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Sport, société et identités en Irlande du Nord (1921-1998)

Ugo Ryckman

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Ugo Ryckman
Sous la direction de Joana Etchart

SPORT, SOCIÉTÉ ET IDENTITÉS EN IRLANDE DU NORD
(1921-1998)

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Introduction

Last year, I was interested in the Irish parliaments as a first thorough approach to Irish politics. The main issue studied was the development of the administrative entities of northern and southern Ireland. The dissertation undertaken last year was a good introduction to Irish politics. However, it did not study the application of the legislation, and I failed to understand the nuances of identities present in the province, as well as the extent of the political and cultural antagonisms. This year, I wrote about sports, politics and society in Northern Ireland to approach the political activity of the province from a different perspective. Exploiting sport was a way to understand such complex antagonisms, for sport impacts the lives of the Northern Irish community on a day-to-day basis.

Sports study include a variety of studies, it was thus necessary to narrow the field of research down to three of the main sporting associations in Ireland: the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), the Irish Football Association (IFA) and the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU). I chose to study associations after reading *The Gaelic Athletic Association and Irish Nationalist Politics*.¹ I first approached the GAA with Mansergh's book. It is considered by researchers as the first piece of work that did not limit its depiction of the association to the statements of the Irish nationalist and republicans officials. This book was used to gather information on the nature of the GAA when it was created, which enabled me to understand its evolution throughout the 20th century. As a matter of fact, this book studies the evolution of the GAA in a revolutionary context and displays its importance during political changes. Mandle's book will also help us clarify the nature of the GAA's nationalism. This dissertation intends on questioning the nature of the GAA during the 20th century. Is it uniquely cultural, or political? Does the link between culture and politics make of this cultural body a political body? Was the GAA a threat to civil order and to the authority of the Northern Irish government? The questioning of the apolitical nature of the GAA carried out in this book led me to question the nature of the other associations approached in this dissertation.

Moreover, I realised with this book that studying an organised body was much more practical to study, because it was easier to find documentation. The objective of the development will then be to understand how each association reacted to the policies of the unionist government in Northern Ireland in the 1921-1998. Simultaneously, we will depict the nationalist identities conveyed by those associations. This is studied in Mansergh's and Cronin's books.² Moreover, the notion of nationalism and the evolution of the Irish nationalist identity are studied in the latter. I

¹ Mandle, W. F. *The Gaelic Athletic Association and Irish Nationalist Politics 1884-1924*. Intl Specialized Book Services, Dublin. 1987.

² Cronin, Mike. *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic games, Soccer and Irish Identity Since 1884*. Four Courts Press, Dublin. 1999.

tried to expand the development of the book by studying the unionist identity as a nationalist one. This approach will enable us to compare the Irish nationalist and the unionist identities, and so to compare their evolution. Sport associations are an alternative perspective to the study of the political activity. The purpose of this perspective is to depict the importance of cultural bodies in the defense of identities and the expression of political views outside of parliament.

The development of books such as *Sport, Sectarianism and Society*³ and *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and the Theories of Social Movements*⁴ were an introduction to sociology for me. I followed a historical and literary formation in anglophone studies. Hence, sociology is not part of my university curriculum. It was thus a challenge for me to study the Northern Irish society. Still, the more I read about the Troubles and sports, the more I was convinced that sociology had to be integrated into the development of this dissertation. I wanted to expand my knowledge of Northern Ireland to identity and social issues. Moreover, the formation of collective identities through sports is part of sociological studies and is particularly interesting in the case of Northern Ireland. The dissertation made last year focused only on political and historical studies, and I considered that my understanding of Northern Irish nuances of identities was limited. *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and the Theories of Social Movements* introduced me to some elementary sociological theories, such as that of ‘deeply divided societies’. Those theories helped me depict the Northern Irish society. The historical approach of the constitutional question and of the Troubles is thus completed by the sociological approach of this book. It helped me understand the role of the social movements in Northern Ireland, from the 1960s on. It is exploited in the second part of the dissertation to demonstrate that the Unionist government was willing to repress any alternative to their authority. Concerning the study of sport association, this book introduces us to sociological notions, which are helpful in the scrutinising of the association’s policies.

The sole study of politics and parliaments to approach sectarianism seemed limited to me. Understanding the issues that agitated the province and the development of antagonistic identities requires the understanding of sociology, politics and history. Sports enabled me to exploit all three of those domains to pursue my research. I leaned towards this specific subject early in the process of research because of my personal experience. I have spent a semester in the University of Coleraine, Northern Ireland, during the university year 2017-2018. During my time there, I was able to practice all sort of sports: hurling, surfing and even coasteering. As I practiced those sports,

³ Sugden, John P., and Alan Bairner. *Sport, Sectarianism, and Society in Ireland*. Leicester University Press, Leicester. 1993.

⁴ Bosi, Lorenzo, and Gianluca De Fazio. *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*. Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2017.

I was exposed to nuances of Irish identities, to which I would not have been exposed to in another context. On a personal level, this dissertation is a way for me to understand some exchanges I had with local students.

This combination of studies is meant to depict Northern Irish identities and to understand the extent of sectarianism through the prism of sports. This approach has already been executed in *Sport, Sectarianism and Society* but the tools and objectives of the dissertation differ from that of the book. The purpose of my paper is to link the identities to political parties and governments and highlights their constitutional importance. In this dissertation, we consider that adhering to certain sports was a way to declare one's allegiance to a specific administrative entity, hence revealing the constitutional importance of sport associations. This idea was expressed in Cronin's book.⁵ We have stressed this idea in the third and fourth parts of the dissertation with the study of the IFA and of the GAA. It is linked to the criticism of the devolved parliament, which failed to represent fairly the cultural identities of Northern Ireland, whereas sport associations protected it. As a continuity to Cronin's work, we also exploited his study of the integration policies of the IFA and GAA.⁶ Indeed, he linked the policy of the unionists with that of the IFA. This parallel is legitimate since the IFA was mostly managed by members of the Protestant-Unionist community. My goal in this dissertation is thus to expand such a parallel and study both the IFA policy towards clubs representing the Catholic-nationalist community and the policy of Stormont towards the Catholic-nationalist community. The study of this article was my first approach of the notions of exclusiveness and of inclusiveness. Both issues are approached in the study of the IFA and of the GAA as we study the policies of the associations in the third and fourth parts of the dissertation. This article specifically will be helpful in the criticism of the sectarian organisation of the associations and in the study of the construction of identities of the Protestant-Unionist community in the IFA, and of the Catholic-nationalist community in the GAA.

The tools used here are a complete study of the policy of the unionist government during the 1921-1972 period. Hence, the transformation of the parliament (1921-1972) the concern with civil order are studied. Then, the contestant groups opposing the unionist government are examined, those groups include the Irish nationalist present in the parliament and the Civil Rights Movement. The development made in my first-year dissertation "Étude des parlements Irlandais"⁷

⁵ Cronin, Mike. *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic games, Soccer and Irish Identity Since 1884*. Four Courts Press, Dublin. 1999.

⁶ Cronin, Mike. "Catholics and Sport in Northern Ireland: Exclusiveness or Inclusiveness?" *International Sport Studies*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2000, pp. 25-41.

⁷ Ryckman, Ugo. "Étude des parlements irlandais (1910-1948)". Mémoire de M1 Literature. 2019. DUMAS.

is used, as well as the development of Farrell⁸ and of Darby.⁹ The constitutional issue is presented thoroughly. Interestingly, we will depict the stance taken by the given sport associations regarding the constitutional question. This development will help us approach the constitutional question and the antagonist identities through a different perspective from what has been done until now. The depiction of those identities also help us understand the functioning of the Northern Irish institutions.

⁸ Farrell, Michael. *Northern Ireland: The Orange State*. Second Edition, Pluto Press, London. 1980.

⁹ Darby, John, et al. *Northern Ireland: The Background to the Conflict*. Edited by John Darby, The Appletree Press Ltd, Belfast. 1983.

Abbreviations

CRM: Civil Rights Movement

FAI: Football Association of Ireland

GAA: Gaelic Athletic Association

IFA: Irish Football Association

IRA: Irish Republican Army

IRFU: Irish Rugby Football Union

NICRA: Northern Irish Civil Rights Association

RIC: Royal Irish Constabulary

RUC: Royal Ulster Constabulary

UUC: Ulster Unionist Council

UUUC: United Ulster Unionist Council

UUP: Ulster Unionist party

UVF: Ulster Volunteer Force

I. Northern Ireland: display of identities (1920-1954)

The nationalist notion and the nationalist identities present in Northern Ireland are the first issues studied in this dissertation. From the partition of Ireland until the mid-20th century, the constitutional question¹⁰ caused the clash of several Irish nationalist identities. It was preceded by a debate over self-determination in Ireland - Home Rule (HR). Home Rule and the process that led to the creation of the Irish administrative entities will be clarified before we study nationalism and the Northern Irish identities. In this part of the development, we intend to study the impact of the constitutional question and of the Northern Irish institutions on the society and on sport associations. With this part, we mean to demonstrate that institutions can influence identity formation. This influence can be seen not only in political activity but also in cultural activity. It is for this reason that sport associations are studied in this dissertation. Indeed, as political activity often leads to public demonstrations of discontent, the reactions of cultural bodies must not be left aside when it comes to political studies. Moreover, we will explicit the relation existing between the sport associations and the devolved government. The sport associations studied in this part are the Irish Football Association (IFA), the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) and the Irish Football Rugby Union (IRFU). They are studied throughout the 1920-1954 period.

Firstly, we try to define nationalism as a notion. Afterwards, the nuances of nationalism present in Northern Ireland will be depicted. The frames in which they envision their nation, their state, and their relation with the ruling government will help us define them. It is inspired by Mike Cronin's "Nationalism",¹¹ which contains an overall study of nationalism. Secondly, sectarianism in Northern Ireland is approached. We will focus on the policy of the Unionist government towards the Catholic community and scrutinise the enactment of four acts. These acts will enable us to understand the ruling of the legislative system by the Unionists, the relation between the Catholic community and the security forces, and finally, the importance of nationalist identities in the Northern Ireland. Regarding the approach of the Northern Irish society and parliamentary activity, we will exploit Mansergh's *The Unresolved Question*¹² and Farrell's *Northern Ireland: the Orange State*.¹³ Both books provide a concise overview of the nationalist groups involved in the constitutional question. Finally, the IFA, GAA and the IRFU will be studied. The cultural and

¹⁰ The constitutional question concerns the partition of Ireland. It questions the authority of both the Irish Free State and of the Stormont government and studies the importance of parliamentary politics.

¹¹ Cronin, Mike. 'Nationalism'. *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic games, Soccer and Irish Identity Since 1884*, Four Court Press, Dublin. 1994, pp. 24-46.

¹² Mansergh, Nicholas. *The Unresolved Question: The Anglo-Irish Settlement and Its Undoing 1912-72*. Yale university press, London. 1991.

¹³ Farrell, Michael. *Northern Ireland: The Orange State*. Second, Pluto Press, London. 1980, p.41.

political claims of those associations - whether explicit or not - will be exploited. Finally, their geographical organisation will be studied and exploited to determine their vision of Ireland and of the partition. Most of the information exploited in this part are coming from Sugden and Bairner's *Sport, Sectarianism and Society*¹⁴ and Mansergh *The Gaelic Athletic Association and Irish Nationalist Politics*.¹⁵ Both books provide extensive information on the cultural and political identities of the organisation, as well as the internal issues that animated it. The purpose of this part is to demonstrate that the Unionist government was willing to control and resorbate any political or cultural body willing to contest its constitutional authority.

¹⁴ Sugden, John P., and Alan Bairner. *Sport, Sectarianism, and Society in Ireland*. Leicester University Press, Leicester. 1993.

¹⁵ Mandle, W. F. *The Gaelic Athletic Association and Irish Nationalist Politics 1884-1924*. Intl Specialized Book Services, 1987.

A. Introduction to the nationalist notion and to the political parties (1870-1921)

1. Definition of nationalism and presentation of the constitutional question

Definition of nationalism

Nationalism is hard to define and its description will necessarily be a source of disagreement. Cronin, for example, is aware of the complexity of the question and does not aim at providing a universal definition of nationalism. In the chapter “Nationalism”,¹⁶ he exposes a variety of definitions and approaches to the notion. However, Cronin considers that nationalism cannot be defined with precision. Adrian Hastings differentiates nationalism from the idea of a nation-state to be linked to “the belief that one’s own ethnic or national tradition is especially valuable and needs to be defended at any cost”.¹⁷ This quotation can be linked with the development of *Sport Sectarianism and Society*. “Nationalism refers to a mobilisation of sentiments of fidelity to an established nation state or the idea of such. While nationalism can be underpinned by ethnicity [...] it can also transcend ethnicity”.¹⁸ The author then applies this definition to the case of Northern Ireland, and highlights the variety of nuances one can witness in the province:

In the case of Northern Ireland, nationalism is closer to [a nationalism underpinned by ethnicity] rather than [a nationalism that transcends ethnicity] in that it appears as a more formal political expression of the Province’s rival ethnic enclaves. That people from Northern Ireland can, if they chose, hold Irish and British passports simultaneously as citizens of two nation states, is a formal recognition that the region is beset by problems of nationhood. This facility, as we will see, regularly leads to political disputes within and between national and international sporting bodies.¹⁹

The importance of ethnicity in both Sugden and Hastings’ definition is highlighted. Those two definitions and the historical approach to nationalism led me to believe that nationalism is not only present in republicanism and Irish nationalism. It is also present in Unionism and Loyalism. Nationalism in Ireland is an issue that numerous researchers have discussed. However, I believe that we should not limit our study of nationalist identities in Northern Ireland to the conventional Catholic-nationalist and Protestant-unionist vision. It can be expanded to the study of Unionism

¹⁶ Cronin, Mike “Nationalism”. *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic games, Soccer and Irish Identity Since 1884*, Four Court Press, Dublin. 1994, p. 24-46.

¹⁷ Hastings, Adrian. *The Construction of Nationhood, Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1997, p.4.

¹⁸ Sugden, John P., and Alan Bairner. *Sport, Sectarianism, and Society in Ireland*. Leicester University Press, 1997, p.18.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

as a nationalist movement. The research made for this dissertation, as well as my research conducted last year as part of my M1 on “Study of the Irish Parliaments”,²⁰ made me consider that Northern Irish studies are to be seen beyond the Catholic-nationalist and Protestant-unionist picture. The purpose of this first subpart is to depict and understand this complexity. By doing so, we try to go beyond the dual and sectarian description of the Northern Irish society and politics.

The partition of Ireland

Home Rule (HR) was a project intending on establishing self-determination in Ireland. It agitated the British Parliament from the 1870s until the beginning of the 20th century. However, this project was never implemented. HR was carried out by the Home Rule League, founded and promoted by Isaac Butt. It was meant to establish an independent parliament in Ireland whilst remaining part of the Union with Great Britain. Butt decided to hand the reins of the party to Charles Stewart Parnell in 1870. It must be noted that Home Rule was represented in Westminster by the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP).²¹ During the 19th century, the Liberal Party was one of the two most important parties in Westminster, the other one being the Conservative party. Those two parties fought for the majority and the IPP helped the Liberals gain seats. The association between the Liberals and the IPP was made under the agreement that the Liberals would support the Home Rule project, and so vote for the passing of its bill. The bill failed to pass the House of Commons once, in 1886, because of a split in the Liberal Party. It was then proposed again in the Commons in 1893 by PM William E. Gladstone but was defeated in the House of Lords. In 1911, changes were made in the legislative system. Any bill passed twice in the House of Commons and turned down twice in the House of Lords was allowed to bypass the Upper House and be enacted. Such a modification of the constitution allowed for the Third Home Rule Bill to be passed. However, the Great War delayed its application.

The Government of Ireland Act (1920) partitioned Ireland into two different administrative entities. Northern Ireland was composed of six counties. The delimitation was based on six of the nine counties composing the province of Ulster. Furthermore, it provided both parts of Ireland with a self-governing parliament. Those parliaments were composed of a Lower and an Upper house. The legislative process was similar to that of the Imperial Parliament.²² However, the voting system differed from that of Westminster. The parliament of the United Kingdom is notorious for its First Past the Post System. This plurality method favours the number of votes over a majority

²⁰ Ryckman, Ugo. *Étude des parlements irlandais (1910-1948)*. Literature. 2019. dumas-02393214.

²¹ In 1874, the Home Rule League became the Irish Parliamentary Party.

²² Westminster Parliament. *Government of Ireland Act*, February 1922. Vol. 151, cc.204-24.

of votes. The main advantage of this system is that it keeps radical parties away from power. Its main disadvantage is that only two parties can have a lasting impact on the parliament. Hence, the Proportional Representation voting system was chosen for the ruling of the Northern and Southern Irish parliaments. This system allowed for a fair representation of minority parties. By choosing this system over the FPTP system, the British government was willing to protect the Protestant minority in the South of Ireland and the Catholic minority in the North of Ireland.

The Anglo-Irish Treaty created the Irish Free State (IFS). It was composed of 26 counties, as the 6 counties of Northern Ireland were not included in it. This Treaty was meant to put an end to the conflict taking place between the British forces and the Irish republicans. Furthermore, it declared Ireland as a dominion existing within the Commonwealth and the British Empire. Self-determination had been reached by the republicans as the legislative system in Southern Ireland was relatively independent. However, the British government kept hold of the finalisation of the legislative process. No Bill enacted in the Irish parliament could be enacted without the Royal approval. Furthermore, an Oath of Allegiance had to be taken by each member of the parliament and of the government. The intervention of the British government in Irish legislative affairs caused the division of the Irish republicans and provoked the Civil War (1921-1923). The Civil War was put to an end when the anti-Treaty forces were completely repressed by the Free State forces. From 1921 on, the Government of Ireland Act was used as the Northern Irish constitution. The Anglo-Irish Treaty was the constitution of the Free State until 1937. Eamon De Valera's government²³ managed to replace it in 1937, when the Constitution of Ireland was declared.²⁴ With this constitution, De Valera tried to expand the authority of the Southern Irish government to the North as it claimed the governance of Ireland as a whole.

Taking into consideration this context, we shall study the identities revealed by nationalism in Ireland and in Northern Ireland. In the early debate over self-determination in Ireland, two Irish identities arose. On the one side, an identity asking for self-determination and/or separatism. On the other side, an identity defending the Union between Ireland and Great Britain. One can recognise nationalism and republicanism in the first identity described. The second is made of Irish Unionism. Let us note that self-determination was an idea peculiar to the Home Rule debate. Each party involved in this debate perceived nationalism in its own way, and used different frames to depict their position in it. The purpose of this part is to describe the frames in which each party

²³ De Valera's government ruled from 1932 until 1948 with the *Fianna Fáil*.

²⁴ *Oireachtas*, the Irish Parliament. *Constitution of Ireland*. July 1937. Vol.40.

envisioned itself. By doing so, we will have a better understanding of the stakes that represent the constitutional question for each party.

2. Nationalism and republicanism

The Radicalisation of Irish Nationalism

In *Modern Ireland*, R.F Foster studies the changes that animated Irish Nationalism at the end of the 19th century and in the first decades of the 20th century. Its “radicalization”²⁵ was influenced by two major factors, the Boer War (1899-1902) and the Great War (1914-1918). According to the author, both conflicts triggered an anti-Empire feeling in Ireland. Foster considers those conflicts as defining the period of change in Irish Nationalism but also as causes of those changes.²⁶ He also demonstrates that changes were demanded by the supporters of Irish Nationalism - whether they were sympathetic to radicalism or not. In fact, the Liberal Party as well as the IPP were losing influence in Westminster. Foster presents the Liberals as “old, increasingly out of touch with both the new elements of labour politics and fringe extremists. [Furthermore, a] sense was growing, reflected in much political correspondence, that the young were no longer subscribing to the Irish Parliamentary Party”.²⁷ As the Home Rule project failed, the demand for action grew. This feeling was also present within the ranks of the IPP, as Foster argues that “[some] Irish Parliamentary Party members, and not the most extreme, had flirted with *Sinn Féin* as the kind of movement that might attract the youth vote”.²⁸ However, Foster claims that this was not done as a result of a sort of abandonment, but because those MPs “thought *Sinn Féin* might be the new vogue of constitutional politics”.²⁹

Because of the involvement of the British Empire in imperial conflicts, of the progressive fall of the Liberal Party and of the rise of support for radical nationalism, the Home Rule project was let down. With it, the IPP lost legitimacy and support from the public. The party had already begun to lose its privileged place in Westminster by 1905 as the Liberals no longer needed it to solidify its majority. In 1916, the privileged place was lost after the Easter Rising. Indeed, Lloyd George would be the last Liberal Prime Minister to serve, and this last Liberal mandate ended in 1922. All in all, the Liberals and the moderate nationalists simultaneously lost influence and popularity. The Home Rule project was never achieved, even though in reality the Government of

²⁵ Foster, Robert Fitzroy. *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972*. Harmondsworth, Penguin books. 1989, p.433.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.458.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

Ireland Act was introduced as the Fourth Home Rule Bill. In fact, the partition of Ireland was far from representing the will or interests of the moderate nationalists.

Radical Nationalism

It has been said before that Irish nationalism comprises radical and moderate nationalism. *Sinn Féin* and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) were the two most important radical groups, whereas the IPP was the main moderate nationalist group. It was also said that the main difference between those two was their vision of the Union. Indeed, radical nationalists were separatists: they wanted to exit the United Kingdom and establish a sovereign and foreign state in Ireland that would be ruled by a Republic. Quite logically, they considered themselves as republicans. One specific feature of the republicans was their will to exploit any means to reach their objective. In fact, *Sinn Féin* and the IRA were closely linked, which meant that both parliamentary representation and armed actions were used. Most of the tradition and political views of the republicans had been expressed during the Easter Rising, in 1916, which proclaimed the creation of the Irish Republic and of the *Dáil*, an independent Irish parliament.

We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people.³⁰

This operation was organised by the IRA and involved numerous members of *Sinn Féin*. Amongst those members, Michael Collins, Eamon de Valera and Arthur Griffith. First, the Rising arouse disapproval. In a context of a worldwide conflict that was getting stuck, and in which many Irish men were involved, not much support was brought to the republicans. However, the violent repression of the movement by the British forces did provoke a wave of support for them. The Easter Rising had little impact on Irish politics. The Republic proclaimed by the rebels was not recognised, the parliament established - the *Dáil* - was to remain underground until the creation of the Irish Free State, and most of the insurgents were killed in action, imprisoned or executed. In the long term, the tradition of martyrdom and of sacrifice was to be glorified by the IRA and *Sinn Féin*.

The Easter Rising, despite its political and military failure, allowed the republicans to be put at the forefront of Irish politics. Considering this, the years that preceded the Great War were to influence Irish politics for the rest of the century. In fact, the Republican Army fought against the British Forces during the Irish War of Independence, from 1919 until 1921. Hence, it was with

³⁰ J. Clarke, Thomas, et al. 'The Proclamation of Poblacht Na H-Eireann'. *Easter Rising 1916*, 24 Apr. 1916.

them that the British government had to negotiate to appease the situation in Ireland. It also meant that the IRA and *Sinn Féin* were seen as serious threats to the Union by the British government. After the partition of Ireland, the IRA launched a campaign harassing security forces in Northern Ireland. *Sinn Féin* contested the authority of the Northern Irish parliament. To do so, they did not attend the parliamentary debates. Both methods are contestable as they ended up backlashing on the Catholic community, as we will see in the next subpart.

In conclusion, the republicans called for the creation of a Republic in Ireland, that would unify the island under one sovereign authority. According to the Declaration of the Republic printed and distributed during the Easter Rising, they aimed at creating a sovereign state in which no foreign authority would have any form of influence. In the frame of Irish republicanism, Ireland was united and Great Britain was off-screen. Because of the Ulster unionist demand, which contradicted that of the republicans, the vision of the latter was never achieved. Ireland was partitioned in two separate states, and both states were under the authority of the British government. A devolved government and parliament was established in Northern Ireland, and the Irish Free State remained under the authority of the British government as its Parliamentary representatives had to take an Oath of Allegiance.

