin, 2010, p. 2).

¹ Irish Republican Brotherhood was a secret revolutionary organization founded in 1858 by Irish exiles in New York.

2.3. A Divided Island

2.3.1. First Irish Parliament (Dail) 1919; War of Independence (1919-1921); Partition 1921; Civil War (June 1922-May 1923)

At the end of the WWI, general elections were held in 1918 in Ireland (and Britain) and Sinn Fein (SF), which was founded in 1905 by Arthur Griffith and Bulmer Hobson and which from 1920s took on the role of the political arm of Irish republicanism (Mac Annaidh, 2013, p. 199), won 73 of the 105 Irish seats at Westminster replacing the moderate nationalist Irish Parliamentary Party as the voice of the Irish electorate in all provinces except Ulster. Most of SF deputies were in prison and the rest did not attend Westminster, instead a new parliament (Dail) opened in the Mansion House in Dublin on 21 January 1919; the Proclamation of the Republic (1916) was reaffirmed, and in an attempt to win international recognition and assert its authority in Ireland, a Declaration of Independence (Parliamentary Debates: Dáil Éireann (Irish Parliament) 1919, 2024) and a Message to the Free Nations of the World (Parliamentary Debates, Dáil Éireann (Irish Parliament), 2024) calling for support for the new republic was adopted.

The new Dail (Lower House of the Irish Parliament) and the IRA (Irish Republican Army/military wing of SF), which was considered as the continuation of Irish Volunteers beginning from 1916, were declared illegal by the British and forced underground. Anglo-Irish War/the War of Independence, which began in 1919 and was fought by the republicans, mainly IRA, against British forces, ended with the Anglo-Irish Treaty on 6 December 1921. While the war of independence was going on, the partition of Ireland was already executed with the 1920 Government of Ireland Act, according to which two self-governing units were created: twenty-six counties of southern Ireland and the six counties of north-east Ireland (Northern Ireland). This Act was introduced by Lloyd George after the election of 73 SF MPs and their refusal to sit in Westminster.

The Dail voted for the adoption of the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty by a small margin with 64 votes to 57 on 7 January 1922. Following the general election in Ireland in

June 1922, which was won by those in favour of the Treaty, the Civil War (June 1922 - May 1923) broke out between those who were against the Treaty, which included a republican minority and the majority of IRA combatants, and those who were in favour of the Treaty (McGarry, 2016, p.118).

On 6 December 1922, the Irish Free State came into being, having dominion status within the British Commonwealth, and on 7 December 1922, the six counties in the northeast opted out in line with the provisions of the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty. The Civil War ended with the defeat of the anti-treaty forces led by the IRA which decided to dump arms. But the traumatic legacy of the conflict shaped Irish politics for decades (ibid, 2016, p.118).

2.3.2. 1921-1972 Majoritarian (One Party) Rule; Catholic Community Grievances

The boundaries of Northern Ireland were artificially demarcated to ensure a safe majority for unionists, who are composed predominantly of Ulster Protestants who advocate for the maintenance of the union with Britain; whereas nationalists, composed predominantly of Irish Catholics, consider the partition of the Island illegitimate and support the unification of Ireland (Bardon, 1996, pp. 187-188).

Besides the issue of boundaries there is also a conceptual dispute over the name of Northern Ireland, as many nationalists call it “North of Ireland”. The Northern Irish state was rather distant from the Catholic population from its very start due to the fact that its foundation was already controversial between Ulster unionists and Irish nationalists. Though proportional representation was implemented after its foundation, the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), elected to the government by the support of Protestant majority, abolished proportional representation in 1929 and adopted plurality rule (Borsuk, 2016, p. 46). Hence, unionist seats never fell below 34 seats out of 52 in the Stormont Parliament until 1972 when direct rule was imposed.

Table 1. Northern Ireland Parliamentary General Election Results (1921-1968)

	Unionist	Ind U	Nationalist	Sinn Fein	Ind Nats etc	NILP	Rep Lab	Irish Lab	Ind Lab etc	Liberal	Ind / oth
1921	40	-	6	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1925	32	4	10	-	2	3	-	-	-	-	1
1929	37	3	11	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
1933	36	3	8	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	-
1938	39	3	8	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
1945	33	2	9	-	1	2	-	-	2	-	3
1949	37	2	8	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	2
1953	38	1	7	-	2	-	1	1	1	-	1
1958	36	-	8	-	1	4	1	-	1	-	1
1962	34	-	8	-	-	4	2	1	1	1	1
1965	36	-	9	-	1	2	2	-	-	1	1
1968	34 (24 pro-O'Neill, 10 anti)	3 (pro-O'Neill)	6	-	3 (pro-civil rights)	2	2	-	-	-	-

- Ind Nats etc includes Republicans (2 in 1925, 1 in 1933), Fianna Fail (1933), National League (1933), Socialist Republican (1945 and 1949), Anti-Partition League (2 in 1953), New Democratic Party (1965) and pro-civil rights independents (3 in 1968).
- Ind Lab etc includes the Commonwealth Labour Party (1945)

Source: Economic and Social Research Council, Northern Ireland Elections (The Northern Ireland House of Commons, 1921-1972, 2024).

Therefore, the UUP, which had the overwhelming majority in the parliament, did not have to seek for compromises with Catholics which would have moderated the conflicts. Moreover, this system also worked against the “separation of powers” principle as it had the effect of fusing the legislative and the executive (Mulholland, 2003, p. 50).

The exclusion of nationalism was not just at the political level, but it ran through the whole society. The UUP ruled Northern Ireland from the institution of Stormont parliament in 1920, established by the Government of Ireland Act of 1920 (Government of Ireland Act 1920, 2024) until the introduction of British direct rule

in 1972. The Nationalist Party, which was formed after the partition of Ireland by the members of the Irish Parliamentary Party, represented mainly Catholics but the parliament was not an efficient ground to represent nationalist's interests. Besides, the Special Powers Act was introduced in 1922, which suspended normal legal processes and provided sweeping powers of search, arrest, and detention. This legal initiative was introduced for one year at the outset, but it lasted until 1972 (Tonge, 2013, p. 19).

The primary actor implementing this Act was Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), where on average only 10 percent were Catholic. A special unit called "B Specials" was seen by the Catholics as a sectarian militia, as their recruitment was mainly based upon Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) as well as Orange lodges² (ibid, p. 20). Nationalists were also excluded from many senior posts in the judiciary. In the early years much of the police activity was directed against the Nationalist population, despite the fact that the main source of disturbance were loyalist attacks upon Catholic areas, forcing many people to flee their homes. 16 battalions (each consisting of up to 1000 soldiers) of British troops were stationed in Northern Ireland to consolidate Unionist rule, together with a regular police force, 19.000 B Specials and 5.000 full time reservists. (ibid, p. 20)

There was heavy discrimination against the Catholic community in three more areas, namely electoral, employment and housing. In addition to the plurality rule, which favoured the unionist party (UUP), electoral inequalities as well existed. In this context, voting qualifications were based upon finance, therefore majority of Catholics becoming disadvantaged. In the elections to local councils only homeownership ratepayers could vote. Many Catholics relying on public housing could not vote to elect their local representatives. Because of these legal requirements, though the number of total electorates for Westminster was around 900,000, the same number for local elections was only 600,000. One of the slogans used at the civil rights marches was 'One man one vote' (ibid, p. 21).

² Orange lodges are connected to Orange order, the largest Protestant civil society organization in Northern Ireland. Its name stems from William of Orange, who defeated the Catholic King James II at the Battle of Boyne in 1690. Before becoming the King of England, Scotland and Ireland, he was the Stadtholder of Holland, where the name comes from.

There was also the existence of business franchises, by which the owner could hold up to six extra votes, and since most of the businesses were owned by Protestants, this rule also favoured them. One more strange practice was, awarding four seats in Stormont to Queen's University, largely Protestant at the time. But in the electoral sphere, the most blatant electoral device was gerrymandering, which meant the manipulation of electoral ward boundaries. This practice was used to reinforce Unionist electoral dominance by changing electoral boundaries to ensure Unionist Council majorities, even in predominantly Nationalist areas. Most striking example was Derry/Londonderry, where there was a substantial Catholic majority, but they were put into a large electoral ward to lessen their effect. In many other towns like Omagh and Dungannon, where there were Nationalist population majorities, they were in minority in the local councils. Overall, Unionists controlled 85 percent of the local councils even though they made up only 66 percent of the population (Buckland, 1981, p. 74).

In the employment sector as well Catholics were adversely affected by the location of most industries in the east of the Province, which was mostly populated by the Protestants than the rural west. Catholics were also discriminated against in public sector appointments which was sanctioned officially, as Basil Brooke, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland from 1943-1963, stated on 12 July 1933, when he was UUP government whip, that "He would appeal to loyalists, therefore, wherever possible to employ good Protestant lads and lassies." (Reported in Fermanagh Times, 13 July 1933 / (CAIN Discrimination - Quotations, 2024).

Civil service contained very few Catholics in high positions. Unionist controlled local councils excluded Catholics from jobs. The Cameron Report (September 1969) also found that Unionist councils used their power of appointment in favour of Protestants (CAIN Cameron Report, 2024).

Housing constituted another area where Catholics were discriminated against, also because housing was determined through *ad hoc* arrangements by individual councils. Though unionists would reject all these complaints, the findings of the Cameron Report evidence otherwise (ibid, 2024).

The British government tacitly supported this exclusionary political system by being disinterested in it (McKittrick, 2002). The rift between nationalists and the state grew bigger along with the limitations on the representation of Catholics and overrepresentation of Protestants. Political hegemony of Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) made it possible application of policies favourable to the Protestant majority and unfavourable to the Catholic minority, to maintain its power intensifying further ethnic polarization between Catholics and Protestants.

In the meantime, in the south of the island, Irish Free State lived on until 1937, when a new Constitution was adopted and the name of the country became “Ireland” (Éire), and in 1948 Ireland officially left the Commonwealth. It would be appropriate to take note of the Article 2 of the new Constitution which claimed sovereignty over the entire island, which will be amended later as to the relevant provision of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 (“Article 2. The national territory consists of the whole island of Ireland, its islands, and the territorial seas.”) (Constitution of Ireland 1937, 2024).

The IRA was not very active in this period. It carried out a series of bombing campaigns in 1939 and 1940 in England and then from 1942-1944 another ineffective bombing campaign in Northern Ireland trying to force British withdrawal from Northern Ireland. As estimated by the IRA headquarters that by 1947 they had only around 200 activists (Bishop, 1987, p. 23). In the following period, between December 1956 and February 1962, the IRA waged a guerilla warfare campaign against targets mainly in the southern part of Northern Ireland close to the border with Ireland with the aim of overthrowing British rule and creating a united Ireland. However, according to Cathal Goulding, who took over the leadership of the IRA as Chief of Staff in 1962, this campaign failed due to significantly lack of support within the nationalist community in Northern Ireland, also because the people had no real knowledge of IRA’s objectives which was to end British imperialism. Therefore, the key to success was to effectively mobilise popular support. During the 1960s Marxist thought was a distinctive feature of Irish republicanism (Charles & Roche, 2020, pp. 125-126). Curiously enough, Marx and Engels had attributed to Ireland an eminent role in their early revolutionary formulations. Irish peasantry had proletariat-

like qualities; even nationalism in Ireland was a progressive force. The power of the British aristocracy stemmed from their possessions in Ireland, and that a united Irish and English proletariat movement could end the authority of the landed nobility, and this would, in return, trigger a European uprising (Anderson, 2016, pp. 128-164).

2.4. The Relative Deprivation Concept (Derek Birrell) and the underlying causes of the outbreak of The Troubles (1968-1969)

Birrell argues that there is enough evidence to substantiate the view that most Catholics consider themselves unjustly treated in comparison to Protestants (Birrell, 1972, pp. 320-321). Taking into account Runciman's three categories of inequalities, which are explained in the Introduction Chapter, in the Northern Ireland case, grievances concerning economic deprivation focused mostly on religious discrimination in employment opportunities in both public and private sectors. (ibid, p. 321)

Rose found out that two-thirds of all the unemployed are Catholics, whereas Catholics constitute one-third of the population. While unemployment rate for Protestants was four percent, for Catholics it was eleven percent. Rose's findings also pointed out that Catholics were proportionately more numerous in the bottom income group (Rose, 1971, p. 298).

The strongest sense of social grievance was in housing allocations. Catholics complained that Unionists controlled most of the city councils and in the allocation of council houses they were not treated fairly. This was also among the findings of the Cameron Report, that is, inadequate housing provision by certain local authorities, unfair methods of allocation and the use of discretionary powers in the allocation of houses with the aim of perpetuating Unionist control of local authorities (CAIN Cameron Report, 2024).

At the local government level Catholics complained also that they were deprived of political control of areas where although they constituted the majority of the population through the gerrymandering of constituency boundaries. Although

Catholics constituted 61.9 % of adult population, the percentage of all non-Unionist councillors were 40 percent (O'Hearn, 1983, p. 440). Such was the case in Derry / Londonderry, which was the second largest city in Northern Ireland after Belfast and populated mostly by Catholics, where the sense of discrimination was strongest. The sense of deprivation of Catholics is directed at both central and local government systems. Catholics felt they were excluded from the possibility of participating in the policy-making process at Stormont because of the single majority electoral system (Birrell, 1972, pp. 321-322).

The strong reaction of the British Government to the civil rights movements and the introduction of internment and Special Powers Act increased frustration of Catholic community and finally the counter reaction turned into aggression which can be identified with the DFA (deprivation-frustration-aggression) theory in the explanation of civil disorders (Birrell, 1972, p. 333). Birrell explains that severest riots have taken place in the Catholic ghettos where conditions of housing, employment and poverty were very poor. The problem in some areas was even on the verge of not relative but absolute deprivation. In these ghettos the militant Republican organisations had developed a violent revolutionary political movement with the aim of changing the political and economic *status quo*. Since they felt that there existed an enormous gap between possessions and expectations, they felt that they had the least to lose. As a result, relative deprivation provided a plausible explanation of the civil disturbances in Northern Ireland, and the only effective solution would have been to remove the underlying causes (ibid, p. 339).

Though scholars like J.L.P. Thompson (Thompson, 1989, pp. 676-699), and Christopher Hewitt (Hewitt, 1981, pp. 362-380) criticised Birrell for lack of suitable data for substantiating his thesis, other scholars such as Denis O'Hearn support the findings and theoretical framework put forward by Birrell, and argue that the evidence presented by Hewitt is misleading and rely on just one source (O'Hearn, 1983, pp. 438-445).

In conclusion, it would be safe to argue that, in line with Birrell's approach, all these political, economic and social grievances constitute very strong motives at the outset of the events, which in fact started as civil rights demands. Besides, this widespread

sense of grievances was also confirmed in the Cameron Report-1969 (CAIN Cameron Report, 2024). It is also true that republicans had and still have this nationalist aim, yet unfulfilled, of the unification of Ireland, whose solution has been left to an uncertain future with the Good Friday Agreement.

2.5. The Troubles and the First Attempts for a Solution; The Talks Leading to the Good Friday Agreement

Against this background, the turn of events started in 1968, when Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA), inspired also by civil rights movement in France and the US, initiated its marches beginning from 1968 calling for greater equality and challenging the social, economic and political discrimination of Catholics. NICRA was established in Belfast on 9 April 1967. The Unionist Government of the day claimed that NICRA was a front for Republican and communist subversion. However, Bob Purdie, in his history of NICRA, shows that though the Republicans and communists were centrally involved in the creation of the organisation, the movement did not bear out subversive intentions, in fact it did not conform to the model originally proposed by the Republicans, and in its early stages the Republicans and communists were not effectively in control (Purdie, 1988, pp. 33-41).

Nonetheless, the Protestant-Unionist administration and the Protestant-Unionist majority population considered this civil rights movement as a threat to their security and privilege. Northern Ireland administration's attempt to suppress and intimidate the civil right movement led to a hardening of attitudes on both sides. In fact, violent dispersal of a civil rights march through Derry/Londonderry city on 5 October 1968, which left many people injured including some MPs, had a profound effect particularly on the Catholic population of Northern Ireland, and this incident is considered as the starting date of "The Troubles".

Another important event at the start of "The Troubles" happened on 12 August 1969, a march by the loyalist Apprentice Boys of Derry led to a large-scale fighting with nationalists in the city's Bogside area. When the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) stormed the area with armoured vehicles and water cannons, the fighting simply escalated. The 'Battle of the Bogside' lasted for three days. British army troops were

deployed in Derry/Londonderry and Belfast on 14 August 1969, and within a month they started to build a 'peace wall' separating Belfast's largely nationalist Falls and predominantly loyalist Shankill communities. Initially, when the British troops arrived, they were greeted warmly by the Catholics and were considered as protectors from RUC and 'B Specials', whom they regarded as sectarian authorities. However, very quickly British soldiers began to lose the trust of the Catholic community and be regarded as an occupying force and heavily armed ally of the RUC and 'B Specials' (Mac Ginty, 2019, p. 216) (Keefe, 2019, p. 33).

All these incidents resulted in an increased support for Provisional IRA (Provos), which split from Official IRA in December 1969 after a Sinn Fein Conference. Provisional IRA had a more militant approach than Official IRA, also because the IRA was accused of not being able to protect nationalist enclaves in Belfast (Ó Beacháin, 2019, p. 111). In fact, some people began to suggest ironically that what IRA really stood for was "I Ran Away" (Keefe, 2019, p. 41) (Borsuk, 2016, p. 50).

Early years of 1970s were marked by violence. Catholic demonstrations were considered as a threat to the political regime. Protestants also organized counterdemonstrations and loyalist paramilitaries, such as Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) which was a unit of the British Army mainly with local recruits, had rather close ties with the loyalist groups (Ó Beacháin, 2019, pp. 143-144).

British counterinsurgency strategies targeted mainly Catholic working-class neighbourhoods which were also strongholds of the national resistance. On 9 August 1971, the Northern Ireland government, after receiving the necessary approval from London, reintroduced internment (detention without trial) to Northern Ireland. This was supposed to be a short-term measure but was kept for four years and it resulted in transforming "The Troubles" from a low-intensity conflict to an all-out war (ibid, p. 115).

On 30 January 1972, British soldiers charged civil rights marches in Derry/Londonderry organized by NICRA against internment and opened fire onto civilian demonstrators killing fourteen unarmed marchers and wounding many other.

This tragic event is known as the ‘Bloody Sunday’. This had a big impact on the Catholic community as a whole, and on more moderate Catholics as well, who had distanced themselves from violence, and so far resorted to more peaceful way of demonstrations. As a reaction to the Bloody Sunday events, a huge demonstration was organized in Dublin which ended with the destruction of the British Embassy. British Prime Minister Edward R. G. Heath (Conservative) suspended Stormont and imposed direct rule on Northern Ireland on 30 March 1972, for the first time since partition. An inquiry into these events was inconclusive. This remains as one of those issues which are called as “legacy of the past” which await resolution. On 21 July 1972, IRA exploded 22 bombs in Belfast killing 9 and seriously injuring 130 people. This is known as the “Bloody Friday”. The British Government initiated ‘Operation Motorman’ on 31 July 1972, which was the biggest military operation undertaken by the British Army since the 1956 Suez crisis, with 22,000 troops taking part (Powell, 2014, pp. 79-80).

The internment policy and the heavy-handed interventions by the British resulted in facilitating militant recruitment of the Provisional IRA, and the introduction of the direct rule toughened more the nationalist-unionist cleavage structure. Following the introduction of the direct rule, Westminster assumed the administration and responsibility of Northern Ireland. In fact, British Prime Minister Edward Heath realized that this problem also contained a political aspect and could not be solved only by force. Accordingly in October 1972, the British Government published the “Green Paper”, which is a report entitled “The Future of Northern Ireland: A paper for Discussion” (CAIN / Green Paper, 2024), and later in March 1973, another report entitled “Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals” (White Paper) (CAIN / The Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals, 2024), which recognized the “Irish dimension” in Northern Ireland, which meant that any settlement must recognize Northern Ireland’s position within Ireland as a whole.

2.5.1. Sunningdale Agreement (1973) and its aftermath

Following the elections in 1973, British government tried an elite power-sharing executive in Northern Ireland with the Sunningdale Agreement, 9 December 1973 (CAIN / The Sunningdale Agreement, 2024).

Sunningdale was the first occasion since 1925, that the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (UK), the *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister of Ireland), and the Northern Ireland government - in the form of the Northern Ireland Executive (designate) - had attended the same talks on the future of Northern Ireland. Edward Heath, then British Prime Minister, and Liam Cosgrave, then *Taoiseach*, and senior ministers attended, in addition to representatives of the Ulster Unionist Party/UUP³, the Social Democratic and Labour Party/SDLP⁴, and the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland/APNI⁵ (CAIN / Sunningdale Members of the 1974 Executive, 2024) (Deacon & Sandry, 2007, pp. 182-195).

The Irish connection consisted of the establishment of a Council of Ireland composed of seven Ministers from each side of the Northern Ireland Executive and Irish Cabinet. On the other side, paragraph five of the Agreement stipulated that

“The Irish Government fully accepted and solemnly declared that there could be no change in the status of Northern Ireland until a majority of the people of Northern Ireland desired a change in that status.” (CAIN / The Sunningdale Agreement, December 1973, 2024).

The main opposition party in Ireland, Fianna Fail criticised the agreement stating that it was in contradiction of Article 1-3 of the Constitution, which stated that sovereignty resided in the people of Ireland as a whole. Nonetheless, *Taoiseach* Cosgrave committed himself to the wording of paragraph five and a heated debate ensued in Dail⁶ (Irish Parliament Debates, 1974).

Besides these debates on the Irish side, this initiative encountered difficulties at the very start on the British side as well. February 1974 general UK elections in Northern Ireland, which was kind of a referendum for the Sunningdale deal, resulted

³ The most traditionalist and establishment-based party, but also proved to be the most conciliatory party within the unionist grouping.

⁴ Dominant voice of moderate nationalists, social democratic party founded in 1970, which believes in the parliamentary and constitutional road to a united Ireland.