3. Unionism

Expression of Unionism

The nationalism displayed by the Loyalists and by the unionists is that of an affiliation to Great Britain and loyalty to the British Crown. It was the opposing force to the Home Rule League - and to any form of Irish nationalism. It was first represented in Westminster as Irish Unionism. This form of Unionism was based in Dublin. However, as the Home Rule debate intensified and the plausibility of its application grew, unionist representatives gathered in Ulster. It was then that Ulster Unionism developed. The rhetoric of Ulster Unionism describes Ulster Protestants as surrounded by the threat of Irish nationalists. This rhetoric was embodied by the Ulster Covenant, which was written in 1912. This paper was signed by more than 400.000 people and contested the introduction of the Third Home Rule Bill. Parliamentary representation was thus of the highest importance for the unionists. It was so important that it is considered by Mansergh that the Unionist Party helped preserve the Union, and was not solely a party trying to protect Ulster:

[N]o doubt [Irish] independence [...] would not have been won without force - after all, the Unionist party had come into existence in 1886 not to save Ulster but, as its name indicated, to preserve the Union - and only by stages dominion and then a republican status, within or conceivably outside the Commonwealth, would have followed for Ireland as a whole. It was the identification of a third party in terms of polity over and above community, and the

widening scope for manoeuvre that a triangular political situation affords, that made such an outcome, not unrealisable, but altogether more difficult.³¹

The “third party”,³² as named by Mansergh, is studied in the third chapter of *The Unresolved Question*. It first fought against the Home Rule project by allying forces with the Conservatives, with whom they shared the will to maintain the Union. It must be remembered that the Union was embodied in the Act of Union (1800), which closed down the Irish parliament and centralised parliamentary activity in Westminster. During the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, the unionists were allied with the Conservative Party, in Westminster. Generally, the two parties stood side by side to face the Home Rule project, and kept it from being established. The Conservative-unionist association was much more united than that of the Liberals and the Irish nationalists. In this point one of the specificities of the Unionist Party is revealed. It is considered to be an umbrella party. It means that it gathered a variety of parties whose common objective was the protection of the Union.

The First World War was a turning-point in Irish history. It galvanised the loyalism of the Ulster Unionists, and led the republicans to emancipate from British influence. In this subpart, we will focus on the case of the unionists. In fact, a division was created for Ulster, the 36th (Ulster) Division. It is still praised as representative of the loyalty of the Ulster Protestants to the Crown, to the Empire and to the British culture. Three Irish regiments were created. The 10th and 16th (Irish) Division and the 36th (Ulster) Division, mentioned earlier. Around 200,000 Irish men fought in the First World War for the British Army. A majority of them were volunteers.³³ As we can see, Ulster was the only region of Ireland that was explicitly represented. Such a specific denomination is interesting to note. By the time of its creation - in 1914 - Ireland was not partitioned and was still a member of the United Kingdom and subject to the British Crown. However, it was virtually divided because of the Home Rule debate. Hence, differentiating Ulster from the rest of Ireland might have been a way for the War Office to promote the defence of the Union in testing times. Let us note that this is only an hypothesis of mine expressed as elements are put together as the War Office was strongly supportive of the Union and Ulster was known for its attachment to it. Still, Nicholas Mansergh describes the War Office as a “Unionist stronghold”.³⁴ He studies its refusal to Redmond’s demand of creating a National Volunteers that would include Irish divisions. Such a group was meant to promote the existence of the nations

³¹ Mansergh, Nicholas. *The Unresolved Question: The Anglo-Irish Settlement and Its Undoing 1912-72*. Yale university press, London. 1991, p.43.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Peatfield, Lisa. « Ireland’s Role In The First World War ». *Imperial War Museums*, 2018.

³⁴ Mansergh, Nicholas. *Op.cit.* p.83.

composing the United Kingdom and was an expression of Redmond's vision of it.³⁵ Up to today, the participation of the 36th Division in the Battle of the Somme - which was one of the most important battles for the British forces on the Western Front of World War I - is still paid tribute to.

Ulster Unionism in the devolved parliament

In the chapter "Siege or Pogrom"³⁶ Farrell studies the establishment of a solid unionist majority in the devolved parliament. In this chapter, the author focuses on the 1921-1924 period. In fact, those years were marked by violence. During this period, the sense of isolation and abandonment of the unionists reached its peak, leaving deep marks in their rhetoric, in their vision of the devolved parliament and in their will to protect the Union. By 1921, the military confrontation between the British forces and the Irish republicans was put to an end by the Anglo-Irish Treaty. However, the IRA was still active and openly rejected the partition of Ireland. It resulted in direct confrontation between them and unionist paramilitary groups and the British forces in Northern Ireland. In fact, the British forces were still in charge of civil order. A truce was declared on the 9th July 1921, but it did not prevent sectarian violence from happening. The very same day, "a large force of police and Specials raided Raglan Street in the heart of the Lower Falls".³⁷ The Lower Falls is a constituency in which an important part of the Catholic community of Belfast lives. It is crossed by the Falls Road, which also goes through the Shankill Road, a Loyalist constituency. During times of troubles, those two constituencies were the battleground of sectarian confrontations. The IRA responded immediately, as well as the civilians. The Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) failed to go any further in the Lower Falls and had to retreat. However, this event, called e 'Bloody Sunday' was the result of a backlash set on the Catholic population by the Specials and armed mobs the day after the failure of the RIC.³⁸ Days of violence followed until 14 July. It resulted in the death of 23 civilians - sixteen Catholics, seven Protestants.³⁹ 216 Catholic homes had been destroyed. Farrell quotes the coroner's jury as a conclusion: "We think that in the interests of peace the Special Constabulary should not be allowed into any locality occupied by people of an opposite denomination".⁴⁰ The truce then made was not respected by the security forces, and was an open demonstration of the sectarianism present in Northern Ireland.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Farrell, Michael. 'Siege or Pogrom'. *Northern Ireland: The Orange State*, Second, Pluto Press, 1980, pp. 39-65.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.41.

³⁸ Farrell, Michael. 'Siege or Pogrom'. *Northern Ireland: The Orange State*, Second, Pluto Press, 1980, p.41.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

The confrontation between the Ulster Special Constabulary and the IRA, as well as events of sectarian violence, were partly responsible for the feeling of insecurity amongst the unionists in Ulster. The ongoing negotiations over the Treaty intensified this feeling, as the British government failed to take a stance on the Irish question up until the Government of Ireland Act and the Anglo Irish Treaty. However, Eamon de Valera and the representatives of republicanism were asking for self-determination and the unification of Ireland. They did not recognise the authority of the devolved parliament of Northern Ireland. PM Lloyd George's position remained equivocal up until the 20th of July 1921. It distilled doubts in all parties involved for most of his time in office as PM. Lloyd George then "offered a restricted form of dominion self government for the 26 counties",⁴¹ whilst asking for the Southern parliament not to interfere in the constitutional status of the Northern parliament as well with its authority. Any change of constitution implying the extension of the authority of the *Dáil Éireann* in Northern Ireland would have to be agreed to by the Northern Irish government. Eventually, those obligations were included in the Anglo Irish Treaty which would then be applied by the 1922 Irish Free State Constitution. With this Treaty, the constitutional status of Northern Ireland was legitimised and the unionist position was solidified. This solidification was to reach its peak in 1924 with the establishment of pro-unionist security forces as well as with the consolidation of a legislative system that would favour the unionists. This will be the concern of the second part of this chapter.

In the introduction of this part, we have presented nationalism as a sort of frame, in which all parties envision themselves. In the case of Ulster Unionists, they intended to be part of a frame containing Ireland as a part of the United Kingdom. From the 1880s on, the ambition of the unionists was limited to Ulster because of the growing resistance of the nationalists. For the Ulster Unionists and the Loyalists, the constitution established by the Government of Ireland Act (1921) is the embodiment of the last defense against the nationalist threat. As Farrell states, the creation of the state strengthened the position of the Ulster Unionists for it legitimised their rhetoric. The study of the ruling of Northern Ireland by the unionists will show that this position was indeed well protected and that the government dedicated most of its forces to its protection.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p.42.

B. Sectarianism in Northern Ireland (1921-1954)

1. A deeply divided society

The creation of the two Irish administrative entities

The 1920s marked the beginning of intense civil unrest in both the Free State and in Northern Ireland. Those troubles were to last until the end of the 1930s. From then until the outbreak of the 1960s Troubles, the situation remained tense. The main issue causing civil disorder was the constitutional issue. The authority of the Northern Irish government was contested by the Catholic-nationalist minority, and the authority of the Anglo-Irish Treaty was contested by a part of the republicans in the South. All in all, the Government of Ireland Act (1920) and the Anglo-Irish Treaty (1921) were at the origin of the civil unrest. Eventually, the Northern Irish government managed to establish a status quo that maintained civil order and the question of the Treaty was settled in the South as diverging forces were repressed. Between 1921 and 1925, a Boundary Commission was opened to determine the frontiers of the Irish State, but it had little impact on the frontiers established by the Government of Ireland Act. With this same Act, a status quo was established. Indeed, it stated that the province was to remain part of the United Kingdom. The possibility of uniting Ireland was not excluded by the Act, but an absolute majority in both the Southern and in the Northern parliament was required to do so.⁴² Considering the will of the unionists to remain part of the United Kingdom, this section of the Act had no chance to be exploited. In fact, the unionist will was symmetrically opposed to the separatist demands of the leaders of the Free State. Later in 1937, the constitutional authority of the Northern government was challenged by the new Constitution. De Valera, then leader of *Fianna Fáil* and head of the Southern government, unofficially declared a Republic as the features of the constitution he drafted were those of a Republic. The Irish State was then a Republic in all points but the name. The only feature missing to it was the unity of the island, which de Valera considered necessary to openly declare the existence of the Irish Republic. In 1948, the Republic of Ireland - or *Éire*- was declared by the government of Costello, then leader of the *Cumann na nGaedheal* party. Yet, Ireland was still partitioned.

The Irish question is interesting as it displays a number of nationalist frames. Each frame of nationalism is clashing with another as they defend opposed views. During the first decades of existence of the Northern Irish State, the discourse of both nationalisms did not evolve much. The

⁴² British Parliament. *Government of Ireland Act*, 1920. Ch.67, Geo 10 and 11.

authority of Stormont was contested but the nationalist voice had much less impact on the parliament than that of the unionists, for the latter dominated it in number.

The democracy supposedly represented by the devolved government of Stormont tended to weaken any voice that did not support the unionist state and the government. This theory is defended by many authors, including Michael Farrell's,⁴³ Bosi & de Fazio.⁴⁴ Four important acts will be studied: the Method of Voting Act (1929), the Special Powers Act (1922), the Public Order Act (1951) and the Flag and Emblem Act (1954). With the first act mentioned, we will try and reveal the importance of parliamentary representation in the context of a deeply divided society. Then, the Special Powers Act will be examined to demonstrate the prejudice of the unionist government and the discrimination against the Catholic community. Finally, we will scrutinize how nationalism is demonstrated through symbols and emblems in Northern Ireland, and how the unionist government dealt with open demonstrations of Irish nationalism. This study focuses on the Public Order Act and on the Flag and Emblems Act.

Definition of a sectarian society

Two definitions of sectarianism have helped me approach Northern Irish sociology. The first definition was written by John Sugden: "In Northern Ireland, all significant aspects of life are bound up with the politics of division. Sports is no exception".⁴⁵ This quotation demonstrates the global division that affects Northern Irish society by including sports, and so contradicting the common belief concerning the unifying abilities of sports. The second is provided by Fazio and Bosi, who define the divisions occurring in societies. First, one can depict the majority of societies as being subject to divisions caused by ethnicity, race, religion, class and so on. Such divisions are subject to evolution and they demonstrate the varying intensity of "resiliency, and politicization".⁴⁶ They can be influenced by historical and geographical fluctuations. Finally, there is a category of deeply divided societies where every aspect of division is exacerbated. Furthermore, a "widespread belief that the state is actively taking the side of one of the parts in the conflict"⁴⁷ exists in such

⁴³ Bosi, Lorenzo, and Gianluca De Fazio. *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*. Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam. 2017.

⁴⁴ Farrell, Michael. *Op.cit.*.

⁴⁵ Sugden, John P. Bairner, A. *Sport, Sectarianism, and Society in Ireland*. Leicester University Press, Leicester 1997, p.1.

⁴⁶ Bosi, Lorenzo, and Gianluca De Fazio. 'Contextualizing the Troubles: Investigating Deeply Divided Societies through Social Movements Research'. *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, edited by Lorenzo Bosi and Gianluca De Fazio. Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press. 2017, p.11.

⁴⁷ Bosi, Lorenzo, and Gianluca De Fazio. 'Contextualizing the Troubles: Investigating Deeply Divided Societies through Social Movements Research'. *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, edited by Lorenzo Bosi and Gianluca De Fazio. Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press. 2017, p.11.

societies. With such a belief existing in a part of the society, violence and sociopolitical conflict escalate quickly and violently. In fact, it is the legitimacy of the state that is questioned. It leads to the formation of a "dominant group".⁴⁸ It is also said that in such a situation, the dominant group will appropriate the state apparatus, and so shape as it suits it the political system, the public institutions, the geography, the economy and finally the culture.⁴⁹ As Nordlinger stated, "subcultural divisions based on antagonized sociopolitical cleavages lead to regimes lacking full legitimacy, a propensity to widespread political violence, and state repression".⁵⁰ Both the definition of De Fazio and Bosi and the statement of Nordlinger will be exploited in the demonstration of the following parts.

Maintaining the status quo

We will focus on the devolved parliament in Stormont, and on the debate that took place in it over the constitutional question. As established under the Government of Ireland Act, Stormont Members of Parliament were meant to be elected by Proportional Representation (PR), based on the Single Transferable Vote system.⁵¹ The constituencies represented in the parliament were Armagh, Antrim, Down, Fermanagh and Tyrone. It also included the parliamentary boroughs of Belfast and Londonderry. As soon as 1920, the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), leader of the unionist movement, was elected. James Craig, elected as Prime Minister and head of the UUP, made it clear that the PR voting system would be abolished.

Let us study how Craig managed to take down PR, and what was the purpose of this manoeuvre. To do so, we will base this study on Pringle's work in *Electoral Systems and Political Manipulation*⁵², for it provides a concise view on the gerrymandering question. The PR voting system was established and defended by the Government of Ireland Act, for it was to be applied to the General Elections (GE) for a duration of three years after the declaration of the Act. However, it was an issue for the UUP, as it allowed the Labour Party and Independent Unionists to gain seats in Stormont. It had been the case during the 1925 GE when the UUP lost 12.5 percent of votes. At this point, the Prime Minister viewed PR as a tool for parties not involved in the constitutional question to gain seats and influence. The debate on the constitutional issue had lost of its importance in Northern Ireland, as most of the population favoured the improvement of

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Yiftachel, Oren, and As'ad Ghanem. 'Understanding "Ethnocratic Regimes": The Politics of Seizing Contested Territories'. *Political Geography*, vol. 23, no. 6, 2004, pp. 647–76.

⁵⁰ Nordlinger, Eric. *Conflict Regulation in Divided Societies*. MA: Harvard University Press, 1972.

⁵¹ British parliament. *Government of Ireland Act*. 17 Feb. 1916, cc.378-92.

⁵² Pringle, D. G. 'Electoral Systems and Political Manipulation : A Case Study of Northern Ireland in the 1920s'. *St. Patrick's College, Maynooth*, vol. 11, no. 3, Apr. 1980.

social issues. The UUP brought back the attention of the parliament on the constitutional issue instead of taking into consideration the social demands of the population. It also enabled them to counter the rise of influence of minor and independent parties, who were the only tangible opposition to unionist rule. It was explicitly stated by Craig: “What I want to get in this house what I believe we will get very much better in this house under the old-fashioned plain and simple system, are men who are for the Union on the one hand, or who are against it want to go into a Dublin parliament on the other”.⁵³ This policy disadvantaged the MPs and the parties unwilling to take a stance on the constitutional question. It divided the parliament in two sections: pro-partition and anti-partition parties. Craig knew that by doing so, the UUP would be certain to maintain a majority since two third of the population were of Protestant denomination - and so inclined to be pro-partition.

The Method of Voting Act was passed in 1929. The First Past the Post (FPTP) voting system was established for the Stormont GE. The change of voting system impacted the GE of the same year, as minor parties only won four seats. The seats lost by the Independent Unionists and by the Labour Party were retrieved by the main unionists and nationalists. As Pringle states, “the Unionist gains were at the expense of the candidates who had challenged them on class issues, and not at the expense of the anti-Partitionist section of the community”.⁵⁴ Those gains were directly linked to the FPTP system, which favours the establishment of a two-party parliament, as is the case in Westminster. The main difference between the Westminster and the Stormont parliament was that the objectives of the two main parties were opposed. The unionist majority was willing to consolidate its position in Stormont and any nationalist participation was turned down during debates. The nationalists had been assigned a role of official opposition but they could not impact the legislative process as they were not numerous enough. There was no balance of power within the parliament. Furthermore, the division existing between nationalist and republicans kept them from forming a coalition. All in all, the situation would not evolve. The Method of Voting Act had for a consequence the freezing of political activity in Stormont for the existence of the Act. It was abolished in 1969, as the state was undergoing major civil unrest, known as the Troubles.

The importance of representation

In the introduction of this subpart, we defined a sectarian society as led by a “state [believed to be]

⁵³ Hansard. Parliament of Northern Ireland, *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report House of Commons*, Vol.8, col.2276. Quoted in Farrell, Michael. *Op cit.* Second Edition, Pluto Press, London. 1980, p.111.

⁵⁴ Pringle, D. G. *Op.cit.*, p. 199.

actively taking the side of one of the parts in the conflict”.⁵⁵ The legislative policy of James Craig, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland from 1921 until 1940, was proved to favour the UUP. However, it must be specified that this policy favoured his own vision of Unionism and of the Stormont state, which he intended to defend from external threat. The Northern Irish state, as perceived by Craig, focused on the constitutional question. By doing so, a pattern was created, opposing the anti-partitionists to the pro-partitionists. Also, Craig exploited the numerical superiority of the Protestant electorate, which was the main electorate of the UUP. All in all, he denied the existence of any debate that did not involve the legitimacy and order of the state. The Labour Party, for example, was willing to bring social and economic issues on the table. The duality of Stormont imposed by Craig kept the LP from expanding. As a matter of fact, the number of Labour MPs in Stormont dropped from three to one in 1929. MPs of the LP would keep standing for constituencies until 1973 but they never won more than four seats. This manoeuvre was carried out thanks to the FPTP system. In Great Britain, such a system has been successful and fair because the government and the nations represented in it were not divided by social, cultural, religious and political issues - at least not to the same extent as in Northern Ireland. Establishing such a voting system served not only the self-centered political interests of the UUP, it also kept the social and cultural minorities from expressing themselves in the parliament.

The use of the definitions of De Fazio, Bosi and of Nordlinger is to be made carefully in the study of the legislative policy of the UUP government. The first motive of the government was self-centered and focused on the stability of the Party as head of the government and parliament. However, such a policy still fits in the description of the Nordlinger of what is a sectarian society. We have quoted him in the introduction as he stated that “subcultural divisions based on antagonized sociopolitical cleavages lead to regimes lacking full legitimacy, a propensity to widespread political violence, and state repression”.⁵⁶ When applied to the legislative issue, the policy of Craig and of the UUP fits in this definition. Indeed, the parties which were repressed were the Labour Party and the Independent Unionists. What is surprising in the case of the Method of Voting Act is the fact that the unionist government exploited the constitutional issue even though it was no longer a priority for the public. With this Act, the UUP government consolidated the sectarianism that had already made thousands of victims since the creation of the Northern Irish state. No social, economic or political debate was then possible in Stormont. Furthermore, no

⁵⁵ Bosi, Lorenzo, and Gianluca De Fazio. ‘Contextualizing the Troubles: Investigating Deeply Divided Societies through Social Movements Research’. *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, edited by Lorenzo Bosi and Gianluca De Fazio. Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press. 2017, p.11.

⁵⁶ Nordlinger, Eric. *Conflict Regulation in Divided Societies*. MA: Harvard University Press, 1972.

parliamentary representation other than that of Irish Nationalism and Ulster Unionism existed in Stormont, as the few bi-confessional parties failed to have a lasting impact and influence in the parliament. As Farrell concludes, “the Unionist leaders had constructed a system which divided the Northern working class and bound the Protestant workers to them by links of ideology and material advantage”.⁵⁷

2. The security forces and the Catholic community

Context: violence in the 1920s

From 1918 until 1923, a series of clashes occurred between Irish political factions and the British forces. During the War of Independence⁵⁸ the IRA harassed the British forces and demanded their departure. This demand was backed by the underground parliament, the *Dáil*, which exercised political pressure. Simultaneously, in Ulster, the partition of Ireland was contested by the Catholic-nationalist population in urban areas. However, Farrell states that due to the weakness of the republicans in the Northern counties, Ulster experienced a “relative peace”⁵⁹ when the West and the South were going through a dreadful guerilla. The terms and conditions of the truce between the IRA and the British Army were source of disagreement. The authority of the newly created Irish Free State was contested by the anti-Treaty force. In the North, the Treaty caused numerous clashes in the streets and was debated upon in the devolved parliament.

Civil unrest occurred in Northern Ireland after the 1920 local elections. The PR voting system allowed non-unionists to be represented fairly, and it resulted in the election of *Sinn Féin* and of the United Irish League (UIL) in Londonderry, Fermanagh and Tyrone County Councils.⁶⁰ It was the city of Londonderry that triggered civil unrest. Indeed, the city occupies a specific place in the unionist rhetoric. Planters had settled there and established a prosperous economy in the city. Furthermore, it is an example of the tenacity of the Protestant community, as it resisted the attacks of King James II, a Catholic, from 1688 until 1690. The city is built around sectarian lines, as the Catholic live in the Bogside, outside the walls of the city. Farrell reminds the reader that the city, even though mainly populated by Catholics, has been ruled by Protestants since the 1688 siege thanks to a “careful gerrymandering”.⁶¹ However, the control of the Protestants and of the unionists over the city was put to a temporary end with the 1920 local elections. A Catholic and

⁵⁷ Farrell, Michael. *Op.cit.*, p.121.

⁵⁸ The Civil War is also alluded to as the Anglo-Irish War. It lasted from 1919 until 1921 and was settled with the Anglo-Irish Treaty.

⁵⁹ Farrell, Michael. *Op.cit.*, p.23.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p.25.

⁶¹ Farrell, Michael. *Op.cit.*, p.25.

nationalist corporation and mayor were elected this year. They voted to declare their allegiance to the *Dáil* and to the republican movement.⁶²

The 1921 local elections strained the situation in Londonderry. Farrell goes as far as stating that “The effect [of the elections] on the Loyalists of Derry was traumatic”.⁶³ On the other hand, the nationalists had good hopes of turning the situation at their advantage. However, rioting broke out in mid-April. The Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) and British troops charged Catholic crowds armed with bayonets and opened fire. Farrell provides no explanation on the reason that caused this charge. The IRA counter attacked immediately as they killed the head of the RIC Special Branch, and triggered the implication of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). Rioting in Derry and in Belfast continued. Civil unrest peaked as homes, shops and factories were attacked and civilians were killed.

Study of the Act

The Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (1922) is known for the use of internment and for the centralisation of executive authority. Internment enabled the police forces to arrest and imprison any civilian that was suspected of committing anti-constitutional actions. No judgement was required to proceed to the imprisonment. It was introduced in Stormont to restore civil order in Northern Ireland as riots were raging in cities. Mr Megaw, Parliamentary secretary to Ministry of Home Affairs introduced the Special Powers Bill as follows “This is an exceptional time and requires exceptional measures. We may require stronger measures still”.⁶⁴ Dr Morrison, member of the UUP representing the Queen’s University constituency stated: “I say, ‘We cannot help ourselves. We are up against a wall, and we must take a fight for our lives’”.⁶⁵ Most regulation measures were drawn from the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act (ROIA), passed in 1920 in Westminster. Furthermore, the executive authority was transferred from the military to the Northern Irish government.⁶⁶ The Act enabled the government to

impose of curfew, close licensed premises, prohibit public meeting and processions, ban military drilling, military uniforms and uniforms indicating membership of proscribed organizations, and to establish stringent requirements for the possession of firearms,

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Parliament of Northern Ireland. Mr Megaw, Northern Ireland House of Commons Debates. 21 March 1922, col.89.

⁶⁵ Parliament of Northern Ireland. Dr Morrison, Northern Ireland House of Commons Debates. 21 March 1922, col.91.

⁶⁶ Donohue, Laura K. ‘Regulating Northern Ireland: The Special Powers Acts, 1922-1972’. *The Historical Journal*, vol. 41, no. 4, 1998, p.1090. JSTOR.

explosives and petrol.⁶⁷

Furthermore, the Special Powers Act established direct intervention. MP Coote defended the Bill when it was introduced. William Coote represented the constituency of Fermanagh and Tyrone in 1922. He was a UUP member. MP Coote criticised the process of intervention in force before the passing of the Special Powers Act. As a matter of fact, any intervention required the approval of a Commissioner of Police to report the situation, who would then contact military authorities. Military action was then triggered. When defending the Special Powers Act, Coote emphasised the need to quicken military action. Furthermore, he denounced the corruption of it.⁶⁸ The features of the Special Powers Act are questionable, and the use of internment was its most controversial point. The passing of this Act represented more than an ethical question for the unionist government. When defending the Act, Coote presents it as the legislative action that will provide the unionist government with legitimacy, and that will ensure the thriving of the Northern Irish province as an administrative entity. Using the Ulster Unionist rhetoric, the MP states “[If] we fail now we fail in everything. If we succeed now we shall succeed in spite of all the powers that may be arrayed against us”.⁶⁹

Thanks to the unionist majority in the Stormont parliament, the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Bill was enacted with no difficulty. The management of civil unrest by the unionist government then followed a sort of pattern. The Special Powers Act enabled the Stormont government to have direct control over the security forces and military action. Hence, the authority of the British government was bypassed by it. Chronologically, the control of security forces was the second of two elements that helped the unionists shape it at their image. The first element was the Special Constables, created in 1920. Three classes composed the Specials. The A Specials were engaged to be in full-time activity, they were uniformed and paid. This class was meant to support the Royal Irish Constabulary. The B Specials were - at first - not uniformed, supported the RIC by patrolling in their areas and were armed. Then, the C Specials were a reserve force. Still, they were allowed to get gun licences. Regarding this class, and the fact that Catholics were unable to purchase gun licences, Farrell claims that “[in] practice the C Specials were only a device for arming the Loyalist population”.⁷⁰ Furthermore, the Special Constabulary in itself was a mainly Protestant force, and links existed between it and the Ulster Volunteer Force, the most notorious

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Parliament of Northern Ireland. Northern Irish House of Commons Debates. 14 March 1922, c.31.