⁵ Alliance Party is a cross-community and non-sectarian party founded in 1970.

⁶ Irish Parliament/Lower House.

with the overwhelming victory of opposing unionists, and Ulster Workers Council (UWC) organized a massive strike throughout Northern Ireland which brought an end to the new executive at the end of May. The same month, on 17 May 1974, in Dublin three car bombs and in Monaghan one car bomb exploded killing 34 people wounding more than 250. This was the highest death toll in one day in Ireland or Britain during “The Troubles”. No one was ever arrested or convicted of these murders. The largest loyalist paramilitary groups UDA and UVF first denied responsibility, but years later in July 1993, UVF admitted its sole responsibility in the bombings (CAIN / The Dublin and Monaghan Bombs, 2024).

This Sunningdale experiment failed because most of the unionists were not yet ready to power sharing with the Catholics and the British government had tried to impose this deal to the unionists without preparing the necessary ground for such a deal. The time was not ripe for taking such an initiative (Zartman, 2000). Northern Ireland’s political culture is unique and fragmented, and elite political behaviour remained competitive and adversarial, and the power sharing was imposed by its external ethno-guarantors, which were the British and Irish governments (Byrne, 2001, pp. 327-352). Therefore, it did not have a chance to be implemented.

Following the collapse of Sunningdale, in the subsequent months, the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson (Labour) authorized the opening of a secret contact with the IRA leadership. As in 1972, the talks ended without any result (Ó Dochartaigh, 2016, pp. 157-158). As a matter of fact, in 1972, Gerry Adams, who was in detention but released for this purpose, and Martin McGuinness, who then was the leader of the Provisional IRA in Derry, and later he became a politician, a Sinn Fein member and served as Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland from May 2007 to January 2017, had travelled to London to meet secretly with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland William Whitelaw, but the talks, which took place on 7 July 1972, yielded no result (CAIN / Chronology of the Conflict - 1972, 2024).

The unionists were totally against any power sharing solution because it involved an Irish dimension. The SDLP did not want to take part in any executive without an Irish dimension. In 1976 the British government could not figure out a win-win

political solution. Security policies were further estranging the minority community. In fact, the problem in the past was not high in the political agenda of British governments whose major priority was to limit the cost of involvement (Byrne, 2001).

The official negotiations in the Northern Ireland peace process began in early 1980s through bilateral talks between the British and Irish governments, and also between Northern Ireland political parties. The Anglo-Irish Summit (teapot summit) in Downing Street on 21 May 1980 between British PM Margareth Thatcher (Conservative) and *Taoiseach* Charles Haughey (FF) was in fact a first to establish a rapport between the two leaders. They made a *tour d'horizon* with Northern Ireland issue as the last item on their agenda. In the *Joint Communiqué* following the meeting, it was stated that any change in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland would only come about with the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland, and *Taoiseach* Haughey reaffirmed that it was the wish of the Irish government to secure the unity of Ireland by agreement and in peace. They also expressed their joint desire to hold regular meetings, and to develop new and closer political cooperation between their two Governments. At the end of the *Communiqué* it was stated that they noted with satisfaction the efforts being made by the two Governments, both separately and in cooperation, in the field of security (CAIN / National Archives Ireland, Agreed Communiqué 21 May 1980, 2024).

British Prime Minister Thatcher returned the visit in December the same year, and her visit to Dublin was a first for a British Prime Minister to Ireland since partition. At the end of the summit in Dublin, a joint communiqué was issued where there was a mention that they had taken up the “totality of the relationships”. This language was commented upon differently by each side. Thatcher, in her memoirs, blamed *Taoiseach* Haughey for overselling the summit as if there had been a breakthrough on the constitutional question and concluded that the summit had done more harm than good (Thatcher, 1995, p. 471), because Haughey had described the Summit as a ‘historic breakthrough’, and departing from the language of the declaration (totality of relationships) the Irish side had created an impression that everything was on the table, implying even the constitutional issue (Ó Beacháin, 2019, pp. 182-184).

The British perspective on the Northern Ireland conflict was mainly based on the idea that this was a security problem, which PM Thatcher had incorporated it in the above-mentioned Communiqué dated 21 May 1980. As a matter of fact, the reaction of PM Thatcher to hunger strikes in 1980 and 1981 was, at first, refusal of all the demands of the prisoners. However, this development has been an important turning point in The Troubles and had far reaching consequences in Northern Ireland. The hunger strikes started in October 1980 by republican prisoners. The reasons for the strikes were the fact that those who were convicted of offences after March 1976 were denied political status. These prisoners refused to accept that they were criminals and refused to wear the prison uniform. As a result, they were denied routine facilities, the right to exercise, to reading material, to association. They were held in solitary confinement (Adams, 2004, p. 7). First, seven of them initiated it, and later thirty more joined. British PM Thatcher did not attach much attention first. Hunger strikes ended after fifty-three days without achieving much. Bobby Sands, who was a member of the Provisional IRA imprisoned at HM Prison Maze⁷, and some other inmates began a second hunger strike in April 1981, and during this period Sands was elected to Westminster. The strike was called off after 10 prisoners starved to death, including Bobby Sands, whose funeral was attended by over 100.000 mourners, and he was buried in Milltown Cemetery in Belfast. The hunger strikes were important because they further radicalized Irish nationalist politics and the transformation of Sinn Fein as a mainstream political party, made progress (Ó Beacháin, 2019, pp. 185-191). As a matter of fact, in 1983 elections Sinn Fein boosted its votes to 13,4 % getting closer to SDLP which received 17,9 % (Northern Ireland elections, 1983). The British were concerned that Sinn Fein would become the main representative of the Catholic community in Northern Ireland (Ó Beacháin, 2019, p. 191). If we name some developments and events as milestones, the hunger strikes may be mentioned among one of the factors which had an impact in the initiation of the peace process leading to GFA (Thatcher, 1995, pp. 474-501).

In the following period, the IRA continued its military campaign in Northern Ireland and England and attempted to assassinate PM Thatcher by bombing the Tory Party Conference in Brighton on 12 October 1984. As a result, in the beginning of the '80s,

⁷ HM Prison Maze was also called Long Kesh, and it is located at 10 miles west of Belfast.

in addition to the conditions within Northern Ireland and the course of action taken by different sides to the conflict, neither on the British side nor on the Irish side the political conditions were ripe enough for engaging in a serious and comprehensive peace process.

2.5.2. Anglo-Irish Agreement / Hillsborough (1985) and the subsequent developments

Following unsuccessful attempts by the British government to find a solution without recognizing Irish dimension, in November 1985, the British government finally acknowledged, for the first time since 1920, that the Irish government had a political role to play in the internal affairs of Northern Ireland (Byrne, 2001, p. 336).

The Anglo-Irish Agreement signed on 15 November 1985, by British Prime Minister Margareth Thatcher (Conservative) and *Taoiseach* Garret Fitzgerald (Fine Gael) at Hillsborough Castle in Northern Ireland, was an important departure in Anglo-Irish relations. While Irish side recognized British sovereignty over Northern Ireland, Britain recognized the consultative role of the Irish government in the internal politics of Northern Ireland. The first part of the document stated:

"The two Governments affirm that any change in the status of Northern Ireland would only come about with the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland."

The Agreement established the Inter-Governmental Conference that for the first time gave the Irish government a consultative role in matters related to security, legal affairs, politics, and cross-border co-operation. The Agreement also stated that the two governments would support any future wish by the people of Northern Ireland to enter into a united Ireland (The Anglo-Irish Agreement 1985, 2024).

Unionists/loyalists reacted strongly to this Agreement, and the unionist MPs at Westminster resigned and forced a by-election, but they lost a seat to SDLP. British Treasury Minister also resigned in protest. However, the Anglo-Irish Agreement was approved by the House of Commons. The Anglo-Irish Agreement recognized for the

first time that the root cause of the conflict was not only ethnic but both ethnic and constitutional. British side for the first time recognised the existence of two communities with different cultures and political aspirations. British government's perception began to introduce political rights for the two communities. The inclusiveness of peace process was essential for its success (The Anglo-Irish Agreement 1985, 2024).

This agreement is considered by some scholars as an experiment in coercive consociationalism (O'Leary & McGarry, 2016, pp. 220-241). The external ethno-guarantors cooperated to coerce the political elites of both ethnic blocs to negotiate with each other. However, this Agreement failed to set up an elite power-sharing devolved government between unionists and nationalist communities. However, it can be regarded as one of the first attempts towards the initiation of a process which finally will lead to a successful solution. After many unsuccessful attempts by the British and Irish governments, it was evident that a more inclusive approach was needed, and after 1993 all political parties in Northern Ireland were included in the official peace efforts. In fact, with this 'experiment', coercive consociationalism had run up against the limits of long standing ethno-religious cleavages. Northern Ireland's political elites lacked the autonomy, confidence, and capacity to negotiate a political accommodation which their communities would accept (ibid, p. 274).

Following the failure of the Anglo-Irish Agreement-1985 to bring peace and reconciliation to both communities, the IRA stepped up its paramilitary campaign with renewed military supplies from Gaddafi's Libya, following PM Thatcher's support for the American raid on Tripoli in April 1986. This military support helped IRA in its campaigns from 1987-1988 onwards, and IRA extended its campaign to England and to attacks on British security-force personnel on the European continent (ibid, pp. 271-272) (BBC, February 2011).

In June 1993, Irish President Mary Robinson paid an unofficial visit to Belfast and shook hands with Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams, which was a first. In fact, she had already made history, three weeks before, by visiting Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace for the first time in Irish history (Ó Beacháin, 2019, pp. 221-

223). At this point, Sinn Fein leadership was given signals from the IRA that they might be receptive to a plan with prospect of a peaceful path to national self-determination. In November 1993, once more top-secret communications took place between the British Government and the republican movement (CAIN/Chronology of the Conflict-1993, 2024). Almost simultaneously meetings were held between the leader of SF Gerry Adams and the biggest republican party in Northern Ireland SDLP leader John Hume.

2.5.3. Downing Street Declaration (1993)

The attempts to find a solution through negotiations between the British and Irish governments went on and following the meeting between British PM John Major and *Taoiseach* Albert Reynolds in London a joint statement was issued, Downing Street Declaration (DSD) of 15 December 1993 (Downing Street Declaration 15 December 1993, 2024), where the exercise of self-determination was linked to the consent of the people of Northern Ireland because the Irish side was insisting on this point and this formulation was devised in order to reach a consensus. Moreover, in the joint declaration it was stated that Britain had no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland. However, ‘political interest’ was missing in the text. The text expressed with a sense of constructive ambiguity, the principles of self-determination and consent. British side stated that “*they have no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland*” and that “*the primary interest is to see peace, stability and reconciliation among all the people in the island*”. British government had also agreed that “it is for the people of the island of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts, to exercise their right of self-determination on the basis of consent, freely and concurrently given, North and South, to bring about a united Ireland.” Irish side, at their turn, recognized that

“it would be wrong to attempt to impose a united Ireland,...that the democratic right of self-determination by the people of Ireland as a whole must be achieved and exercised with and subject to the agreement and consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland...”, and also that in the event of an overall settlement they will put forward and support proposals for change in the Irish Constitution (Downing Street Declaration 15 December 1993, 2024).

PM Major claimed that the Declaration reaffirmed the constitutional guarantee to unionists that North would remain part of the UK. *Taoiseach* Reynolds said that there was a constitutional onus on John Major “to pursue unity” (Adams, 2004, p. 148). The leader of DUP Ian Paisley criticised strongly the document in a letter he sent to PM Major stating that it was a tripartite agreement between Reynolds, IRA and himself (Major) (Cochrane, 2001, p. 318).

Despite these ambiguities and criticisms from the unionists’ side, both sides realised that they could not achieve their goals through military force or armed struggle and a point of mutually hurting stalemate was in fact reached. Therefore, the time was ripe for a negotiated solution, that is, it was time to opt for political efforts as opposed to armed struggle. In the beginning of 1990s and especially in the period following the Downing Street Declaration this becomes the prevailing feeling among the parties (Zartman, 2000, pp. 228-229).

Following this Declaration, Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries called a double ceasefire, the Democratic Unionist Party-DUP (hardliner) refused to participate in constitutional talks with the mainstream political parties, which culminated in the launching of two framework documents on 22 February 1995 in Belfast by British PM Major (Conservative) and *Taoiseach* John Bruton (Fine Gael), that is, “A Framework for Agreement” (CAIN/A New Framework for Agreement, 2024), and “A Framework for Accountable Government in Northern Ireland” (CAIN/A Framework for Accountable Government in Northern Ireland, 2024).

The latter document proposed a single-chamber Assembly elected by proportional representation, containing 90 members. “A Framework for Agreement” dealt with, *inter alia*, North/South institutions. The leader of the DUP, Ian Paisley strongly criticised the Agreement (Cochrane, 2001, pp. 334-335).

2.5.4. American Involvement

In 1993, in the US, Bill Clinton was elected President. President Clinton proved a valuable ally who intervened throughout the peace process in Northern Ireland by

means of his Special Envoy George Mitchell, who chaired and mediated during the multi-party talks.

In January 1994, President Clinton (1993-2001) granted a visa for Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams to visit America, which was a decision taken against the advice of the UK government. “*British Prime Minister Major was furious and No.10 sent a very strongly worded message to the White House*” (Powell, 2008, p. 78). As a matter of fact, Gerry Adams, who could not appear on or give interviews to British media, was able to use American media freely. On the other side, this decision paved the way for IRA ceasefire on August 1994 as stated by Gerry Adams, who also emphasized that this initiative symbolically was very powerful in the sense that it showed that an alternative existed to armed struggle, that it was possible to have the support from powerful people in the USA (BBC, 2023). An additional factor, which prompted an external intervention, was the lack of trust of the republicans in the British government and their search for a support from America, where existed a strong Irish-American lobby.

In reality, American factor began being felt even at the time when Margareth Thatcher was Prime Minister. PM Thatcher had many reasons for signing the Anglo-Irish Agreement-1985, but pressure from the Unites States was an important factor as well. Beginning from early 1980s, leading US politicians, elicited by the Irish government and Irish Americans, encouraged British leaders to cooperate more closely with Ireland, and President Ronald Reagan, whom PM Thatcher respected, put his personal weight in this context. American pressure prepared the groundwork for 1998 even before Clinton was elected in 1992 (McGarry & O’Leary, 2009, pp. 38-39).

However, between 1992-1997, Thatcher’s successor PM John Major depended on unionist support in the House of Commons. Therefore, Major did not have much room for manoeuvre. He had put as a precondition complete decommissioning of IRA for Sinn Fein to participate in the negotiations, which was not acceptable for the republicans. Whereas, following Labour’s landslide victory in May 1997, Blair had obtained a comfortable majority in Westminster, hence did not need the support of the unionists, and only then UUP began to negotiate seriously with the nationalists.

President Clinton, in February 1995, appointed former Senator George J. Mitchell as his Special Envoy to Northern Ireland and Independent Chairman of the Peace Talks, which later culminated with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. The conflict in Northern Ireland became an important component of President Clinton's agenda, where the USA played the role of the primary mediator. President Clinton travelled several times to Northern Ireland to encourage the peace process, the first of such visits was in November 1995, when he has been to Belfast and Derry/Londonderry, and he became the first US President to visit Northern Ireland (Clinton Digital Library, 1995).

2.5.5. The Talks Leading to the Good Friday Agreement

Following the granting of a US visa to Gerry Adams, the IRA called its first ceasefire in August 1994. This raised expectations amongst Republicans that Sinn Fein would be able to take part in the negotiations. However, British side laid down an extra condition, according to which before the talks IRA should lay down the arms, i.e. total decommissioning (CAIN / Decommissioning, 2024). Decommissioning in the context of the peace process meant the hand-over or verified disposal of weapons by paramilitary groups. This issue proved to be a stumbling block during the whole process. This precondition of laying down all the arms in order to be allowed to participate in the talks led to a period of deadlock, and Special Envoy George Mitchell was asked to report on the issue of arms decommissioning.

The report prepared by the International Body on Arms Decommissioning (IBAD) on 22 January 1996 changed the direction of the peace process (CAIN/Report of the International Body on Decommissioning 1996, 2024). The members of this Body, who were Special Envoy and the Chairman of the Negotiations George Mitchell, General John de Chastelain from Canada, former Canadian Chief of Defence Staff and Harri Holkeri, former PM of Finland, against the opposition of unionists and British government, stated in paragraph 34 of their report that

“The parties should consider an approach under which some decommissioning would take place during the process of all-party

negotiations, rather than before or after as the parties now urge. Such an approach represents a compromise. If the peace process is to move forward, the current impasse must be overcome. While both sides have been adamant in their positions, both have repeatedly expressed the desire to move forward. This approach provides them that opportunity.” (CAIN/Report of the International Body on Decommissioning 1996, 2024).

However, British PM Major refused to follow this proposal and called for elections as an entry mechanism into all-party talks. The IRA ended its ceasefire and bombed London’s financial district Canary Wharf on 9 February 1996. At this point, the IRA believed that the cost of staying in the negotiations was higher than the armed struggle. Therefore, in line with the Zartman’s assumption, the IRA believed that the talks were not proceeding as they had demanded, and they opted to continue with the armed struggle (Zartman, 2000).

The collapse of the ceasefire did not mean an end to the peace process, but Sinn Féin was barred from the talks. Nevertheless, talks started on 10 June 1996 between nine other political parties and the two governments. The negotiations stalled quickly on procedural issues, particularly over the appointment of George Mitchell as the Chair. They were suspended again in early July 1996 when tension and violence associated with a contentious Orange Order parade at Drumcree near Portadown spread across Northern Ireland. The deadlock was not broken until after the general elections in Britain on 1 May 1997, when Labour government took over with Tony Blair as the Prime Minister with a landslide victory (418/659). In Ireland as well, there has been a change of government following the elections in June the same year, and Bertie Ahern (FF) took over as *Taoiseach* on 26 June 1997, as the youngest (45) politician to hold the office then. Bertie Ahern revealed in his book “The Autobiography” that Tony Blair asked to meet him after the IRA Canary Wharf bombing, and they both were in the opposition at the time, but they had decided at that meeting, that if elected, they would take up the Northern Ireland issue immediately, and that the *status quo* was untenable and some form of agreement was in the interest of both sides (Ahern, 2024, p. 3h 02m 00s).

By mid-June, Blair agreed with the proposal in the IBAD report (paragraph 34), and the demand for decommissioning prior to Sinn Fein's entry into talks was dropped.

The IRA renewed its ceasefire on 20 July 1997, and SF signed up to the Mitchell's principles, and thus SF entered the multi-party talks at Stormont on [9 September 1997](#). Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams met with the new Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam, and substantive political negotiations between the parties began in early October 1997 under the chairmanship of George Mitchell (Mitchell, 1999, p. 120).

In the meantime, British PM Blair also met personally Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness already on 13 October 1997 in Belfast, which was a first for a UK Prime Minister (Blair, 2011, pp. 152-199). PM Blair appreciated the positive role played by the Chairman of the talks G. Mitchell, who had set out two fundamental principles, i.e. commitment and adherence to democracy and non-violence in order to reach an agreed political settlement. Accordingly, it was asked from the participants to all-party talks to affirm their absolute commitment to democratic and peaceful means of resolving political issues, renounce to the use of force, total disarmament of all paramilitary organizations verified by an independent commission, full implementation of the terms of the agreement to be reached at the end of all-party talks by all the parties. These were known as the Mitchell principles (Mitchell, 1999, pp. 37-38).

The negotiations could restart also because all the parties which had resorted to violence for prolonged period of time changed their perspectives vis-à-vis the conflict (conflict transformation), softened their stands and also understood that they could not achieve their aims through armed struggle. The British side as well, especially relevant British authorities, military, police and the leadership of the Security Service became convinced that only security policies were not enough to bring to an end this conflict, and that there was a need for a negotiated settlement (Powell, 2008, p. 310). Besides, the parties directly involved with violence and the authorities trying to impede, the people of Northern Ireland and also the Irish people in the South were tired of years of violence and murder on the streets, they were sick of war, sick of sectarian killings and random bombings and they wanted peace (Mitchell, 1999, pp. 187-188).

A sustainable peace agreement would not be possible without the support and consent of the people, which they showed in the two referenda held in North and South, on 22 May 1998, by overwhelmingly voting in favour of the Agreement. Indeed, the point of mutually hurting stalemate was reached as Zartman had conceptualized, after almost three decades of violence and more than 3500 deaths. Moreover, the involvement of an external actor of high calibre was also one of the crucial inputs in the successful conclusion of the peace process. Though the US administration was criticised for being closer to nationalists due to the presence of Irish-American diaspora in the US, the Clinton administration could change the view of the people of Northern Ireland, which made possible for Mitchell to lead the negotiations under relatively peaceful conditions. Moreover, Mitchell enjoyed behind the support of President Clinton, who also intervened personally by making calls not only to Mitchell, but to both the Prime Ministers and even Northern Ireland party leaders (Leahy, 2017).

On 24 March 1998, the Chairman of the talks, George Mitchell, set a target date of 9 April for an agreement in order to facilitate a referendum in May. In late March the negotiations intensified, although many issues were still outstanding. Mitchell, in his book entitled "Making Peace", emphasized that lack of trust by both parties was the biggest problem to overcome during the negotiations (Mitchell, 1999, p. 37). The UUP and SDLP held differing views of how power would be shared between both communities in Northern Ireland. Sinn Féin was deeply uneasy at the prospect of any new Northern Ireland assembly and contributed little to negotiations on this matter. The UUP was concerned to tie the Irish government down on the proposed changes to its constitutional claim on Northern Ireland's territory (ibid, p.148).

The last two weeks, the talks intensified and with the consent of both governments, the sides accepted not to leave the negotiations table without agreement. Consequently, the negotiations went on without interruption and both PM Blair and *Taoiseach* Ahern were personally involved in the negotiations. *Taoiseach* Ahern accepted even to renegotiate the Strand Two section of the draft agreement dealing with the North-South institutions, which he had already negotiated and agreed upon with PM Blair because of unionists' objection. An important principle that Chairman

Mitchell implemented at the negotiations was that ‘nothing is agreed until everything is agreed’ which prevented the parties from walking out of the negotiations when they disagreed with some issue, but kept talking, and also on those very contentious issues like decommissioning and release of prisoners in formulating the text of the agreement ‘constructive ambiguity’ strategy was conveniently resorted to (Mitchell, 1999, pp. 170-172) (Powell, 2008, p. 315) (Ahern, 2024, p. 3h 34m 00s). Finally, Good Friday Agreement was signed, with over 15 hours of delay, on 10 April 1998.

2.6. The Good Friday Agreement 1998 / Consociational Power-Sharing

2.6.1. The Good Friday Agreement

Good Friday Agreement (GFA) / Belfast Agreement was signed on 10 April 1998 (Good Friday Agreement 1998, 2024), and it was adopted in two separate referenda, North and South, on 22 May 1998. However, GFA could enter into force only on 2 December 1999 following the approval of both British and Irish Parliaments.

The GFA, consists of two texts; one of them is the “Agreement between the Government of the UK and the Government of Ireland”, signed by the governments, and the second text ‘Multi-Party Agreement’, signed by the main political parties involved in the conflict, Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), Ulster Democratic Party (UDP), Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), the Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition, the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (APNI), Sinn Fein (SF), Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP).

The Governments, in the Agreement they signed, recognized the right of the people of Ireland of self-determination on the basis of consent, expressed separately North and South, to bring about a united Ireland. Parity of esteem and equality of political, civil, social and cultural rights were guaranteed. They also recognized the birthright of all the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves as British, Irish or both, and this right could not be affected by any change to the constitutional status of the North.

Both Governments undertook to support and implement, where appropriate, the Provisions of the Multi-Party Agreement. The Governments also pledged to make necessary changes in their own legislation in order to implement the provisions of this Agreement. On the Irish side, this consisted of an amendment to the Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution (Irish Statute Book, 1998). Britain also was envisaged to make changes in its legislation relating to the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, which was executed by enacting the Northern Ireland Act on 19 November 1998, and the Government of Ireland Act of 1920 was repealed (Northern Ireland Act, 1998).

GFA is the cornerstone of the commitment of the parties to peace and stability on the Island. It was overwhelmingly approved in two separate referenda, held on 22 May 1998, in Northern Ireland (71.1% with 81% turnout) and Ireland (94.4% with 55,6% turnout). However, though among Catholics the approval rate of the agreement was 99%, only 57% of Protestants voted favourably. Some 'no' voters they considered this as a constitutional sell-out. Among Protestants even less than half (47%) supported the establishment of North-South institutions. Moreover, an overwhelming majority of Protestants opposed early prisoner releases (Tonge, 2013, pp. 190-191). The GFA devised a political framework with three pillars, which consists of three strands, which provided a comprehensive political structure embracing the concepts of power-sharing, self-determination, and constitutional amendments. These institutions successfully addressed the majority of the unionists, nationalists and republican demands.:

Strand One: the NI Assembly (Stormont) and Executive were set up so that the elected political parties could share power.

Strand Two: North-South Ministerial Council to develop cooperation between both parts of Ireland (North-South cooperation).

Strand Three: British-Irish Council to promote the relationship between Ireland and Britain (East-West cooperation) (Deacon & Sandry, 2007, pp. 166-180).

GFA highlights the principle of 'consent', which affirms the legitimacy of the aspiration to a united Ireland and recognizes at the same time the current wish of the majority in Northern Ireland to remain part of the UK. It is for the people living in the north and south of the Island to exercise their right of self-determination based on consent.

The Multi-Party Agreement envisages establishment of a number of Commissions such as Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland, Equality Commission, Equal Opportunities Commission, Commission for Racial Equality, Northern Ireland Victims Commission as well as a review of the Criminal Justice System, and about the issue of decommissioning, Independent International Commission will monitor, review and verify progress on decommissioning. UK Government will ensure equality of opportunity in economic, social and cultural issues. About security, UK government will reduce the presence of Armed Forces in Northern Ireland. The independent Commission on Policing will make recommendations for future policing arrangements.

On the issue of prisoners, both Governments will put in place an accelerated program for the release of prisoners. Actually, paramilitary prisoners were released from jail within two-year time frame laid down in the GFA.

Mitchell emphasized in his book that the GFA will be an enduring document because it is fair and balanced, it seeks to promote tolerance and mutual respect, and it is based on the principle that the future of Northern Ireland should be decided by its own people (Mitchell, 1999, p. 187). Elections to a new Northern Ireland Assembly were held on 25 June 1998. The issue of decommissioning impeded progress to the devolution of powers from Westminster to Stormont and the deadline for the formation of the Executive on 31 October 1998 was missed. Further attempts to implement GFA failed during the rest of 1998 and much of 1999. Finally, devolution took effect on 2 December 1999, and Direct Rule came to an end. However, the UUP, in agreeing to enter the Executive, said it would review progress on decommissioning in February 2000, and if IRA had not begun the process, the leader of UUP David Trimble would resign as First Minister. Trimble eventually resigned on 1 July 2001.

On 23 October 2001, the IRA announced that it had started to decommission its weapons. Following two more statements in the subsequent years, finally on 28 July 2005 the IRA leadership, with a statement, ordered an end to its armed campaign and instructed all IRA units to “dump arms”. On 26 September 2005, it was announced by the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IICD) that the IRA had completed the decommissioning of all its arms (Report of the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning, 2005).

On 11 November 2007, the UDA issued a statement announcing that all active service units of the Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF) will stand down and all weaponry will be put beyond use. Similarly, the UVF also made a statement two years later, on 27 June 2009, that it had completed the process of rendering ordnance totally, and irreversibly, beyond use. Finally, Ulster Defence Association (UDA) made a statement on 6 January 2010 that it had decommissioned its weapons. Official IRA, the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) made similar statements. Finally, the official remit of the IICD came to an end on 8 February 2010.

2.6.2. Consociational Approach to Peacebuilding in Northern Ireland

In the period 1920-1972, a majoritarian model, one party unitary government was superimposed on the political culture of Northern Ireland, politicizing the ethno-religious cleavage (Byrne, 2001, p. 333). After 1972, British governments tried to develop a power-sharing consociational settlement in Northern Ireland. The participation of the civil society, in other words, constructive conflict resolution requires intensive interaction between the elites and the grassroots in order to build a shared culture of peace (Lederach, 1999).

After 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement (AIA), British and Irish governments tried to impose a consociational power-sharing model on Northern Ireland’s political elites (Byrne, Spring 2000). This was defined as a ‘coercive consociational’ power-sharing system (O’Leary, 1989). At the same time, they also tried to encourage a civil society approach through which to transform the conflict and build trust between the communities in an attempt to de-escalate the conflict (Byrne, 1995). This requires

strong links, cooperation and interaction between the grassroots participants with the political elites, and with maybe middle-tier elites in between as a conduit having access to both sides (Lederach, 1999).

In the period leading to the GFA, British and Irish governments worked together to end the unionist veto, which was one of the reasons for previously failed attempts to establish a power-sharing model and include moderate nationalist elites and the paramilitaries in a negotiated solution with the final goal of devising a political framework to manage the conflict successfully. The involvement of all the stakeholders in the negotiation process with a strong mediator as former US Senator George Mitchell resulted in the GFA, which established a power-sharing executive in Northern Ireland. In the Northern Ireland case, consociation was vital for a final political settlement, however, it had to be complemented through binational institutions (North and South; East and West) that addressed the national dimension of the conflict between unionists and nationalists. In other words, “*consociation was a necessary, but insufficient, requirement for a stable agreement*” (McGarry & O’Leary, 2009).

The components of the GFA which are not included in traditional consociational accords are:

- ‘North-South Ministerial Council’, so far, met 27 times in Plenary format⁸ (North-South Ministerial Council, 2024),
- ‘British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference’ which meets twice a year; last one was on 28 November 2023 (British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, 2023),
- recognition of Irish people’s right to self-determination,
- recognition of the principle of consent.

In Northern Ireland, where there live two national communities who want to be ruled by their respective nation-states, a purely internal and traditional consociation arrangement would not be appropriate. The GFA, which included this right of self-

⁸ Plenary format: *Taoiseach* + First Minister of Northern Ireland + Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland.

determination, had to be adopted on both sides of the border, North and South, to persuade ambivalent unionists. Northern Ireland cannot become part of a unified Ireland unless a majority here (Northern Ireland) agrees in a referendum, and Irish Constitution was changed accordingly.

In terms of consociational legislative procedures, the GFA required that members elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly (MLAs) designate themselves as nationalists, unionists and others and not as Protestants and Catholics. This is important because all key decisions are taken on a cross-community basis, and the key decisions requiring cross-community support will be designated in advance. These key decisions are taken either with parallel consent, i.e. a majority of those members present and voting, including a majority of the unionist and nationalist designations present and voting; or a weighted majority (60%) of members present and voting, including at least 40% of each of the nationalist and unionist designations. First Minister and Deputy First Minister as well, they are jointly elected into office by the Assembly voting on a cross-community basis with the same procedure. However, this required to choose a candidate which would be acceptable to both communities, which contained the risk of recurrent deadlocks. The solution to this problem was brought with the St. Andrews Agreement of October 2006, according to which a fundamental change was made stating that the party with the right to nominate the First Minister would be the largest party in the Assembly regardless of designation, with the Deputy First Minister to be named by the largest party in the other designation (St Andrews Agreement, 2006).

Following the election of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, the posts of Ministers are allocated on the basis of d'Hondt system proportional to the number of seats each party has in the Assembly. If First Minister or Deputy First Minister resigns the devolved government collapses. Thus, two major features of the consociational power-sharing model are fulfilled, i.e. grand coalition government and mutual veto power granted to both groups (Deacon & Sandry, 2007, pp. 170-173).

The only criterion which is not present in the Northern Ireland case is segmental autonomy (Coakley, 2009, p. 143). On the other side, O'Leary defined the GFA

settlement as “power-sharing plus” due to the fact that along with consociational internal agreements it has elaborated innovative external institutions as explained above (O’Leary, 1999).

In accordance with all these complicated procedures for designating the members of the Executive, the composition of the new Executive which was formed two years after the resignation of the First Minister Paul Givan (DUP) on 3 February 2022 and the collapse of Northern Ireland Executive, and holding of the elections in May 2022, is a first in the political history of Northern Ireland. The new Executive took office on 3 February 2024 with the First Minister from Sinn Fein (SF) which has obtained 27 seats out of a total of 90 seats in the Assembly, and the Deputy First Minister is from Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) with 25 seats, and in the Executive, proportional to the number of seats the parties have obtained in the Assembly, there are three SF Ministers, two DUP Ministers, two Ministers from the Alliance Party with 17 seats in the Assembly, one Minister from Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) with nine seats in the Assembly. There are also two Junior Ministers, one from SF and DUP each. The Speaker of the Assembly is from DUP (Northern Ireland Executive, 2024).

CHAPTER III

ENDOGENOUS FACTORS LEADING TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION

In this Chapter, internal factors, including leaders and methods and strategies used at the negotiations which have contributed to the successful conclusion of the peace process in Northern Ireland, will be examined, within the context of the concept of conflict resolution, while applying at the same time as a conceptual framework, the ripeness theory.

3.1. Endogenous Factors

The analysis of the internal factors which led to the Good Friday Agreement will be made by being faithful to the chronological order in which they were implemented during the peace process.

3.1.1. Backchannel Communications (Secret Direct and Indirect Channels), Track II Diplomacy (Pre-negotiation stage)

For governments it is difficult to admit talking to terrorists also because it entails a political cost. Government officials will always say that they never negotiate with terrorists. Therefore, in case the governments decide to establish contact with such groups, they prefer to do it secretly either directly or indirectly through intermediaries. These kinds of contacts usually take place in the pre-negotiation stage. Jonathan Powell, who was the Chief British negotiator on Northern Ireland from 1997-2007 and Chief of Staff of British Prime Minister Tony Blair, states in his book entitled “Talking to Terrorists” that it is not possible to defeat insurgencies by military means alone, and that often the leaders of the terrorist groups outlive political leaders, as was the case with Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness who had seen eight British Prime Ministers (Powell, 2014, pp. 1-14).

In the case of Northern Ireland as well back/secret channels were used, when it was not possible to meet officially, to make contacts between the British government and the republican movement, including Sinn Fein and the IRA. These kinds of contacts may help to reduce the concerns of the conflicting parties and contribute to trust building, reliability and mutual understanding and in some cases de-escalation.

3.1.1.1. Direct Contacts

As it was explained in the previous chapter, that already at an early stage of the Troubles, in 1972, Gerry Adams, who was released from detention for this purpose and Martin McGuinness had travelled together to London to meet secretly with Secretary of State for Northern Ireland William Whitelaw. Even a year earlier, British Prime Minister Harold Wilson had flown to Dublin for secret talks with the IRA. However, all these initiatives were inconclusive (Powell, 2014, p. 79). This was still an early stage of “The Troubles”, and the time was not ripe for engaging on a serious negotiation process, both sides had not reached yet the point where they would be persuaded that they could not end this conflict using military means alone. Following the Bloody Friday in Belfast on 21 July 1972, when IRA exploded 22 bombs killing 9 and seriously injuring 130 people, British Government started ‘Operation Motorman’ on 31 July 1972, which was the biggest military operation undertaken by the British Army since the 1956 Suez crisis with 22.000 troops taking part (Powell, 2014, pp. 79-80).

Following the collapse of Sunningdale/Hillsborough Agreement (December 1973) British Prime Minister Harold Wilson (Labour) had authorized secret contact with the IRA leadership, but in this case as well the talks yielded no result.

Powell says that usually the establishment of a secret channel of communication on behalf of the government is done through the members of the intelligence agency, and that the British government had a secret channel to communicate with the IRA from 1972 onwards. The British government opened an office in the suburb of Belfast. The first meeting between the British government and the IRA took place in June 1972 in a house on the border with Donegal. The IRA was represented by

Dáithí Ó Conaill, Chief of Staff, and twenty-three-year-old Gerry Adams, who had been let out from Long Kesh internment camp for this meeting, was included in the IRA delegation (ibid, pp. 78-79).

3.1.1.2. Indirect Communications Through Intermediaries

3.1.1.2.1. Brendan Duddy

Brendan Duddy, a successful Derry businessman, who was a convinced Republican but opposed to violence and a friend of Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, then the President of Sinn Féin, has been another successful and most comprehensive secret channel of communication between the British intelligence officers and republicans, which was established at the beginning and remained in place for most of the conflict, and has been instrumental during the hunger strikes in 1980-1981 and the 1994 IRA ceasefire. Even the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland was not informed about these contacts, thinking that it might have been difficult to conduct covert operations by including government representatives. Although in the case of the hunger strikes, Duddy's efforts as an intermediary between the prisoners and his contact who was a British official, were not successful because British PM Thatcher refused to meet strikers demands, and though Duddy's mediation was leaked to the British media in 1993, IRA ceasefire in 1994 could be achieved. Therefore, it can be said that a satisfactory dialogue had been built between the British government and the republican movement which facilitated the official negotiations coming afterwards (ibid, pp. 81-82).

As explained above, despite the credibility of these initiatives, they may not always produce a clear outcome towards peace. In this context, the intentions of the disputing parties for a non-violent resolution are important. British side in the 1970s intended to use the ceasefires to weaken IRA. But this was a false motive executed at a wrong time, in other words, not at the ripe moment. As Zartman argues, the intentions of the parties and the timing of the initiative is crucial in its success (Zartman, 2001, pp. 8-18). The first encounters through secret channels were not successful also because it was still an early stage of the conflict, the demands of the

republicans were impossible to meet by the British side because they included self-determination, troops withdrawal, and general amnesty for prisoners. Definitely, the time was not right to commence a peace process. As Zartman indicates, mutually hurting stalemate (MHS) emerges when disputing parties are locked in a conflict and cannot reach victory, and this deadlock is painful to both of them, and at this stage they seek a way out (Zartman, 2000, p. 228).

3.1.1.2.2. Father Alec Reid

Father Alec Reid was a priest of the Redemptorist Order of the Catholic Church, and he was posted to Clonard Monastery in north Belfast in 1961, where he spent forty years of his priestly life. From 1975 he developed a personal relationship with Gerry Adams, and later he developed friendly relationship with a few loyalist paramilitaries as well. He hoped to persuade the IRA to end its armed campaign. In 1986, he opened channels between Adams and the British government and between Adams and SDLP leader John Hume (Maume, 2024). Adams-Hume process began in December 1987 with first meetings in Clonard Monastery and then continued, and this dialogue initiated a peace process which developed further with the change of governments in Britain and Ireland (Moloney, 2007, pp. 277-279).

From the autumn of 1992 he arranged meetings between Martin McGuinness and an envoy of *Taoiseach* Albert Reynolds. The contacts between Father Reid, Adams and Hume became public in April 1993, and Father Reid's role receded thereafter (Adams, 2004, pp. 13-25; 42-43; 75-76).

In conclusion, it can be said that backchannel communications can go on even when violence pursue. In fact, secret indirect talks usually take place between low level participants, and are focused on interrupting violence, whereas direct talks take place between higher ranking members of the two sides and may involve a bargaining process depending on the limits of the demands. Therefore, direct talks can be more successful. On the other side, when direct contacts are yet not possible, indirect communications may prepare the ground for and facilitate direct contacts.

3.1.2. Grassroot Organizations and NGOs

At the pre-negotiation stage, secret direct and indirect channels can be used and be useful as it has been already explained in the previous chapter. There are other mostly local grassroot organizations and NGOs whose contributions can be helpful in bridging the gap between the communities as it was the case also in Northern Ireland. As Lederach explains (Figure 1), these organizations are close and in direct contact with the population affected by the conflict, though they cannot by themselves be able to bring a lasting solution to the conflict, they can contribute meaningfully to peacebuilding and be complementary to official negotiations. They can also influence decision-makers through public conferences, forums and other events with the participation of current and/or former politicians, representatives of the conflicting parties and actors. The role of these organisations may begin in the pre-negotiation stage but may continue during the negotiations as well.

3.1.2.1. British-Irish Association (BIA)

British-Irish Association (BIA) in Northern Ireland is an independent organisation founded in 1972 with the aim of improving understanding of the conflict in Northern Ireland. The organisation does not have formal membership but holds a large private annual conference to discuss Northern Ireland. The BIA invites senior politicians, government officials, diplomats, academics, business managers, faith leaders, writers and artists, commentators and community workers from Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and Britain, to this conference, which is usually held in England over a weekend in September.

Changing relationships within the UK, the restoration of trust, sectarianism, constructive approaches to commemoration and coming to terms with the past are the main issues discussed. Currently, the impact of Brexit on British-Irish relations and sustaining the vital relationship between Britain and Ireland are the main themes under discussion. The group organises other smaller *ad hoc* meetings. Last year, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the GFA, the opening speech of the annual BIA conference was delivered by Tánaiste (Irish Deputy Prime Minister) and

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defence of Ireland Micheál Martin (British-Irish Association, 2024).

BIA aimed to fill the gap of official negotiations as a middle-range organisation (Figure 1), and Peace People, as a grassroots organisation, which will be analysed next, tries to push for peace from the bottom, up to the elite level.

BIA's 1973 Cambridge and 1974 Oxford Conferences hosted high level politicians, civil servants, and journalists. British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Merlyn Rees and Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs Garreth Fitzgerald participated in the Oxford Conference. In the early 1970s these kinds of informal events presented opportunities for first contacts as it was not possible yet to engage in official negotiations. These types of events constituted a significant dimension of Track-II diplomacy. The BIA conferences brought together official representatives from British and Irish governments and Northern Irish parties and encouraged them to seek for political solutions to the conflict. The representatives of the conflicting communities as well participated in these events. Lederach argues that the leaders of these middle-range organizations are connected to both the top and the grassroots levels. They are connected to many influential people across the human and physical geography of the conflict (Lederach, 1999, pp. 41-42).

BIA facilitated political agreements through its policy reports, which were prepared following discussions between current and former politicians, academics, and journalists. For instance, Kilbrandon Report helped to modify the Anglo-Irish Agreement (1985) in relation with the demands of Catholics and Protestants (Kadioğlu, 2020, p. 156).

3.1.2.2. Peace People (PP)

Peace People instead, was established in 1976 as a protest movement against the ongoing violence in Northern Ireland. In fact, it was founded following the death of three young children. A car, which contained members of an Irish Republican Army (IRA) unit, was shot at by members of the British Army, and the car mounted the

pavement killing the three Maguire children. There was a large outcry among people in Northern Ireland who joined marches for peace. Out of this initial reaction the Peace People was born. The three founders of the organisation were Mairead Corrigan (now Mairead Corrigan-Maguire), Betty Williams and Ciaran McKeown. The Peace People advocated non-violence as the best means to resolve conflict. The organisation is involved in youth, welfare, and justice work. Since its inception, the organization has been committed to building a just and peaceful society through nonviolent means, a society based on respect for each individual and that has at its core the highest standards of human and civil rights (Peace People, 2024). The group received substantial aid from Norway, Germany, and the United States of America (CAIN / Peace People, 2024).

Peace People aspired to promote and encourage peace attempts through bottom-up approaches. Community support was essential for the success of such a group. Support for this organization increased along with its rejection of discrimination and violence and keeping its distance from both communities. This has helped de-escalation of violence by encouraging people to come together against violent attacks, and creating a united voice against violence, and reducing prejudices on both sides, and even heartened Catholic community members to speak out against IRA and Protestants against Ulster Defence Association. They tried to deal with the root causes of the conflict, while campaigning at the same time for nonviolence, justice, and equality. As the group claims, very quickly within the first six months there was a meaningful drop in the rate of violence, as also confirmed by official reports (Young, 2005).