⁶⁹ Hansard. Parliament of Northern Ireland, *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report House of Commons*, Deb 14 March 1922, col.31.

⁷⁰ Farrell, Michael. *Op.cit.*, p.35.

Loyalist-Protestant paramilitary group of Northern Ireland. In fact, “[recruitment] was based so closely on the UVF that whole UVF units formed Special platoons”.⁷¹

It is important to nuance our views on the Special Powers Act. Internment measures towards terrorist groups were not limited to the republican ones. Members of the Ulster Protestant Action (UPA) had been interned as well. It resulted in the breaking up of the UPA, and was a major step towards the re-establishment of peace in Belfast, and so in Northern Ireland. However, this policy was contested within the unionist government and in the parliament, as UPA men who had been interned received support from MPs.⁷² Furthermore, Farrell quotes some anomalies provoked by the internment of Loyalist gunmen, such as the internment of B Specials and the re-engagement of a Special who had been interned.⁷³

In 1922, one could witness the rejection of the Irish nationalist identity by the unionist government. In the very speech that introduced the Special Powers Act, MP Coote presented the Northern Irish state as under a siege of Nationalism. “We hate bloodshed, we detest attacking a man in the dark, and strike him in the back. It is not a plant which grows in Ulster”.⁷⁴ The plant alluded to in this sentence alludes to Nationalism, and more specifically to republican paramilitary groups. The methods of the IRA are denounced by the MP here, and the Special Powers Bill is presented as a piece of legislation that will enable the government to repress this threat. Once again, Coote uses the Ulster Unionist rhetoric to defend the Bill. The association between religion and political orientation is hard to avoid in Northern Ireland. Hence, Irish nationalism is described as a threat to the integrity of the Northern Irish population, and as responsible for the civil unrest agitating the state. However, association between politics and religion in a deeply divided society lead to the alienation of the dominated community, in this case, the Catholic-nationalist community. Under the Special Powers Act, any member of this community was considered as a possible agent of the IRA. Moreover, the security forces - and especially the Special Constabularies - were essentially Protestant and unionist groups. This opposition between the executive body, mainly Protestant-unionist, and the contesting group leads to the deepening of the ethnonational cleavage. As a matter of fact, soon after the partition of Ireland, Catholics stopped engaging in security forces because of its sectarian feature.

However, the implementation of the Special Powers Act was a success. By 1923, the

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*, p.64.

⁷³ Farrell, Michael. *Op.cit.*, p.64.

⁷⁴ Hansard. Parliament of Northern Ireland, *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report House of Commons*, Deb 14 March 1922, col.32.

government managed to pacify Northern Ireland. Consequently, internment was ended in 1924 and the curfew was lifted because the province had been pacified.⁷⁵ Nonetheless, the Special Constabulary and the Special Powers Act were maintained until 1972. The Loyalist security force meant to deal with a temporary issue - civil unrest and riots - would be maintained on the long term, serving the unionist government. The ethno-national cleavage described earlier was thus maintained over most of the existence of the devolved government of Northern Ireland.

3. Repression of political Nationalism

The Public Order Act and the Flags and Emblems Act (1954)

From the restoration of order in 1924 on, the unionist government dedicated its legislative activity on securing civil order. Parliamentary opposition was contained, and the government carefully exploited the unionist rhetoric and ideology to consolidate the status quo. As Farrell puts it, “the Unionist leaders chose [...] to keep their followers in a permanent state of siege [and the] minority in a position of permanent and hopeless inferiority”.⁷⁶ On the long term, it “became a central grievance leading to the civil rights movement in the late 1960s”.⁷⁷ Two acts passed in the 1950s were to affirm the position of the unionist government. The Public Order Act (1951) and the Flags and Emblems (Display) Act (1954).

After civil order was restored, the Special Powers Act targeted the nationalist threat. This exceptional Act became a tool over the years, and it became part of the unionist government policy for most of its ruling. This tool was meant to repress and counter any demonstration that would contest the authority of the Northern Irish state. Ninety meeting, assemblies and processions were banned during the 1922-1950 period.⁷⁸ Those bans were made possible by the Special Powers Act. Most of those events were republican, nationalist or anti-Partitionist events. The control over demonstrations, marches and assemblies was defined with more precision in 1951, with the Public Order Act. This Act was issued from the Special Powers Act. It was meant to explicit and improve the extent of power of the security forces and of the Ministry of Home Affairs concerning the marches, demonstrations and public gatherings. In fact, the RUC and the government had the ability to re-route or ban any march.⁷⁹ Farrell considers that this decision was subject only to the

⁷⁵ Farrell, Michael. *Op.cit.*, pp.64-65.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p.81.

⁷⁷ Donohue, Laura K. “Regulating Northern Ireland: The Special Powers Acts, 1922-1972”. *The Historical Journal*, vol. 41, n° 4, 1998, p.1090.

⁷⁸ Donohue, Laura K. “Regulating Northern Ireland: The Special Powers Acts, 1922-1972”. *The Historical Journal*, vol. 41, n° 4, 1998, p.1093.

⁷⁹ As quoted in Donohue’s “Regulating Northern Ireland”: Regulation 4 was revoked by Standing Rules and Order i87/1951, 12 Oct. 1951, at which time marches and procession became governed by the Public Order Act

will of the government.⁸⁰ Yet, he also states that the passing of this Act was the result of Loyalist pressure on the government.⁸¹ Furthermore, the organisation and the route of the event had to be declared two days before its proceeding, so as to enable the Ministry of Home Affairs and the RUC to determine whether or not the event represented a threat towards civil order. However, just as the Special Powers Act, the Public Order Act was bound to be used exclusively on nationalist or republican events. Mansergh alludes to the attacks led by the RUC on a march led by the Ancient Order of the Hibernians (AOH),⁸² which took place before the enactment of the Public Order Act, and which represented quite well the direction took by the government.⁸³ It was taking a “tough line”.⁸⁴ Furthermore, the case of Easter marches is an evidence of the repression of nationalist and republican demonstrations in the Northern Irish state. In fact, from 1926 until 1949, those marches were banned by the government with the Special Powers Act. Donohue also states that after the marches were banned, all gathering and meetings taking place during the Easter week were forbidden.⁸⁵

During the clash between the AOH and the RUC mentioned above, tricolour flags had been torn down by the security forces. This leads us to the second Act studied here: the Flags and Emblems Act. It forbade the exposition of flags other than the Union flag, as well as the damaging of Union flags. The purpose of this Act was to prohibit any expression of contest towards the authority and the legitimacy of the state. It was a complementary legislation to the Public Order Act. Symbols are indeed weapons that need to be taken into consideration when studying sectarian issues and ethnonationalist clashes. In this case, the unionist government demonstrated its loyalty and its Ulsterness by displaying both the United Kingdom flag and the Ulster flag on official buildings. However, flags were also displayed in neighbourhoods. David Cairns states that the presence of flags in the streets were the proof of a daily demonstration of loyalty to the Crown and to the Union. “Streets in non-nationalist areas are blanketed by Red Hand of Ulster and Union flags, accompanied by red, white, and blue bunting - with optional paramilitary trapping”.⁸⁶ The

(Northern Ireland), 1951, 14 & 15 Geo c.19. For the banning of public meetings under the 1951 statute see, for instance, orders issued 13Nov. 1968, Belfast Gazette (hereafter BG), 15 Nov. 1968 and 11 July 1970, BG, 17 July.

⁸⁰ Farrell, Michael. *Op.cit.*, p.200.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² The Ancient Order of the Hibernians is a Catholic and Irish nationalist secular group.

⁸³ Farrell, Michael. *Op.cit.*, p.200.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Donohue, Laura K. “Regulating Northern Ireland: The Special Powers Acts, 1922-1972”. *The Historical Journal*, vol. 41, n° 4, 1998, p.1095. JSTOR.

⁸⁶ Cairns, David. « The Object of Sectarianism: The Material Reality of Sectarianism in Ulster Loyalism ». *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. 6, n° 3, [Wiley, Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland], 2000, p.444. JSTOR.

same process of demonstration is took place in nationalist areas, as the tricolour is often displayed and murals accompany it. Forbidding the exposure of tricolour flags was thus an act that enabled unionists to consolidate their authority by imposing the Union flag as the only legitimate flag, alongside that of Ulster.

Conclusion

In this part, we have studied the policy of the unionist government towards the Catholic minority. Beyond this study, it has been made clear that the objective of the unionists was not to target the Catholic community, but to repress any threat to the stability and legitimacy of the Northern Irish state. On the short term, the minority parties, such as the Labour Party and the Independent Unionists, lost their seats in Stormont. On the long term, the nationalist opposition was made inefficient in General Elections. In local elections, trade unions and minorities were underrepresented after the 1925 gerrymandering. It eventually led to a transfer from parliamentary politics to streets politics. By the 1960s, general discontent with the unionist government grew in Northern Ireland. Non-sectarian groups and movements such as the Civil Rights Movement demanded fair representation in the devolved parliament with the 'one man - one vote'.

During the 1930s, fair representation was lacking in Stormont. At the same time, the IRA was active and had put the Northern Irish state in a situation of constant danger. The IRA campaign was called the S-Plan and targeted civil, economic and military infrastructures in Great Britain. The measures undertaken by the unionists to stop civil unrest in the 1920s had been maintained, and were still exploited to face the IRA threat. However, the Catholic community suffered collateral damage as the security forces stigmatised it and harrassed it. The Loyalist pressure on the government and the constitution of the Special Constabularies worsened the sectarian aspect of the security forces in the Northern Irish state. On the long the unionist policy resulted in the growing of resentment, defiance and suspicion between the Catholic community, the nationalists and the security forces.

Besides this, expressions of Irish nationalism were repressed. This was made possible because of the Special Powers Act - then complemented by the Public Order Act - and the Flag and Emblems Act. Beyond the issue of repressing cultural and political nationalism - which was justified by the security of the state and its legitimacy - those acts demonstrate that there was a repression of identity. The Catholic-nationalist identity was denied and alienated. In the streets, demonstrations were charged. In Stormont, the nationalists failed to influentiate in any way the legislative process.

The study of those four acts enabled us to understand how the state was ruled and how civil

order was maintained. It also helped us understand that the Irish nationalist identity was repressed by the government. The legitimacy of the state and of the constitutional partition of Ireland was the priority of the unionist government. Politics in the streets were repressed, as the Special Powers Act and the Public Order Act only authorised Loyalist demonstrations. Furthermore, the government neglected social issues to maintain the unity of the state. On the long term, such a policy meant that the unionist government exploited the sectarianism present in Northern Ireland and emphasized it, even when the common interest - regardless of the communities - was to face social and economic issues as the 1930s suffered from a major economic crisis. In such a context, let us study the role and place of sports in the Northern Irish society. In the next part, we will try and study the evolution of the Irish Football Association, of the Gaelic Athletic Association and of the Irish Rugby Football Union in Northern Ireland. We will study if the cultural hegemony which the unionist government tried to achieve impacted those sport associations. Most importantly, we will try and define the position of those three organisations regarding the constitutional question.

C. Organisation of the sporting associations and the constitutional question

The Irish Football Association (IFA), the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) and the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) are studied in this chapter. Moreover, it is the political position of the sporting associations that is approached. First, we will try and reveal what is their political and cultural position. In this part, we will exploit Sugden's idea of Gaelic and Foreign sports in Ireland and link it with stances of the associations. Then, we will study what was their partition policy - the way they organised competitions on a geographical level is going to be the subject of this approach. We will thus demonstrate to which frontier they obeyed. It will be the second element indicating which government they considered legitimate.

1. IFA: local focus on Northern Ireland, international monopoly

Political and cultural position

The demographic expansion of the game began in Dublin and Ulster. The said expansion took place from the 17th to the 19th century. During this period, an important Anglo-Irish community had settled in Dublin. The football game had been introduced by it and grew in importance in the surroundings of the city. Then, due to Ulster's closeness to Scotland and to the presence of British settlers, football was brought in to the north of the island. Sugden and Bairner highlight the importance of industrialisation in this process of expansion:

the Belfast area was the most industrialised region in Ireland at the end of the nineteenth century at a time when it was becoming apparent that the real strength of association football was to lie not in its popularity in the great public schools, but in its growth in the industrial regions of Britain.⁸⁷

It must be reminded that the East of Ulster was the most industrialised region of Ireland, and, as our study of Ulster Unionism showed, was the home of a majority of the Protestant population. Furthermore, the series of victory of the Belfast clubs shows that the popularity of football in industrial regions had for a result a pattern of domination of Belfast over other Irish cities involved in the national competition. Indeed, from the creation of the IFA in 1880 until 1906, only Belfast clubs won the Irish Cup. The fact that the British settlers and the Anglo-Irish communities introduced and first organised football in Ireland is a demonstration of the cultural history of football to the British culture. Moreover, there are traces of the British influence in the organisation of football. First, Sugden and Bairner suggest that the integration of football in the Irish tradition was parallel to the application of the British vision of sport associations.⁸⁸ Then, the Irish Football Association (IFA) was created in Belfast in 1880. The importance of the British influence in this association is demonstrated by the presence of Black Watch regiment and Gordon Highlanders.⁸⁹ Both those regiments belonging to the British Army were formed of Scottish soldiers, hence stressing the presence and domination of British-formed teams. The end of the 19th century was very important in the formation of identity process. Thus, the organisation and the composition of the sporting associations at that time influenced its ruling for most of the 20th century.

Geographical organisation

In this subpart, we explicit the links existing between the IFA and the Ulster Unionist tradition. It is meant to display the position of the association towards the constitutional question. The importation of football by Anglo-Irish and Scottish settlers, the demographic expansion of the sport, the way the IFA was first organised and the demonstration of the British culture heritage are cultural elements that shaped the evolution of organised football in Northern Ireland. Those elements alone do not allow us to determine the political affiliation of the IFA. However, the reaction of the IFA to the partition of Ireland can help us explicit it. Before the partition of Ireland, the political context had already began to influence the football association. As a matter of fact, the presence of members of army garrisons and the British administration linked the association

⁸⁷ Sugden, John P., and Bairner, A. *Sport, Sectarianism, and Society in Ireland*. Leicester University Press, Leicester. 1997, p.72.

⁸⁸ Sugden, John P., and Alan Bairner. *Sport, Sectarianism, and Society in Ireland*. Leicester University Press, 1997, p.72.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

with the British influence. At a time when separatism and Radical nationalism were gaining in influence by the day in Ireland, the presence of British representatives in an Irish association was not accepted by some clubs. Because of this political issue, when the Shelbourne Football Club qualified for the semi-finals of the Irish Cup in 1919, they refused to play at Windsor Park in Belfast. It was those political issues that led the Leinster Football Association to break from the IFA, its “parent body”.⁹⁰ From this point on, games in the Free State were organised under the “Football League of Ireland”.⁹¹ Later on, the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) was founded, taking control of association football in the Free State. By then, according to Brodie, “unanimity no longer existed in Irish football. Hardline attitudes had developed between Belfast and Dublin. The split, admittedly minimal now, was soon to widen to a chasm”.⁹² From 1921 on, the IFA organised local competitions within the frontier of the Northern Irish state only. Those competitions were still active under the name of the Irish League. The Football Association of Ireland, on the other hand, would organise competitions in the Irish Free State under the appellation of the League of Ireland.⁹³

In 1921, the organisation of the IFA focused on the six counties of Northern Ireland. One can note that the geographical reform of the IFA is similar to that carried out by Irish Unionism. Both entities moved North when facing the rise of Irish nationalism. However, this change of geographical focus by the unionists took place in a different context. Ireland had not been partitioned yet when Ulster Unionism developed. It was a strategic action. In the case of the IFA, the association had no choice left but to limit its boundaries to Northern Ireland. The FAI had been created soon after the partition of Ireland. Southern clubs were no longer interested in evolving within the IFA. First, because of the cultural and political heritage of the IFA, which was perceived as associated to the unionist tradition. Secondly, because the FAI presented itself as the organiser of association football within the Free State, which attracted Southern clubs. Finally, Sugden and Bairner demonstrate that Belfast contained the most successful clubs in Ireland, and dominated the Irish League. Exploiting the partition to create a sporting association that would not suffer from the domination of Belfast was a way for Southern clubs to affirm their abilities as football clubs. All in all, the IFA was certainly not willing to administrate only the six counties of Northern Ireland. The retrieving from the South of Ireland of the authority of the association was not caused

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p.73.

⁹¹ Brodie, M. *One Hundred Years of Irish Football*. Belfast, Blackstaff. 1980, p.15.

⁹² Brodie, M. *One Hundred Years of Irish Football*. Belfast, Blackstaff. 1980, p.15.

⁹³ Sugden, John P., and Alan Bairner. *Sport, Sectarianism, and Society in Ireland*. Leicester University Press, Leicester. 1997, p.75.

by political motivations. Instead, it was the consequence of the obvious presence of British influence in its political and cultural identity. This presence was not accepted by a majority of the Southern clubs

The IFA and the FAI organised regional association football under the frontiers of their respective administrative entity: Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State. On the senior level, northern clubs disputed the Irish League championship, organised by the IFA. Southern clubs disputed the League of Ireland championship, organised by the FAI. The participation of the clubs in either league depended on their own will. However, the representation of Ireland on an international level was disputed by the two associations. As a matter of fact, the IFA was in charge of the national selection of the whole of Ireland from 1880 until 1947. It was in direct competition with the FAI, which also claimed to represent Ireland. Both the IFA and the FAI constructed their national selection by selecting players coming from the other administrative entity. However, the explanation of the national selection policy carried out by the IFA is not to be found in its cultural identity. As a matter of fact, the FIFA tolerates the selection of players that are eligible to one nationality even though they do not live in the said nation. This policy is used by several nation members of the FIFA, even to this day.

The process of national selection of the IFA is very interesting when approaching its organisation. In fact, the claim of territorial authority beyond the partition of Ireland does not fit in the unionist tradition. When doing research about the national selection policy of the IFA, a parallel was drawn between the method of the IFA and that of the government of Eamon De Valera. Elected in 1933 as head of the Free State, De Valera declared a constitution that established the authority of the Southern Irish state over the whole of Ireland in 1937. As a matter of fact, the partition established by the Government of Ireland Act was ignored by the document. The strategy of De Valera and of the IFA are quite similar. They both ignored the partition and presented themselves as 'true' representative of the Irish nation. They both tried to force the application of their authority beyond the boundaries that had been imposed to them. The Republic unofficially set up by De Valera in 1937 was officially declared in 1948. With it, the partition issue was settled as it was tolerated by the Southern state. It directly influenced the national selection policy of the IFA and of the FAI. By 1946, the FAI had stopped selecting Northern Irish players, and in 1950, the IFA stopped as well. Furthermore, in 1953, the FIFA recognised the existence of the two teams. The IFA organised the national selection of the Northern Ireland national football team. The FAI organised the national selection of the Republic of Ireland team. Eventually, the FAI and the IFA

were able to coexist. As Sugden and Bairner state, the organisation of football in separate associations is “a straightforward acknowledgement of [the partition of Ireland]”.⁹⁴

2. The Gaelic Athletic Association

Political and cultural position

The Gaelic Athletic Association was created in 1880. Michael Cusack and the founding fathers of the associations were willing to organise Gaelic games. This association had two objectives: to popularise Gaelic games again, as they were not much practiced, and expand Irish nationalism. Furthermore, it was meant to tackle the influence of the British on Irish sports. The creation of the GAA and the expansion of the Gaelic games took part in the Gaelic Revival. This movement intended on promoting an Irish nationalist identity throughout the Ireland. It was also constituted of literary movements. In its early years, the association counted 10,000 members across Ireland.⁹⁵ Yet, members expressed their nationalist views through ‘low’ culture, and not so much through political activism. In their case, nationalism was expressed through “national identity and characteristics which were an inherent part of a game which by its nature encapsulated an historic ideal of Gaelic manhood”.⁹⁶ Separation from high cultural nationalism and political nationalism needs to be done in the case of the GAA. Indeed, the 1885-1920 period is considered to be revolving around revolution. Hence, playing and supporting a Gaelic game instead of a British game was in itself a statement one’s identity. National identity was thus expressed, but it did not necessarily mean that political activism was part of the GAA membership.

High and low nationalism were defined by Hutchinson.⁹⁷ Low nationalism defines the vehiculation of nationalism through populist mediums, such as sports. On the other hand, high nationalism is vehiculed by mediums such as literature or poetry, which are accessible to a lesser part of the population. Cronin draws a line between ‘low’ and ‘high’ cultural nationalism. The author considers that ‘high’ nationalism has never been so important to the social and political life in Ireland as the Gaelic games and the GAA were. Gaelic games embodied a “populist”⁹⁸ vision of Irishness. The foundation of the Association was part of a greater cultural plan. Indeed, Irish literature and arts were also promoted from the end of the 19th century onwards. This plan is

⁹⁴ Sugden, John P., and Alan Bairner. *Sport, Sectarianism, and Society in Ireland*. Leicester University Press, Leicester. 1997, p.74.

⁹⁵ Cronin, Mike. *A History of Ireland*. Palgrave, Basingstoke. 2001, p.165.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p.148.

⁹⁷ Hutchinson, John. *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State*. Allen & Unwin, London. 1987.

⁹⁸ Cronin, Mike. *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic games, Soccer and Irish Identity Since 1884*. Four Courts Press, Dublin. 1999, p.147.

described as the Gaelic Revival.⁹⁹ The Gaelic Revival was developed through the Irish Literary Revival, the Gaelic League and the Gaelic Athletic Association. The origins of the Revival divide the historians. For Russell Rees, it was “a reaction against the modernisation of Irish society in the second half of the nineteenth century”.¹⁰⁰ Social and economic changes led to an identity crisis that moved intellectuals to return to the cultural and historical roots of Ireland, as opposed to “the remorseless advance of commercialisation”.¹⁰¹ Let us note that the reaction Rees describes was not limited to that of the intellectuals. As a matter of fact, ‘low’ cultural nationalism was of the highest importance in the wake of modern Irish nationalism. Furthermore, the return to the roots of the cultural and historical Ireland was also observable amongst Gaelic sporting groups, as the GAA illustrates it.

Veldeman comments that this cultural movement was also highly motivated to counter the anglicisation of Ireland. The use of Irish had declined since the middle of the 18th century. By the 19th century, only a half of the population were monolingual Irish speakers. As stated by Liam de Paor, whom Veldeman quotes: “by the early nineteenth century the Irish language had come to be associated with poverty, ignorance, social stagnation and political impotence”.¹⁰² The link established between the British presence in Ireland and the Act of Union by Cronin is used to demonstrate that the English language had become omnipresent. In fact, “[the] Irish Language had disappeared from everyday use in many parts of the country, the language of work and business was English, and popular forms of entertainment, social behaviour and customs were increasingly drawn from the British experience”.¹⁰³ Parts of Ireland that suffered the most from the Famine were locations where Irish was spoken. Hence, the Famine directly impacted the use of the Irish language. There is a parallel between the impact of the Famine on the Irish language and on the practice of Gaelic sports. Irish and Gaelic culture were indeed additional victims to the Famine. Considering the fact that the Irish speakers represented a minority, the decline of the language took place even faster.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, language was seen as a tool. Nationalist leaders showed little concern for its decline. Daniel O’Connell, whose first language was Irish, as states Veldeman, did

⁹⁹ Veldeman, Marie-Christine. “Cultural Nationalism in Late Nineteenth-Century Ireland, a Step Towards Political Separatism?” *Equivalences*, vol. 36. 2009, p.146.

¹⁰⁰ Rees, Russell. *Nationalism and Unionism in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*. Colourpoint, Newtownards. 2001, p.97.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² De Paor, Liam. *Milestones in Irish History*. Mercier Press, 1998.

¹⁰³ Cronin, Mike. *A History of Ireland*. Palgrave, Basingstoke. 2001, p.165.