Indeed, their opposition to any type of violence and their peace efforts were recognized and the two co-founders of the group Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams were awarded Nobel Peace Prize already in 1976, the year the group was founded. Even the Queen at her Christmas Broadcast, while addressing the importance of promoting the understanding between different communities, she praised the group's efforts stating

“Another shining example is the peace movement in Northern Ireland. Here Roman Catholics and Protestants have joined together in a crusade

of reconciliation to bring peace to the Province.” (Christmas Broadcast, 1976).

Moreover, besides all paramilitary groups on both sides, Catholic and Protestant, they also criticized the British Army and Royal Ulster Constabulary and reached the leaders of political parties to put pressure on the government to reconsider the actions of security forces. They also tried to understand the demands of the republican prisoners and were opposed to internment without trial. Peace People was the only cross-sectarian group that tried to create links between the divided communities.

As is shown in Lederach’s ‘Actors and Approaches to Peacebuilding’ illustration (Figure: 1), these groups’ efforts constitute bottom-up activities which had the effect of increasing public support for conflict resolution processes. By making it possible the participation of communities in the peace process and gaining their support, they facilitated the peace process and complemented the efforts of the political elites. As a result, it can be said that they indirectly contributed to the successful resolution of the conflict.

3.1.3. The Leaders

It would be correct to analyse British and Irish sides (actors and governments) under the rubric of endogenous elements, though they may be sub-classified as second-tier endogenous factors whose contributions were crucial in the final settlement.

3.1.3.1. Tony Blair

Tony Blair, who had Irish antecedents with his grandmother being a Protestant from Donegal (North-west coastal region of Ireland) and his grandfather an Orangeman, as a child used to travel to Ireland to visit his grandparents, and he was married a Catholic and raised his children as Catholics (Powell, 2008, p. 35). He was elected leader of the Labour Party in 1994 and he became Prime Minister of Britain following a landslide Labour victory in May 1997. He was the youngest prime minister since 1812 and the longest-serving Labour Prime Minister until 2007. As opposed to his predecessor PM

Major, he did not depend on the support of the unionists in Westminster where he enjoyed a clear majority (418/659). Moreover, as his Chief of Staff Jonathan Powell describes him, contrary to previous British leaders, who were not very convinced that Northern Ireland problem could be solved at all, he was very determined to find a lasting solution to this conflict, and displayed strong political will in this context, taking political risks when necessary (Powell, 2008, pp. 3-5; 309-322).

Bertie Ahern (former *Taoiseach*/Irish Prime Minister) stated in his book “The Autobiography”, that Tony Blair, even before being elected, when he was still in the opposition, immediately after the IRA bombing of London/Canary Wharf in February 1996, met him (Bertie Ahern), then leader of Fianna Fail, who was also in opposition at the time, and they decided together that, if elected, the Northern Ireland issue would be the first item on their joint agenda because the *status quo* was not justifiable and that a solution should be found to this problem (Ahern, 2024, p. 3h 02m 00s).

Tony Blair, all the way through the process leading to GFA tried to convince the unionists and UUP leader Trimble personally that his aim was to sort out the Northern Ireland problem, and that he had no predisposition for a united Ireland. In order to reassure the unionists, after assuming office, he promptly travelled to Northern Ireland on 16 May 1997, and at the Royal Ulster Agricultural Show in Balmoral he delivered a speech, and stated that his agenda was not a united Ireland, Northern Ireland was part of United Kingdom, alongside England, Scotland and Wales, and that he believed in the United Kingdom and valued the Union; that any settlement must be negotiated, not imposed, and endorsed by the people of Northern Ireland in a referendum, and endorsed by the British Parliament (Speech at the Royal Ulster Agricultural Show, 1997).

On the security side, Tony Blair was informed of the fact that the British security authorities (police, military, intelligence) had already realised that this anti-terrorist campaign could not be won militarily; that what they could achieve was only trying to contain the terrorists; that already by early 1990s, British security authorities were positive about the need for a negotiated settlement (Powell, 2008, p. 310).

Following the decision of restoration of the ceasefire by the IRA in July 1997, along with its decision to sign up to Mitchell principles, which ensured republican involvement, Blair authorised official meetings with Sinn Fein. He also met Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness in Stormont, on 13 October 1997, where all-party talks were going on since 15 September. This was a first meeting between a British Prime Minister and Republican leaders since 1921. Blair, as suggested by George Mitchell, who besides the all-party talks, was also chairing International Body on Arms Decommissioning, agreed to have decommissioning take place concurrently with the process of all-party talks, and let Sinn Fein to participate in the talks. On the other side, to guarantee their continued presence at the talks, Blair assured David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), which was the largest unionist party at the talks, that no final agreement would be reached without their consent (Powell, 2008, pp. 15-18).

Tony Blair tried to maintain this balance all the way throughout the process keeping all the sides around the table, including himself, because during the final stages of the process, he first negotiated with *Taoiseach* Bertie Ahern in London while the parties were negotiating in Stormont, and then in the very final days, beginning from early April, both leaders (Blair and Ahern) joined the talks in Belfast. This joint intervention by the leaders of both British and Irish governments proved to be crucial in the success of the final settlement. He also continued his efforts for encouraging support amongst those sections of the unionist community who remained sceptical, in the campaign for the referendum which was held on 22 May 1998 (ibid, pp. 113-117).

In conclusion, Tony Blair belonged to a new generation of politicians who did not bear the resentments of the past about Ireland and/or about the terrorist campaign that the British people had suffered for three decades. “From his first day in office, search for peace was his priority, and he did not give up until he had resolved it.” (ibid, pp. 310-312).

3.1.3.2. Bertie Ahern

Bertie Ahern as well, as Tony Blair, was a member of the new and young generation of politicians ready to take political risks and display strong political will in difficult

moments during the negotiations. Also in Ireland, 1997 was a year of elections, and following the general elections in June, there has been a change of government in Ireland and Bertie Ahern, leader of Fianna Fail (FF), took over as *Taoiseach* (Irish Prime Minister) on 26 June 1997, as the youngest (45) politician to hold the office then. His father was a farmer who had joined the IRA and fought against the British during the Independence War (1919-1921).

Ahern worked closely with Bill Clinton and Tony Blair and showed perseverance and determination during the negotiations, sometimes contrary to the advice of his close aides. In the very final stage of the negotiations, there has been an opposition from the unionists, from David Trimble (UUP) to the draft agreement, who wanted to renegotiate the Strand Two section (North-South institutions) and, actually, Ahern says, that Trimble wanted it to be watered down. Ahern had negotiated and agreed with Blair on that text in London, just two days earlier.

Ahern was in Dublin for her mother's funeral when he was informed that the British side wanted this Strand Two section to be renegotiated, and Blair had invited him for a breakfast next morning to Belfast to discuss this problem. Ahern's aides advised him not to go and not to renegotiate. Though at first, he seemed to agree with them, after some reflection alone, he decided to go to Belfast and renegotiate Strand Two, instead of insisting to Blair to sell to unionists the text that they had agreed upon two days ago. This was a big risk because if the talks had collapsed due to a disagreement over Strand Two, they would have been blamed for the failure and for the ensuing events. But now Ahern had to convince SDLP and Sinn Fein, which he achieved, thanks to the fact that Sinn Fein was very much concerned about the release of prisoners. He succeeded in this *quid pro quo* strategy. Mitchell describes all these last-minute developments and praises Ahern's actions as "*a superb demonstration of leadership*" (Mitchell, 1999, pp. 169-172) (Ahern, 2024, p. 3h 31m 00s).

Bertie Ahern became a very successful politician in the consecutive period winning three successive general elections and serving as *Taoiseach* for more than 10 years; and on the economic front as well he led his country through a period of very high economic development known as Celtic Tiger years (1995-2007).

3.1.3.3. Gerry Adams

Gerry Adams was born and raised into a family with a strong Republican background. British security forces at the time believed that he was the head of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in the Ballymurphy area of west Belfast, and this led him being interned in 1971. In 1972 he was released to take part in secret talks in London between IRA and the Secretary of State, William Whitelaw, in the wake of a brief IRA ceasefire. After his arrest with other leading republicans in Belfast in 1973, he twice unsuccessfully tried to escape from the Maze prison and was later sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment. During this period of imprisonment, he used to write a series of articles which were published in the republican paper, *Republican News*, under the heading of the 'Brownie Articles'. He advocated in these articles the need for republicans to develop a political programme as well as the need to maintain the 'armed struggle', which Adams calls 'Active Abstentionism' and 'Active Republicanism' (Adams, 2017, pp. 247-251).

Adams was released in 1977, but allegations continued that he remained a senior figure in the IRA. However, he always denied these charges. In February 1978, he was charged with membership of IRA, but was later freed after a ruling by the presiding judge that there was insufficient evidence for a conviction. In November 1978, he was elected as Vice-President of Sinn Féin (1978-1983). In this role he began making calls for the republican movement to recognise that its aims could not be secured by military means alone, but would require as well a more active engagement in political activity.

As mentioned above, the first secret talks with the British government in 1972, which Adams was part of, resulted in a change in the republican strategy in the sense that they already started to believe in the potential success of political resolution efforts. Gerry Adams, from the early stages of the conflict, thought that the solution should be political. Gerry Adams, in his book "Hope and History", says that even from the beginning of 1970s he was thinking that there was a necessity to move from a culture of resistance to a culture of change.

“Some tentative steps have been taken to build politically during the 1972 IRA truce, but they were not sustained. At the beginning of 1980s with the hunger strikes this process of political development accelerated.”

Already at this stage he says:

“It was also my view that there could be no military solution. The conflict did not arise from a military problem. It was a political conflict which required a political solution” (Adams, 2004, p. 28).

However, at the beginning of the 1980s, the republicans were not yet thinking of renouncing to armed struggle, and Adams’ influence and weight within the Republican movement was growing. He formulated a new strategy during and after the 1981 H-Block (Maze prison) hunger strikes. This new approach became known as the 'armalite and ballot box' strategy (1981-1994), which can be described as the commitment of the Republican movement to actively engage in the electoral process within Northern Ireland whilst at the same time maintain its on-going armed campaign against the continuing British presence in Ireland. In line with this policy, he, together with four more SF candidates won a seat in the Northern Ireland Assembly (1982-86) in October 1982 elections, but in accordance with party policy of abstention, they all refused to take their seats. However, this change of strategy did not result in de-escalation of the conflict (Morrison, 2016, p. 628). This strategy was implemented until 1994, when finally, SF realized the its contradictions and ended it with its first ceasefire in August 1994 (Moloney, 2007, pp. 152, 203, 216, 340, 567).

In June 1983 Adams fought and won the West Belfast seat also in Westminster on an abstentionist ticket (1983-92). This success increased his weight in the party, and he was elected as the President of Sinn Fein in 1983, and he held this position until 2018. In November 1986, against the opposition of many traditionalists, Adams was successful in dropping SF's policy of abstention from the Dáil (Irish Parliament) (Adams, 2004, pp. 45-47).

In the late 1980s he began a series of discussions with John Hume, the leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), which in 1993 led to a joint position

between Northern nationalists as to how political progress could be made. Adams survived an assassination attempt by Loyalist paramilitaries in 1984. He played a significant role in the political developments of the mid-1990s. He was instrumental in the declaration of an IRA ceasefire in August 1994, after he was granted a 48-hour visa by President Clinton early in the same year, and he visited New York and gave interviews to American media outlets, whereas he was banned to appear or give interviews on British media (Ó Beacháin, 2019, pp. 226-227) (Powell, 2008, pp. 78-79).

The fact that, despite British objections, Adams was granted a US visa, was another important turning point as commented upon by Adams himself. Adams stated after 25 years of the signing of the GFA that "It was important in showing that you could build an alternative... an alternative to armed struggle. And you could enlist support from powerful people in the USA." On the IRA ceasefire, which was called in August 1994, he said: "It wouldn't have happened at the time that it happened if the visa had not been granted." (Simpson, 2019). This was done thanks also to a very strong Irish-American lobby which applied pressure for granting the visa to Adams. This development has brought a change in the nature of a national violent conflict, namely, a transformation in the structure of the conflict with the inclusion of an international actor, also in the sense that with the involvement of the Clinton administration, the context of the conflict changed, and it was not anymore an internal issue of the UK as the British government had believed so far (Kadioğlu, 2020, p. 190) (Väyrynen, 1987, pp. 293-308).

Adams had intervened for this IRA ceasefire in 1994 with the hope that this would allow for all-party talks to begin between the main political parties in Northern Ireland along with the British and Irish governments. However, the participation of Sinn Fein into this process was delayed as the British government remained sceptical over the status of the 1994 IRA ceasefire, and then over the demands for decommissioning of the IRA (Powell, 2008, pp. 80-81). Although this ceasefire was to breakdown in February 1996, the role played by Adams and Sinn Fein was by now being recognised in terms of growing electoral support especially amongst the nationalist electorate in both parts of Ireland. At the Westminster general election of

May 1997, Adams regained his West Belfast seat, and SF achieved the best ever election result in Northern Ireland winning over 126,000 of the total votes cast which corresponded to 16.1 per cent (ARK, 1997). Just after one month, in the general election of June 1997 in Ireland, SF succeeded in electing a candidate who pledged to take a seat in the Dáil for the first time (General election of 6 June 1997, 2024).

The IRA ceasefire was renewed in July 1997, which allowed Adams to lead Sinn Fein into the multi-party talks taking place under the chairmanship of George Mitchell. He later committed his party to the Mitchell principles on which those participating in these negotiations had been required to adopt. Despite certain reservations, Adams succeeded in getting Sinn Fein to sign up to the Good Friday Agreement (1998) even though this required the republicans to agree to much less than their original demand i.e. unification of Ireland, and viewed from a different perspective, it could be also defined as a formal recognition of partition. The role of Adams in persuading his republicans comrades to accept these new terms of settlement was critical (CAIN Biography of Gerry Adams, 2024), (Adams, 2017, pp. 317-325). On the positive side, however, the GFA kept the door open to unification conditional on the consent of Northern Ireland people, and provided many measures and mechanisms to redress the grievances of the Catholic community, and parity of esteem between the two traditions.

3.1.3.4. John Hume

John Hume already became very active politically at the end of the 1960s also because he was frustrated and increasingly disillusioned with the apparent unwillingness of the Unionist government at Stormont to adequately address the growing calls from the minority community in Northern Ireland for a thorough programme of economic, political and social reform, Hume chose to participate in the civil rights campaign. He tried to establish a new opposition group and as a result he became one of the co-founders of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) in August 1970. After the suspension of Stormont in 1972 and the beginning of direct rule, he participated in the negotiations aimed at producing a new political settlement for Northern Ireland which culminated with the Sunningdale Agreement (1973) by which SDLP agreed to

join a power-sharing executive to govern Northern Ireland. However, the loyalist reaction and all-out strike ended this experiment without success. He became convinced that an entirely different approach, involving outside actors like politicians in Ireland, the US and Europe, was needed in order to find a solution to this problem. He took the leadership of SDLP in November 1979 until 2001. Once the leader of SDLP, he began implementing his strategy of forging closer links with the political establishment in Dublin and outside (Murray, 1998, pp. 91-95).

Taking advantage of the fact that he was one of the three Northern Ireland members of the European Parliament (MEP: 1979-2004) and as Westminster MP from 1983 to 2005, he tried to draw attention of political circles to Northern Ireland. Thanks to his efforts as well, 1985 the Anglo-Irish Agreement (AIA) was signed and received a positive response especially in America and Europe.

However, progress was painfully slow with no end in sight to paramilitary campaigns. In order to overcome this impasse, he commenced a series of negotiations with Gerry Adams who was then already the President of Sinn Fein. Although Hume was criticized outside and also within his party, he insisted on his decision (ibid, pp. 175-176).

As it was explained earlier, Father Alec Reid has been instrumental in bringing together SDLP leader John Hume and Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams, who issued joint statements after each meeting, three times in 1993, once in 1994 and the last one in 1997. In their statements, they have underlined that the most pressing issue was the question of a lasting peace, and the only way to reach an agreement was to have inclusive negotiations; that the Irish people had a right to national self-determination, the exercise of which was a matter for agreement. Following the IRA ceasefire in 1994, meaningful and inclusive negotiations were not put in place, and an opportunity was missed. A just and lasting settlement could be achieved only on the basis of democracy and equality and that it included the allegiance of both traditions, and such a solution required political and constitutional change; that they were committed to continue dialogue and cooperation with all the parties to achieve this.

Hume tried to explain to Adams that both nationalists and republicans were going to collectively benefit from a non-violent resolution and pushed for the laying down of arms and tried to convince the Provisional IRA to bring to an end their campaign of violence. This dialogue helped to increase the contributions of republicans and nationalists to the peace process and showed that it was essential that this process be inclusive (ibid, pp. 177-181) (CAIN / Hume-Adams Joint Statements, 2024).

The SDLP-SF dialogue encouraged SF to believe in politics instead of armed struggle and led the IRA to declare a ceasefire. In fact, these talks laid the basis for developments which led to the start of the 'Peace Process' (Murray, 1998, pp. 161-186). Hume's role in the peace process was later recognised together with David Trimble, leader of the largest unionist party, UUP, and they were both awarded Nobel Peace Prize in 1998.

3.1.3.5. David Trimble

David Trimble was a professor of law, and he became interested in politics because of his disappointment with unionist leadership of the time, and this had reached its peak in 1972 when Stormont was suspended and direct rule from Westminster was introduced. During the loyalist worker's strike of May 1974, aimed at collapsing Sunningdale Agreement of 1973, at which it has been successful, he played an important role behind the scenes for its success (McDonald, 2000, pp. 52-53). He then took part in a Constitutional Convention in 1975 with the aim of drafting proposals for the governance of Northern Ireland; but this project also failed. He then gradually began to establish himself within the UUP, and associated himself with those in the party who were seeking to have devolved power restored to Northern Ireland. In 1990 he became an MP at Westminster, and this new role helped him gain greater prominence. Because of his uncompromising views on constitutional position of Northern Ireland, he was known as a hard-liner within the UUP, and was not the favourite interlocutor of the republicans (ibid, pp.106-113, 158-159). He won the leadership of the party in September 1995. Initially, his leadership did not augur well for the peace process because he was insisting on the decommissioning of IRA before to entering into any talks with republican representatives (ibid, p. 163).

He led his party into the multi-party negotiations which started in June 1996. After Sinn Fein joined the talks in September 1997, Trimble overcame internal UUP opposition to remain in the process. In April 1998, despite criticism from his own party he signed up to the Good Friday Agreement and campaigned for the approval of the Agreement at the referendum in May (Powell, 2008, pp. 103-107; 111-117). Trimble was awarded Nobel Peace Prize in 1998 together with John Hume, leader of the biggest nationalist party, SDLP.

In November 1999, when at last the Northern Ireland Executive was established, he took up the position of First Minister. He resigned twice from this office in July 2001 and October 2002 to force the pace on the issue of paramilitary decommissioning. At the elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly in November 2003, Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) took over from his Party the title of being the largest unionist group in the Assembly. Some of his deputies resigned and joined the DUP. He left the leadership of UUP in 2005 after being defeated at the general election the same year (McDonald, 2000, pp. 307-329) (Cochrane, 2001, pp. 370-399).

3.1.4. British Government

Northern Ireland has received significant support from central Government to provide services within Northern Ireland since partition in 1921.

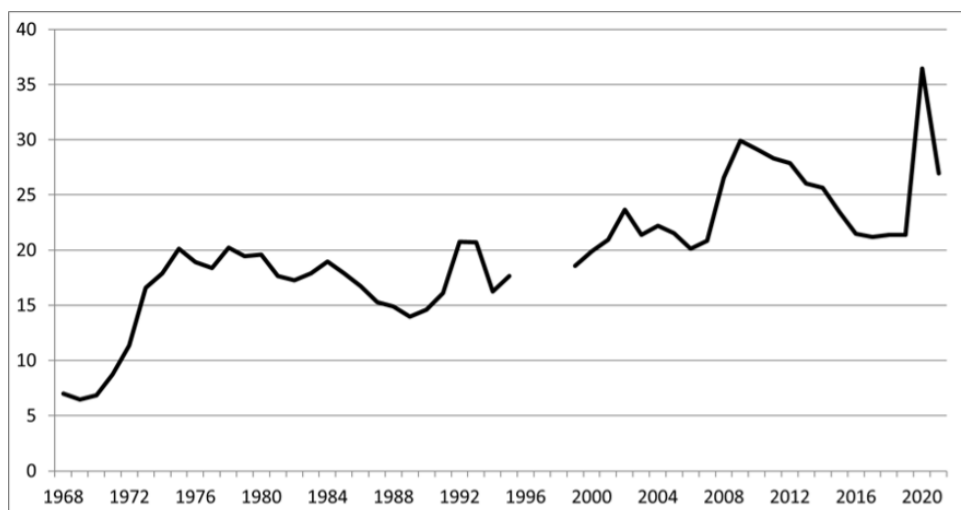


Figure 5. Northern Ireland Subvention from Central Government as % of Northern Ireland GDP

Source : (FitzGerald & Morgenroth, April 2024, pp. 1-2) from Office for National Statistics.

As it can be observed from the above chart, that there has been a significant annual subvention to Northern Ireland since partition, and after the outbreak of “The Troubles” in 1969, subventions to Northern Ireland increased dramatically, and they remained at an elevated level ever since.

Table 2 below displays in detail the subventions in recent years, based on data provided by the UK official statistics, including revenue and expenditure figures and the deficit being covered by a subvention from London.

Table 2. Northern Ireland Subventions, £ million.

	Revenue	Expenditure	Subvention	Subvention % of GDP
1999	8533	12929	4396	18.6
2000	9133	14184	5051	19.9
2001	9118	14666	5548	21.0
2002	9273	15751	6478	23.7
2003	10474	16795	6321	21.4
2004	11047	17918	6871	22.2
2005	11719	18776	7057	21.5
2006	12574	19576	7002	20.1
2007	13399	20944	7545	20.8
2008	12853	22574	9721	26.6
2009	12828	23535	10707	29.9
2010	13627	24151	10524	29.1
2011	14179	24710	10531	28.3
2012	14334	25067	10733	27.9
2013	14488	24786	10298	26.0
2014	14921	25387	10466	25.7
2015	15257	25205	9948	23.5
2016	16057	25640	9583	21.5
2017	16564	26366	9802	21.2
2018	17072	27257	10185	21.4
2019	17686	28368	10682	21.4
2020	17057	34565	17508	36.4
2021	19297	33238	13941	27.0

Source: (FitzGerald & Morgenroth, April 2024, pp. 3-4) from Office for National Statistics.

Currently the UK Government is providing the Northern Ireland Executive with a £3.3 billion spending settlement to stabilize its finances and protect public services. The Northern Ireland Executive can use £708 million of the total amount to support public services over five years from 2024-25 to 2028-29. The release of £235 million is subject to the establishment of a Public Service Transformation Board, which will work to make public services more efficient. The Executive can choose how to use the remaining £473 million for his own priorities.

The full list of the UK Government funds which are being made available to the Northern Ireland Executive is as follows:

- New Decade, New Approach - £64.6 million
- New Deal for Northern Ireland - £202.9 million
- Fresh Start/Stormont House Funding - £150 million
- Levelling Up Fund Round 3 - £30 million
- A portion of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund - £22.6 million (gov.uk, 13 February 2024).

3.1.5. Irish Government

Irish government, in addition to its contributions through different EU programmes explained in Chapter 4, Section 5, provides further financial aid to Northern Ireland by means of the Reconciliation Fund, which was established in 1982 to support civil society organisations in creating a better understanding between people and traditions on the island of Ireland, and between Ireland and Britain. Irish government has disbursed in this context more than 65 million Euros to over 3,000 projects over four decades. The majority of grants are awarded to groups working within Northern Ireland (The Reconciliation Fund, March 2024).

3.1.6. Principles required for participation in and methods used at the negotiations

All the methods and conduits of communications which were used during the peace process, and which are analysed in this section have contributed significantly to the

success of the peace process. Besides these, as the main conflict resolution method, direct negotiations (all-party talks) with a powerful mediator brought success. However, as it has been already explained that there were also certain principles to be adopted in order to participate in the talks, the most important being non-violence. Moreover, during the negotiations the principle of ‘nothing is agreed until everything is agreed’ was adopted, which was the right course of action to prevent the parties to walk out of the negotiations. In finding an appropriate language in the final draft text using ‘constructive ambiguity’ techniques in some sections like decommissioning, was also a complementary factor which made possible to meet sometimes contradictory demands of different sides to the talks and facilitated their approval of the final agreement.

Moreover, in deciding the composition of the participants and the issues to be discussed at the talks, two vital choices, i.e. inclusiveness and comprehensiveness, were made which are underlined by both George Mitchell, who was chairing all-party talks and *Taoiseach* Bertie Ahern. Though these choices had the potential to make the negotiations more difficult and lengthen the process, they contributed to the sustainability of the end result.

Inclusiveness in the negotiations structure strengthened the conflict resolution process and impacted positively the final political solution. Inclusive approach in terms of participants in a negotiation process meant the majority of the parties to the conflict, which are not involved in violent activities, were included in the talks. In fact, the Multi-Party Agreement was signed by all the main political parties involved in the conflict.

Though it may prolong the process and make it more difficult to reach a final agreement, comprehensiveness, in terms of issues incorporated in the negotiations, which involves the ability of the parties involved to rise beyond historical issues and grievances and securing the validation of the people for the outcome negotiated, is an essential element for the post-conflict period to ensure the longevity of the final contract (Ahern, OSCE, 2008) (Ahern, OSCE, 2019) (Mitchell, 1999, pp. 129-142).

3.1.7. War weariness and inadequacy of security policies

Complementary but also crucial factors, which contributed to the decision of the parties to Northern Ireland conflict to renounce to violence and use of force, and adopt the course of political dialogue, were war weariness on the republican side, and on the British side that security policies did not yield the desired results.

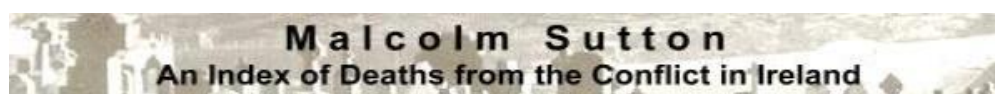
It was possible to bring to an end this intractable ethno-nationalist conflict also because all the parties which had resorted to violence and use of force for prolonged period of time changed their perspective vis-à-vis the conflict (conflict transformation), and realised that it was not possible to achieve their goals through armed struggle; and on the British side, the military, the police, the intelligence services and all the relevant British authorities became convinced that only security policies were not enough to bring to an end this conflict, and that there was a need for a negotiated settlement (Powell, 2008, p. 310).

Besides, the parties directly involved with violence and the authorities trying to thwart, the people of Northern Ireland and also the Irish people in the South were tired of years of violence and murder on the streets, they were sick of war, sick of sectarian killings and random bombings and they wanted peace (Mitchell, 1999, pp. 187-188).

A sustainable peace agreement as the Good Friday Agreement (10 April 1998) would not be possible without the support and consent of the people, which in fact they displayed in the two referenda held on 22 May 1998, in North and South, by overwhelmingly voting in favour of the Agreement (ibid, p. 188).

This is also a very strong indication that the point of Mutually Hurting Stalemate (MHS) was reached as Zartman had conceptualized, after almost three decades of violence and more than 3500 deaths. Both sides had also realised that a political solution, a way out, was possible, and they became convinced that the cost of prolonging the conflict by use of force was higher than agreeing to a settlement which maybe falls short of their original objectives. In Zartman's terms, this can be qualified as a condition of mutually enticing opportunity (Zartman, 2000, pp. 241-243).

Table 3. An index of death from the conflict in Northern Ireland arranged in relation to the organizations responsible.



Organisation Responsible for the death:

Organisation Responsible	Count
Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC)	55
Ulster Special Constabulary (USC)	1
non-specific Republican group (REP)	92
non-specific Loyalist group (LOY)	256
British Army (BA)	299
Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF)	428
Saor Eire (SE)	3
Irish Republican Army (IRA)	1705
not known (nk)	77
Official Irish Republican Army (OIRA)	53
Ulster Defence Association (UDA)	113
Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF)	147
Irish National Liberation Army (INLA)	113
Red Hand Commando (RHC)	13
Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR)	8
Royal Air Force (RAF)	1
Protestant Action Force (PAF)	37
Protestant Action Group (PAG)	5
People's Liberation Army (PLA)	3
Irish Army (IA)	1
Republican Action Force (RepAF)	24
People's Republican Army (PRA)	4
Catholic Reaction Force (CRF)	3
Irish People's Liberation Organisation (IPLO)	22
Garda Siochana (GS)	4
Loyalist Retaliation and Defence Group (LRDG)	2
Irish People's Liberation Organisation Belfast Brigade (IPLOBB)	2
Direct Action Against Drugs (DAAD)	5
British Police (BP)	1
Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF)	18
real Irish Republican Army (rIRA)	29
Red Hand Defenders (RHD)	8
TOTAL	3532

Source: (CAIN⁹ Sutton Death Index, 2024)

⁹ The CAIN (Conflict Archive on the Internet) Archive is a collection of information and source material on “The Troubles” and politics in Northern Ireland from 1968 to the present. CAIN is located in [Ulster University](https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/index.html). (<https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/index.html>)

CHAPTER IV

EXOGENOUS FACTORS WITH SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION

4.1. The International Setting

International setting in the '90s can be cited among the factors facilitating and/or providing a propitious environment for the settlement of some protracted conflicts. The end of the Cold War, marked by the collapse of Soviet Union brought an end to the bipolar international system dominating the Cold War period, leaving its place to basically a unipolar system under the leadership of the United States.

Besides, the end of Cold War released the US Presidents from traditional constraints of interfering in the UK's internal affairs, and left them more inclined to listen to Irish-American lobbies (McGarry & O'Leary, 2009, p. 39).

In the US, following a Republican President George Herbert Walker Bush, Bill Clinton, a Democrat, became President in 1993, and he was elected for a second term in 1997 and served until 2001. During his first term, President Clinton encouraged both the Palestinian and Israeli sides to come together to negotiate a joint solution for the Middle East problem. Oslo I Accord was signed between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat at the White House in 1993, and then Oslo II Accord was signed in Egypt in 1995. Though Oslo Accords did not end the conflict and the peace process came to a stall, President Clinton kept trying and invited PLO leader Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu to peace talks in October 1998 in Wye River, where a Memorandum was adopted but its full implementation was not possible (Clinton White House Archives, 1998).

President Clinton was not successful in achieving a final settlement in the Middle East, but he was successful in bringing to an end the conflict in the Balkans between

Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia, and stop ethnic cleansing which claimed 300.000 lives.

After his re-election in 1997, in his inaugural address, he stated that “*America stands alone as the world’s indispensable nation.*” (Clinton, 1997). As a matter of fact, his statement reveals his conception of the world order and the place of the US in it, and his approach, efforts, and interventions to several ongoing conflicts in different parts of the world.

4.2. US President Bill Clinton

During his second term (1997-2001), President Clinton exhibited an unprecedented attention to Northern Ireland, and he was involved personally and through his Special Envoy former Senator George Mitchell, in the final settlement of Northern Ireland conflict with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.

President Clinton’s interest in Ireland was personal and political. He had travelled to Ireland when he was at Oxford University as a scholar, and taken an interest in the northern civil rights movement. He had extensive knowledge of Irish affairs. During his election campaign, he worked with influential Irish Americans and promised to reverse the visa ban on Gerry Adams, who had been leading Sinn Fein since 1983 and would continue to lead until 2018, and the other senior Sinn Fein leaders. In fact, the US, in the role of primary mediator, brought influence, interests, resources, and capabilities to assist both sides to resolve the conflict. *Taoiseach* Albert Martin Reynolds also was determined to maximize the US influence at any peace initiative that might take root. President Clinton, in his first meeting with *Taoiseach* Reynolds (Fianna Fail) on 17 March 1993, on St Patrick’s Day celebrations, in the Oval Office, at which the Northern Ireland issue was also on the agenda, mentioned him his intention to appoint the US Senate majority leader George Mitchell as his Special Envoy to Northern Ireland. *Taoiseach* Reynolds cautioned him that the timing was not appropriate because local elections in May were approaching. Clinton, later, did appoint George Mitchell as his Special Envoy to Northern Ireland in 1995, and Mitchell also chaired the multi-party talks as agreed by all participants (Ó Beacháin, 2019, p. 220).

President Clinton's personal intervention in the political negotiations on several occasions increased the confidence of the Irish republicans about the merits of negotiations. Clinton was so much committed to Northern Ireland that he visited three times. First time it was on 30th of November 1995, and then he proceeded to Ireland on 1-2 December 1995. The main purpose of the visit was to encourage the peace process. After the signing of the GFA, he visited Northern Ireland again following an explosion in Omagh (Northern Ireland), where 29 innocent people were killed by a bomb of Real IRA, on 15 August 1998 (Blair, 2011, pp. 192-193), (Mitchell, 2015, pp. 239-245), to show his solidarity with the people and his support of the newly established GFA order. Then he also travelled south to Ireland on 3-5 September 1998 (Clinton Digital Library, 1995), and for a third time on 12 December 2000 to Ireland and 13 December 2000 to Northern Ireland (Ireland in the USA, 2023).

President Clinton, as a Democrat President, as briefly explained above, was seriously involved in searching for solutions to some intractable conflicts in different parts of the world, *inter alia*, Northern Ireland. President Clinton granted a visa for Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams in January 1994 despite objections from the UK government, which reacted to it strongly. Adams considers this as a very important development which changed his way of thinking about the conflict (Adams, 2004, pp. 158-159) (BBC, 2023).

President Clinton was extremely influential in the successful conclusion of the Northern Ireland conflict as explained in different sections of this study, and also as emphasized by many Irish officials with whom I had the chance to discuss this subject personally during my time in Ireland, including members of Dail (Irish Parliament), politicians and Foreign Ministry colleagues and academics.

In conclusion, it can be argued that many of the protracted conflicts (besides the ones mentioned above, Sri Lanka Ceasefire in 2002, ETA ceasefire in Spain in 2006 ...) in the world reached the stage of a breakthrough agreement, as it was the case with the Good Friday Agreement, also because the international circumstances provided a propitious environment in this context.

4.3. Special Envoy and Chairman of Multi-Party Talks George Mitchell

A lawyer by profession, George Mitchell was elected as a Democratic Senator for the state of Maine in 1980 and between 1988-95 was the Senate majority leader. With the involvement of President Bill Clinton in the emerging peace process in Northern Ireland in the early 1990s, Mitchell was appointed by President Clinton as his Special Envoy in 1995, and later he became the Chair of multi-party talks and his role as a mediator was crucial in the success of the process which culminated with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement.

The British general election of May 1997 saw the return of a Labour government which then set a deadline of a year for the talks process to reach an agreement. Then the renewal of the IRA ceasefire in July 1997 allowed the entry of Sinn Féin (SF) into the negotiations in September 1997. Although this led to some of the unionist parties withdrawing from the talks, the presence of SF gave the process a sense of inclusiveness that had previously been lacking. The negotiations were taking place between the political parties in Northern Ireland and the British government with George Mitchell as the Chairman of the Plenary Sessions despite the objection of two unionist parties (Democratic Unionist Party-DUP and United Kingdom Unionist Party-UKUP). According to Mitchell, to gather all the conflicting sides around the same table was one of the most difficult things to achieve. (Mitchell, 1999, pp. 46-75) Moreover, for the first four months, the parties could not agree even on a preliminary agenda (ibid, p. 76; 84-85).

Mitchell's initiative to include SF in the talks without prior IRA decommissioning was a very important development. This also conforms with Zartman's premise that a strong mediator can overcome a very controversial issue to go ahead with the process. In fact, he was endowed with the authority of the President of the US, which was a significant source of influence. Even President Clinton himself, besides being in permanent contact with his Envoy Mitchell and the Prime Ministers of both countries, he also occasionally called the leaders of political parties in Northern Ireland (Leahy, 2017).

The British government and other parties were asking for a peaceful environment and commitment not to use violence for the negotiations to continue, whereas the IRA was expecting some progress on the political side before being ready to lay down arms. The peace process picked up pace when these two conditions were somehow merged by the Mitchell formula. His role, especially in the last stage of negotiations was crucial. The progress in the negotiations was very slow with no apparent sign of a breakthrough. Mitchell decided in March 1998 to set 9 April 1998 as the deadline for the negotiations to conclude (Mitchell, 1999, pp. 143-145). This gave fresh impetus and after a frantic last round of negotiations the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) was signed on 10 April 1998 with the attendance of all the main parties involved in the talks.

In December 1998, Mitchell was awarded with an honorary knighthood in recognition of his work in Northern Ireland, but by September 1999 found himself returning to chair a review of the GFA (Mitchell, 2015, pp. 237-252). These efforts were to bring some success, and finally, in November 1999 led to the formation of the power-sharing Executive proposed under the GFA. As a result of his involvement in Northern Ireland, he has subsequently been invited to participate in efforts to try to address conflicts in other parts of the world particularly in the Middle East.

4.4. American-Irish Diaspora

For Sinn Fein, the American factor was an important one. As Gerry Adams explains in his book “Hope and History, Making Peace in Ireland”, for over two hundred years the Irish diaspora in the USA, Irish America, played an important supportive role in the Irish nationalist and republican cause (Adams, 2004, pp. 154-155).

According to the US Census Bureau, the number and percentage of US residents who claimed Irish ancestry in 2021 is 31.5 million and 9.5% respectively (United States Census Bureau, 2023), and 23 US Presidents have Irish heritage, including Barack Obama (EPIC, 2024).

After the civil rights struggle of the late 1960s and the start of the armed struggle in the North, senior US politicians like Ted Kennedy, Daniel Moynihan, Tip O’Neill,

and Hugh Carey tended to support the approach favoured by the Irish government and SDLP leader John Hume. Other Irish American figures and Congress members like Peter King, Richard Neal, Ben Gilman, Tom Manton lobbied and campaigned. Organizations like Irish Northern Aid and *Clann na Gael*¹⁰ highlighted justice issues and raised funds for political prisoners and their families. Irish American community was the best chance for internationalising the issue of peace in Ireland. Irish America had considerable influence, not just in politics but in the business world as well. Whereas the countries of the European Union saw the conflict in Ireland as an internal matter for the British government (Adams, 2004, pp. 151-153).

Tony Blair's Chief of Staff and Chief Negotiator at the negotiations of the Good Friday Agreement Jonathan Powell, in his book "Great Hatred Little Room", admitted that, during the nineteenth century, American Presidents had been happy to weigh in on Irish matters for electoral advantage at home, but in the twentieth century they were reluctant in becoming involved in the internal matters of a close ally. However, this had changed with President Clinton, who had been the first modern US President to make a sustained effort to work for peace in Northern Ireland (Powell, 2008, pp. 310-311).

4.5. The European Union

Britain and Ireland had already joined the European Union in 1973 at the same time, but the European Union was not directly involved in the negotiations during the peace process in Northern Ireland. As a matter of fact, as Adams claimed in his book 'Hope and History', "the countries of the European Union saw the conflict in Ireland as an internal matter for the British government." (Adams, 2004, p. 153).

On the economic side, the European Union, since 1991, through its INTERREG Programme/Northern Ireland-Ireland-Scotland (UK-Ireland), has brought in approximately 1.13 billion Euros into the region. This funding has been used to finance thousands of projects that support strategic cross-border co-operation in

¹⁰ An Irish republican organization in the US in the late 19th and 20th centuries, successor to the Fenian Brotherhood and a sister organization to the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

order to create a more prosperous and sustainable region prioritising issues ranging from access to transport, health and social care services, environmental issues and enterprise development (INTERREG-EU, 2024).

The EU has also supported through its Peace Fund, the peace dividend arising from the Good Friday Agreement by facilitating socioeconomic interaction, solidarity and reconciliation. The Peace Fund allocated 500 million Euros to PEACE I (1995-1999), with an additional 167 million Euros contributed by the British and Irish governments; 531 million Euros to PEACE II (2000-2006), with both governments allocating an additional 304 million Euros for peacebuilding projects; 225 million Euros to PEACE III (2007-2013), with the European Structural and Investment Funds allocating 108 million Euros additionally to peacebuilding Civil Society Organizations; 270 million Euros for PEACE IV (2014-2020) with British and Irish governments contributing an additional amount of 41 million Euros, and the Regional Development Fund providing 229 million Euros as well (Byrne, 2024, pp. 40-41).

In the following period, the Commission has adopted the PEACE PLUS, a new cross-border EU programme to strengthen peace and reconciliation and cross-border cooperation between Ireland and Northern Ireland. It combines the previous INTERREG and PEACE funding strands into a new programme for the 2021-2027 EU period. The Commission will be investing 235 million Euros from the European Territorial Cooperation allocation of the European Regional Development Fund (EU Commission, 2022). Together with the UK's financial commitment and additional national co-financing from Ireland and Northern Ireland, this will result in a total investment of 1.1 billion Euros in peace and prosperity on the island of Ireland (EU Commission, 2022). Over the past 25 years, the EU has funded major PEACE programmes within the framework of Cohesion Policy, to support and sustain the peace process on both sides of the Irish border. As such, the peace process on the Island has meshed naturally with the larger peace process on the European continent. In conclusion, although the EU was not actively involved in the negotiation side of the peace process, it has supported and continues to support peacebuilding especially in the border regions since 1991 by facilitating socioeconomic interaction and reconciliation.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1. An Account of the Main Actors' Contributions

The Northern Ireland case is a successfully resolved ethno-nationalist conflict, where during the process leading to peace both top-down and bottom-up initiatives were effective, and there has been cooperation during the negotiation process between these initiatives. In other words, peace efforts should be assisted and promoted at every level, i.e. local, national and international, including not only independent third-party mediator and political wings of the conflicting parties but also peace groups and the wider society. This is another factor contributing to the success of the process (Lederach, 1999, Figure: 1). Official negotiations and mediation by an independent third party constituted the core of the peace process, but the backchannel communications have also played a significant role in preparing the ground for substantive negotiations.

As a matter of fact, throughout the process different levels of interaction proved efficient and together they made up the conflict resolution process:

- Secret talks direct or through some intermediaries, involving two or more parties, (backchannel communications of unofficial feature)
- Interactions through peace organisations of an informal nature,
- Official negotiations.

There was a complementarity among all these three levels, and the communication direction was both bottom-up mainly in the early stages of the process and later towards the end of the process rather top-down.

Secret direct talks at an early stage, like the one in 1972 between Gerry Adams and the British side did not yield a positive result, but it was useful for the parties to

make a first contact, to know each other and learn the demands and building trust in the long run. Yet, these kinds of channels, if disclosed, there was the probability of a backlash for the government side to be 'talking to terrorists'. Therefore, secrecy was essential; once revealed it could also create mistrust between the military and the political wings of the armed groups. However, the failure of these early contacts did not prevent in the following period to keep these channels of communication open. These kinds of communication channels can be considered as a facilitating factor of engagement between the parties.

Third party covert communications like the ones established by businessman Brendan Duddy and Father Alec Reid were not only helpful because they made possible exchange of messages between the conflicting parties, but they also tried to convince the conflicting parties to deescalate violence and encourage them to talk face-to-face. Though these initiatives were not always successful, but certainly they were the first attempts and have contributed to a certain degree in the preparation of the ground for direct contacts at a later stage, and the start of substantive negotiations further ahead in the process. Therefore, these initiatives can also be mentioned among those factors wielding positive impact on the early stages of the process.