¹⁰⁴ Veldeman, Marie-Christine. “Cultural Nationalism in Late Nineteenth-Century Ireland, a Step Towards Political Separatism?” *Equivalences*, vol. 36. 2009, p.146.

not worry about it. However, Young Ireland promoted the revival of the Irish language and culture as part of the great national revival:

With its emphasis on culture, [Young Ireland] proposed a more inclusive definition of nationality, which went back to the non-sectarianism of the United Irishmen in the 1790s and was based on the idea of a 'nation in which common citizenship would override religious differences.'¹⁰⁵

To Veldeman, the failure of the HR movement also represented a factor of the development of cultural nationalism. This point of view can also help us explain why the GAA and Republicanism have been associated by the public. Veldeman justifies this statement as such. The Home Rule movement suffered from its loss, after the death of Parnell. Furthermore, the Home Rule Bills had all been turned down in Westminster, which meant that the parliamentary procedure and the 'step-by-step' strategy adopted by the heirs of Parnell had failed. As a consequence, the HR party "led some Irish people to look for other ways of expressing what they considered to be Irish identity".¹⁰⁶ Taking into consideration those elements, Veldeman considers that the party was partly responsible for the growing interest in Gaelic games and sports, the Irish language and literature: "it was now believed, especially in Irish literary and educational circles, that political nationalism needed a strong cultural dimension if it was to meet with success".¹⁰⁷

Sugden and Bairner suggest that the nationalism praised by the founders of the GAA and its patrons revealed a sort of anti-British racism. However, the authors presents this racism as a reaction against the xenophobia of Victorian England which had singled out the Irish for derision. Satirical magazines such as *Punch*, caricatured the Irish as being physically and mentally inferior to those of Anglo Saxon stock.¹⁰⁸ Hence, by promoting Gaelic literature and sports, the Great Revival aimed at exposing a more positive image of the Irish people. As Sugden states, this was not meant to improve the image of the Irish abroad but within its own population.¹⁰⁹ However, the anti-Englishness feeling carried by the Gaelic movement did not keep the GAA from being influenced by the British. In fact, the organisation of sports as set up by the Victorian era can be found in the organisation of the Gaelic games by the GAA. Mandle indeed states that

¹⁰⁵ Killeen, R. *The Concise History of Modern Ireland*. Gill and Macmillan, 2006.

¹⁰⁶ Veldeman, Marie-Christine. "Cultural Nationalism in Late Nineteenth-Century Ireland, a Step Towards Political Separatism?" *Equivalences*, vol. 36. 2009, p.147.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Sugden, John P., and Alan Bairner. *Sport, Sectarianism, and Society in Ireland*. Leicester University Press, 1997, p.29.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

however much the Association might seek to distance itself from the Anglicisation it could not escape the contemporary impact of the revolution in games-playing and games-organisation that has proved to be one of Victorian England's most enduring legacies.¹¹⁰

As Sugden and Bairner highlight, the game-playing and the game-organisation established by Victorian England revolved around moral, physical and character-building qualities as well as the promotion of amateurism. Those features were indeed promoted by the GAA, for they were carrying nationalist values. Paradoxically the organisation of the GAA was both influenced by the Victorian method and provoked by the anti-Irishness of the very same Victorian England. This demonstrates that the Irish nationalist movement has managed to seize its image by contradicting and discrediting the racist picture that had been drawn of the Irish people and culture. The efficiency of the Victorian methods was recognised by the Irish nationalists and they exploited it for their own objectives.

Even though the cultural nationalism of the GAA has always been promoted by the association, its political stance is a matter of debate and is much more ambiguous. As we have said, the GAA promoted native Irish sports from its foundation onwards. According to Hutchinson's concept of cultural nationalism, the association only fit in the 'low' nationalism standard. Hutchinson defines cultural nationalism as aiming for "the moral regeneration of the national community rather than the achievement of an autonomous state".¹¹¹ The goal of the GAA - and of the Gaelic Revival - was to promote Irish Nationalism and get rid of the British influence. Hence, it was part of a cultural nationalist movement, rather than a political nationalist one. The task of establishing a sovereign and independent state was that of the IRA and of *Sinn Féin*, not that of the GAA. However, the cultural purpose of the GAA is made ambiguous by the links existing between the GAA, the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) and the Catholic Church. In fact, to legitimise the association, Cusack decided to design representatives of the republican movement and of the Catholic Church to be its patrons such as Archbishop Croke, Charles Parnell and Michael Davitt. It must be reminded that Archbishop Croke was involved in nationalist activities as Champion of the Irish National Land League.¹¹² Charles Parnell was a Member of Parliament defending the Home Rule project. Finally, Michael Davitt was responsible for the founding of the Irish Land League - alongside Parnell - and was also involved in the activities of the IRB.

¹¹⁰ Mandle, W. F. *The Gaelic Athletic Association and Irish Nationalist Politics 1884-1924. Intl Specialized Book Services, Dublin. 1987*, p.14.

¹¹¹ Hutchinson, John. *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State*. Allen & Uwin, London. 1987, p.9.

¹¹² Meehan, Thomas. 'Thomas William Croke'. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, edited by Robert Appleton Company, New York. Vol. 4, 1908.

Yet, the political orientation of the patrons of the GAA alone is not an indicator of the political orientation of the association. Their declaration regarding the GAA and its political role clarifies their views on the association and on the cultural revival. The most explicit declaration made by a President of the GAA regarding the political role of the association was made in January 1914, when James Nowlan encouraged GAA members to “join the Irish Volunteer Movement and learn to shoot straight”.¹¹³ This declaration contradicted the will of the association to distance itself from any political involvement. The relationship existing between the Volunteers and the GAA was a source of suspicion amongst the British authorities. Because of the involvement of many GAA representatives and members during the Easter Rising, in 1916, the British “clearly believed that the G.A.A., as one of the most prominent nationalist bodies in the country, was guilty of complicity in the rebellion”.¹¹⁴ Amongst the GAA members who were executed by the British forces during or after the Rising were Padraig Pearse, Sean McDermott, Con Colbert, Michael O’Hanrahan and Eamonn Ceannt, as mentioned by Sugden.¹¹⁵ The GAA suffered from the ambiguous role in the Irish nationalist movement. The association had a strictly cultural role. Nevertheless, the association had a political and military role for the British government. This confusion was caused by its cultural importance and of the importance of culture in the nationalist movement. By seeking the approval of radical nationalists, Cusack associated the GAA with this specific form of nationalism - even though he only meant to link those two to promote gaelic sports across the island. In the end, it led both the British forces and the unionists to envision the GAA and Irish nationalist paramilitary groups as being two faces of one coin. Concerning the rise in popularity of the Association, Mandle considers that there was a sort of common interest in promoting nationalism for the leaders of the GAA, and for the nationalists to promote Gaelic games.

Geographical organisation

The Gaelic Athletic Association is organised around the frontiers of the traditional provinces of Ireland, Ulster, Munster, Leinster and Connacht, and to 26 counties. This organisation is similar to that of Irish Rugby Football, however, it does not have the same cultural and political meaning. The founding fathers of the GAA were willing to overcome the British authority and organise the association according to the Irish tradition. It was a policy that supported the will of the association to counter the abandonment of Gaelic and Irish sports, which they considered to be

¹¹³ Corry, E. *Catch and Kick*. Poolbeg, Dublin. 1989, p.96.

¹¹⁴ Sugden, John P., and Alan Bairner. *Sport, Sectarianism, and Society in Ireland*. Leicester University Press, 1997, p.32.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

caused by English rule.¹¹⁶ After the partition of Ireland, the Civil War in the South divided nationalists. The GAA is said to have played a mediating role during those troubled times. In fact, the maintenance of the 26 counties policies enabled pro and anti-Treaty nationalists to gather in neutral grounds. This idea is emitted in *Sport, Sectarianism and Society*.¹¹⁷ However, the GAA remained highly controversial in the North of Ireland, because of its political dimension. Sugden considers that “[at] no time has Northern Ireland, as a political entity, achieved total acceptance from the minority Irish Catholic population and, in continued support for the cause of Irish unity, the G.A.A has gone on playing a political role”.¹¹⁸ Hence, the geographical organisation of the GAA was a political statement of the highest importance. In fact, it refuted the authority of the Northern Irish state.

3. The Irish Rugby Football Union

Political and cultural position

Amongst some Gaelic circles, a theory states that rugby derived from the game of *Cad*. This game was an ancient form of football practiced long before the British settlement in Ireland. It is supposed to have influenced a young William Webb Ellis, who would then display *Cad* to his schoolmates. The game would then turn into rugby. However, Sugden and Bairner consider that this theory is doubtful, as the importance of Webb Ellis in the development of the rugby game was slight.¹¹⁹ The introduction of the study of rugby as a British sport in Ireland in *Sport, Sectarianism and Society* with this anecdote shows the will of the author to tackle the unifying and politically neutral image of rugby. Indeed, this image was conveyed by many rugby historians. Amongst them, Edmund Van Esbeck praised the neutrality and unity of rugby:

the friendships and good fellowship of Irish rugby men were not affected by differing loyalties and political sympathies, and this great sporting bond continues to be a bright feature in the most gloomy times.¹²⁰

From a wider point of view, the authors state that the purpose of the book *Sport, Sectarianism and Society* is to demonstrate that sports are subject to political and social issues, and that they can help us depict some of those political and social issues. The first issue tackled at the beginning of the part focusing on the rugby union is that of unity within rugby circles. In fact,

¹¹⁶ Mandle, W. F. “The I.R.B. and the Beginnings of the Gaelic Athletic Association”. *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 20, n° 80, Cambridge University Press, 1977, p.418. JSTOR.

¹¹⁷ Sugden, John P., and Alan Bairner. *Sport, Sectarianism, and Society in Ireland*. Leicester University Press, 1997, p.33.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, p.34.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.52.

¹²⁰ Van Esbeck, E. *The Story of Irish Rugby*. Stanley Paul, London. 1986, p.218.

contrary to football and Gaelic games, there was much less dividing issues in the rugby union. Still, they were present.

Rugby in Ireland did experience political controversy. Sugden and Bairner's approach on the question relies on two points. First, the development of rugby in Ireland, and second, its contemporary character. In fact, rugby was imported by the Anglo-Irish settlers. Practicing a foreign sport was then viewed as a contradiction to nationalist motivations and to the development of the GAA within the Irish nationalist circle. Exclusion of 'foreign games' reached its peak as it was officially pronounced by the Rule 27 of the GAA. This rule forbade members of the GAA from practicing games that were not Gaelic. Rugby was thus concerned by this rule. However, some major figures of Irish nationalism had practiced rugby. For example, Michael Cusack - founder of the GAA - and Eamon de Valera - leader of *Fianna Fáil* and third president of Ireland in 1959 and 1973 played rugby in their youth. Rugby football was then a matter of debate within the nationalists, but a vast majority of them did not adhere to it, which settled the debate. Furthermore, De Valera's preference for rugby football was somehow hidden by his government - at least never promoted or alluded to. Sugden and Bairner consider that "the development of rugby depended on a huge extent on the participation of Protestants or, at the very least, those who identified with the Union".¹²¹ Hence, even though historians such as Van Esbeck depict rugby football as exempt from political controversy and division, the sport did not unite the Irish population.

The creation of the Irish Rugby Football Association was the result of years of debate and issues over the place meant to rule rugby in Ireland. The 5 February 1880, the IRFU met for the first time, so as to answer to the poor international performances of the Irish team and on the creation of a united Irish team. This was meant to counter the Munster officials who tried to establish a team of their own. Ireland was finally united under one association in 1885, when Connacht joined the IRFU.¹²² Sugden makes the effort of contradicting Van Esbeck and Diffley's depiction of the IRFU after 1885, which they describe as "as placid as a South Sea lagoon over the past 95 years".¹²³ However, the political division taking place soon after the unification of the IRFU was to affect the rugby game. First, the association suffered from the Great War, for it cost the lives of numerous players and officials, hence disrupting the organisation the game. Then, the

¹²¹ Sugden, John P., and Alan Bairner. *Sport, Sectarianism, and Society in Ireland*. Leicester University Press, 1997, p.55.

¹²² Sugden, John P., and Alan Bairner. *Sport, Sectarianism, and Society in Ireland*. Leicester University Press, 1997, p.56.

¹²³ Diffley, S. *The Men in Green: The Story of Irish Rugby*. Pelham Books, London. 1973, p.14.

unionist-nationalist clash taking place in Northern Ireland strengthened the political position of the IRFU. Sugden demonstrates that some rugby clubs put a great effort in motivating Protestant players to join the UVF:

the Protestant anti-Home Rule lobby developed a military dimension with the formation of the Ulster Volunteer Force (U.V.F.). [...] Ulster's leading rugby club, North of Ireland, supported this development and in 1913 suggested that the second half of the rugby season should be cancelled. This was to encourage and enable rugby playing Protestants to join the U.V.F. and divert their energies away from sport towards the defence of the Union. The following season, North cancelled all of its fixtures and gave over its ground on the Ormeau Road in the centre of Belfast for the training and drilling of Protestant paramilitaries.¹²⁴

The policy adopted by the Protestant anti-Home Rule lobby and by the North of Ireland club had consequences on the playing of rugby prior to the establishment of partition. However, this policy did not represent the views of the IRFU as a whole. It is only the proof that rugby suffered from the political division that has agitated Ireland for centuries.

The division taking place in the IRFU after the partition of Ireland and the establishment of two Irish states was expressed with the issues of flags. For the Northern Irish players it was indeed problematic to play for the tricolour flag when their state was in no way associated with it. This issue was raised when matches were disputed in Lansdowne Road, in Dublin, in the context of international matches.¹²⁵ An alternative was proposed in 1925, as the union chose a "flag of its own".¹²⁶ However, the question was not settled and demands of flying the national flag were still emitted. The question was raised again in 1932, as the press and clubs took over from the demand of the Connacht branch. Government officials got involved in the issue, and the IRFU and the executive of the IFS agreed to fly the tricolour flag in Lansdowne Road but not in Ravenhill, the Belfast stadium in which international rugby games were disputed. In both cases, the IRFU flag had to be flown. On this matter, Diffley concludes that "an issue that did not initially raise the passions of many inside and outside the game was resolved yet again with the fine balance that has maintained the unity of purpose within the game in Ireland, even if that balance has not been matched in the political arena".¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Sugden, John P., and Alan Bairner. *Sport, Sectarianism, and Society in Ireland*. Leicester University Press, 1997, p.57.

¹²⁵ Diffley, S. *The Men in Green: The Story of Irish Rugby*. Pelham Books, London. 1973, p.47.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Diffley, S. *The Men in Green: The Story of Irish Rugby*. Pelham Books, London. 1973, p.47.

Geographical organisation

Contrary to the IFA and to the GAA, there was little issue for the IRFU to organise competitions in Ireland. In fact, with the formation of the IRFU, association rugby was uniformised and its organisation was centralised. The IRFU has successfully managed to organise all-Ireland competitions including all four provinces of Ireland, by including the 32 counties that compose it. However, a rivalry existed between Dublin and Belfast. In 1874, the Irish Football Union was established in Dublin. In 1875, the Northern Football Union was founded in Belfast. Both unions were willing to organise rugby in Ireland. This rivalry lasted from 1874 until the creation of the IRFU. Thanks to the creation of the IRFU, the 32 counties policy was maintained and is still operational to this day. Furthermore, the IRFU was meant to improve the performances of Ireland in international games.

Concerning the case of Northern Ireland, the absence of division within the IRFU during the 1920s and 1930s might be explained by its uniformity. In fact, a majority of adherents to rugby clubs are Protestants or identifying to the Union. Policies such as those undertaken by the North of Ireland club concerning the UVF might have finalised the uniformisation of rugby clubs in Northern Ireland. Sugden studies in detail the case of Northern Irish rugby.¹²⁸ There is indeed nuances of attitudes towards rugby and towards the Irish national team in Northern Ireland. First, “members of the rugby fraternity”¹²⁹ have interests only in international games. In such a situation, they support the national team even when facing British teams. Here, one can say that local identity and representation prevails over anything else. Let us note that the Irish national team is involved in prestigious international competitions, such as the Six Nations Championship. The nationalist symbolic surrounding the proceedings of the game are of little matter to the members of the rugby fraternity. In fact, thanks to the constant success and good performances of the Ulster region, most of the players composing the national selection are issued from its clubs. This point seems to prevail over the nationalist symbolism present in international meetings. Neither Sugden or me are able to give a pragmatic explanation to this phenomenon, and I am only expressing an hypothesis here.

Conclusion

All in all, the study of the political and cultural identities carried out in this part has enabled us to lay the basis of our study. Nationalist identities in Northern Ireland are not limited to the

¹²⁸ Sugden, John P., and Alan Bairner. “British Sports and Irish Identity”. *Sport, Sectarianism, and Society in Ireland*. Leicester University Press, 1997, pp.52-63.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, p.60.

political parties. They are expressed and defended in cultural bodies such as the sporting associations. The expression of those national identities were of the highest importance in a society deeply divided by cultural and political issues. The unionist government was conscious of this importance and tried to enforce the limitation of this expression. As a matter of fact, the interests of the unionist government were defended with the repression of any form of contest of its authority. To the unionist government, cultural bodies were perceived as agents of the political life. This led them to repress the expression of identities that contested the constitutional authority of Stormont. The study of its legislation demonstrated the extent of the influence of the institutions on the expression of national identities. Symbolism was controlled with the Flags and Emblems Act. Nationalist marches were controlled - or even forbidden - by the Special Powers Act and the Public Order Act. The expression of Nationalism and of contesting political identities in Stormont was limited in Stormont. Regarding this situation, sport association display more accurately the evolution of political and cultural identities in the Northern Irish province.

The cultural and historical heritage of the IFA links it to the unionist tradition and to the Anglo-Irish and Scottish culture. The study of the cultural and political identity of the IFA was broadened to the geographical organisation of the association. With the partition of Ireland, this approach explicits the political position of the IFA. The IFA chose to manage association football in the six counties of Northern Ireland quickly after the partition of Ireland. The FAI developed in parallel and organised association football in the Free State. The movement to the North of the IFA is explained by the tensions existing between Southern clubs and the head of the IFA, located in Belfast. This North-South tension was exacerbated as the debate over Home Rule evolved, and it reached its peak from the beginning of the Anglo-Irish War until the partition of Ireland. Contrary to the unionist tradition moving to the North, the IFA had no choice but to restrain its local authority within the boundaries of the Northern Irish province. However, the claim to represent Ireland at an international level is discordant with the unionist tradition, to which the IFA is linked. This claim is indeed quite radical and does not fit in the unionist rhetoric. In fact, Ulster Unionism has put a great focus on the interest of the Northern Irish state. It aimed at protecting the Protestant-unionist population and culture by maintaining a status quo. This method was meant to preserve the Union. Such a rhetoric is not respected by the IFA for it tries and expands its authority to the whole of Ireland. By doing so, it defies the authority of both the Irish Free State and the FIA.

The history of the GAA is dense and controversial. Over the first decades of existence of the GAA, its specific position towards the way sports were organised, ruled and its cultural value provoked both interest and suspicion. From the creation of the Northern Irish state until the reform

of security forces, the association would be the target of the RUC and of unionist paramilitary forces. Furthermore, adhering to the GAA became a demonstration of political affiliation through culture. It opened the doors for a safer way of expression of one's identity. The government's policy towards political identities that did not fit in the unionist frame was quite repressive. Symbols that did not represent Ulster or the Union were made illegal, the expression of Irish Nationalism in the parliament was contained and paramilitary groups were severely repressed. Still, the GAA was harder to contain and repress, as it was not an explicit threat to the civil order or to the legitimacy of the Northern Irish government. However, since the association was indeed strongly associated with the republican tradition, its members were able to express their political stance and their cultural identity through it. The expression of the Catholic-nationalist cultural and political identity was highlighted by the geographical organisation of the GAA. Its 32 counties policy enabled the association to thrive in a geographical setting that did not recognise partition. Thus, the stance of the GAA concerning the constitutional question was quite clear. The stance of the GAA, its cultural heritage and the exclusivity of its shaping served its members. It provided them with a place where the expression of the Catholic-nationalist identity was safe and recognised. However, it led to the exclusion of the Protestant-unionist community, which grew suspicious of the role of the GAA in the Northern Irish society.

The IRFU stands out from the three other associations studied here. The geographical organisation of the association is comparable to that of the GAA. However, it is more likely to have been maintained over the 32 counties of Ireland because of organisation reasons. There was no cultural or political reason that moved the IRFU to split its organisation. As a matter of fact, the IRFU itself was meant to unify rugby in Ireland and put to an end the Belfast-Dublin rivalry. We have struggled to link the IRFU with any of the political identities present in Northern Ireland - or in Ireland. It is associated with the culture of the Anglo-Irish and Scottish settlers. However, the IRFU tried to establish a sort of hegemony of association rugby by maintaining the 32-counties policy. The nationalist identities present in the IRFU seem to have coexisted thanks to the acceptance of the British historical and cultural legacy by its members. Moreover, the social situation of the members of the IRFU - which was of the upper middle-class - seems to have influenced the hegemony of the union. Still, political issues have impacted the activity of the IRFU and it is not completely external to the agitation present in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Because of the ambiguity of the political identity displayed by the IRFU, it had to adapt to the place games are organised. The organisation of international games resulted in the frequent confrontation between the Irish nationalist identity and the Ulster Unionist identity. Eventually, they were fixed in 1932 when the IRFU flag was created.

The Northern Irish cultural bodies express nuanced identities of Irish nationalism. In the case of the GAA, the Catholic-nationalist identity is defended and the authority of the Northern Irish province is questioned. Yet, its role was to express cultural identity of the Catholic-nationalist community. It was not to end the partition, because it did not have such abilities. The IFA was linked to the unionist movement because of its cultural heritage and its geographical policy. However, both communities of Northern Ireland were present in it until 1954. There was no explicit rule forbidding the Catholic-nationalist community from integrating it, contrary to the GAA. Catholic representation in the IFA diminished because the it tolerated the mistreatment of clubs identified with Catholicism. It was the absence of action that led to the exit of Catholic clubs from the IFA. Finally, the IRFU differed from the GAA and the IFA because no nationalist identity was explicitly expressed by it. Each traditional province of Ireland expressed its own identity through rugby. Irish Nationalism and Ulster Unionism were present in those identities, but not to the same extent as it was in the GAA and the IFA. It enabled the communities to coexist and experience much less division than there was in the IFA, for example.

II. The Troubles: challenging the authority of the unionist government (1960s-1990s)

During the 1920s and 1930s a pattern that ruled Northern Irish politics up until the 1960s was set up. It had established the unionists as rulers of the Stormont parliament, and with it, enabled them to organise the parliamentary activity. Northern Ireland was deeply influenced by parliamentary politics, and the distinction between the Catholic-nationalist and Protestant-unionist communities were highlighted. However, in 1960, Terence O'Neill was elected Prime Minister of the Stormont government. Even though he was a unionist, O'Neill was the very first Northern Irish Prime Minister willing to end the cleavage existing between the two communities. The agenda of O'Neill was a failure. Still, he managed to trouble the pattern. Simultaneously to the mandate of O'Neill, social movements and streets politics began to fill the lack of representation of the Catholics in the parliament, and to stress economic and social issues. In this part, we will try and demonstrate how identities evolved facing the troubling of the pattern, which escalated into the period known as the Troubles. The closing of the Stormont parliament in 1972 will also be studied. The purpose of this part is to study and understand the evolution of Northern Irish politics and the nuancing of nationalist identities at a time of change for social and cultural antagonisms.

This part is based on historical and sociological studies. In fact, the way Stormont dealt with streets politics and the social movements will be the main subject studied here. The historical study of the Troubles will be based on a similar approach to that of the first part. First, the main

actors of Northern Irish politics are presented. To do so, the 1950-1960 period and the 1960-70 period will be studied separately. Then, the contentious movement and the response of the executive authority will be depicted. In this part, the contentious movement is the Civil Rights Movement (CRM). Even though the importance of nationalism has been underlined in the first part, the CRM were less involved in the constitutional question than the nationalists, which made it much harder to restrain for the unionist government. Hence, the demands of the CRM will be clearly presented. Then, the response of Stormont and of the British government will be studied.

A. Historical approach to the Troubles (1950-1960)

In this subpart, we will exploit the work of John Darby and of Michael Farrell for they provide an extensive number of examples of the prejudice caused by the unionist government before the expansion of the Civil Rights Movement. Furthermore, they take into account the legislative agenda of the unionists as we have had in the first part. We will not develop much on the agenda of James Craig for we studied it before. However, it is important to keep it in mind as it is linked with Northern Irish social movements and to the centralisation of the legislative power in 1972, when Stormont was abolished. We will first study the parliament in the 1950s, the evolution of the Anti-Partition League and of the IRA campaign. It will enable us to have a clear overview of the political context in which the Civil Rights Movement appeared and developed. We will then conclude this first subpart with the election of O'Neill and the suspension of Stormont.