The peace groups like British-Irish Association (BIA) and Peace People's (PP) efforts at the pre-negotiation stage, and even later, have been valuable, and they have contributed to the peace process through both top-down but mostly bottom-up initiatives. These organisations were widely supported also because they acted objectively and tried to reach both communities. Their cross-community feature and broad-based support increased their influence and capacity to reach political elites. Hence, they could deliver the demands of both communities to the political elites easily and promptly. Thousands of people from both communities participated in the PP's organisations. They also helped to reduce the violence and the intensity of other events, like the marches organised by the loyalists. The conferences, public talks and protest demonstrations organised by these groups, during which the armed campaigns of both sides were criticised, contributed clearly to the peace process. They also brought political elites from both sides together in their organisations, so that they could have an exchange of views in an informal setting without any

political pressure. They established a communication line, a bridge between the society and political elites and encouraged the political actors to take on the demands of the wider society for a resolution. As a result, they can be definitely placed among the internal factors which have had a positive impact on the peace process.

The efforts and contribution of the leaders of the largest political parties of both communities were crucial. John Hume, leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), the largest nationalist party then, through a series of negotiations with Gerry Adams, leader of Sinn Fein, convinced him to stop violence and join the peace process and solve his problems through dialogue, and adopt political reconciliation as the course of action. Hume was awarded with Nobel Peace Prize in 1998 together with Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) leader David Trimble (McAleese, 2020, pp. 160-165). Trimble, following the entry of Sinn Féin (SF) into the talks process in September 1997, overcame internal UUP opposition to remain involved in these talks. Whenever other radical unionist parties like Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and United Kingdom Unionist Party (UKUP) walked away from the talks, Trimble remained, so that the process could go on and the Protestants were still represented in the talks. By April 1998, he again defied criticism from his own party to sign up to the Good Friday Agreement (GFA), and went onto campaigning for a 'Yes' vote in the subsequent referendum in May 1998. His efforts during this time were to be recognised later in 1998 when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize along with John Hume. Both leaders' efforts were vital in the successful conclusion of the process. As the Nobel Peace Prize laureates, they played an important role in furthering the process and bringing it to a successful conclusion.

Third party intervention through mediation exercised with competence and patience by George Mitchell, who was the Special Envoy appointed by President Clinton and Chairman of the Multi-Party talks, was crucial in achieving the final positive result. Mitchell was a powerful mediator as Zartman envisaged (Zartman, 2000, p. 244). He had the power of the US administration behind, so that, when needed, he could bring his input in shaping the agenda of peace talks and set deadlines as he did in the final stage of talks, which ended with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. His contribution to the process has been significant.

Gerry Adams, as the leader of Sinn Fein, has changed his standpoint as the process proceeded. This change in fact facilitated reaching a political solution. This was also possible thanks to Hume-Adams talks, during which Sinn Fein's standpoint evolved. Despite some criticisms and deep disappointment from IRA members, Gerry Adams opted for non-violence, dialogue, and political solution. Some members of the IRA, who had been involved personally in para-military activities throughout these years, were complaining that they felt betrayed and left alone because their final goal, which was the unification of Ireland, had not been achieved, and left to an unknown future. This was the prevailing feeling of former IRA members like Brendan Hughes (senior IRA commander), Dolours Price, who gave interviews within the context of an initiative called Belfast Project (Keefe, 2019). Belfast Project was a social research project which aimed to provide an oral history archive of "The Troubles" from the perspectives of those who were directly involved in paramilitary activities on both sides, republicans and loyalists. This project was initiated by Boston College in the US, in 2001, and the archive was to be housed in the Burns Library. The oral testimonies of the living participants would only be released after their death. The participants also signed a contract to protect their identities until their deaths. Legal authorities in Ireland became aware of the project as a result of a local media interview by Dolours Price in the Irish News. The contracts did not hold up in court, and Irish detectives were able to collect several interview tapes (Inckle, 2015).

As a matter of fact, there has been a generational change in Northern Ireland in the late 1980s onwards. Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness who had joined Provisional IRA (Provos) in their early twenties, they saw a whole generation being arrested and killed, and this cycle of blood could continue for another generation. They realised that they could not win, and this stalemate might go on indefinitely (Zartman, 2000). They showed courage to seek for political settlement. Gerry Adams showed great leadership to convince the IRA to much less than their initial goal, which was unification. Moreover, Adams had also the chance of finding a new generation of leaders both in Ireland and Britain. Bertie Ahern was from a republican family; his father had fought against the British during the Independence War, but Ahern did not carry the complexes of the past and ready to go beyond the traditional

Irish positions and take political risks to achieve peace. Tony Blair as well, belonged to a new generation of politicians, who did not carry on the resentments of the past, three decades of terrorist campaign that British people had to endure. Blair as well, did not hesitate to undertake political risks, and displayed strong political will to take difficult decisions.

All these leaders have brought their personal contribution in different ways to the peace process, and all were essential in reaching a successful conclusion. Tony Blair, in his book “A Journey” emphasised that there were ten principles for the resolution of conflicts; among them “*the quality of leaders is a sine qua non for success*”. He also underlined that “*any peace process calls for political risks, and leaders with political courage to take sometimes difficult decisions. Therefore, quality of leadership matters*” (Blair, 2011, p. 194). The impact and contribution of all the political leaders and their close advisors on both sides, including the leaders of the political parties of both communities in Northern Ireland in persuading the representatives of the parties to the conflict to a political solution, was compelling.

Ireland and the UK joined the EU in 1973. Later, during the 1980s and 90s, Ireland went through a period of strong economic growth transforming itself into the Celtic Tiger. This economic strength also changed how Ireland positioned itself *vis-à-vis* its big neighbour. Though GFA was already signed, 9/11 events of 2001 also speeded up the end of the IRA, which had not yet completed the decommissioning process. Finally, the IRA declared in 2005 that it had dumped all arms and formally ended its armed campaign, and the total decommissioning of IRA was confirmed by the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IICD) (IRA Statement, 2005).

The 9/11 attack had also changed the thinking of the political and financial American supporters of the IRA, who were pressured to choose exclusively the political route (Powell, 2008, p. 310). As expressed by Powell, one of the most important changes was in the attitude of the British government. Because for many years British administration tried to ignore the problem in Northern Ireland, but beginning with PM Major, British administration commenced to devote considerable time and

attention. PM Blair, who succeeded Major, from day one in the office, made the search for peace his priority (Powell, 2008, p. 312).

The Northern Ireland conflict involved religious issues between the Catholic and Protestant communities, but in fact it entailed political, ethnic, national and territorial matters. The major dispute, however, was about the constitutional status of Northern Ireland. The unionists/loyalists, the majority of whom were Protestants, and who considered themselves British, wanted to remain part of the UK, and nationalists/republicans, the majority of whom were Catholics, and who considered themselves Irish, wanted to leave the UK and join Ireland. Although Northern Ireland conflict was resolved with an agreement between all conflicting parties, the political solution did not completely transform the underlying causes of the conflict. On the positive side, many of the grievances of the Catholic community were addressed with the GFA, but the main underlying cause being the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, it can be stated that the root cause of the conflict was partly transformed through the legal changes adopted by both Ireland and Britain, while its final settlement was left to the future.

5.2. Implementing the Good Friday Agreement

The Good Friday Agreement (GFA) has brought peace to Northern Ireland, but its implementation has not been without problems. First of all, there were issues which were to be solved following the entry into force of the agreement, such as decommissioning, police and justice reforms. In the fall of 1999, Mitchell led a review of the GFA's implementation. Unionists dropped their precondition that the IRA had to decommission first before Sinn Fein representatives could assume their ministerial posts in the power-sharing executive. Finally, following 27 years of direct rule from London (since 1972), Northern Ireland Executive was formed in December 1999 with David Trimble (UUP) as the First Minister, and Seamus Mallon (SDLP) as the Deputy First Minister. However, in 2001, the Executive stopped functioning because of the decommissioning problem.

Following the elections in November 2003, hardliners took over the Executive, that is, DUP led by Reverend Ian Paisley surpassed UUP as the dominant unionist party

and Sinn Fein became the largest nationalist party surpassing SDLP. Thus, the GFA order, which was established with moderate parties from both communities, UUP and SDLP, has evolved into another stage, where more radical parties from both communities, DUP and SF, replaced them.

However, both SF and DUP refused to form a government with the other. SF leader Adams called on IRA to completely abandon violence. Finally, in July 2005, the IRA ordered an end to its armed campaign and adopted exclusively peaceful means. All IRA units were ordered to dump arms. As a matter of fact, in September 2005, Independent International Commission on Decommissioning confirmed that the IRA had “met its commitment to put all its arms beyond use in a manner called for by the legislation” (Report of the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning, 2005). Consequently, UK Prime Minister Blair and *Taoiseach* Bertie Ahern called an all-party meeting in Scotland in October 2006. They put forth a road map known as St. Andrews Agreement, which set out a path to full devolution of policing and justice and a stable power-sharing arrangement (St Andrews Agreement, 2006). In July 2007, British Army ended its 38-year-long military operation in Northern Ireland.

Finally, following intensive negotiations between DUP and SF, and later with the intervention of the UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown and *Taoiseach* Brian Cowen, Hillsborough Agreement was reached on 4 February 2010, and in April, for the first time in 38 years, London transferred power over policing and justice affairs to Belfast. Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) staff used to consist 92% of Protestant officers, and there were constant complaints of brutality and collusion with loyalists. In November 2000, the name was changed to Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), and in March 2011, 50-50 recruitment process for Catholic and Protestant officers to PSNI was introduced. Presently, in Ireland, “An Garda Síochána (Guardians of the Peace)” (Police Service of Ireland) Commissioner is Drew Harris since September 2018. He was born in Belfast, and before being appointed as Garda Commissioner, he was Deputy Chief Constable of the PSNI.

In March 2011, the NI Assembly and Executive concluded its first full term in office. May 2011 and May 2016 elections produced power-sharing governments led by the

DUP and SF as power-sharing partners. The Stormont House Agreement was concluded in December 2014 over some political, social, and economic issues to advance reconciliation and economic renewal. The UK and Irish governments undertook a few financial commitments. A Fresh Start/The Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan (November 2015) included implementation of some aspects of the Stormont House Agreement and tackling the impact and legacy of paramilitarism (A Fresh Start/The Stormont Agreement, 2015). However, no agreement could be reached on the implementation of the articles dealing with the legacy of the past, but the parties decided to continue working on this issue.

In January 2017, after 10 months in office, the devolved government led by the First Minister Arlene Foster (DUP) and the Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness (SF) collapsed over a scandal about the cost of the Renewable Heat Incentive to taxpayers (490 million Pound) due to the resignation of the Deputy First Minister McGuinness. At the snap elections in 2017, Sinn Fein won just one chair less than DUP in the Assembly (27/28). Following three years without executive and round table negotiations, The New Decade, New Approach (NDNA) Deal was reached on 9 January 2020, which restored the Executive in Northern Ireland. This deal focused on delivering what mattered to citizens in Northern Ireland, i.e. better public services, a stronger economy, and a fairer society (The New Decade, New Approach Deal, 2020). Finally, “The Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Act, 2022”, (6 December 2022) provided official recognition of the status of the Irish language in Northern Ireland, with Ulster Scots being an officially recognised minority language as well. This was a ‘historic milestone’, which was in fact, part of the NDNA deal (Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Act 2022, 2022).

5.3. Brexit and the new Windsor Framework

Trade between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland was straightforward before Brexit because both were in the EU and shared the same trade rules. However, when (UK) Northern Ireland left the EU, a deal was required to allow trade to continue seamlessly across the border. The EU has strict sanitary and phyto-sanitary rules, and requires border checks when foodstuff, such as dairy products and meat,

arrive from non-EU countries like the UK. However, the idea of checks at the border with Ireland is a sensitive matter because of Northern Ireland's troubled political history. It was feared that even introducing cameras or border posts as part of checks on incoming and outgoing goods could lead to reactions reminding past times when there existed a hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland.

Brexit referendum took place on 23 June 2016, and though 55.8% of the voters in Northern Ireland voted 'remain', the majority in the UK 51.9% voted 'leave' (UK Electoral Commission, 2016). Brexit happened as of 31 January 2020, and the Northern Ireland Protocol came into force as of 1 January 2021, according to which new checks were introduced. However, these inspections and document checks rather than taking place at the Irish border, they were carried out at Northern Ireland's ports. This applied to goods travelling from Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) to Northern Ireland. These checks were applied even if the goods were going to remain in Northern Ireland. Unionist parties complained that these checks created an effective border between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK. Businesses also have criticised because the checks meant extra costs and delays. The solution, which was jointly crafted with the EU, has been the Windsor Framework, which was announced on 27 February 2023, and came into effect as of 1st of October 2023, which significantly reduced the number of checks required (The Windsor Framework, 2023). According to this new agreement, two "lanes" were envisaged especially for agri-food arriving in Northern Ireland from Great Britain: A green lane for agri-food retail products for end consumption in Northern Ireland; and a red lane for goods which will be sent to the South. Products going through the green lane do not need additional checks or paperwork. Red lane goods are still to be subject to checks (ibid, 2023).

5.4. Future of the Good Friday Agreement and Prospects for Unification; Possible Future Research

As it has been explained in detail in this study, the Good Friday Agreement has established power-sharing institutions (Assembly and Executive) in Northern Ireland as well as North-South (Ministerial Council) and East-West (British-Irish Council)

institutions, the latter two functioning fairly regularly. However, there has been several interruptions in the Executive in Northern Ireland because of the power-sharing mechanism which required both the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister, who are from different designations, to agree to stay in the government, that is, if one of them resigned the Executive collapsed. Already at the outset, while Northern Ireland Assembly was formed after the elections in June 1998, the first Executive, in line with the GFA mechanism, could only be formed on 2 December 1999. After just nine weeks the Executive was suspended on 11 February 2000 because of the lack of progress on IRA decommissioning. On 30 May 2000, the Executive was restored as the IRA pledged to put its weapons beyond use. There were more suspensions for short periods of time in 2001. On 15 October 2002 Stormont was suspended again, this time for a period of almost five years until 8 May 2007. All these suspensions were due to the First Minister quitting the job. For the first time, on 9 January 2017, Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness resigned as the Deputy First Minister, in protest over the DUP's role in a controversial renewable energy scheme, causing the collapse of the Executive (BBC, 12 February 2022). Devolution was restored only after three years on 11 January 2020, as the parties signed up to the New Decade, New Approach Agreement (The New Decade, New Approach Deal, 2020). Currently, devolution in Northern Ireland relates to health and social care, education and training, local government, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, transport, some taxation, justice and policing, some social security elements, sports and the arts; whereas, defence, foreign affairs, immigration, trade policy, broadcasting and constitution are within the purview of the central government (UK Devolution, 2024).

On 14 June 2021, DUP leader, First Minister Arlene Foster resigned due to an internal revolt within the DUP, but Sinn Fein refused to go back into government with her replacement unless there would be a progress on Irish language legislation. A deal was reached three days later, and the government was restored. On 4 February 2022, First Minister Paul Givan (DUP) resigned in protest over the Irish Sea border and the Executive collapsed (BBC, 12 February 2022).

On 5 May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly elections were held and Sinn Fein won 27 seats, whereas DUP 25 (Alliance Party 17; UUP 9; SDLP 8; Traditional Unionist

Voice-TUV 1; People Before Profit 1; Independent 2). The Assembly is composed of 90 MLAs (Member of Legislative Assembly); 5 MLAs are elected to each of the 18 constituencies across Northern Ireland. For the first time, Sinn Fein obtained more seats than DUP in the Northern Ireland Assembly (Northern Ireland Assembly, 2022).

As a matter of fact, while there has been such a shift in favour of the republicans politically, concurrently there has been a change in favour of the population of Catholics who now outnumber Protestants in Northern Ireland. While according to the 1911 census, the share of the Catholics in the population of Northern Ireland was 34.4%, and the Protestants 61.4%, in the latest census of 2021 there has been a rise in the share of the Catholics to 42.3%, whereas the share of the Protestants has fallen to 30.5%, and 8.2% identified themselves as non-Christian (NISRA, 22 September 2022).

The demographic changes in Northern Ireland as to different religious groups is shown in the Figure 6 below.

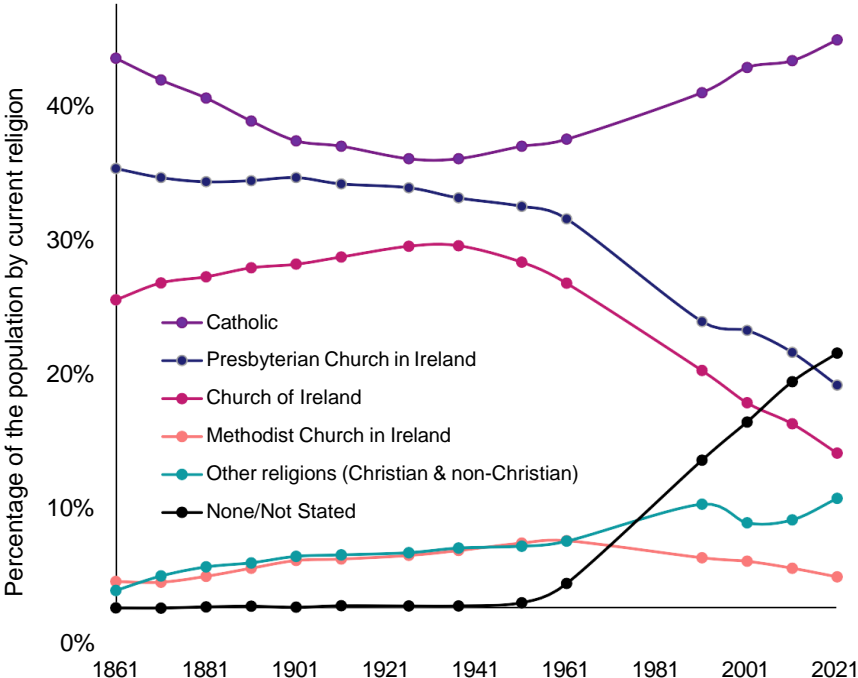


Figure 6. Percentage of population by religion in Northern Ireland between 1861-2021.

Source: (NISRA, 22 September 2022, p. 14).

New Executive could only be restored, after a two-year break, on 3 February 2024, for the first time in Northern Ireland political history, with a First Minister from Sinn Fein, Michelle O'Neill, and the Deputy First Minister from DUP, Emma Little-Pengelly. As a result, it would be correct to state that, since its inception, Stormont has been without a functioning government for more than a third of its lifespan.

The Good Friday Agreement (GFA), from the outset, has been very successful in maintaining peace and security in Northern Ireland and avoiding hard border between North and South. Therefore, the consociational power-sharing system that the GFA brought in Northern Ireland has been successful in this context, and in keeping a certain balance between the two communities while protecting the community which is in minority, i.e. the GFA, which is a legally binding international treaty, cannot be changed by either government without the consent of the other.

However, there have been several criticisms levelled at the GFA arrangements. One of them is that the GFA entrenches sectarianism in Northern Ireland. The institutions, including the Assembly, the Executive and all other formal establishments are set up taking into account the two traditions in Northern Ireland, that is, instead of transforming the perspectives of the two main traditions, it underlines their distinctions in terms of the arrangements it brought forward. In other words, it does not attempt to create a shared, common local identity such as 'Northern Irish'; instead, it leaves to the people to assume British, Irish or both identities (Humphreys, 2018, pp. 128; 133-137) (Jarrett, 2018, p. 163).

Moreover, the GFA does not point a clear way forward when devolved executive collapses, which means return to direct rule from London. In the absence of devolved institutions, Westminster legislates for Northern Ireland. As it was explained before, this has been a serious problem so far, because for a total of more than ten years out of 26 the Executive was suspended. This power-sharing system brought by the GFA was devised to reach consensus between both sides, but as experienced so far, it is far from functioning smoothly (Humphreys, 2018, pp. 21-56; 128-150).

The GFA did not bring a solution to the root cause of the problem, which is the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, i.e. the unification, but it just deferred its solution to a future date. In this context, the consent of both people living in Northern Ireland and those living in the South (Ireland) is required.

Following Brexit, and taking into account the demographic and political changes which have taken place recently in Northern Ireland, in case of a referendum as envisaged in the GFA, the likelihood of a positive answer for the unification is increasing. As a matter of fact, the number of residents of Northern Ireland who asked and received Irish passport increased significantly after Brexit. According to official figures, the number of holders of Irish passport, either solely or jointly with a UK passport, increased (according to GFA, all residents of Northern Ireland are entitled to have UK or Irish or both passports) from 375,800 in 2011 to 614,300 in 2021, and there has been a constant upward trend since UK left the EU in 2016 (Main Statistics for Northern Ireland, Passports Held, 2022, p. 2).

In the meetings I had with different TDs (Member of Irish Parliament-Dail/ Teachta Dála) politicians, government officials, diplomats and Irish people, most of them first emphasized the role of the US and of course President Clinton's role as crucial in the final settlement. As to the question of referendum on both sides of the border (it is commonly called 'border poll') for the unification, almost all my interlocutors, except Sinn Fein officials, underlined the fact that, given the present circumstances, even though it may be possible to obtain the majority also in the North in case of such a referendum, this majority should be the largest possible, including a large majority of Protestants, in order to have lasting stability and security; therefore, 'as much as hearts and minds should be won' before attempting to take such an initiative.

Michelle O'Neill, leader of Sinn Fein in Northern Ireland, newly elected First Minister of Northern Ireland, in her inauguration speech in Stormont, declared that she will be the First Minister of all, and in an interview with Sky News she predicted Irish unity vote within a decade (Interview with Michelle O'Neill on Irish unification, 2024). Whereas Irish officials in the South and British authorities stated that this

issue is not in their agenda, it is not their priority. However, it is also a fact that in the South as well, at the last general elections in 2020, Sinn Fein received the most popular votes, though not enough to form the government alone, and they could not find partners for a coalition government either. Next elections will be held in 2025, and depending on its results, the issue of ‘border poll’ may come back on the agenda. On the other hand, according to a recent report entitled “Northern Ireland Subvention; Possible Unification Effects” and published by the Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA), prepared jointly by Prof. John Fitzgerald from Trinity College Dublin and Prof. Edgar Morgenroth from Dublin City University, taking into account yearly amounts of subventions which the UK Government is providing to Northern Ireland since partition as explained in Chapter 3 of this study, the cost of the unification of a united Ireland might be between 8 billion Euros a year and potentially rising to 20 billion Euros a year depending on different scenarios (FitzGerald & Morgenroth, April 2024). Therefore, there would be many factors that the Irish side should seriously consider before undertaking any initiative on this issue.

In conclusion, the Northern Ireland conflict is a *sui generis* case, and its different stages may be analysed utilising different theoretical approaches, which help us to better understand the developments and their consequences. As Bercovitch, Kremenyuk and Zartman, in the Introduction Chapter of their book on Conflict Resolution, have stated that “*Conflict Resolution is one of the most interdisciplinary of all academic fields*” (Bercovitch, Kremenyuk, & Zartman, 2009, pp. 1-11).

Therefore, the factors having an impact on a given conflict are numerous, and all these different factors can be examined through the perspectives of different fields of study. This study tries to explain the root causes of the conflict through the perspective of the deprivation theory, and attempts to explain the reasons for the right timing for the initiation of the peace process through the lenses of the ripeness theory, and to underline the factors which have had the strongest impact in reaching a sustainable settlement as the Good Friday Agreement, which is analysed as a successful case of consociational power-sharing model, and the negotiation process leading to the final settlement through the Lederach’s approach of conflict resolution.

Whether GFA contains all the answers for the future, and is the unification of Ireland now within reach, as the republicans claim, and how Brexit may affect all this, may well be questions for further analysis.

As a last point, although every conflict possesses different features from each other, there are of course lessons to be learned from each case, which may be useful in the settlement of other conflicts in different parts of the world. Consequently, a comparative approach in terms of ethno-nationalist conflicts, which have a tendency to be protracted, may prove to be useful not only for finding new and creative courses of action leading to a solution to the conflict in question, but also for the development of different conflict resolution approaches which, as it has been stated at the outset, is still a relatively young field of study; and this, may be considered as another subject for future study.

To conclude, as Óscar Arias Sánchez, former President of Costa Rica, stated in his Nobel Peace Prize (1987) Acceptance Speech that “*peace is a never-ending process*”; therefore, it should be diligently, patiently, and incessantly worked on to be sustainable.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Kuzey İrlanda'daki ihtilafın başarılı bir şekilde çözümünde, başka bir ifadeyle, yaklaşık otuz yıl boyunca devam eden ve "The Troubles" olarak adlandırılan etnik şiddet dönemini sonlandıran 1998 tarihli Hayırlı Cuma/Belfast Antlaşması'nın gerçekleştirilmesinde etkili olan iç ve dış faktörleri analiz etmektedir.

1960'ların sonlarında başlayan ve hem cumhuriyetçi hem de birlikçi paramiliter gruplar tarafından gerçekleştirilen şiddet olaylarıyla bilinen bu dönem, Hayırlı Cuma Antlaşması ile başarıyla sonlandırılmıştır. Esasen, medeni ve siyasi haklara dair talepleri içeren toplumsal hareketler olarak başlayan bu dönem, daha sonra etnik-milliyetçi şiddet hareketlerine evrilmiş ve 3500'den fazla can kaybına malolmuştur.

Tarihi Arkaplan; Göreceli Yoksunluk Kuramı (Relative Deprivation Theory) Bağlamında Sorunun Kökeninde Yatan Nedenler

İrlanda'da sorunun kökenini, Ada'nın İngiltere tarafından sömürgeleştirilmesine başlandığı ve 1171'de İngiltere Kralı Henry'nin, İrlanda toprakları üzerinde de hakimiyetini tesis ettiği 12. yüzyıla kadar geriye götürmek mümkündür. Öncelikle İskoçya ve İngiltere'nin farklı diğer bölgelerinden de Ada'ya getirilen İngiliz yerleşimcilerin, büyük çiftlik sahibi yapılmak suretiyle (*plantations policy*) ve ilk aşamada Ada'nın kuzeydoğusundan (*Ulster*) başlayarak bilahare büyük bölümüne yayılmışlardır. 17. yüzyılın sonlarına gelindiğinde Katoliklerin ellerindeki toprakların oranı % 12'ye kadar gerilemiştir.

İrlanda'nın bağımsızlığını kazandığı ve altı coğrafi bölgeden (County) oluşan Kuzey İrlanda'daki (*Ulster*) çoğunluğun İngiltere'nin toprağı olarak kalmayı tercih etmesi

sonucu Ada'nın bölündüğü 1921 yılına kadar, çeşitli aralıklarla ve 19. Yüzyılın ikinci yarısından itibaren artan bir şiddette cumhuriyetçi/milliyetçi gruplar tarafından ayaklanmalar olmuş, ancak bunlar başarılı olamamıştır. Bu ayaklanmalardan en önemlisi, İrlanda Cumhuriyeti Beyannamesi'nin, ayaklananların lideri Pádraig Pearse tarafından Dublin'deki Merkezi Postane Binası önünde okunduğu 1916 Paskalya Ayaklanması'dır. Ancak, bu da İngiliz askeri güçleri tarafından kısa sürede bastırılmış ve ayaklanmanın onbeş öndegelen lideri infaz edilmiştir.

Bilahare, büyük ölçüde cumhuriyetçi paramiliter güçlerden oluşan gruplarla 1919'da İngilizlere karşı başlatılan bağımsızlık savaşı, 6 Aralık 1921 tarihli İngiliz-İrlanda Antlaşması (Anglo-Irish Treaty) ile sonuçlanmış ve 26 coğrafi bölgeden oluşan Ada'nın güneyi, Britanya *Commonwealth* üyesi olarak kalmak suretiyle, 'Serbest İrlanda Devleti' (*Irish Free State*) adı altında bağımsızlığını kazanmış, altı coğrafi bölgeden oluşan Kuzey İrlanda ise, İngiltere'nin egemenliğinde kalmıştır.

Bu Anlaşmanın koşullarını kabul etmeyen ve çoğunluğunu *IRA* (İrlanda Cumhuriyetçi Ordusu) mensuplarının oluşturduğu güçlerle hükümet güçleri arasında Haziran 1922-Mayıs 1923 tarihleri arasında gerçekleşen iç savaş, Anlaşma karşıtı güçlerin yenilgisiyle sonuçlanmıştır.

1937'de yeni bir Anayasa kabul edilerek, ülkenin resmi ismi 'İrlanda' olmuş ve 1948'de *Commonwealth* üyeliğinden de ayrılmıştır.

Kuzey İrlanda'da ise, 1921'den 1972'ye kadar, çoğunlukçu seçim sisteminin de etkisiyle, birlikçi (İngiltere taraftarı) Protestan çoğunluğun desteklediği *UUP*'nin (Ulster Birlikçi Partisi) tek parti yönetimi hüküm sürmüştür. Bu dönemde, Katolikler, ekonomik (işsizlik, gelir düzeylerindeki farklılıklar, iş güvencesi, kamuda ve özel sektörde iş bulma ve yükselme) siyasi (seçme ve seçilme hakları, seçim bölgelerinin sınırlarının değiştirilmesi gibi uygulamalar) ve sosyal (sosyal konut tahsisi, eğitim) alanlarda ayrımcılığa tabi olmuşlar ve 1960'ların sonlarında ekonomik ve sosyal hak talepleri olarak başlayan ilk gösteriler, sonrasında İngiliz güvenlik güçlerinin bu gösterilere karşı aşırı güçle verdiği tepkinin de etkisiyle ve *IRA*'nın da olaylara katılmasıyla, otuz yıl sürecek bir şiddet sarmalına evrilmiştir.

Katoliklerin bölünmeden sonra onyıllar boyunca maruz kaldığı bu ayrımcı ve adaletsiz uygulamalar, Derek Birrell'in göreceli yoksunluk kuramında da belirtildiği üzere, özellikle etnik ve dini bakımdan bölünmüş toplumlarda görülen bu haksız ve adil olmayan uygulamalar kaldırılmadığı ve bunların düzeltilmesine yönelik taleplere karşı kayıtsız kalındığı takdirde, çeşitli yöntem ve şekillerde tepkilerin ortaya çıkması kaçınılmaz olmaktadır. Katoliklerin yakınmalarına neden olan hususların büyük çoğunluğu, 1969 tarihli Cameron Raporu'nda da tespit ve teyit edilmiştir.

***The Troubles* ile ilgili dönüm noktaları ve eşzamanlı olarak ilk çözüm girişimleri; Zartman'ın Olgunlaşma Kuramı Bağlamında Gelişmelerin Tartışılması**

Olgunlaşma Kuramı (Ripeness Theory)

Hayırlı Cuma Antlaşması'na giden süreçte, İngiliz ve İrlanda Hükümetleri arasında çeşitli anlaşmalar yapılmış, ancak bunlar sonuç vermemiştir. Bunların neden sonuç vermediği ve Hayırlı Cuma Antlaşması'nın ise neden başarılı olduğu hususu, bu çalışmada, Zartman'ın Olgunlaşma kuramı çerçevesinde tartışılmaktadır.

Zartman'a göre, ihtilafların çözümünde 'müzakere' yöntemini incelerken iki ana yaklaşım mevcuttur. Birincisi içeriği, ikincisi ise zamanlamayı öne çıkartmaktadır. Zamanlama müzakerelerin başlamasında, içerik ise başarılı bir şekilde ilerletilmesinde önemli rol oynamaktadır. Bir anlaşmazlığın çözümü bağlamında müzakerelere başlamak için zamanın olgunlaşmış olup olmadığını anlamak, müzakereleri yapacak diplomat, siyasetçi ve/veya arabulucunun tespit etmesi gereken bir olgudur. Zartman'a göre, taraflarda, kendilerine zarar veren bir çıkmaz (mutually hurting stalemate) içinde olduklarına dair bir algı oluşması ve mevcut koşullar sürdüğü takdirde, diğer bir ifadeyle, bu aşamaya kadar yürütülen mücadelede kullanılan araç ve yöntemlere devam edildiği takdirde, bu çıkmazdan kurtulmanın mümkün olmadığı ve bunun başarı getirmeyeceği algısının oluşması halinde, (müzakerelere başlamak için) zamanın olgunlaşmış olduğu söylenebilir. Bu aşamadan sonra, görüşmelere devam etmek için, tarafların, sonuçta bir çıkış yolu bulunduğu kanaat getirmeleri ve müzakereler sonunda, elde edebileceklerini

düşündükleri daha cazip seçeneklerin mevcudiyetine inanmaları gerekmektedir. Zartman, bu olguyu da ‘karşılıklı cazip seçenekler’ (mutually enticing opportunities) olarak tanımlamaktadır.

***The Troubles* ve İlk Çözüm Çabaları**

Kuzey İrlanda’daki Protestan-Birlikçi yönetim, 1960’ların sonlarında başlayan medeni ve siyasi haklarla ilgili gösterileri, yönetimlerine karşı bir tehdit olarak görerek, sert karşı önlemler almışlardır. *The Troubles* döneminin başlangıcı olarak kabul edilen ilk olay, 5 Ekim 1968’de, Derry/Londonderry’de gerçekleştirilen sivil haklar yürüyüşünün sert bir şekilde bastırıldığı ve bir çok kişinin yaralandığı olaydır. Bilahare, 12 Ağustos 1969’da, Derry/Londonderry kentinin Bogside bölgesinde birlikçi bir yürüyüş ile başlayan ve İngiliz askerlerinin de müdahale ettiği, üç gün süren şiddet olaylarıyla devam etmiştir (The Battle of the Bogside). IRA içinde de, İngilizlere karşı yeterli düzeyde güçlü bir tepki verilmediğini düşünen bir grup ayrılarak, *Provisional IRA* adıyla aktif olarak paramiliter faaliyetlerine başlamıştır.

1970’lerin başları, şiddet olaylarının giderek tırmandığı yıllar olmuştur. 9 Ağustos 1971’de Kuzey İrlanda yönetimi tarafından getirilen *interment* (yargısız tutuklama) uygulaması ise, olayların daha da alevlenmesi sonucunu doğurmuştur. ‘Kanlı Pazar’ olarak da bilinen, 30 Ocak 1972 günü, Derry/Londonderry kentinde, protesto yürüyüşü yapan göstericilerin üzerine güvenlik güçleri tarafından açılan ateş sonucu ondört sivil ölmüş ve birçok kişi de yaralanmıştır. Bu olay büyük infial yaratmış ve Dublin’deki İngiltere Büyükelçiliği, göstericiler tarafından ateşe verilerek tamamen tahrip edilmiştir. Bu olayların akabinde, dönemin İngiltere Başbakanı Edward Heath tarafından alınan bir kararla, 30 Mart 1972 tarihi itibarıyla, Kuzey İrlanda’da, 1921’den bu yana devam eden yerinden yönetime son verilerek, doğrudan yönetime (Londra’dan yönetim) geçilmiştir.

Bölgedeki soruna çözüm bulma çabaları çerçevesinde, Aralık 1973’de, İngiltere ile İrlanda Hükümetleri arasında gerçekleştirilen ‘Sunningdale Antlaşması’ ile, Kuzey İrlanda’da bir güç paylaşımı (power-sharing) modeli denenmek istenmiş, ancak, birlikçiler buna büyük tepki göstermiş, ayrıca İrlanda’daki muhalefet de eleştirilerde

bulunmuş ve sonuçta bu deneme başarılı olamamıştır. Esasen, bu inisiyatifin başarısızlığı, birlikçilerin yönetimi paylaşmaya hazır olmamalarından, diğer bir ifadeyle, Zartman'ın olgunlaşma kuramında belirttiği üzere, zamanın (koşulların) yeterince olgunlaşmamış olmasından kaynaklanmıştır.

Bu dönemde, bir yandan da Sinn Fein ile gizli temaslara da başlanmıştır. Ancak, henüz çok erken bir aşamada bulunulduğundan ve taraflar maksimalist taleplerinden vazgeçemediklerinden bir sonuç almak mümkün olamamıştır.

Sorunun çözümüne yönelik ilk resmi müzakereler 1980'lerin başında İngiltere ve İrlanda hükümetleri arasında gerçekleşmeye başlamıştır. 21 Mayıs 1980'de *Anglo-Irish Summit*, İngiltere Başbakanı Thatcher ile İrlanda Başbakanı Haughey arasında gerçekleşmiş, yıl sonunda Thatcher'ın Dublin'e yaptığı iade-i ziyaretten de somut bir sonuç alınamamıştır.

1980 ve 1981 yıllarında İngiliz hapisanelerindeki IRA mahkumları tarafından başlatılan ve hapisteyken seçimlere katılarak Milletvekili (Westminster) seçilen Bobby Sands dahil, on mahkumun ölümüyle sonuçlanan açlık grevleri, İrlandalı milliyetçilerin daha da radikalleşmesi sonucunu doğurmuştur. IRA, Ekim 1984'de, Brighton'daki Muhafazakar Parti Kongresinde, Başbakan Thatcher'a başarısız bir suikast girişiminde bulunmuştur.

Kasım 1985'de, yine İngiliz ve İrlanda hükümetleri arasında, bu defa Hillsborough'da, Başbakan Thatcher ile Başbakan Fitzgerald arasında yapılan Antlaşmanın da uygulanması mümkün olmamıştır. Bununla birlikte, sorunun çözümüne yönelik bu ilk belgelerde, 1998'de üzerinde nihai uzlaşının olduğu Hayırlı Cuma Antlaşması'nın içeriğine dair bazı hususlar mevcut olup, bunları çözüme giden yolda 'hazırlık çalışmaları' olarak da nitelemek mümkündür.

İngiliz ve İrlanda hükümetleri arasında, soruna müzakereler yoluyla çözüm bulma çabalarında önemli bir diğer aşama ise, İngiltere Başbakanı Major ile İrlanda Başbakanı Reynolds arasında, 15 Aralık 1993 tarihinde yayınlanan ve Kuzey İrlanda'nın self-determinasyon hakkının burada yaşayan halkın rızasına (consent)

bağlı olduğunun kabul edildiği *Downing Street Declaration* olmuştur. Bu aşamada, artık taraflar, sorunun askeri güç ve silahlı mücadele ile çözülemeyeceğini anlamaya başlamışlardır. Esasen, Zartman'ın olgunlaşma kuramı bağlamında ifade edildiği takdirde, sorunun çözümüne yönelik ciddi müzakerelere başlamak için giderek uygun zamanın yaklaştığı söylenebilir.

Tüm bu gelişmelerin yanısıra, 1993 yılında ABD'de Başkan seçilen Demokrat Bill Clinton da, hem şahsi olarak öğrencilik yıllarından kaynaklı İrlanda'ya duyduğu yakınlık ve daha da önemlisi Amerika'daki İrlanda diasporasının da etkisiyle, İngilizlerin karşı yöndeki görüşüne rağmen, hem Gerry Adams'a vize vermiş ve New York'a gelerek Amerikan basını aracılığıyla görüşlerini Amerikan kamuoyu ile paylaşmasını sağlamış hem de barış sürecinde arabulucu olarak görev yapmak üzere eski Senatör George Mitchell'ı Özel Temsilcisi olarak atamıştır.

İngiltere'de de, Mayıs 1997'de gerçekleştirilen seçimlerde İşçi Partisi'nin büyük bir zafer kazanarak, Parlamentoda rahat bir çoğunluk elde etmesi sonucu Tony Blair'in Başbakan olması sonrasında, Blair'in, tüm tarafların katıldığı müzakerelere Sinn Fein'in katılabilmesi için, selefi John Major'un koyduğu 'IRA'nın silahları bırakması' önkoşulundan vazgeçerek, müzakerelerin tarafsız başkanı olarak görev yapan Başkan Clinton'ın Özel Temsilcisi George Mitchell'ın bulduğu ara çözüm olan, müzakerelerin ve IRA'nın silah bırakması süreçlerinin eşzamanlı olarak ilerletilmesi yönündeki önerisini kabul etmesi, sürecin önünü açmış ve IRA'nın da Ağustos 1997'de ateşkes ilan etmesiyle Sinn Fein temsilcilerinin Eylül ayında başlayan tüm partilerin katıldığı müzakerelere iştirak etmesi mümkün olmuştur. Başbakan Blair ayrıca, 13 Ekim 1997'de, Belfast'ta Gerry Adams ile görüşmüş ve bir İngiliz Başbakanı için bir ilk olan bu görüşme ile süreçte önemli bir eşik daha aşılmıştır. Bilahare hızlanan müzakere süreci, son aşamasında hem Başbakan Blair hem de İrlanda'da Haziran 1997'de seçimleri kazanarak en genç Başbakan ünvanını alan 'Fianna Fail' partisi lideri Bertie Ahern'in kişisel ve çok kritik müdahaleleri ve Mitchell'ın gerektiğinde zaman sınırlamaları da koymak suretiyle sergilediği usta ve güçlü arabuluculuk yeteneklerinin yanısıra, Başkan Clinton'ın da hem her iki Başbakan hem de Kuzey İrlanda'daki siyasi parti liderleri nezdinde gerçekleştirdiği şahsi müdahaleleri sonucunda, 10 Nisan 1998 tarihinde, biri İngiltere ve İrlanda

Hükümetleri arasında diğeri ise Kuzey İrlanda'daki siyasi partilerin büyük bölümü tarafından imzalanan iki ayrı metinden oluşan Hayırlı Cuma Antlaşması imzalanmıştır. Esasen, tüm bu gelişmelerin gerçekleşmesi adigeçen Antlaşmanın hayata geçebilmesi için gerekli koşulların ve zamanın olgunlaştığını göstermektedir.

Hayırlı Cuma Antlaşması ve Oydaşmacı Güç Paylaşımı (consociational power-sharing)

Bu Antlaşmaya göre, İrlanda halkının self-determinasyon hakkı, hem Kuzey İrlanda'da yaşayan halkın hem de güneyde yaşayan halkın birleşik İrlanda'ya ilişkin olarak, gelecekte, hem kuzeyde hem de güneyde eşzamanlı olarak yapılacak bir referandumla ortaya koyacakları ortak rızalarına bırakılmıştır. Antlaşma, Ada'nın hem kuzeyi hem de güneyinde, 22 Mayıs 1998 tarihinde düzenlenen iki ayrı referandumda, kuzeyde %71.1, güneyde ise %94.4 oranında Ada halkı tarafından desteklenmiştir.

Antlaşma'nın getirdiği yükümlülükleri hayata geçirmek amacıyla, İrlanda Hükümeti, Antlaşma'da öngörüldüğü üzere, 1937 tarihli Anayasa'sının, Ada topraklarının tamamı üzerinde hakimiyet ileri süren 2. ve 3. maddelerini değiştirmiş, İngiliz tarafı da 1920 tarihli "Government of Ireland Act" yasasını yürürlükten kaldırarak, yeni bir "Northern Ireland Act 1998" yasasını kabul etmiştir.

Hayırlı Cuma Antlaşması, klasik oydaşmacı (consociational) yönetim modellerinden farklı olarak, sadece Kuzey İrlanda içinde iki en büyük etnik/dini grup arasında güç paylaşımını düzenlemekle kalmamış, Kuzey İrlanda ile İrlanda ve İngiltere ile İrlanda arasında da işbirliği ve danışma mekanizmalarını tesis etmiştir. Bu nedenle, bazı akademisyenler tarafından, Kuzey İrlanda modeli, "consociation plus" olarak da tanımlanmaktadır. Antlaşmada öngörülen mekanizmalar, "Strand One" (Kuzey İrlanda ile ilgili iç düzenlemeler), "Strand Two" (Kuzey-Güney yani Kuzey İrlanda ile İrlanda arasındaki mekanizmalar) ve "Strand Three" (İngiltere ile İrlanda arasındaki istişare mekanizmaları) olmak üzere üç ana sütundan oluşmaktadır.