1. The constitutional issue in the 1950s

Until the 1950s, the partition of Ireland and the creation of the Northern Irish government was the main matter of agitation in Northern Ireland. As we have studied before, it is the constitutional question that embodied the cleavage existing between the Catholics-nationalists and the Protestant-unionists. However, the unionist government managed to maintain civil order under control, and as John Darby states, there was no challenge of the state from outside the institutions during most of the 1930s until the 1960s.¹³⁰ In such a context, the constitutional nationalists - or moderate nationalists - were encouraged to face the unionist government within the Northern Irish institutions as there was no way of representing the Catholic-nationalist community otherwise. However, "they found that the institutions which had been established and those which were still

¹³⁰ Darby, John. "The Historical Background" in *Northern Ireland: the Background to the Conflict*. The Appletree Press Ltd, Belfast. 1983, p.21.

being set up were so arranged as to effectively exclude them from positions of power”.¹³¹ John Darby then highlights the importance of both local elections and general elections. The local elections were linked to housing. In fact, the local government franchise was to remain intact up until 1969. It meant that non-rating people had no access to it. All in all, it was not a matter of representing a population, but a determined population. “Housing allocation and the gerrymandering of constituency were actively used in some cases, notably Derry city, to maintain unionist majorities”.¹³²

Concerning the general elections, Darby focuses on the constituency boundaries. The manipulation of the boundaries was indeed one of the two elements that helped the unionist government to shape the legislative body at its will, alongside the establishment of the FPTP voting system. The manipulation of the boundaries led to the election of a precise number of Irish nationalist and unionists in Stormont. By doing so, the Labour Party and independent unionists were kept from being elected. Hence, the main threat to the unionist government was suppressed. Then, the nationalists were blocked by the demographic majority of the Protestants - or by the demographic minority of the Catholics. Furthermore, the unified and strong majority of the Ulster Unionist Party stopped all nationalist initiatives. Hence, they could not behave and act like an official opposition. As said above, the parliamentary representation of the nationalists had once again been turned down by the unionist government. It was followed by the failure of the Anti-Partition League. After the Second World War, the election of the Labour Party in Great Britain brought to Northern Irish nationalists a new hope of troubling the unionist pattern. The Irish Anti-Partition League was created in 1945. Its objective was to unite all opponents to the partition of Ireland. It was meant to both solidify the ranks of the nationalists and to overcome the limits of the parliament. As Farrell states, “the new organisation represented the Catholic small businessmen, farmers and professional classes, and its support was predominantly rural”.¹³³ The organisation deployed members in strategic points, in Northern Ireland directly on the field, in Westminster and in the South of Ireland.

The geographical development of the APL must be studied. In fact, no Irish nationalist party devoted all of its energy to the partition issue in the Imperial Parliament, in the devolved parliament and in Southern Ireland. However, the tensions existing between the Southern republicans and the Northern state dating from the Civil War years were still present. A certain

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Darby, John. “The Historical Background” in *Northern Ireland: the Background to the Conflict*. The Appletree Press Ltd, Belfast. 1983, p.21.

¹³³ Farrell, Michael. *Op.cit.*, p.179.

number of republican activists were still imprisoned and the sole fact of being involved in the Stormont parliament was considered by some as an act of treason.¹³⁴ Indeed, southern republicans were not as much aware as their northern counterparts of the situation of the nationalist community in the North. Resentment dating from the 1920s and 1930s was still present. Farrell considers that those feelings of resentment led to a “superficial unity without basic agreements on tactics”.¹³⁵ Furthermore, the social position of the APL was not appealing to the working class in Belfast, as it was strongly conservative, rural and clergy-dominated. The Belfast constituencies are a remarkable source of seats for Northern Irish candidates. Hence, not exploiting it and not adapting to it would have heavy consequences on the future of the APL. Furthermore, the League could not cope with the unionist majority in Stormont. Furthermore, the unionists engaged a campaign to defend their position. In fact, agitation was raising in the South as the Republic had been declared, as well as in Great Britain because of the “one man one vote” Labour campaign. Indeed, in 1948, the Republic of Ireland was declared by John A. Costello, then leader of the first Irish coalition government. The coalition included the *Fine Gael*, the Labour Party, the National Labour Party, *Clann na Poblachta* and *Clann na Talmhan*. Still, the APL failed to change the conditions of living of the Catholic community they fought for, and to end the partition of Ireland. Their intervention in the Stormont and in the Westminster parliament were a failure, as well as the publicity campaign they launched on an international scene.¹³⁶ Furthermore, street demonstrations were violently repressed by the security forces. To Farrell, the failure of the APL was bound to lead to physical violence. Quite obviously, the IRA answered present in the 1950s and they attacked Ebrington military barracks in Derry, which resulted in the seizing of six machine guns, two Bren guns, 20 Sten guns, 20 Lee Enfield rifles and ammunition.¹³⁷

2. The IRA campaign (1950-1962)

The robbery led by the IRA in 1951 was forewarning the “most serious physical force campaign launched against the Northern State since 1922”.¹³⁸ Farrell links the failure of the APL and the robbery to the 1953 and 1955. The first election was a General Election for the Stormont Parliament, the second one elected members in the Imperial Parliament. During those elections, radical nationalists were rejected by the Catholic population in County Tyrone and across the

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, p.180.

¹³⁵ Farrell, Michael. *Op.cit.*, p.180.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, p.200.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, p.201.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, p.202.

province. Furthermore, the campaign that followed was led by a northern group, “born directly out of the frustration of the minority”.¹³⁹ This campaign was thoroughly prepared. An important element of the IRA strategy is highlighted by Farrell, it was the separation from military and political campaign. In fact, during the 1920s and 1930s, the IRA had lost an important amount of support amongst the Catholic-nationalist population because of the backlash they suffered from. Hence, establishing a clear distinction between the military campaign and the political parties was a way for the IRA to not fight on two fronts and to preserve the public support for the campaign. Indeed, Farrell compares the 1950s campaign to the campaign that took place during the Second World War and notes that it “won a remarkable degree of public support both North and South of the border”.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, this campaign was limited to military targets, so as to support the political stance defended during it. Hence, “North’s most vulnerable points”, such as industrial, commercial and administrative complexes, were not attacked.

Even though the IRA managed to gain support from the population, the campaign was not successful. Internment was used by the two Irish governments to deal with terrorist groups, and by the beginning of the 1960s, the IRA had to declare a truce. The campaign was officially ended in 1962. However, Farrell considers that it was adjourned, and not resolved.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, other issues than the partition were to be dealt with during the beginning of the 1960s. The Northern Irish population demanded a discussion on economic matters, as unemployment rose and the economy stagnated. The Prime Minister was then Lord Brookeborough. He had been at the head of the UUP - and so of the Stormont government - since 1943 and would remain in office until 1963. However, there were changes in the composition of the parliament. Because of the IRA campaign, the republicans lost a considerable amount of votes and had to retreat in Catholic areas. The Labour Party was divided by the partition issue. However, the Northern Irish Labour Party (NILP) took a stance on the issue and supported it, which enabled them to maintain unity. In 1958, they won four seats in Stormont.¹⁴² Farrell considers that this steady rise of popularity for the NILP was an indication that economic issues were to play a more important part in Northern Irish politics during the 1960s.

Still, social issues were pressing. The Catholic community still felt alienated by the Stormont government and sectarian clashes took place during the 1960s. The four acts we have

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Farrell, Michael. *Op.cit*, p.202.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid*, p.203.

studied in the first part¹⁴³ were still implemented. In 1952, one year after the passing of the Public Order Act, which forbade demonstrations that challenged the authority of Stormont, a rally led by the APL in Derry was baton-charged by the RUC. The attack was simultaneous with the flying of the tricolour flag. The crowd answered by besieging and stoning the Victoria RUC Barracks. Baton-charges were repeatedly made by the RUC in the centre of the city. At night, there were clashes between the RUC Commandos and youth from the Catholic ghetto of the Bogside. To Farrell, this was the “most violent clash in Derry since the 1920s”.¹⁴⁴

The situation was tense. Facing this context, APL MPs such as Eddie McAteer promoted non-cooperation and non-violence to face social injustice. Other MPs undertaken more radical political agendas. Liam Kelly of Pomeroy is mentioned by Farrell as an example. He was expelled from the IRA in 1951 and created *Saor Uladh*¹⁴⁵, an armed organisation in which were enrolled most of the County Tyrone members of the IRA. He was elected in Stormont as an abstentionist, but would be arrested a month after the 1953 GE. The agenda of Kelly was to accept the 1937 Southern Irish constitution. This constitution established the authority of the *Dáil* on all provinces of Ireland, and by recognising it, Kelly also denounced and rejected the authority of the Stormont and Westminster parliaments. The response of the unionists to the activity of the republicans was repressive and violent. The Flags and Emblems Act (1954) alienated the nationalist community and outlawed the tricolour flag. However, the international attention the APL had succeeded to bring on the enactments of the Stormont government caused division amongst the unionist ranks. In fact, “[the unionist government] weren’t tough enough for some of their supporters”.¹⁴⁶

3. The O’Neill Years and the suspension of the devolved parliament

In the introduction, it was said that the pattern established by the unionists was challenged by the election of Terence O’Neill. He was indeed the very first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland to express the will to include the Catholic community in Northern Irish society. He declared: “my principal aims are to make Northern Ireland prosperous and to build bridges between the two traditions”.¹⁴⁷ Two elements demonstrated the dedication of the Prime Minister to this agenda. First, the Southern connections of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions was recognised by Stormont. As most Northern workers were affiliated to it, it facilitated the reaching of O’Neill’s aims and

¹⁴³ Special Powers Act (1922), Method of Voting Act (1929), Flags and Emblems Act (1954), Public Order Act (1951)

¹⁴⁴ Farrell, Michael. *Op.cit.*, p.202.

¹⁴⁵ “Free Ulster” in Gaelic

¹⁴⁶ Farrell, Michael. *Op.cit.* p.207.

¹⁴⁷ O’Neill, Terence. *Ulster at the Crossroads*. Faber, London. 1969, p.23.

ensured greater independence to Northern committees. Then, the meeting between O'Neill and Sean Lemass, then President of the Republic of Ireland, appeased the relation between the northern and the southern governments. The meeting took place in 1965 and at the issue of it, the nationalist party had agreed to be the official opposition in Stormont. However, the mandate of O'Neill was not a success.

O'Neill had put a great emphasis on economic and social issues. By doing so, the Prime Minister aimed at gaining support from the working classes, which had turned to the NILP.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, he was willing to legitimise the authority of the government to the Catholic-nationalist population by acknowledging the issues they were experiencing. Hence, the objective of O'Neill to appease the province was meant to be reached through social and economic changes, for they would lower sectarian confrontations. However, O'Neill failed to "translate its intentions into practice [and] caused considerable frustration and resentment".¹⁴⁹ Indeed, the economic changes undertaken by his cabinet focused on industrial activity in Belfast. Hence, the nationalists considered that the Eastern part of the province was once again privileged, the expense of the Western part, in which most of the Catholic population lived. Other elements accentuated the feeling of prejudice amongst the Catholic-nationalist population, such as the closure of the main train link to Derry, the establishment of a new university in Coleraine. Symbolic is of the highest importance in Northern Ireland. Hence, favouring the establishment of a university in a mainly Protestant city rather than in Derry-Londonderry, a city in which a majority of Catholics lived, was seen as another form of prejudice. Then, the creation of a city meant to be called 'Craigavon', after Lord Craigavon, former Prime Minister of Northern Ireland and responsible for the passing of the Method of Voting Act, of the Special Powers Act, amongst others, was criticised by the nationalist opposition.¹⁵⁰

John Darby considers that the optimism demonstrated by the 1950-1960s years triggered no real change of attitude. The author of *Northern Ireland: the Background to the Conflicts* indeed alludes to the incident of 1964, in West Belfast. Because of the tricolour present in Lian McMillan's headquarters, in Divis Street, with the mythologies present in Ulster, and which led to a riot.

Moderate values in Ulster have their mythology, just as extremist values; and, like all mythologies, they ignore those pointers which challenged the popular view of the tolerant sixties. The traditional Ulster values, which would have been threatened by reconciliation, may have been in temporary hiding, but they soon emerged with banners flying. Indeed the

¹⁴⁸ Gillespie, Gordon. "Northern Ireland 1963-1998". *Irish History Live*.

¹⁴⁹ Darby, John. "The Historical Background" in *Northern Ireland: the Background to the Conflict*. The Appletree Press Ltd, Belfast. 1983, p.25.

¹⁵⁰ Gillespie, Gordon. "Northern Ireland 1963-1998" *Irish History Live*.

flying of a banner and an attempt to remove it - in this case a tricolour in the Divis Street headquarters of Liam McMillan, the Republican candidate for West Belfast-provoked a riot in 1964, when liberal mythology had republicanism had republicanism at its lowest ebb.¹⁵¹

Parliamentary representation was once again repressed. In March 1967, the republican Clubs, the new hope of republican representation in parliament was declared illegal. According to Darby, it was “a move which seemed narrow and repressive to many people who did not share republican views”.¹⁵² To some Catholics, the lack of changes within the Unionist party was due to its very conservatist nature. They considered O’Neill’s efforts vain for it was its core that needed to be changed. Pressure had to be applied and it was carried on through the housing allocation issues. However, Gillespie Gordon brings another view on this matter. The author highlights the internal division of the UUP due to O’Neill’s management of social issues. In fact, the meeting with Sean Lemass alluded to above was made without the concentration of the cabinet, and caused discussion within the party of the PM. Hence, the improvement of the UUP position towards the Labour Party was made at the expense of “opening up divisions within O’Neill’s own party”.¹⁵³

The UUP was divided by O’Neill’s management of external relations, and Unionism was growing out of confidence in the objectives of the Prime Minister. Within the ranks of the UUP, two major elements expressed their disapproval towards the policies of O’Neill, Brian Faulkner and William Craig. There was one specific policy that was responsible for the division of the UUP. Facing the escalation of violence and the growing of influence of the Civil Rights Movements, The PM was willing to replace the local government election system, which was studied earlier. This system had been set up by the unionist government and was meant to provide it with a control of the constituencies. However, O’Neill faced the unionists as he introduced this measure. This change of voting system was part of a five-points reform package. The five-points package will be studied in depth later in this part. To deal with the wave of protest against the agenda of the PM coming from the unionists, O’Neill called for a general election in 1969. 39 unionists were elected, including 24 official unionists, 3 unofficial unionists supporting O’Neill, 10 official unionists openly anti-O’Neill and 2 who remained neutral.¹⁵⁴ It must be noted that most of the unionists who spoke out against O’Neill were coming from border constituencies and from working-class areas in Belfast, hence were more inclined to defend the Union. All in all, the unionists remained head of the government but O’Neill was no longer legitimate. One of the most virulent opponents to

¹⁵¹ Darby, John. “The Historical Background” in *Northern Ireland: the Background to the Conflict*. The Appletree Press Ltd, Belfast. 1983, p.25.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ Gillespie, Gordon. “Northern Ireland 1963-1998”. *Irish History Live*.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

O'Neill within the unionist movement was the infamous Ian Paisley. He was a Presbyterian reverend openly opposed to the integration of Catholic-nationalists in the Northern Irish society for he considered that it "worked to undermine the very purpose of Protestantism".¹⁵⁵

The unionist dispute over the extent of the social reforms triggered civil unrest in an unprecedented level. As Gillespie Gordon puts it, "what had initially begun as an intra-unionist dispute over the degree of reform which was required in Northern Ireland gradually began to deteriorate into an overtly sectarian confrontation".¹⁵⁶ In 1969, the Battle of the Bogside, caused by the a march of the Apprentice Boys in Derry-Londonderry, eventually led to the intervention of the army, as the police forces were overrun by the situation. Then, sectarian and communal violence spread to Belfast, where a curfew was established. The Troubles had begun. With it, paramilitary groups emerged in both the Catholic and Protestant communities. Earlier in the 1960s, the IRA had been divided in Southern and Northern based bodies. The Northern body was known as the Provisional IRA, or the Provos. During the 1970s, a campaign was launched in Northern Ireland by the Provisional IRA, its purpose was to destroy Northern Ireland's economy.¹⁵⁷ However, the Official IRA, based in the South, remained dedicated to military and political targets. There was an open clash between th IRA and the British Army. Internment was then exploited since it had been made legal in 1971 and the political prisoners were kept in camps built on an RAF airfield near Lisburn. Farrell goes as far as comparing the camp to a German concentration camp.¹⁵⁸ Protestant-unionist paramilitary groups had developed as well. Gillespie openly criticised the sectarian approach of those groups, who aimed at "terrorising the terrorists",¹⁵⁹ and which indeed was a policy enabling them to harass and attack the Catholic community with no distinction.

The internment measure triggered the suspension of the devolved parliament. In fact, it was introduced as both Stormont and the security forces were overrun by the situation in 1971. In January 1972, a pacific demonstration protesting against internment in Londonderry was brutally repressed by the police forces. This day is remembered as the Bloody Sunday. Still, pressure was made on the Stormont government to remain in control of security in Northern Ireland. Faulkner, who had succeeded to O'Neill in 1971, was under pressure from the right "a Unionist Party thirsting for blood and daily demanding more extreme repression would never agree to surrender control of security".¹⁶⁰ Still, Faulkner was to be the last Prime Minister of Northern Ireland. Bloody

¹⁵⁵ Gillespie, Gordon. "Northern Ireland 1963-1998". *Irish History Live*.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ Farrell, Michael. *Op.cit.*, p.286.

¹⁵⁹ Gillespie, Gordon. "Northern Ireland 1963-1998". *Irish History Live*.

¹⁶⁰ Farrell, Michael. *Op.cit.*, p.290.

Sunday had been the dramatic event that persuaded the British government that Stormont was unable to deal with the paramilitary groups and to provide the social movements with a decent response. Hence, the governing of Northern Ireland was modified; the Stormont parliament was suspended after resignation of the cabinet of Faulkner in March 1972, and a Secretary of State for Northern Ireland would represent the Executive authority in the province. With the announcement of the resignation of Faulkner as Northern Ireland PM, William Whitelaw was named Secretary of State. To Farrell, this demonstrated that “the threat to take over Stormont’s security powers was only a way to precipitate the crisis”.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, p.291.

B. The Civil Rights Movement

The Civil Rights Movement appeared in the 1960s as a challenge to the unionist government, which had been in power since the partition of Ireland in the 1920s. Greatly inspired from the Afro-American Civil Rights Movement, which had been created in the 1950s and demanded the abolishment of segregation, the Northern Irish CRM aimed at suppressing the social cleavage existing in Northern Ireland. In fact, establishing a more fair local and general legislative system, as well as at the development of a more fair housing system. The CRM differs from any other Northern Irish political movement as it does not take into consideration the issue of partition. nationalist parts of the movement did - it was not homogeneous - but the purpose of the CRM was not to abolish partition.

In the study of sports in the Northern Irish society, the scrutinising of the CRM, of its goals, and of the response of the unionist government allows us to understand the extent of the ethnonational conflict taking place in Northern Ireland. Furthermore, it will enable us to determine whether or not the IFA and the GAA took a stance during the period of the Troubles, as well as during the peace process that took place at the end of the 20th century. Furthermore, we will try and link the progressive acceptance of the partition by the population when it comes to political issues and the influence of the partition on sports.

1. Definition of an ethnonational conflict

In this subpart, most of the development is based on the book *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*. As an introduction to their book, Lorenzo de Bosi and Gianluca De Fazio present the Troubles. They quote a series of numbers, out of the 3530 victims, 1840 civilians were killed and 47,500 people injured.¹⁶² With those numbers, the authors explicit the consequences of the conflict that took place in Northern Ireland from the 1960s until the end of the 1990s. Bosi and De Fazio seem to state that those consequences are not to be discussed. However, the trajectory that led to those dreadful numbers needs to be understood. The Troubles have been the subject of numerous studies, in this book, de Fazio and Bozi aim at expliciting the status of Northern Irish society through the study of social movements. The ambition of the two authors is to “challenge the exceptional character that has been often attributed to this conflict in the past”.¹⁶³ Moreover, they do not limit their development to Northern Ireland. Social movements

¹⁶²Bosi, Lorenzo, and Gianluca De Fazio. ‘Contextualizing the Troubles: Investigating Deeply Divided Societies through Social Movements Research’. *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, edited by Lorenzo Bosi and Gianluca De Fazio. Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press. 2017, p.11.

¹⁶³ Bosi, Lorenzo, and Gianluca De Fazio. *Op.cit.*, p.11.

from the United States are compared to the Northern Irish social movements. It must be reminded that the Civil Rights Movement of Northern Ireland was greatly influenced from the Afro-American civil rights movement. De Fazio and Bosi are specialised in the study of social movements. Bosi indeed worked on political and historical sociology as well as social movements and political violence. De Fazio is a PhD in Sociology and specialised in the study of political violence in Northern Ireland and lynching in the South of the United States of America. Furthermore, the ethnonationalist feature of the conflict in Northern Ireland is presented as an important field of study in this book. More specifically, the authors aim at demonstrating that Northern Ireland is a deeply divided society. Bosi and De Fazio note that there is a surprising lack of documentation on the study of deeply divided societies in the case of ethnonationalist conflicts. In fact, the study of “stable”¹⁶⁴ democracies was favored over the study of troubled and unstable societies. In this dissertation, studying the features of Northern Ireland will help us depict its division before studying the activity of sport associations. This goal will be reached with a sociological study and a study of the political activity.

In the very first chapter of *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, De Fazio and Bosi define the division that take place in societies. This definition has already been exploited in the first part of this dissertation, but it is important to use it again here. It is just as necessary to have it in mind in this part of the dissertation as before. As was said before, all societies suffer from divisions. Ethnicity, race, religion and class are elements that trigger conflict when put in opposition. The division in question tends to evolve, and so does its intensity of “resiliency and politicization”.¹⁶⁵ The variation of intensity fluctuate because of the historical and geographical context. In deeply divided societies, the variation of politicisation and of cleavage are not pacified. In the first part, we have put a great emphasis on the role of the government in this case. Indeed, there exists a “widespread belief that the state is actively taking the side of one of the parts in the conflict”¹⁶⁶ in deeply divided societies. The two consequences to this are the questioning of the legitimacy of the state - which we have demonstrated as existing during the 1920-1950 period - as well as the formation of a “dominant group”.¹⁶⁷

The prejudiced management of the legislative system by the unionists has already been proven and studied in part I.B.1. However, let us quote Nordlinger on the issue of the state apparatus: “subcultural divisions based on antagonized sociopolitical cleavages lead to regimes

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ Bosi, Lorenzo, and Gianluca De Fazio. *Op.cit.*, p.11.

lacking full legitimacy, a propensity to widespread political violence, and state repression”.¹⁶⁸ In De Fazio and Bosi’s work, Northern Ireland is compared with other deeply divided societies such as Cyprus, Israel, South Africa and so on. Then, a series of questions are raised: “How does non-violent mobilisation emerge and persist in deeply divided societies? What are the trajectories of participation in violent groups in these societies?”.¹⁶⁹

First, De Fazio and Bosi define ethnonationalism and the study of social movements. This subpart aims at explicating the method employed by the authors and at differentiating it from the already-existing documentation. Ethnonationalism and deeply divided studies are intertwined, since conflicts existing in such societies revolve around ethnic or national issues. “The ethnonationalism approach argues that, when in a single territory competing ethnic communities ‘want their state to be ruled by their nation, or [...] want what they perceive as ‘their’ state to protect their nation’, ethnonational conflict is likely”.¹⁷⁰ However, such a vision of the entities that constitute a divided society is criticised by the authors. They consider that it lacks nuances and defines ethnic communities as monolithic collective actors, responding only to environmental stimuli. De Fazio and Bosi highlight the importance of studying the steps that lead to the final escalation of violence, hence including the reasons - *how* - and the context - *when*. They also take into account the pre-existing conditions for ethnic contention. Indeed, the documentation mentioned and criticised by the authors focused mainly on the latter point.

Bosi and De Fazio then highlight the necessity of studying the episodes of ethnic conflict and violence. It will enable us to have a better understanding over the “outbreak and trajectory of the Troubles in Northern Ireland”.¹⁷¹ To reach such an objective, historical processes, popular mobilisation and state reactions ought to be studied. Tilly demonstrates that “[it] is through these collective processes that certain social boundaries and identities can be created and/or activated and transformed, leading conflict and political violence to be framed as ethnic (or ethnonational)”.¹⁷² Applying this theory to the case of Northern Ireland, the controversy regarding the foundation of the state and the discourse of the civil rights movement towards the unionist government demonstrate that salient categories existed in the state. For the authors, it shows the organising principle of Northern Ireland as well. Furthermore, the magnification of ethnonational

¹⁶⁸ Nordlinger, Eric. *Conflict Regulation in Divided Societies*. MA: Harvard University Press, 1972.

¹⁶⁹ Bosi, Lorenzo, and Gianluca De Fazio. *Op.cit.*, p.12.

¹⁷⁰ McGarry, John, and Brendan O’Leary. *Explaining Northern Ireland: Broken Images*. London, Wiley. 1995, p.354. Quoted in Bosi, Lorenzo, and Gianluca De Fazio. ‘Contextualizing the Troubles: Investigating Deeply Divided Societies through Social Movements Research’ p.12.

¹⁷¹ Bosi, Lorenzo, and Gianluca De Fazio. *Op.cit.*, p.13.

¹⁷² Tilly, Charles. ‘Social Boundary Mechanisms’. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, vol. 34, no. 2, 2004, pp. 211–36.

identities broadened the gap between the Catholic-nationalist and the Protestant-unionist communities. It is also added that the transition from political conflict to political violence is by no means natural, and the transition from political demonstration to political violence must be taken into account and studied.

2. Studying the goals of the Civil Rights Movement

Now that we have depicted the objectives of *Northern Ireland and the Troubles* and defined what is an ethnonational conflict, let us study the documentation existing on the Civil Rights Movement. To do so, we will exploit Niall Ó Dochartaigh's chapter De Fazio and Bosi's book, entitled "What did the Civil Rights Movement Want?".¹⁷³ Dr Ó Dochartaigh wrote a thesis on the origins of the civil rights movement and the conflict in the 1950s and 1960s. It was published as *From Civil rights to Armalites*.¹⁷⁴ The chapter "What did the Civil Rights Movement Want?" is introduced with a brief presentation of the existing documentation on the agenda of the CRM. Following the statement of Ó Dochartaigh, early studies presented peaceful protests and armed conflicts as two distinctive elements. It led to the study of stable democratic societies only. Hence, such cases as Northern Ireland were not studied in the first place. However, the situation has evolved. Over the last two decades the protest-political violence distinction was challenged. The publication entitled *Social Movements, Political Violence and the State*, discussed the transition from protest to violence in 1970s Germany and Italy.¹⁷⁵ It highlighted the link between protest and political violence, which was first made explicit by Robert White. His paper focuses on the organisation and on the motivations of the Provisional IRA.¹⁷⁶ Ó Dochartaigh also cites other researchers so as to show that an important and credible documentation is already available on the issue of protest and political violence in Ireland. McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly are hence cited.¹⁷⁷ There is a growing interest in the links between "protest and subsequent outbreaks of violence, persistence of peaceful protest tactics alongside the use of violence, and the important continuities in terms of social relations and political dynamics".¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ Ó Dochartaigh, Niall. 'What Did the Civil Rights Movement Want?' *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, Amsterdam University Press, 2017, pp. 33–53.

¹⁷⁴ O Dochartaigh, Niall. *From Civil Rights to Armalites: Derry and the birth of the Irish Troubles*. 2005.

¹⁷⁵ Della Porta, D. *Social Movements, Political Violence and the State*. Cambridge University Press, 1995.

¹⁷⁶ White, Robert. 'From Peaceful Protest to Guerrilla War: Micro-Mobilization of the Provisional Irish Republican Army'. *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 94, no. 6, 1989, pp. 1277–302.

¹⁷⁷ Quoted in Bosi and De Fazio. 'Contextualizing the Troubles: Investigating Deeply Divided Societies through Social Movements Research'. *Op. Cit.*: McAdam, Doug, et al. *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2001 & Tilly, Charles, and Sidney Tarrow. *Contentious Politics*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

¹⁷⁸ Ó Dochartaigh, Niall. 'What Did the Civil Rights Movement Want?' *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, Amsterdam University Press, 2017, p. 33.

Still, Ó Dochartaigh criticises the consistent distinction that is made between protests and political violence. The criticism concerns the idea that the aim and goals of the protests and of political violence differ. In fact, the works quoted before illustrate the protests as evolving within the system and its structure, whereas political violence happens outside of it and is characterised by its radicalism. Hence, when protests ask for the improvement of grievances, political violence claims constitutional changes. In the case of Northern Ireland and of its Civil Rights Movement (CRM), the demand concerned housing, the franchise and employment discrimination. Concerning the Provisional IRA, the claim concerned the unification of Ireland, which implied the withdrawal of the British government from Irish politics. Ó Dochartaigh considers that such a politically involved and violent group as the IRA might have emerged in a context of pacific protest, but does not represent a continuity of the aims of the CRM, rather a radical break from it.

In the context of the study of sports in Northern Ireland, it is important that the political and social aims of the IRA and of the CRM are taken into account. Those elements are needed for the better understanding of the political activity. Finally, studying the link and continuities existing between the CRM and the IRA are helpful to grasp the relationship existing within the opposition to the ruling party and to the government itself. It will help us have a better understanding of the constitutional question and of its evolution. Furthermore, it will help us understand the relationship existing between the ruling political party, the UUP, and the different bodies representing its broad opposition.

Ó Dochartaigh introduces his development through the perspective of the government by asking questions such as “What would satisfy the protestors? What would bring an end to the agitation and restore order and stability?”.¹⁷⁹ Such questions were indeed asked as the movement reached its peak in 1969, after few goals were secured and as the movement got more and more linked with rioting taking place in parallel to the protests. In fact, soon after the November 1968 reforms,¹⁸⁰ the situation changed for the CRM. Even after obtaining a positive answer from the Prime Minister, the protests were not stopped. This led to the criticism of the movement by the Independent Unionists, who considered that such protests were no longer legitimate. Then, with the deployment of British troops, the involvement of Westminster in Northern Irish internal affairs and the re-emergence of the IRA, the CRM lost the support of the government, which considered as well that its demands had been met.

¹⁷⁹ Ó Dochartaigh, Niall. ‘What Did the Civil Rights Movement Want?’ *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, Amsterdam University Press, 2017, p. 35.

¹⁸⁰ A five point plan had been announced by Prime Minister Terence O’Neill to answer to the housing and electoral law demand of the CRM.

The Provisional IRA justified its armed campaign by criticising the CRM and stating that its demands were contained in the structure of the system. Since the republicans considered that such a system would not allow democracy and equal rights, the demands of the CRM would not be met, and if met, would be contained in a repressive state. The repression of the CRM was exploited to justify the use of force. Furthermore, the bad timing of the government in answering the movement, the lack of consistency of its answer and the deployment of troops were illustrations of the repression and of the sectarianism of the state for the republicans. Ó Dochartaigh then draws two different views on the situation. That of the Liberal Unionists and British ministers, who expressed their regrets to reach such a situation, and that of the republicans, who exploited the repression to demonstrate the flouting of civil liberties. As a conclusion, the anti-internment marches that took place in 1971-72 are said by the author to be a continuity of the early civil rights mobilisation. Hence, he draws the first continuity between the CRM and the IRA arguments. As a duty of remembrance, Ó Dochartaigh mentions the dramatic apotheosis of those anti-internment NICRA-led marches which resulted in the death of thirteen civilians in Derry, killed by British soldiers.

After studying the legitimacy of the goals of the CRM, Ó Dochartaigh draws the attention on its opponents. The author claims that, at first, the British government and the Liberal Unionists Party were sympathetic to the initial goals of the movements. However, the limits of their sympathy for it are to be found in the violence that followed the civil rights agenda. Ó Dochartaigh then studies further opposition to it, which was coming from the loyalists. The violence that took place following the protests led to associations such as the slogan “IRA=CRA”.¹⁸¹ In fact, the unionist right-wingers perceived the CRM as a way for the IRA to act in some sort of security. Hence, Clifford Smyth, former DUP MP is quoted as follows: “the civil rights movement was seen as a Trojan horse or stalking horse for Republicanism”.¹⁸² The right-wing unionists considered that the CRM was a direct threat to the unionist government. The violence that followed the protests was a confirmation of their fears and they exploited it as an argument to demonstrate the “insincerity”¹⁸³ of the movement. Once again, Ó Dochartaigh is able to make connection between the two edges of politics in Northern Ireland - that is to say between right-wing unionists, strongly

¹⁸¹ Ó Dochartaigh, Niall. ‘What Did the Civil Rights Movement Want?’ *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, Amsterdam University Press, 2017, p. 36.

¹⁸² Maney, Gregory M. ‘From Civil War to Civil Rights and Back Again: The Interrelation of Rebellion and Protest in Northern Ireland, 1955-1972’. *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, edited by Patrick G Coy, vol. 27, 2007, p.22.

¹⁸³ Ó Dochartaigh, Niall. ‘What Did the Civil Rights Movement Want?’ *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, Amsterdam University Press, 2017, p. 36.

loyalists, and left-wing radicals, who were republicans. In fact, Eamonn McCann is quoted to demonstrate that the eventuality of a violent takeover of the government by the republicans and by the CRM would only be possible after the radicalisation of the people, which would be provoked by the repressive answer of the state towards protests.¹⁸⁴ Here, the author presents those contrasting and radical opinions to open the way for “subsequent academic debate”.¹⁸⁵

The demands of the CRM are then studied, and compared with the external perception for the CRM goals. In fact, it was identified with the end to discrimination in housing and employment, as well as with the reform of the franchise. The goals of the movement were expressed as such in the constitution of the Northern Irish Civil Rights Association (NICRA):

- (1) To defend the basic freedoms of all citizens.
- (2) To protect the rights of the individual.
- (3) To highlight all possible abuses of power.
- (4) To demand guarantees for freedom of speech, assembly and association.
- (5) To inform the public of their lawful rights.¹⁸⁶

Ó Dochartaigh notes that the absence of the word discrimination is surprising. He also notes that the explicit allusion to repression against the freedom of speech was expressed early in the demands of the movement. Hence, it proves the repression of the state before the escalation of violence. It also permits the author to introduce the importance of protests as a continuity of the motivations of the civil rights movement.

The unionist government understood that the maintenance of their authority in the parliament was closely linked to the order in the streets. History proved them right twice. First, when they exploited the Special Powers Act, which enabled internment and the ban on marches and assemblies, and second, when the Troubles reached their peak and led to the end of Stormont, in 1972. Hence, the republican and nationalist opposition had no room for expression, either in parliament or in the streets. Here, Ó Dochartaigh cites two marches. The first, which took place in Derry city centre in 1952, was violently repressed by the baton charge of the RUC. It is exploited here to demonstrate that violent repression of marches and of public demonstrations took place years before the beginning of the Troubles. The second date marks the beginning of the conflict. In 1968, a march to defy the ban was violently dispersed in Derry.

Ó Dochartaigh then focuses on the repression of republican and nationalist parades, so as to demonstrate the political aspect of the repression. Amongst them, the annual parades celebrating Easter, which were banned. In 1967, the centenary celebration of the Fenian Rising was also

¹⁸⁴ McCann, Eamonn. *War and an Irish Town*. London: Pluto, 1993.

¹⁸⁵ Ó Dochartaigh, Niall. ‘What Did the Civil Rights Movement Want?’ *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, Amsterdam University Press, 2017, p. 36.

¹⁸⁶ Purdie, Bob. *Politics in the Streets: The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland*. Belfast, Blackstaff Press. 1990, 133.

banned by Stormont.¹⁸⁷ The methods employed by the government was understood by the Northern Irish Civil Rights Association and their criticism of it was expressed in 1968: “a ban on demonstrations was an effective government weapon against political protest”.¹⁸⁸ Ó Dochartaigh demonstrates the importance of defying such bans for the NICRA as an extent of the freedom of expression and of protests.

From 1968 on, the central mobilising issue became the struggle against state repression. In fact, it was this issue that increased the number of activists, as not so many joined the ranks of the civil rights movement when the main concern was discrimination and the franchise. It was the conflictual relationship between the state and the Northern Irish minority that generated “mass mobilisation”¹⁸⁹ as it generated “moral outrage”¹⁹⁰ and people were hit by it in a much more direct way than with housing and employment discrimination and the franchise. 1968 marks the beginning of the Troubles. It also displays the failures of the government - to maintain order, reform security forces and the militarisation of policing. It also marked the beginning of the IRA campaign. The state repression issue was now at the heart of political debate in Northern Ireland. Such a debate, however, had to be led in a certain place: the parliament. Ó Dochartaigh uses this fact as a transition towards the second continuity of the civil rights movement: the institutionalisation of the opposition. So do we, as this dissertation aims at highlighting the importance of representation.

3. Organising the Civil Rights Movement

Ó Dochartaigh presents the civil rights movement as composed of a variety of elements, whose strategic objectives and ideologies differed. However, the author unites them in a common objective: that of putting an end on the “Unionist party’s 50-year monopoly”.¹⁹¹ This goal was not limited to the sectarian frontiers existing in Northern Irish politics and society. In fact, any political body opposed to the unionist government was included in the civil rights movement because of this goal. It is in this point that we can find the second continuity of the movement: putting an end on the UUP monopoly so as to reach social reform. The author then contemplates the possibility

¹⁸⁷ Purdie, Bob. *Politics in the Streets: The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland*. Belfast, Blackstaff Press. 1990, p.134.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p.135.

¹⁸⁹ Ó Dochartaigh, Niall. ‘What Did the Civil Rights Movement Want?’ *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam. 2017, p. 42.

¹⁹⁰ Wood, Elisabeth. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. Cambridge University Press, New York. 2003.

¹⁹¹ Ó Dochartaigh, Niall. ‘What Did the Civil Rights Movement Want?’ *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam. 2017, p. 42.

of an association between all anti-unionist elements in an electoral coalition. Such a vision was indeed expressed by some Marxist republicans. It was imagined in such a way that sectarianism would be overruled by the common will of the Protestants and of the Catholics to focus on social issues.

The author then studies the actual association that took place in Northern Ireland and which somehow echoes his contemplation. It occurred between republicans and left-wing activists in Derry. Similarly to the NICRA, the alliance condemned the repression of the freedom of expression by the unionist government. However, it kept a primary concern on the housing and unemployment issue, “they were driven by much more broader goals of social transformation”.¹⁹² Furthermore, an important emphasis was put on the struggle against the Tories. It was particular in the fact that it fought the ‘Green’ as well as the ‘Orange’ Tories. Ó Dochartaigh notes that the ‘Green Tories’ had very little power in Northern Ireland, and that the association was in the end questioning the legitimacy of the government. In this association, the constitutional question was a minor one, and the focus was put on the struggle against the established unionist government.

As the Troubles grew in intensity, each part of the civil rights movement clarified its demands. It must be reminded that after 1969, British troops had been deployed in Northern Ireland to deal with the civil unrest. Local defence committees asked for the withdrawal of those troops in exchange of the removal of the barricades. This demand concerned civil order as well as the ceasing of the systematic repression of the Catholic communities. The SDLP and the Provisional republicans demanded a re-structuration of the government, in order to put an end on the unionist dominance in Stormont. However, Ó Dochartaigh makes a distinction between the SDLP and the republicans as their goals differed. The first asked for a restructuring of the government in order to facilitate Catholic representation within the Northern Irish state, as well as all-Ireland structures. The latter demanded the abolition of Stormont, which was controlled by the unionist, in order to unite Ireland. By doing so, the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland would be part of the all-Ireland Catholic majority. Ó Dochartaigh explains such demands as answers to a critical context. It can be added that more than a continuity, the will to take down the unionist government joins the will to reach self-determination.

In November 1968, because of intense pressure on the Stormont government by the British PM Harold Wilson, a first reform programme was announced. It contained the abolition of Derry Corporation, the end of the franchise restriction and a point system for housing. However, because of the unchanging composition of the Stormont parliament, this reform was not achieved as it

¹⁹² *Ibid*, p.43.

should have been. Ó Dochartaigh considers that it was due to the main threat to the homogeneity of the UUP, which was to be found in the right-wing Unionism. Hence, the programme was announced but its execution was jeopardised. The local authorities supposed to deal with the point system of housing were still managed by the Stormont government. The authority laying in the hands of those same local authorities was also balanced by Stormont. The franchise saw no reform: the local government franchise remained the same and districts with a nationalist majority remained under unionist control. Finally, the changes that were bound to happen were managed by the unionist government, that is to say the re-organisation of boundaries, as well as the extent of local authorities powers. It also remained in its abilities to centralise any power it would like, in order to keep it away from any threatening opposition party. Ó Dochartaigh also adds that there was nothing that would prevent the government from doing so. In fact, Westminster had got involved in Stormont affairs - which should not have happened regarding the documentation that created the Northern Irish state and government - and so would not go any further in it.

By keeping the civil rights movement and its representatives out of the parliament, the unionist government had somehow succeeded to stop them from reaching their goal - that is to say put an end on Stormont and resolve social issues. In fact, McAdam considers that social movements will not represent a threat for an established government as it is not likely to last over the time, and so to integrate the system. Hence, its outsider position weakens it over the time.¹⁹³ Some representatives of the civil rights movement stepped in the parliament in order to “devise some way to overcome the basic powerlessness”¹⁹⁴ of the movement. It was made through the creation of the Social Democratic Labour Party, in 1970. However, as a Bill to outlaw some protest tactics was voted on, their sole voices were far from being sufficient to counter the overwhelming majority of the unionist government. Ó Dochartaigh hence demonstrate that institution had left no room for changes. The constitution of the government and of the parliament were thus to be revised.

Ó Dochartaigh considers that such an answer worsened the situation. The author uses Maney’s argument that slow reforms tend to annihilate moderate elements and emphasise the importance of radical elements.¹⁹⁵ This is to be added to the violent backlash of counter-reform,

¹⁹³ McAdam, Doug. ‘Tactical Innovation and the Pace of Insurgency’. *American Sociological Review*, vol. 48, no. 6, 1983, pp. 735-775.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p.735.

¹⁹⁵ Maney, Gregory M. ‘The Paradox of Reform: The Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland’. *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, edited by Sharon Erickson Nepstad and Lester R Krutz, vol. 34, pp. 3–26.

as depicted in Turner and De Fazio's development.¹⁹⁶ In fact, it intensifies the quickness of the transition from moderate arguments to radical arguments, that is to say from protest to armed action. The author then studies the waves of reforms emitted by Stormont. The first one intensified the restrictions on protest. The second one called for military deployment in the streets in order to answer to the failures of the government. As the author puts it: "their own coercive capacity had been exhausted".¹⁹⁷ Finally, the role of the British government grew in importance. First, a UK representative got in contact with the Stormont government. Police reform was then overwatched by senior British officials. Then, Arthur Young was nominated Chief Constable of the RUC. Finally, communication with the Catholic minority was opened thanks to the consultation of Cardinal Conway, Primate of All-Ireland.¹⁹⁸

Finally, the most ambitious reform programme, which was meant to disarm the RUC, was not carried out as the British government could not intervene in it, because of the loyalist and unionist resistance. Furthermore, the mobilisation of troops of the British army on the Northern Irish soil and in nationalist areas nullified it. Ó Dochartaigh also reminds the reader that the Sunningdale Agreement was never achieved because of the same loyalist and unionist resistance. As a conclusion, the author announces that 30 more years would be necessary before witnessing the institutionalisation of a government allowing the expression of all populations of Northern Ireland.

¹⁹⁶ Turner, Erin-Beth, and Gianluca De Fazio. 'Vacillators or Resisters?' *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, Amsterdam University Press, 2017, pp. 53–70.

¹⁹⁷ Ó Dochartaigh, Niall. 'What Did the Civil Rights Movement Want?' *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, Amsterdam University Press, 2017, p. 46.

¹⁹⁸ Patterson, Henry. 'The British State and the Rise of the IRA, 1969-71: The View from the Conway Hotel'. *Irish Political Studies*, vol. 23, no. 4, 2008, pp. 491–511.

C. Answer of the devolved and centralised governments

The Civil Rights Movement organisation and objectives have been defined. Now, we ought to lean onto the reaction of the centralised and devolved governments to the social movement in question. It will enable us to understand how change was apprehended by the unionist and British governments. Considering the study of sports, we will link the repression of adversary peculiar to the unionist government and the will of the British government to integrate both Northern Irish communities of the British government to their exploitation of sports as an integrative tool. Hence, the purpose of this part is to study and understand the policies of both governments.

1. Vacillators or Resisters ? The unionist government

Let us study Turner Erin-Beth's and De Fazio's chapter "Vacillators or Resisters?".¹⁹⁹ The issue is put under perspective with the following question: "How do authorities respond to social movement tactics, campaigns, and demands?"²⁰⁰ Several researchers tried to answer this question, and the authors of the chapter depict the existing documentation. Early research on the subject tended to focus on the features of the social movements.²⁰¹ Considering the subject studied here - that is to say the response of the authority - the focus was put on the strategies adopted by the government. Turner and De Fazio list those alternatives of the government as follows: "symbolic concession and co-optation to resistance and outright repression".²⁰² They consider that such a study is based on a sole study of the movement variables, that is to say on their depiction of the government's answer.

The field of study which seems to influence the authors the most is the strategic interaction between social movements and systems of authority.²⁰³ Such studies "unpack"²⁰⁴ the process of decision-making in both parties, that is to say social movements as well as the systems of authority. A presentation of Joseph Luders' work is then carried out. In his book *The Civil Rights Movement*

¹⁹⁹ Turner, Erin-Beth, et Gianluca De Fazio. « Vacillators or Resisters? » *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, Amsterdam University Press, 2017, p. 53-70.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p. 53.

²⁰¹ *Ibid*. Here, Turner and De Fazio allude to "the size of protests, the number and type of tactics adopted, the goals and ideologies of protest campaigns etc". p.53

²⁰² *Ibid*.

²⁰³ Quoted as references: Duyvendak, Jan Willem, and James M. Jasper. *Breaking Down The State: Protestors Engaged*. Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2015 & Bosi, Lorenzo, and Katrin Uba. 'Political and Institutional Confrontation'. *Protest Cultures: A Companion*, edited by Kathrin Fahlenbrach et al., 2016, pp. 451-61.

²⁰⁴ Turner, Erin-Beth, and Gianluca De Fazio. 'Vacillators or Resisters?' Amsterdam University Press, London. 2017, p. 53.

and the Logic of Social Change, the author focused on “target action motivation”.²⁰⁵ This piece of work scrutinizes “how to analyse targets’ role”.²⁰⁶ Luder studied the Civil Rights Movement in the United States of America during the 1960s. The main argument of his book is quoted: “social movement success could be predicted by estimating target perception of disruption and concession costs”.²⁰⁷ Luders considers that the study of the demands and of the perception of costs of all parties involved in a social movement issue are helpful to comprehend their reaction. Also, by targeting the demands and the perception of costs through the perspective of each party, one can anticipate its reaction. Those reactions obey to four ideal typical responses. It must be noted that the parties involved in such a matter are the authority, the social movement, and third parties - such as the media and counter-movements.

For the purpose of this article, Turner and De Fazio exploit the equation established by Luders to answer to their question. It is used exclusively on the answer provided by the unionist government to the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland. More specifically, it will be applied to the evolution of Terence O’Neill’s Five-Point Plan. This plan was published in November 1968 in answer to the civil rights movement, as the violence of the Troubles was about to reach its peak. Terence O’Neill was then Prime Minister of Northern Ireland and the plan was meant to answer to the demands of the civil rights movement to solve the issues of unemployment, housing and of the franchise. In the chapter of Turner and De Fazio, fair access to housing and universal suffrage will be the two demands studied so as to “test the empirical validity of the framework”.²⁰⁸

Before getting into the study of the Northern Irish civil rights movement and of the unionist government, Turner and De Fazio put things in perspective. They announce the questioning triggered by the context, place and time of the study. Those theoretical and empirical questions are the following:

[...] was rational cost evaluation the primary mechanism behind target responses in Northern Ireland? In the context of a society riven by an ethnonational divide, are target decisions still mostly based on a conscious calculation of concession and disruption costs? Does the activation of competing ethnonational identities and claims alter the perceptions

²⁰⁵ Turner, Erin-Beth, and Gianluca De Fazio. ‘Vacillators or Resisters?’ Amsterdam University Press, London. 2017, p. 53.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ Luders, Joseph. *The Civil Rights Movement and the Logic of Social Change*. Cambridge University Press, New York. 2010, pp.1-5.

²⁰⁸ Turner, Erin-Beth, and Gianluca De Fazio. ‘Vacillators or Resisters?’ *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*. Amsterdam University Press, London. 2017, p. 54.

of political threats and therefore the ideological/emotional evaluation of concession and disruption costs by various state actors?²⁰⁹

The authors then announce that they intend on broadening the analytic design of Luder as it lacks considerations for issues such as sectarianism, emotional and ideological costs.

Turner and De Fazio then synthesize Luders' idea. They identify the *disruption* and of the *concession costs*, which are said here to be at the origins of target action. Disruption costs are caused by a movement. It can be caused directly or indirectly. Also, the link existing between the disruption costs and the movement is highlighted: "the movement *causes* the costs".²¹⁰ Luders is then quoted to define the concession costs: they are the "actual or anticipated losses resulting from acceding to movement demands".²¹¹ Here, one must take into consideration the degree of vulnerability of the target, as it is the main factor to the concession costs fluctuation. The disruption costs are presented as the amount of leverage of a movement, and are thus variable. In Turner and De Fazio's chapter, a matrix summarizes the interactions between concession costs and disruption costs. It is replicated as follows.²¹²

	Low Concession Costs	High Concession Costs
Low Disruption Costs	Conformers: Target will conform to local customs.	Resisters: Target will offer solid resistance to movement goal.
High Disruption Costs	Accommodators: Target will concede to movement.	Vacillators: Target will oscillate between token concessions, negotiation and repression.