Antlaşma ile getirilen güç paylaşımı modeline göre, Kuzey İrlanda Asamblesi'ne (Parlamento) seçilen üyeler, kendilerini katolik veya protestan değil 'milliyetçi',

'birlikçi' veya 'diğer' olarak tanımlamak durumundadır. Bunun önemi, alınacak kararların toplumlar-arası destek gerektirmesinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Bazı önceden belirlenen önemli kararlar, oylamada hazır bulunan Milletvekillerinin çoğunluğu veya kararın önemine göre %60 çoğunlukla ve buna ilave olarak milliyetçi ve birlikçi grupların da en az %40'ının oylarıyla alınabilmektedir. Birinci Bakan (First Minister) Asamble'de en fazla üyesi bulunan gruptan, Birinci Bakan Yardımcısı da diğer grubun en çok üyesi olan en büyük partisinden seçilmektedir. Bakanların dağılımı da, partilerin çıkardıkları Milletvekili sayısı ile orantılı olarak *d'Hont* sistemine göre belirlenmektedir. Hükümet, Birinci Bakan ile Birinci Bakan Yardımcısı arasında koalisyon olarak görev yapmak durumundadır. Birinci Bakan veya Birinci Bakan Yardımcısı'nın istifası durumunda Hükümet düşmektedir.

Yürütmede her iki gruba da bir nevi veto hakkı tanıyan ve parlamentoya seçilen tüm grupların oldukça adil bir şekilde temsil edilmesini öngören bu sistemin uygulamayla ortaya çıkan bir sakıncası, Hükümetin sık sık Birinci Bakan veya Birinci Bakan Yardımcısı'nın istifası nedeniyle düşmesi sonucu yönetimin kesintiye uğraması olmuştur. Nitekim, bu sistemin yürürlüğe girdiği Aralık 1999 tarihinden bu yana, Kuzey İrlanda, bu sürenin yaklaşık üçte birinde Hükümete sız kalmıştır.

Başarılı Çözüm Etki Eden İç Faktörler

Anlaşmazlıkların çözümü yaklaşımı çerçevesinde, barış sürecinin erken aşamalarında, yukarıdaki bölümde bilgi verilen Sinn Fein ile İngiliz yetkililer arasında yapılan gizli doğrudan görüşmeler; işadamı Brendan Duddy'nin inisiyatifiyle cumhuriyetçiler ile İngiliz istihbarat yetkilileri ve Rahip Alec Reid'in girişimiyle Sinn Fein ile SDLP liderliği arasında gerçekleştirilen dolaylı/aracılı görüşmeler, *British-Irish Association* ve *Peace People* gibi toplumsal tabanı temsil eden örgütlerin, Lederach'ın yaklaşımı kapsamında, tabandan yukarıya doğru iletişim kanallarını kullanmak suretiyle karar alıcıları etkileme çabalarının tümü, nihai çözüme olumlu etki eden iç faktörler arasındadır.

İşçi Partisi lideri, İngiltere Başbakanı Tony Blair ve yine onun gibi 1997'de İrlanda'da gerçekleştirilen seçimler sonrasında Başbakan olan Bertie Ahern de, yeni

nesil genç siyasetçilerin temsilcileri olarak ve her ikisi de iki ülke arasındaki tarihsel bagaj bağlamında önyargılardan uzak bir yaklaşım içinde, gerektiğinde siyasi risk almaktan çekinmeyen, zor koşullar altında çözüme yönelik güçlü bir siyasi irade sergilemişler ve nihai çözüme yönelik çok önemli katkılarda bulunmuşlardır.

Ayrıca, Kuzey İrlanda'daki siyasi parti liderleri arasında, cumhuriyetçi SDLP lideri John Hume ve Sinn Fein lideri Gerry Adams, birlikçi UUP lideri David Trimble temsil ettikleri toplulukları doğru şekilde yönlendirerek ve başlangıçtaki taleplerin tümü elde edilemese bile, kalıcı barış için orta yolda uzlaşma sağlanması hususunda ikna etmek suretiyle nihai sonuca ulaşılmasına önemli katkıda bulunmuşlardır. Hume ve Trimble'in bu çabaları, Hayırlı Cuma Antlaşması'nın yapıldığı 1998 yılında Nobel Barış Ödülü'ne layık bulunmaları ile karşılık bulmuştur. IRA'nın siyasi kanadı olarak bilinen Sinn Fein lideri Gerry Adams ise, esasen Cumhuriyetçilerin nihai hedefi olan İrlanda Adasının birleşmesi gerçekleşmemiş olmasına karşın kalıcı barış ve Kuzey İrlanda'da yaşayan Katoliklerin/cumhuriyetçilerin ekonomik, siyasi ve sosyal haklarının iyileştirilmesi ve yönetimi birlikçiler/protestanlarla paylaşmaları, birleşme perspektifi henüz bilinmeyen ileri bir tarihe ertelense de bunun bir seçenek olarak mevcudiyeti ve İngiliz tarafının da bunu kabul etmesi gibi kazanımları kullanarak, özellikle eski IRA mensuplarını ve diğer cumhuriyetçileri ikna edebilmiş olması, nihai çözüm önündeki en önemli engellerden birisinin daha aşılmasını sağlamıştır.

Hem İngiliz hem de İrlanda Hükümetleri Kuzey İrlanda'ya önemli ekonomik destek sağlamışlardır. İngiliz Hükümeti, Hayırlı Cuma Antlaşması'nın yürürlüğe girdiği 1999 yılından bu yana, Kuzey İrlanda'nın bütçe açığını kapatmak için, her yıl ortalama 10 milyar Pound civarında katkıda bulunmaktadır. Son yıllarda bu ortalamanın da üzerine çıkmak gerekmiştir. Son olarak, kamu hizmetlerinin sürekliliği ve mali istikrarın sağlanması bağlamında merkezi hükümet tarafından 3.3 milyar Pound tutarında bir ek mali imkan tahsis edilmiştir.

Daha önce de değinildiği üzere, müzakere sürecinde, her konu üzerinde mutabakata varılmadan hiçbir konu üzerinde mutabakata varılmış sayılmayacağı (nothing is agreed until everything is agreed), antlaşma metninde üzerinde mutabakat sağlamanın

güç olduğu bazı konularda uzlaşmayı mümkün kılmak amacıyla 'yapıcı muğlaklık' (constructive ambiguity) gibi yöntemlerin kullanılması da olumlu sonuca ulaşılmasında etkili olmuştur.

Ayrıca, özellikle İrlanda Başbakanı Bertie Ahern'in dikkat çektiği, sürecin kapsayıcı (inclusiveness), diğer bir ifadeyle, tüm tarafların sürece katılımlarının sağlanmış olması ve kapsamlı (comprehensive), yani ihtilafı tüm konuların ele alınmış olması, nihai çözümün taraflarca benimsenmesi ve kalıcı olması bakımından isabetli olmuştur.

İngiliz tarafının askeri güç ve IRA'nın da silahlı mücadele ile sonuç elde edemeyeceğini anlamış olmaları ve siyasi diyalog yöntemiyle bir çıkış yolunun bulunabileceğine ikna olmaları, daha geniş açıdan değerlendirildiğinde ise, tüm Kuzey İrlanda halkının otuz yıldır süregelen şiddet sarmalından muzdarip ve usanmış olması ve biran önce huzur ve istikrar istemesi de, Zartman'ın olgunlaşma teorisi çerçevesinde, barış için uygun zamanın/koşulların oluştuğunu göstermiştir.

Başarılı Çözüme Etki Eden Dış Faktörler

Soğuk savaşın sona erdiği, Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılması sonucunda iki kutuplu dünya düzeninin son bulduğu ve ABD'nin liderliğinde yeni bir dünya düzenine adım atıldığı bir ortamda, Demokrat Bill Clinton, 1993'de Başkan olarak seçilmesinden sonra, Ortadoğu, ve Balkanlar (Bosna-Hersek) başta olmak üzere, dünyada mevcut ihtilafların çözüme kavuşturulması için kapsamlı girişimlerde bulunmuştur. Bu çerçevede, aralarında Kongre üyeleri, siyasetçiler ve işadamlarının da bulunduğu Amerika'daki 30 milyonu aşkın İrlanda diasporasının da etkisiyle, Başkan Clinton, Kuzey İrlanda sorununun kalıcı bir şekilde çözüme kavuşturulması için ciddi çaba harcamaya başlamış, atadığı Özel Temsilcisi eski Senatör George Mitchell başkanlığında yürütülen müzakerelerin hemen her aşamasında, ancak özellikle son evrede, taraflar nezdinde şahsen müdahalelerde bulunarak, sonuca en güçlü ve etkili katkıyı getirmiştir. Başkan Clinton, tüm bunlara ilave olarak, Amerika'daki İrlanda diasporasının da teşvikiyle, yakın müttefiki olan İngiltere'nin aksi görüşüne rağmen, İngiltere'de yasaklı olduğu bir dönemde, Sinn Fein lideri Gerry Adams'a,

1994'de vize vererek, New York'a gelip, Amerikan basını aracılığıyla kamuoyuna açıklamalarda bulunmasına izin vermiş olması, Adams'ın kendi ifadesine göre, silahlı mücadele yerine sorunun çözümü için diyalog yolunu benimsemesini desteklemiş ve bu yolun başarılı olacağına dair inancını güçlendirerek, barış sürecinde çok önemli bir dönemeci oluşturmuştur.

Avrupa Birliği de, hem İngiltere hem de İrlanda'nın üyesi olmaları nedeniyle ve Kuzey İrlanda sorununun, İngiltere'nin bir iç meselesi olduğu gerekçesiyle, müzakere sürecine doğrudan dahil olmamakla birlikte, bölgenin kalkınması ve altyapısının güçlendirilmesi için özel mali enstrümanlarla katkısını getirmiştir.

Sonuç olarak, bazı akademisyenlerin de teyit ettiği üzere, Başkan Clinton başta olmak üzere, Zartman'ın teorisinde bahiskonusu güçlü arabulucu konumundaki Özel Temsilcisi ve Çok Taraflı Müzakerelere başkanlık eden George Mitchell'in etkin ve yetkin yönetimi, Amerika'daki İrlanda diasporasının Başkan Clinton nezdindeki etkisi ve uluslararası konjonktürün de uygun olması gibi hususları içeren dış etkenlerin, çözüme en güçlü katkıyı yapan unsurlar arasında olduğunu vurgulamak gerekir.

Öte yandan, yazarın İrlanda'da görev yaptığı dört yılı aşkın süre boyunca İrlandalı diplomatlar, siyasetçiler ve diğer üst düzey yetkililerle gerçekleştirdiği görüşmeler sonucu edindiği bilgiler de, özellikle ABD Devlet Başkanı Clinton'ın çabaları ve sürece olumlu yönde şahsi müdahalelerinin, sürecin başarıyla sonuçlandırılmasına büyük katkıda bulunduğu yönündeki saptamayı desteklemektedir.

Sonuç

Hayırlı Cuma Antlaşması ile Kuzey İrlanda'da otuz yıla yakın bir süre devam eden şiddet dönemi sonlandırılarak, barış ve huzurun hakim olduğu yeni bir dönem başlatılmış, Katoliklere/cumhuriyetçilere yönelik ayrımcı uygulamalara son verilerek, eşit ekonomik, siyasi ve sosyal haklara kavuşturulmuş ve yönetimi birlikçiler/Protestanlar ile paylaşımları sağlanmış ve Ada halkının çok önem verdiği, kuzey ile güney arasında fiziki sınırın yeniden tesisinden de kaçınılmıştır.

Bununla birlikte, cumhuriyetçiler açısından bakıldığında, birleşik bir İrlanda'nın gerçekleştirilmesi Ada halkının rızasına bırakılarak, henüz belli olmayan ileri bir tarihe ertelenmiştir. Dolayısıyla, cumhuriyetçilerin, sorunun kökeninde yatan neden olarak gördükleri bu hedefin (birleşme) gerçekleşmesi mümkün olmamış, ancak belirsiz ileri bir tarihe bırakılmıştır. Buna karşılık, toplumsal yaşamda ve yönetimde adil bir temsil imkanı getirilmiş, Ada'nın kuzeyi ile güneyi arasında geçişler serbest bırakılmıştır. Hayırlı Cuma Antlaşması'nın bu yönleriyle başarılı olduğunu söylemek mümkündür.

Bununla birlikte, esasen adigeçen Antlaşma ile getirilen oydaşmacı güç paylaşımı (consociational power-sharing) düzeniyle özellikle azınlığın temsil hakları korunmak istendiğinden, yukarıda da izah edildiği üzere, cumhuriyetçi ve birlikçi grupların yönetimi mutlaka koalisyon olarak paylaşımları, diğer bir anlatımla, her iki gruba da hükümetin devamı hususunda 'veto' yetkisi verilmiş olduğundan (Birinci Bakan veya Birinci Bakan Yardımcısı'nın istifa etmesi durumunda hükümet düşmektedir) geçen 25 yılı aşkın sürenin üçte birinde Kuzey İrlanda'da hükümet çalışmamıştır.

Cumhuriyetçi ve birlikçi toplumlara yönetimde eşit/adil temsil hakkı verilmesini amaçlayan bu düzenleme, hem sistemin düzenli ve kesintisiz çalışmasını sağlayamadığı hem de toplumsal gruplar arasındaki bölünmeyi daha da derinleştirdiği yönünde eleştirilere maruz kalmıştır.

Kuzey İrlanda'da yürütme kesintiye uğradıkça İngiliz ve İrlanda hükümetleri, arabuluculuk rolünü üstlenerek, hükümetin yeniden ayağa kalkmasını sağlamaya çalışmışlardır. Bu kesintilerin bir nedeni de, IRA'nın silahlarını bırakması sürecinin resmen ancak 2005 yılında sonlanabilmiş olmasıdır. Bilahare, 2006 *St. Andrews* Antlaşması ile güvenlik (polis) ve adalet hizmetlerinin/yetkisinin yerel hükümete devrine ilişkin bir yol haritası kabul edilmiş ve 2007'de İngiliz askerleri, otuzsekiz yıldır Kuzey İrlanda'da sürdürdükleri operasyonlara son vermişlerdir. Şubat 2010'da İngiltere ile İrlanda arasındaki *Hillsborough* Antlaşması ile de polisiye ve adalet hizmetleri tamamen yerel yönetime devredilmiştir. 2011 seçimlerinde, cumhuriyetçiler ve birlikçileri o tarihe kadar kadar temsil eden en büyük partiler olan, ılımlı kanattaki SDLP ve UUP partileri ikinci sıraya düşerek, parlamentoda

sayısal üstünlüğü, daha radikal kanattaki *Sinn Fein* ve DUP partilerine kaptırmışlardır.

Ocak 2017’de, 10 aydır görevde olan Hükümet, Birinci Bakan Arlene Foster’ın (DUP) karıştığı ileri sürülen bir skandalı gerekçe gösteren Birinci Bakan Yardımcısı Martin McGuinness’in (Sinn Fein) istifası üzerine düşmüş ve sonrasındaki üç yıl boyunca yeni hükümet kurulamamıştır. Sonunda, yine İrlanda ve İngiliz hükümetlerinin birlikte hazırladıkları, Ocak 2020’de varılan *The New Decade, New Approach* uzlaşısı ile, Kuzey İrlanda’da yürütme yeniden işler hale getirilmiştir. Ancak, bunun da ömrü Haziran 2021’e kadar sürmüş, DUP lideri, Birinci Bakan Arlene Foster, partisi içinde kendisine yönelik bir kalkışma sonucu istifa etmiş, yerine gelen ve Birinci Bakan olarak atanan Paul Givan ise, aşağıda izah edilen, Brexit sonrasında, İngiltere’den Kuzey İrlanda’ya sevk edilen bazı gıda ürünlerine, AB kurallarına göre yapılan sıkı kontrol ve denetimler nedeniyle, Şubat 2022’de istifa etmiş ve sonraki iki yıl boyunca Kuzey İrlanda yine yürütmesiz kalmıştır.

Brexit referandumunda AB’de kalma yönünde oy kullanan Kuzey İrlanda’nın, Brexit’in yürürlüğe girmesiyle (31 Ocak 2020), İngiltere ile birlikte AB’den çıkmış olmasına karşın AB üyesi olan İrlanda ile Kuzey İrlanda arasında sınır geçişlerinin serbest olması, ticari açıdan çözümü güç bir sorunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. AB’nin, özellikle gıda sektöründe, hayvansal ve bitkisel ürünlerin ticaretinde sıkı kontrol ve denetim kurallarının mevcudiyeti, buna karşın kuzey ile güney arasında sınır geçişlerinin serbest kalmasının özellikle cumhuriyetçiler bakımından önemi, bu sorunun AB ile İngiltere arasında uzun müzakerelere konu olmasına, hatta Brexit Antlaşmasına ilişkin müzakerelerin uzamasına neden olmuştur. Sonuçta, Brexit ile ilgili Antlaşmaya ek ‘Kuzey İrlanda Protokolü’ de değiştirilmiş ve yeni bir *Windsor Framework* belgesi 27 Şubat 2023 tarihinde kabul edilmiş ve 1 Ekim 2023 tarihi itibarıyla yürürlüğe girmiştir. Buna göre, İngiltere’den Kuzey İrlanda’ya gönderilen ve AB kurallarına göre denetime tabi olan özellikle bitkisel ve hayvani ürünlerin kontrol ve denetimlerine bazı kolaylıklar getirilmiştir. Ancak, bu değişiklikler de, ülke içinde (İngiltere’den Kuzey İrlanda’ya) sevk edilen bazı gıda ürünlerinin, yabancı bir ülkeye ihraç ediliyormuş gibi kontrollere ve bürokratik evrak işine tabi tutulmasına karşı çıkan birlikçilerin bir bölümünü tatmin etmemiştir. Halen Kuzey

İrlanda'da, sözkonusu gıda maddelerinin ticareti bakımından 'Tek Pazar' (Single Market) kuralları uygulanmaktadır.

Tüm bunların yanısıra, Kuzey İrlanda'da son dönemde demografik ve buna bağlı olarak önemli siyasi gelişmeler de gerçekleşmiştir.

1911 nüfus sayımında Kuzey İrlanda'da Katoliklerin tüm nüfus içindeki oranı %34.4 ve tüm Protestanların oranı ise % 61.4 iken, 2021 nüfus sayımına göre, Katolik nüfus Protestan nüfusu geçerek, genel nüfus içindeki oranı % 42.3'e çıkmış, Protestanların oranı ise 30.5'e gerilemiştir.

Katolik nüfus lehine gelişen bu demografik değişikliklerin de etkisiyle, son bir önceki Kuzey İrlanda Asamblesi seçimlerinde (Mart 2017) DUP'den sadece bir eksik milletvekili çıkararak Sinn Fein (27/28), 2022'deki son seçimlerde, 25 Milletvekili çıkararak DUP'ni geçerek, 27 Milletvekili çıkarmış ve Birinci Bakanlık görevini üstlenmeye hak kazanmıştır. Esasen, 1921'de Ada'nın bölünmesinden sonra bir ilk niteliğinde olan bu gelişme siyasi deprem olarak yorumlanmıştır. Ancak, seçimlerden ikinci en büyük parti olarak çıkan birlikçi DUP, yukarıda bahiskonusu, Brexit sonrasında İngiltere ile Kuzey İrlanda arasındaki mal sevkiyatına ilişkin yeni düzenlemeleri gerekçe göstererek, hükümetin kurulmasını iki yıl boyunca engellemiş ve nihayet yine İngiliz ve İrlanda hükümetlerinin de baskı ve yönlendirmesiyle, 3 Şubat 2024'te, Sinn Fein Partisinin Kuzey İrlanda'daki lideri Michelle O'Neill'in Birinci Bakan ve DUP'den de Emma Little-Pengelly'nin Birinci Bakan Yardımcısı olduğu yeni hükümet kurulabilmiştir. Bu da, Kuzey İrlanda'nın siyasi tarihinde Sinn Fein'in liderliğinde kurulan ilk hükümettir ve Ada'nın bölünmesinden bu yana ne kadar önemli ve büyük çaplı değişikliklerin gerçekleştiğinin somut bir göstergesidir.

Kuzey İrlanda, diğer ihtilafların çoğunda olduğu gibi, *sui generis* bir örnek olmakla birlikte, buradan da başka anlaşmazlıkların çözümünde kullanılabilecek birçok ders çıkartmak mümkündür. Öte yandan, bu çalışmada ihtilafların çözümüne ilişkin Lederach'ın modeli kullanılmakla birlikte, Bercovitch, Kremenyuk ve Zartman gibi öndegelen akademisyenlerin de isabetle vurguladığı üzere, bu alan, hem oldukça yeni hem de olayları çözümlenmede birçok farklı disiplinden faydalanılabilecek disiplinlerarası bir alandır. Bu çalışmada da ihtilafların çözümünün farklı aşamalarını ve

sonuçta ortaya çıkan nihai ürünü analiz edebilmek için farklı kuramlar kullanılmıştır. Kuzey İrlanda örneğinin ve diğer çözümlenmiş veya çözüm bekleyen ihtilafların, karşılaştırmalı olarak, değişik disiplinlerin farklı bakış açılarını da içeren yeni araştırmaların konusu olabilecekları değerlendirilmektedir.

Ayrıca, Hayırlı Cuma Antlaşması'nın üzerinden 25 seneden fazla bir süre geçtiği ve yukarıda da belirtildiği üzere, bölgede önemli siyasi ve demografik değişikliklerin gerçekleştiği hususu da gözönüne alınarak, Brexit'in Kuzey İrlanda'nın geleceğine ve özellikle İrlanda'nın birleşmesine ne gibi etkilerde bulunabileceği hususunun da yeni araştırmalarla kapsamlı bir analize tabi tutulması yararlı olacaktır. Bu konuda, son olarak Sinn Fein lideri Michell O'Neill'in, önümüzdeki on yıl içinde İrlanda'nın birleşmesi için Hayırlı Cuma Antlaşması'nda öngörülen referandumun gerçekleştirilmesi hususunun değerlendirilebileceğine dair açıklaması dikkat çekicidir.

Son olarak, 1987 Nobel Barış Ödülü sahibi Kosta Rika'nın eski Cumhurbaşkanı Óscar Arias Sánchez'in de ifade ettiği üzere, "barış hiç bitmeyen bir süreçtir", bu nedenle, kalıcı olabilmesi için üzerinde sabır, sebat ve özenle sürekli çalışmak gerekir.

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