From this matrix we can differentiate four targets evaluation: the Conformers, the Accommodators, the Resisters and the Vacillators. Let us review those targets and identify them in a more accessible way than has been done in the study of Luders' work. First, it is to be clarified that disruption costs are emitted by a movement, and that they challenge the established order and customs. The concession costs, on the other hand, are an anticipation of the costs caused by the change of customs or of order for the established authority. Following Luders' argument,

²⁰⁹ Turner, Erin-Beth, and Gianluca De Fazio. 'Vacillators or Resisters?' Amsterdam University Press, London. 2017, p. 53.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ Luders, Joseph. *The Civil Rights Movement and the Logic of Social Change*. Cambridge University Press, New York. 2010, p.3.

²¹² Turner, Erin-Beth, and Gianluca De Fazio. 'Vacillators or Resisters?' *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*. Amsterdam University Press, London. 2017, p. 55. Adapted from Luders, Joseph. *The Civil Rights Movement and the Logic of Social Change*. Cambridge University Press, New York. 2010, p.5.

depending on the value of both types of costs, four types of reactions can be foreseen. Following this classification of costs, the understanding of Luders' theory is clearer. Theoretically, facing low disruption and low concession costs, a target will conform to local customs and not take into consideration the demands of the movement it faces. In this case, the authority is a conformer group. Second, if the disruption costs are high but the concession costs remain low, the target will concede to movement, as there is little threat to their establishment. Here, the target is an accommodator one. Then, in the case of high concession costs and low disruption costs, the target will remain the same when opposing the movement. Finally, if the disruption costs as well as the concession costs are high, the target will "oscillate between token concessions, negotiation and repression".²¹³

The authors then emit their first criticism of Luders' approach to the decision-making process. In fact, his study seems to lack in the consideration of emotional and ideological contributions to target actions, which were overruled by Luders' will to build a rationale matrix.²¹⁴ To the authors of the chapter studied here, the will of Luders to not exploit emotional and ideological contributions limits the potential of his matrix. In fact, he describes the targets as "not monolithic political or economic structures acting only as the system allows, nor are they 'irrational' actors responding solely to prejudiced beliefs".²¹⁵ Turner and De Fazio quote pieces of work that support their vision of emotions. Those works consider that emotions and ideologies play a major role in social movements decision making.²¹⁶ Jasper is quoted as follows to underline the importance of including emotional and ideological costs to the study of social movements, emotions as described as "a core part of action and decisions, which we analysts ignore at our peril. Actions, whether consciously made as choices or not, come with long lists of potential risks, costs and benefits. We need to include the emotional risks, costs and benefits because these help shape actions and choices".²¹⁷ Furthermore, the authors announce their will to exploit Luders' matrix as well as a study of emotional/ideological costs of actions for state actors. In fact, most of

²¹³ Turner, Erin-Beth, and Gianluca De Fazio. 'Vacillators or Resisters?' *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*. Amsterdam University Press, London. 2017, p. 55. Adapted from Luders, Joseph. *The Civil Rights Movement and the Logic of Social Change*. Cambridge University Press, New York. 2010, p.5.

²¹⁴ Turner, Erin-Beth, and Gianluca De Fazio. 'Vacillators or Resisters?' *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*. Amsterdam University Press, London. 2017, p. 55.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ Goodwin, Jeff, et al. *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 2009 and Flam, Helena, and Debra King. *Emotions and Social Movements*. Routledge, 2008. Oliver, Pamela, and Hank Johnston. 'What a Good Idea! Ideologies and Frames in Social Movement Research'. *Mobilization*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2000, pp. 37–54 and Zald, Mayer. 'Ideologically Structured Action: An Enlarged Agenda for Social Movement Research'. *Mobilization*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2000, pp. 1–16.

²¹⁷ Jasper, James. 'Emotions and Social Movements: Twenty Years of Theory and Research'. *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 37, 2011, p.298.

the works quoted before studied social movement actors. They also consider that they can broaden Luders' approach by including non-rational elements to the study of the decision making process of the unionist government.

Thirdly, Turner and De Fazio study the Five-Points Plan emitted by the government of O'Neill. It was alluded to before, during the historical introduction to the Northern Irish Troubles, and is studied here. This part of this review will enable us to have a better understanding of the decision-making process of the unionist government when facing the civil rights movement demands. Hence, it will clarify the position of the government towards it. It must be said that the authors focus on the housing and on the franchise issues, as they are closely linked.

Non-customary marches and parades in Derry, in November 1968, are then studied. This ban was meant to last a month. At this moment, the Prime Minister was Terence O'Neill. William Craig, Minister of Home Affairs, was responsible for the ban on marches and parades. His decision-making is studied here with the scrutinizing of a meeting between senior RUC officers and government officials. More specifically, the authors aim at separating the influence of the RUC from the passing of the ban. In fact, a chronological evolution of the marches and parades status in Derry-Londonderry shows that the RUC had planned a route for the march, which means that it was to roll out under the surveillance of the RUC, and thus was not meant to be stopped by it. However, Craig answered to such a proposal with letters sent by loyalist groups, which warned him of possible retaliations against the NICRA march. This led to a change of trajectoire for the march. It was then that Craig proposed to ban of procession and meetings. Here, the authors make it clear that this idea was emitted by Craig, and was not suggested by the RUC by quoting the Chief Inspector: "it is clear that the police did not advise you to impose a ban or, indeed, to interfere with the marchers at all".²¹⁸

Turner and De Fazio then go back on a meeting between Stormont and Westminster cabinet members that had taken place on the 4th of November, 1968. It took place before the meeting with the RUC officials, which eventually led to the ban on procession and meetings. During this meeting, Craig praised the Special Powers Act and expressed his fear of an eventual involvement of the IRA in civil rights movement. Linking both elements, he exploited his fear - and so the fear of his counterparts - to justify the constant use of the Special Powers Act. He is quoted as follows:

If circumstances were normal most of the various regulations under the Acts could have been put into cold storage, but, unfortunately, some disquieting news about I.R.A. policy had come to light which gave grounds for thinking that a new campaign of violence might

²¹⁸ Kennedy, A. 1968. Letter from A. Kennedy, Chief Inspector of the RUC, to the Minister of Home Affairs. Belfast, 22 November 1968. HA/32/2/28, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

be mounted [...] Mr Craig gave other details of I.R.A. activities in Northern Ireland to illustrate the need for retaining the Special Powers legislation, which he considered indispensable in present circumstances.²¹⁹

However, such a declaration was not received with hegemony within the Westminster cabinet. Alice Bacon, British Minister of State, Education and Science is quoted as contradicting Craig:

In Great Britain there was today, thanks to the television coverage of the Londonderry Riot, a strong feeling supporting the demand for 'one man - one vote' [...] She had difficulty in understanding Mr. Craig's argument about 'dust bin' functions; if in fact local authorities were to be given such exiguous duties surely there could be no objection to allowing everybody to vote in Council elections.²²⁰

Bacon presents the argument of Craig as inverting the value of the disruption costs and of the concession costs. Franchise for all should be the matter of Craig's focus, instead of putting energy on the ban of marches and of parades. To that argument, the Home Affairs minister considered that local government should be centralised and transferred to Stormont.

The emphasis so far had been of reducing numbers [of local government representatives] but must now be switched to a consideration of the functions which it was proper to ask Local Government to carry out in the future. There were arguments [made by Craig] for transferring the responsibility for some of the more important functions to the Northern Ireland Government leaving local authorities with such minor services as street-lighting and refuse collection.²²¹

Alongside the reducing of local representative numbers, Craig aimed at shortening their authority and power. Craig was completely opposed the 'one man - one vote' demands of the civil rights movement, and he resisted it. Turner and De Fazio sum up his position as opposed to the demands of the civil rights movement, as well as differentiating this demand with ratepayer and company votes, "wherein housing determines voting abilities and landlords are granted more voting power than tenants".

From this study, the authors conclude that Luders' matrix can study the case of Craig only partially. In fact, his position towards the local authority issue fits in the vacillators or even resistor target. However, his firm resistance against the one man - one vote issue falls outside of the classification by Luders. Craig "should be a 'vacillator, yet he consistently embodies a 'resistor', in that his policy initiatives offer durable opposition to [the] movement".²²² Indeed, such a position led to Craig's dismissal as a member of the Cabinet and is not justified by a cost-benefit analysis.

²¹⁹ PRONI. 1968. 'Meeting at 10 Downing Street on 4th November, 1968'. Northern Ireland Information Office. CAB/4/1413, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² Turner, Erin-Beth, and Gianluca De Fazio. 'Vacillators or Resisters?' *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*. Amsterdam University Press, London. 2017, p. 60.

Turner and De Fazio consider that his decision to remain opposed to the civil rights movement demand was caused by ideological issues. They mention Craig's contact with loyalist supporters, which was a direct threat to his political position. Furthermore, his strong loyalism - which meant that he favoured the British state over the Northern Irish state - is also exploited to demonstrate his position. This element also shows the limits of Luders' rational model, for it does not take into consideration the ideological issues and identities. Hence, the influence of the political ideologies of Craig exceeded the importance of the rising disruption costs of the civil rights movement in the making of his decision.

Craig was not the only member of the Cabinet and of parliament who opposed the "one man - one vote" demand. In fact, it implied a profound and radical legislative change. Members of the government are quoted as describing the general context as "duress" and the legislation necessary to the civil rights demand as "most unacceptable".²²³ Indeed, the issues the unionist government faced were hard to resolve. They were facing high concession costs, as the loyalist and unionists would be against the legislative reform. The authors state that it would lead to loyalist counter demonstration and a major loss of electoral power for the Ulster Unionist Party. The disruption costs were also very high, as inaction would worsen the political instability, which would lead to the intervention of Westminster, and so the reduction of power for Stormont. The solution for the unionist government was thus to announce a reform package "that avoided dealing directly with universal suffrage".²²⁴

What defined the concession costs at the time were the ban on marches and parades as well as the franchise question. For each issue, one of the two communities of Northern Ireland was concerned. Lifting the ban on marches would lead to the counter demonstration of the loyalists and not dealing with the legislative issue would provoke further agitation coming from the Catholic-nationalist population. Furthermore, opening the franchise would pave the way for further opposition against the unionist government, as the Catholic minority would have an easier access to parliamentary representation, as well as discontent amongst the loyalists. All in all, a Chief Whip from Stormont government claimed that if no package was announced, internal as well as external agitation and pressure would continue. He also considered that "Roman Catholic votes must be secured if the constitutional position was to be maintained".²²⁵ Facing such volatile

²²³ PRONI. 1968. 'Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet'. 20 November. CA/4/1418, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

²²⁴ Turner, Erin-Beth, and Gianluca De Fazio. 'Vacillators or Resisters?' *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*. Amsterdam University Press, London. 2017, p. 64.

²²⁵ PRONI. 1968. 'Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet'. 20 November. CA/4/1418, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

issues, the government decided to orientate its reform towards less controversial demands of the civil rights movement: housing, unemployment. Those issues were still going to face opposition amongst the loyalists, but it partially answered to the civil rights movement demands, and so would provoke less discontentment from the movement.

After studying the answer of the unionist government, Turner and De Fazio study it by using Luders' matrix. In fact, it is displayed by the parallel ban of the marches and the minor concessions to the civil rights movement. The ban of the marches was a form of repression, since most of the agitation and attention the civil rights movement succeeded to draw on itself was coming from it. And so, it was in those public manifestations that was to be found the main threat to the unionist government. Furthermore, such a repression enabled the government to make concessions to the loyalists. This group also represented a threat to the hegemony of the government, as was demonstrated earlier, and was partly satisfied with the maintaining of the ban. The first minor concession made to the civil rights movement was emitted in 1968, with the Electoral Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1968, for it dealt with the unionist gerrymandering and suppressed the University and Business votes in Stormont elections - the General Elections. Then, the Five-Points Plan included reforms answering to some of the issues denounced by the movement. This plan was composed of minor concessions dealing with housing, local government reforms and the Company vote. Yet, as the "one man - one vote" issue was too high of a concession, it was not even mentioned. As a conclusion to their development, Turner and De Fazio state that thanks to Luders' matrix, the factors that exerted pressure on the unionist government are responsible for the orientation of its decisions.

2. The failure of the Sunningdale Agreement

Since the end of the 1960s, Northern Ireland was going through intense civil unrest. The policy of the unionist government was criticised by the public and internment was condemned. Facing the incapability of the UUP, the British were threatening of intervening in the affairs of the province. In 1972, Stormont was abolished as negotiations were carried to establish a shared-power institution in Northern Ireland. After the suspension of Stormont in 1972, the central government located in London would have to deal with the discontent of the unionist community, and with the virulence of the Loyalists. In fact, the decision of suspending the devolved parliament was strongly contested by the unionist community, and it resulted in the expansion of the Loyalist paramilitary groups, their integration in the unionist and Loyalists 'civil' political movements and the extrapolation of violence in the Northern Irish province. Cochrane studies the transition from the devolved to the centralised government, as well as the reaction of the unionists to the

agreement.²²⁶ Furthermore, the impact of such a decision is approached and the methods of the unionists is tackled. This chapter fits in our developments as it will help us conclude our historical and sociological approach of the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

According to Cochrane, the negotiations that led to the suspension of Stormont were accompanied with a wave of optimism. However, the sectarianism of its society quickly ended it. The discussion between Irish nationalists, the British government and Brian Faulkner - sixth and last PM of Northern Ireland - were criticised by the respective republican paramilitaries and the unionist political parties. Depending on the groups emitting critics, those talks were judged as acts of collaboration or of treason.²²⁷ The author then studies the first decisions of the power-sharing government, in 1974 and questions Faulkner's role in the evolution of the political situation. In January 1974, Faulkner was at the head of the power-sharing government. The ruling party, the Ulster Unionist Council, rejected the proposition of integrating a Council of Ireland, hence cutting short the will of Faulkner to establish dialogue with the Republic of Ireland. Furthermore, it led Faulkner to resign as party leader. In fact, the Loyalists and unionists were willing to express their discontent with the policy undertaken by the British government and Faulkner. Cochrane states that "Unionists opposed to the Executive seized the initiative and provided better photo-opportunities and sound bites than those on the inside".²²⁸ Hence, the author highlights the focus of the newspapers on the agitation carried out by the unionists rather than on the action undertaken by the Executive body, in London.

The Executive body question was "undermined"²²⁹ by the political and social agitation going on in Great Britain. The ongoing economic recession was indeed the priority to the British government. It led to the change of Secretary of State in Northern Ireland as Whitelaw was dismissed from his position. The General Election carried out by Edward Heath in 1974 also led to a change of government, as he failed to be reelected. Harold Wilson, leader of the Labour Party managed to win the GE. Merlyn Rees was then named secretary of State in Northern Ireland. Cochrane states that Rees would have to supervise the application of the power-sharing agreement embodied in the Sunningdale Agreement. However, the Agreement was a failure. As said earlier, the Council of Ireland was never created, and the democratic process established left room for radical and paramilitary organisation, who gained support from the lack of efficiency of the British

²²⁶ Cochrane, Feargal. "Direct Rule and the Growth of Informal Politics 1974-1990". *Northern Ireland: the Reluctant Peace*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut. 2013, pp. 89-120. JSTOR.

²²⁷ *Ibid*, p.89.

²²⁸ Cochrane, Feargal. *Op.cit.*, p.89.

²²⁹ *Ibid*.

strategy and intervention. Furthermore, Faulkner was ousted from the Westminster Parliament. The United Ulster Unionist Council (UUUC) managed to gain eleven of the twelve seats available for the Northern Irish province in Westminster. The UUUC was an umbrella party which hosted political parties such as the DUP and the Vanguard.

In the opinion of Cochrane, 1974 marked the year when centralised parliamentary politics were proven to be inefficient. London, for a number of reasons, had no impact on the Northern Irish day-to-day life and politics, the paramilitary groups were gaining in importance in both communities, and there was no hope of survival for the power-sharing executive. In such a context, the Ulster Workers Council was created. It brought together the DUP, led by Paisley, the Vanguard, led by Craig, radical Protestant trade-unions, business leaders, the Orange Order and the Ulster Defence Association (UDA).²³⁰ The UWC managed to take advantage of the Agreement by adopting a policy of people power. They intended on representing the opinion of the unionist community and to shape the Northern Irish activity to their will. The local executive established in Northern Ireland was then ineffective and the authority of London did not reach the province. Hence, politics were informal, and the UWC managed to be at the top of it. In fact, before the establishment of Direct Rule, tried to demonstrate to the London government that the Northern Irish authority laid in their hands.

To do so, the UWC announced an indefinite and progressive electricity shutdown in Northern Ireland. It was meant to start on the 14th May of 1974. Business had to be shut down and only essential services were to be maintained. Cochrane states that by announcing it, the UWC aimed at claiming the management of the Province. “The UWC was going to show the Wilson government that it (and not the British government) controlled Northern Ireland at a *de facto* level”.²³¹ However, the shutdown did not keep a majority of the Northern Irish population from living their lives, as 90 percent of staffing levels. The newly created party had to threaten and harass business for its declaration to be applied. Civil order was seriously affected by the policy of the UWC, as cars and buses were set to fire and barricades built up. Eventually, the UWC forced the carrying out of the shutdown. By the end of May 1974, “the postal service and the telephone system had all but collapsed; food provision was at a critical level as bakeries had closed, farms were unable to function properly or to feed their livestock”.²³² All in all, the support of a part of the workforce for the UWC and the muscular intervention of the UDA enabled the UWC to claim their authority over Northern Ireland and carry out the strike.

²³⁰ *Ibid*, pp.90-91. JSTOR.

²³¹ Cochrane, Feargal. *Op.cit.*, p.91

²³² *Ibid*, p.92.

The result of this strike was the final abandonment of the Sunningdale Agreement, as unionist and Loyalist political groups had managed to exercise enough pressure on the Executive established by it. Furthermore, the fact that the British did not put the Northern Irish issue at the forefront of their agenda testimonies of the lack of interest the government had for the province. Cochrane partly holds them responsible for the progressive escalation of violence in the province, as their intervention lacked results. Hence, considerable pressure was carried out on the Executive meant to carry out the Sunningdale Agreement. Furthermore, it brought to this dissertation a new perspective at unionist politics and at the way Loyalist paramilitaries were enabled to operate in the broad daylight. There was no improvement whatsoever on a political and social level. Furthermore, the British government failed to act as a centralised government for the province. The failures of Westminster in the governance of Northern Ireland will be the subject of study of the following subpart.

3. Direct rule

In 1974, the pattern established by the unionists had definitely been put to an end. Control was exercised only by the Secretary of State and the British government. As Cochrane mentions, this measure was meant to be temporary. However, just like the partition of Ireland and the intervention of the British army to restore civil order, the temporary measure undertaken by the government was maintained for years. There have been a number of consequences of direct rule. The first studied by Cochrane is parliamentary representation. We have studied in the first part that the Westminster parliament is elected with a First Past the Post Voting System. This voting system favours the development of a two-party parliament, leaving little room to local and minority parties. The issue with representation in Northern Ireland is that none of the main parties of Westminster are present in the province. In other words, the Northern Irish parties present in Westminster could not integrate nor the majority or the official opposition. Hence, parliamentary representation meant very little to the Catholic-nationalist community. The Protestant/Loyalists still considered that the presence of Northern Irish representatives in Westminster enabled the province to exist as an administrative entity. This process has been described as a “democratic deficit”.²³³

In fact, since the beginning of the 1970s, political violence was omnipresent in the Northern Ireland. Facing political violence and a lack of parliamentary representation, local actions were undertaken. The political system being tilt and dislocated, political activism grew. What further

²³³ Cochrane, Feargal. *Op.cit.*, pp.90-91.

alienated the Northern Irish population from the British government and parliament was the constitutional question. After the suspension of Stormont, it rose back as a priority for most of the Northern Irish parties. The policy of pressure undertaken by the unionists in 1974 demonstrated this. All in all, the Northern Irish population suffered from the lack of parliamentary representation, whilst the political parties were maintaining their debate over the constitutional issue. The population got involved in voluntary organisations meant to improve local life.²³⁴

The beginning of the 1970s were troubled years. Loyalist paramilitary groups grew in influence and activity, the IRA campaign was still raging and the political system could only focus on civil order. Roy Mason was then named Secretary of State (SOS) in Northern Ireland. Most of Mason's work in Northern Ireland focused on civil order. The intractable sectarian and paramilitary conflict was to be put to an end, and it was the British government's responsibility to do so. He was particularly effective against the IRA, and he sent SAS troops in rural parts of Northern Ireland.²³⁵ However, the SOS failed to approach political issues and sharing-power initiatives failed. All in all, the IRA had been weakened but the political life in Northern Ireland was still at a deadend. However, the civil organisations we have alluded to before "sowed seeds that would later flower as the peace process evolved in the 1990s".²³⁶ The frustration of an absent political system and of street violence led members of the Northern Irish society to organise themselves life in the province. Even though the actions of those individuals were meant to help the community, sectarianism was still present. Cochrane indeed states that helping one's community might mean getting rid of the other's community, which threatens its own community.

[Individuals] wanted to make a positive contribution to their community and to defend the cultural, political and civil rights of those within it; but some came to the conclusion during the 1970s that the best way of doing this was to kill people in the other community, which they regarded as threatening their interests.²³⁷

With such a statement, Cochrane aims at qualifying his views on civil societies. It also consolidates the thesis expressed earlier considering the nature of the Northern Irish society. It is deeply divided and going through an ethnonational conflict. Hence, all aspects of life are affected by it.

The inspiration for civil organisations are to be found in the civil rights movement and in the "belief in the power of collective group activism".²³⁸ Those non-governmental organisations had a wide range of activities. As we have seen, they did not necessarily go against sectarianism.

²³⁴ *Ibid*, pp.89-120.

²³⁵ Cochrane, Feargal. *Op.cit.*, p.106.

²³⁶ *Ibid*.

²³⁷ *Ibid*, p.107.

²³⁸ *Ibid*.

However, Cochrane highlights the importance they had in the re-construction of the social communities of Northern Ireland. They enabled the communities to cope with the lack of political systems, to deal with social and economic issues and that “grass-roots organizations were harnessing and providing outlets for the informal political energies of the society”.²³⁹ The author’s conclusion on the matter is that grass-roots organisation enabled the creation of a dialogue within society.

Conclusion

The chapter “II. The Troubles: challenging the authority of the unionist government” enabled us to discuss the political activity of Northern Ireland during the 1950-1980 period. By introducing the Troubles with a historical study and completing it with a sociological study, we carried out the purpose of the dissertation. The work of De Fazio and Bosi has been prevailing here, as it is the most concise and precise piece of work available on sociological studies of the Northern Irish Troubles I could lay my hands on. It has been successfully demonstrated that the unionist government was repressive towards any threat to its authority, and that it exploited the fault of the constitutional question to maintain the sectarian cleavage. Up until the 1960s, this issue enabled the government to keep most of its electorate. However, as was said in the introduction, the government of O’Neill disturbed this pattern. The mandate of O’Neill is con a failure, it is hard to consider that it helped improving the situation of the Catholic minority and of those demanding social reform. Still, the pattern was indeed disturbed and it eventually highlighted the failures of the devolved parliament to the British government.

The study of the Troubles focused on the Civil Rights Movement. The objective of this focus was to understand how the unionist government answered to a political entity that was not part of the parliamentary system. Luders’ matrix was exploited to study the answer of Craig, who preceded O’Neill, and it was demonstrated that no concessions were possible for the unionists. This development can be linked to the constitutional issue and to the organisation of Stormont. However, the demands of the CRM were answered to by O’Neill. The main difference between the two PMs was that Craig was aware of the cost of concession as the UUP would fall apart. O’Neill, on the other hand, knew the cost of concessions but had decided to go beyond it. Still, Luders’ matrix is criticised by De Fazio and Turner as it only partially describes the response of the unionist government. Then, we have studied the failures of the Sunningdale Agreement and the influence of the unionist groups in Northern Irish politics. It already had been demonstrated in

²³⁹ *Ibid*, p.108.

the first part of the dissertation. What is demonstrated with the study of this agreement is that the constitutional question was still a matter of the highest importance for the unionists and Loyalists, and that any threat to it was to be repressed. Our study of the Direct Rule has also proven that the Northern Irish question was misjudged by the British government, who thought that it was a security issue. This misjudgement was common to both the Conservative and Labour parties. The acceptance of the Good Friday Agreement in 1994 was made possible by the cooperation of the IRA, of republican parties and of the Irish Republic implication. All in all, the sociological study of the CRM and of the answer of the unionist government has enabled us to define more precisely the Northern Irish society and the ethnonational conflict. The dead ends in which each government found itself in a majority of cases demonstrate the gravity of the ethno-national antagonisms.

Overall, this study enabled us to support the hypothesis made in the first part. It considered that the Northern Irish government was repressive towards cultural and political entities that did not fit in its vision of Ulster and of Northern Ireland. However, the study of the Troubles lacks consistency. We have focused on the political activity at the expense of the paramilitary actions and of the civil unrest that marked the period. Furthermore, the subject of sports in Northern Ireland has not been discussed in this part. Considering the intensity of the political activity in Northern Ireland during the second half of the 20th century, a gradual depiction of its society was favoured here. The historical study made in this part will be helpful to situate the events discussed in the third and fourth parts. In fact, all cultural and political bodies were influenced in some way by the political activity. This will be used in the development of the third and final part of the dissertation. Then, sociological hypothesis will be emitted so as to study the way identities were defended during periods of civil unrest.

III. Shaping football at its image: Protestant masculinity and Unionism

Northern Ireland has been defined as deeply divided and subject to sectarian strife. What was the importance of football association in such a society? The historical context in which the IFA evolved was studied in part II (“The Troubles: challenging the authority of the unionist government”). In this part we will examine how identities were defended in the football fields and tribunes during the Troubles, and what was the impact of politics on football practices. Sports in deeply divided societies have been studied by a number of researchers, and the specific case of Northern Ireland was analysed by authors such as Cronin, Sugden and Bairner. Hence, we will try and follow their path in the progress of our development. In each case, football was highlighted as being the sport that both suffered from (passively) and exacerbated (actively) the most sectarian issues in Northern Ireland. How were identities affirmed in football fields and terraces in the context of the conflict?

The main subject of study will be the tribunes. First, we will study the notion of participation in IFA events and activities. It includes a study of the masculinity defended by the Protestant crowds, the presence of women and of Catholics. In this case, we will focus on the religious identities, rather than on the political identities. Hence, we will study the extent of representation in both the tribunes and on the pitch. The purpose of this subpart is to demonstrate that sectarian violence can influence sports and that sports can exacerbate sectarian issues. Furthermore, the violent, anti-Catholic and sexist features of the Protestant Northern Irish crowds will be demonstrated. We will try and link the progressive expulsion of Catholic-representative football clubs from the Northern Irish League with the way the unionist government shaped the Northern Irish institutions. The study carried out in this part is in the 1940-1998 period. The constitutional question was still matter of debate in Northern Ireland from 1940 until 1950. The social demands of the CRM did not impact much football fields. Rather, it was the defence of one’s identity that was conveyed by soccer fandoms, up until the end of the 20th century.

A. Catholic representation in the IFA

We will focus on the consequences of the sectarian and religious opposition present in Northern Ireland, rather than on the causes of the sectarian division. In other words, we will study the consequence of the clash between two distinct identities, and its consequences on individuals. Numerous physical clashes and rivalries developed between local groups of supporters and this was the reason for the exit of two famous football clubs from the IFA: the Derry City Football Club and the Belfast Celtic FC.

1. Football clubs identified with the Catholic tradition

Mike Cronin criticises the failure of the IFA to include the Catholic community in its league. Furthermore, the author considers that the IFA is organised by a majority of Protestants.²⁴⁰ Cronin reminds us that football was - and still is - very popular in Northern Ireland. Both in the Protestant and in Catholic communities. However, this popularity led to intense rivalry between clubs identified with the two traditions.

When Ireland was partitioned, the three leading teams of Northern Ireland were Belfast Celtic, Linfield - another Belfast club - and Derry City Club. An important rivalry existed between those three clubs. Belfast Celtic and Derry City club were identified with the Catholic tradition, whereas the Linfield was identified with the Protestant tradition. There were two consequences to this rivalry. First, violence during the match was “part of the experience”,²⁴¹ as Cronin puts it. He mentions clashes between supporters that often occurred during football matches. The second consequence is that the opportunity to exploit football as a common and neutral ground for two communities in challenge was lost. Cronin quotes Dominic Murray, who sums up the issue of sectarian clashes during football games:

[...] the more obvious manifestations of cultural life in Northern Ireland are inextricably built into the separated communities. The normal avenues of communication and contact between people which would provide a tendency towards the creation of a single shared culture are closed.²⁴²

Because of the ethnonational feature of the Northern Irish society, which puts any cultural activity in the midst of social torment and clash, peaceful and inclusive participation of the Catholic tradition and of the Protestant tradition in Northern Ireland was not possible. The ethnonational

²⁴⁰ Cronin, Mike. « Catholics and Sport in Northern Ireland: Exclusiveness or Inclusiveness? » *International Sport Studies*, vol. 22, n° 1. 2000, p.34.

²⁴¹ *Ibid*, p.34.

²⁴² Murray, David. « Culture, Religion and Violence in Northern Ireland ». *Facets of the Conflict in Northern Ireland*, par Seamus Dunn. Palgrave MacMillan, London. 1995, p.228.

confrontation taking place in the Northern Irish tribunals was already taking place soon after the establishment of the Northern Irish government. It would last until the end of the 20th century. Its features would not evolve much as the IFA did not prevent it from taking place, and neither the Stormont or the British government intervened to stop it. This confrontation expanded to the British leagues and the support for British football clubs. Members of both tradition follow the Scottish and the Premier League. Northern Irish Catholic football fans are known to be more inclined to support the Celtic Football Club - or Celtic Glasgow - for example. This tendency is explained by the importance of the link between the Irish diaspora and Ireland. The communities of Irish Catholics that have emigrated have settled in communities conveying a strong sense of Irish identity. The Celtic Glasgow has an important Irish fandom or in Ireland because of its Celtic imagery. This process also took place in the United States with the Boston Celtic, a basketball NBA club. On the other hand, Protestant-unionist football fans are less limited in their fandoms of British clubs. In fact, the only limitation they have is determined by sectarian features, as supporting clubs such as the Celtic FC would be the same as supporting a Northern Irish Catholic club.

In Belfast, the rivalry between the Linfield club and the Celtic club began in 1891, after the Belfast Celtic was created. In fact, during the very first match disputed between the two clubs, Belfast Celtic, then a junior team, managed to beat Linfield 1-0. The two clubs were respectively based in West and East Belfast, in other words, in the Catholic and Protestant sides of Belfast. From 1896 on, the Belfast Celtic was part of the senior league and the two Belfast clubs were in a constant struggle for domination of the league. However, due to the 1920s troubles agitating Ireland, the Belfast Celtic had to withdraw from the league twice. First from 1915 until 1918, then from 1920 until 1924. Cronin quotes an incident that took place in the 1919-1920 season that illustrates how tense the situation was. The Celtic was playing against Glentoran, an East Belfast club, and a revolver shot was fired from the Celtic tribunes towards the Glentoran's. As Cronin states, "it was difficult for sporting normality to exist in such a climate".²⁴³ After a few decades back into the league, the Belfast Celtic was turned down by the ultimate blow. In 1949, on Boxing Day, a Linfield-Belfast Celtic game occurred in the Windsor Park ground, the Linfield stadium. The final whistle unleashed unprecedented violence: a riot began and the Linfield crowd attacked the Belfast Celtic players. Jimmy Jones, striker of the Belfast Celtic, suffered from a broken leg that kept him definitely out of the pitch. Team officials were also injured in the burst of violence.

²⁴³ Cronin, Mike. « Catholics and Sport in Northern Ireland: Exclusiveness or Inclusiveness? » *International Sport Studies*, vol. 22, n° 1. 2000, p.36.

Cronin notes the irony of Jones' injury as he was identified with Catholicism and nationalism even though he was a Protestant. This illustrates the consequences of sectarian violence and the lack of perspective caused by it. The consequence for the Celtic club was its definitive withdrawal from senior championship. Cronin describes the club as one of the finest teams - it had won fourteen league championships during the interwar period - and was the best supported team in Northern Ireland.²⁴⁴

Later in the late 1960s, the Derry City experienced a prejudiced treatment that led to its departure from the IFA. Because of the specific location of the home ground in Derry City, the club experienced several problems. Indeed, the Brandywell is located in the heart of the Bogside, the Catholic part of the city, which was already surrounded by security forces during the early 1960s. Indeed, we have studied the Battle of the Bogside, which took place in 1969 between Catholics and the RUC. The British Army was also present there. Hence, the Derry City was unable to host a game in such a troubled location. 'Home' games were then disputed in Coleraine. Eventually, Derry City had to withdraw from the IFA. The nature of the prejudice treatment is described in Cronin's article. He holds responsible the IFA for the lack of support towards Derry City, and considers that the fact that other clubs avoided games against Derry caused the departure of the club. Furthermore, Cronin once again states that the IFA was led by a majority of Protestants and argues that "Catholic clubs were unwanted by the IFA and the majority of the senior clubs".²⁴⁵ Cronin tries and proves it with the failure of the IFA to ensure the security of all supporters and the lasting of each of its clubs with impartiality.

2. Catholic representation in the IFA in the 1990s

We will now look at the lack of intervention from the IFA and the RUC in favour of the protection of supporters, and in the managing of violence in the tribunes. The relationship between the IFA and the RUC will also be explained. Furthermore, we will try and demonstrate that the violence caused by sectarianism in Northern Ireland was reflected by the behaviour of the crowds and their affinity with the notions of masculinity and sexism. We will introduce the extent of violence in the Northern Irish tribunes and finish our presentation by dwelling on the most extreme clashes between supporters in the 1990-1991 season and the journey of the Donegal Celtic club through it. This club is an intermediate football club that played in the FAI league. It was formed

²⁴⁴ Cronin, Mike. « Catholics and Sport in Northern Ireland: Exclusiveness or Inclusiveness? » *International Sport Studies*, vol. 22, n° 1. 2000, p.36.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

in 1970 in West Belfast, was identified with the Catholic tradition and never got to play in the senior league in Northern Ireland.

In 1990, a fixture between the Donegal Celtic and Linfield was supposed to take place in the home ground of the Donegal Celtic. However, the RUC intervened and asked the IFA to organize the game in a different ground in Windsor Park, Linfield's home ground. The RUC considered that "potential trouble would be more easily contained [at the Windsor Park]".²⁴⁶ The decision to set the fixture in Windsor Park was made by the IFA officials, and it was immediately contested. The Donegal Celtic officials asked the High Court injunction to intervene and reverse the decision of the IFA, but the implication of the RUC in the process made it impossible.²⁴⁷ From this point, the RUC had to deal with intense civil unrest during the match and rioting until the night. 48 policemen and 15 civilians were injured. Plastic bullets were fired and buses were burnt down in nationalist areas. The controversy had already begun before the fixture kept going. The failure of the RUC to ensure public safety and the responsibility of the IFA in triggering a riot was exploited by the nationalist newspapers. In the *Irish News*, one could read this:

The type of attitude displayed by some of the police, and witnessed by representatives of this newspaper at Windsor Park on Saturday, specifically in relation to the various plastic bullet incidents, and in their general reaction to the trouble caused by segments of the Linfield following, must give rise to grave disquiet.²⁴⁸

The journalists then blamed the IFA for the civil unrest and the prejudice the Donegal Celtic suffered from: "The [IFA] took it upon itself, along with the police, to choose Windsor Park. It cannot now abdicate responsibility for its misjudgement and the subsequent mishandling of the game".²⁴⁹ As Sugden and Bairner put it, incidents taking place in the context of a football game were now "propelled into the public domain of Northern Irish politics".²⁵⁰ The authors then notes that the opinion expressed by *The Irish News* was echoed by publications of Unionist papers, who also condemned the handling of the fixture by both the RUC and the IFA including the *News Letter*, one of the most important Belfast newspapers and a direct competitor to the *Irish News*. Furthermore, questions were raised on police strategy and tactics. The riots triggered by the fixture can be linked directly to the misjudgement of the situation by the IFA. No paramilitary group or

²⁴⁶ Sugden, John P., and Alan Bairner. *Sport, Sectarianism, and Society in Ireland*. Leicester University Press, 1997, p.87.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ *Irish News*, 19 February 1990. Quoted in Sugden and Bairner *Sport, Sectarianism and Society in Ireland*, p.88.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁰ Sugden, John P., and Alan Bairner. *Sport, Sectarianism, and Society in Ireland*. Leicester University Press, Leicester. 1997, p.88.

political party was involved in the controversy. The only people to blame were the officials of the IFA and the RUC. The fact that Northern Irish newspapers agreed on the responsibility of the RUC in a controversial issue is quite uncommon, as it was the authority and the policy of the executive forces of Northern Ireland that was questioned. This shared criticism and questionment might be explained by the fact that the issue took place at the end of the Troubles and that civilians from both communities had been threatened by the outbreak of violence at the same time, at the same place and for the same reason. Furthermore, the fact it was not the result of a political message carried out by a paramilitary action might have influenced the newspaper to consider the issue through a different perspective than that of sectarianism. Their handling of the situation helped to keep the debate from turning into another sectarian issue.²⁵¹

A similar controversy happened again during the 1990-1991 season. Donegal Celtic was drawn to play against Ards, another club mainly associated with Protestantism. Once again, the RUC and the IFA decided to set the fixture in the home ground of Ards, instead of the Donegal Celtic home ground. Expecting similar trouble to what had happened at Windsor Park, the Donegal Celtic officials decided to leave the Northern Irish league and asked to be integrated into the FAI. Even though Sugden makes it clear that the crowd in Ards was not as virulent as that of Linfield, the risks of civil unrest were very high. However, the fixture never took place. Donegal Celtic did not finish the 1990-1991 season, and would struggle to be included in the League of Ireland, which was managed by the FAI. As Sugden puts it, "Donegal Celtic are literally the club nobody wants".²⁵² In fact, the geographical position of the club was too much of an issue for the FAI to send Southern Irish clubs there. Security issues kept the Donegal Celtic from evolving as a 'normal' club in the Irish League and prevented it from integrating the League of Ireland.²⁵³ As a matter of fact, the FAI wanted to limit the exposure of its supporters to sectarian clashes. Indeed, there were high chances that supporters coming from the Republic of Ireland could have been harassed by Northern Irish Protestant fandoms, or even worse, by unionist paramilitary groups. Furthermore, confrontation between Catholic and Protestant football fandoms often led to open clashes, which the IFA also wanted to prevent. All in all, Catholic clubs in Northern Ireland became misfits in both Irish leagues.

Interestingly, Sugden also underlines that the RUC were involved in Northern Irish football through their own football team. It played in the League B division, which was just below

²⁵¹ Sugden, John P., and Alan Bairner. *Sport, Sectarianism, and Society in Ireland*. Leicester University Press, 1997, p.88..

²⁵² *Ibid*, p.89.

²⁵³ The Irish League is organised by the IFA, whereas the League of Ireland is organised by the FAI.

the senior championship. This was, alongside with security, the main obstacle to the integration of clubs such as the Donegal Celtic in to such championships. In fact, the “any team wishing to join the Irish League must first be admitted to win promotion from the B division”.²⁵⁴ Furthermore, because of the civil unrest situation in Northern Ireland and of the specific relationship existing between the Catholic-nationalist community and the security forces, the RUC would hardly be able to organise any regular visit to nationalist areas. Hence, the issues arising from fixtures between clubs identified with the Catholic tradition and the presence of RUC teams blocked the former from expressing its potential in the Northern Irish League. Sugden sums up the situation by stating that “all of the RUC’s sporting engagements are carried out beneath an extensive security blanket”.²⁵⁵ Players from the RUC were sometimes threatened by the IRA as in 1989, when a team representing the Irish League - hence the Northern Irish league - in the United States received a threat from the IRA. In fact, two of its members were part of the police force, and were targeted by the republican paramilitary group. Hence, “[tight] security measures were put into operation in order to allow the tour to go ahead”.²⁵⁶

It has been said earlier that because of a lack of evidence, the IFA was not described as an association affiliated to the Protestant tradition. And so, in the first part, this issue was not exploited at all. However, this subpart has revealed that because of both its management of the teams and of the security, the IFA has proven to be more inclined to support the clubs identified with the Protestant tradition rather than those identified with Catholicism. In fact, the controversy of the fixtures of the Donegal Celtic and of the place of the police force football teams have been exploited successfully by Sugden and Bairner to demonstrate that there exists an institutional prejudice in the Irish Football Association. Furthermore, the series of clashes occurring between the supporters and crowds is a demonstration of the extent of violence in Northern Ireland.. Furthermore, we may relate the methods employed by the IFA to marginalise Catholic-nationalists in its institution with the methods used by the unionist government to repress the expression of nationalists and the presence of political parties that could question its authority. This theory will be studied and defended in depth in the following parts.

²⁵⁴ Sugden, John P., and Alan Bairner. *Sport, Sectarianism, and Society in Ireland*. Leicester University Press, 1997, p.89.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p.90.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid*.

3. Nuancing identities

Religious affiliation are closely linked to the construction of Northern Irish identities. They evolve in a much more complex spectrum than the one that has been depicted in this dissertation. Mike Cronin illustrates the complexity of this spectrum in the article quoted before.²⁵⁷ The authors alludes to the case of Donal Gray and of Tony Dobbin, which took place in 1997. Gray was a Catholic Ulsterman who wanted to play football in the highest spheres of European Football. At the age of 15 he had had the chance to play in Patrick Thistle FC, a Scottish football club. In the newspaper *The Sunday Times*, H. McDonald and A. Alderson state that the young player was driven by the will to play in the Premier League Championship for teams such as the Celtic FC or Liverpool FC. The authors note that both clubs were identified with the Catholic community - in Great Britain and in Ireland, for the supporters of the Premier League.²⁵⁸ However, the fact that a young football player sought to pursue a career in the sport he loved, in a championship he loved, was not tolerated by the IRA. He was attacked and was left with a broken leg, a fractured knee and puncture wounds as he played for Glenavon, in Northern Ireland, during the summer of 1997. As a matter of fact, the young player had come back to Northern Ireland after his mother had died. He described the assault:

One of them put a gun to my head and they dragged me out into the yard. I didn't think I would die but thought I'd never play football again. They were beating me with iron bars and wooden clubs. I just felt myself go dizzy and I just lay there, half dead, so they went.²⁵⁹

Unfortunately, Gray was not the only victim of an IRA attack. Tony Dobbin, former National Hunt jockey saw his sister being subjected to a campaign of intimidation carried out by republican paramilitaries. H. McDonald and A. Alderson, who wrote about the matter, did not specify which paramilitary group intimidated Patricia Perry, Dobbin's sister. This act of intimidation was made after Dobbin made comments on the postponement of the 1997 Irish Grand National race because of a bomb hoax, for which terrorists were responsible.²⁶⁰ Those two examples illustrate how sectarianism and challenging identities have impacted Northern Irish sports and sportsmen outside of the football pitches and terraces. Indeed, the attack carried on Donal Gray express the condemnation of 'foreign' sports and foreign championships by the IRA.

²⁵⁷ Cronin, Mike. « Catholics and Sport in Northern Ireland: Exclusiveness or Inclusiveness? » *International Sport Studies*, vol. 22, n° 1, 2000. pp. 25-41.

²⁵⁸ J. Turner, 'Irish pain that does not cease', *The Guardian*, 21 July 1997, p. 8.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ H. McDonald and A. Alderson, 'IRA terror for family of jockey who spoke out', *The Sunday Times*, 27 July 1997, p. 6.

The implication of an Irish individual in a foreign championship and sport was seen as discrediting the Irish identity displayed by republican nationalism.

All in all, the playing of a foreign game as a way of identity expression was condemned. The IRA intended on defining the means and purposes of the Catholic-nationalist community. The expression and emancipation of the Irish identity was to be carried out by the group in hegemony, even though individuals did not perceive their identity as Catholic-nationalist under the republican banner. The greater good imposed by a radical and paramilitary group was imposed on individuals. All in all, the republican Irish identity could only be expressed to the world through elements of the republican culture. Furthermore, the intimidation carried on Tony Dobbin was meant to express the supreme authority of the IRA and to warn him not to question the actions carried out by it. Even though Dobbin is not part of the football activity in Northern Ireland, the example of the reaction of the IRA to his statement serves the development made here. The cultural heritage of sports is of the highest importance in recent Irish republicanism. The IRA intended on controlling each feature of identity expression. By doing so, it tries to abolish nuances of Irish identity. One can link this specific policy of the IRA to the policy of the unionist government. Furthermore, the policy of rejection of British features was still present in the position of the IRA. This secessionist rhetoric was already part of the policy of the GAA when the Rule 27 and 21 were established.

B. The effects of a violent society on the football tribunes

Considering the violence Northern Ireland suffered from for most of the second half of the 20th century, we ought to understand the nature of the violence present in football terraces as well as its origins. First, we will define the importance of the territory as perceived by football fandoms and the importance of contact with identities alien to those promoted by Protestant-unionist fandoms. Bairner and Shirlow studied Northern Irish fandoms and more specifically Linfield supporters.²⁶¹ They compared it with football fandoms in Sweden, which evolve in a society that is not concerned by ethnonational issues at the same extent as in Northern Ireland. This comparison brings to the development of the authors a different perspective on football fandom violence in Northern Ireland.

1. Territorial identity

Bairner and Shirlow present sports in society as a way for communities to express their position in the said society. This expression of the self implies the understanding of the world, as well as the position claimed by this community within it. Sports represent a specific form of cultural expression, and as MacClancy puts it, sports are “vehicles of identity, providing people with a sense of difference and a way of classifying themselves and others, whether latitudinally or hierarchically”.²⁶² Such identities are subject to changes, and to duality and multiplicity.²⁶³ Let us note that it can be expressed through the support of a particular team, or the practice of a particular sport. It is also interesting to note that Bairner and Shirlow specify such an analysis on the identity construction of men. Bairner and Shirlow note the lack of understanding of the “processes whereby identity is constructed”²⁶⁴ and the role of ethnicity, gender and historical context and upbringing in this construction.²⁶⁵ Considering these elements, they state that football has a power of “identity formation and reinforcement”.²⁶⁶

The specific case of soccer is presented as carrying a political and a social aspect. Two ideas - which rely on the hypothesis expressed before - are exploited to develop the theory of Bairner and Shirlow. First, football allows supporters to express their identity as it “is a public

²⁶¹ Bairner, Alan, et Peter Shirlow. *Territory, Politics and Soccer Fandom in Northern Ireland and Sweden*. n° 1, 2000, p. 22.

²⁶² MacClancy, John. ‘Sport, Identity and Ethnicity’. *Sport, Identity and Ethnicity*. Oxford, Berg, 1996, pp. 1–20.

²⁶³ Kellas, J. G. *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity*. Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1991.

²⁶⁴ Bairner, Alan, and Peter Shirlow. *Op.cit.*, p. 5.

²⁶⁵ Werbner, P. ‘Our Blood Is Green’. *Sport, Identity and Ethnicity*, edited by John MacClancy. London, Berg, 1996, p.106.

²⁶⁶ Bairner, Alan, and Peter Shirlow. *Op.cit.*, p. 5.

arena in which ethnic identities can be assessed and reinvented in changing circumstances”.²⁶⁷ Also, just as identities evolve with their environment, the identities expressed through football are influenced by the social and political context. Crolley is quoted as follows: “football does not cut out external factors but it acts more like a sieve than a solid wall, and the sieve is not only selecting but also modifying what it filters”.²⁶⁸ Arguably, Bairner and Shirlow consider that the sole attendance at a soccer match is part of a broader social process: “football centres upon an affirmation of faith, an element of identity, both personal and collective, that is never fully communicable in effectively rational terms”.²⁶⁹ In other words, football gives room for the expression of radical identities with much more liberties than the norms of the society would tolerate. This process also takes place in deeply divided societies, such as Northern Ireland. The expression of anti-Catholic racism in the tribunes is not punished by the authorities as it takes place in the context of a football game. This open expression of hatred is also made possible by the management of order of the IFA and of the RUC. There is no consequence of any sort when the Linfield fandom sings loyalist songs that tend to glorify paramilitary deeds.

The link between sports and cultural identity and politics seems to have been neglected in past studies, which have focused essentially on such themes as class solidarity and nationalism. With this dissertation, we aim at exploiting football to depict the process of identity formation. Regarding the Protestant-unionist football fandoms, we must take into consideration the construction of a group identity and the defense of a territorial ground supposedly controlled by the said fandom. Moreover, we will demonstrate that in the context of a ethnonational conflict, the identity of the Self is exclusively built through the identity of the group. When approaching the subject of politics and territory, Thrift and Forbes are quoted. They demonstrate the influence of a place over the development of socio-cultural resistance: “modes of socio-cultural resistance emanate from ongoing and modified processes of socialisation, which, because they are distinctive to place, give specific meaning to life and living in that place”.²⁷⁰ Then, they explain that within individuals and communities, “an identifiable pool of resistance against the real and imagined processes of socio-economic and cultural modification that redefine the nature and composition of

²⁶⁷ Jones, R., and P. Moore. “‘He Only Has Eyes for Poms’”: Soccer, Ethnicity and Locality in Perth’. *Ethnicity and Soccer in Australia*, edited by J O’Hara, Australian Society for Sports History, 1994, pp. 16–31.

²⁶⁸ Duke, V., and L. Crolley. *Football, Nationality and the State*. Longman, 1996.

²⁶⁹ Giulianotti, R., and G. Armstrong. ‘Reclaiming the Game - An Introduction to the Anthropology of Football’. *Entering the Field. New Perspectives on World Football*, edited by G Armstrong and R Giulianotti, Berg, 1997, pp. 1–29.

²⁷⁰ Thrift, N., and D. Forbes. ‘A Landscape with Figures: Political Geography with Human Conflict’. *Political Geography Quarterly*, vol. 2, 1983, pp. 247–63.

places and localities”.²⁷¹ The identity of a group is thus built following precise lines of socio-economic and cultural features. Hence, any confrontation to an identity that does not resonate with those lines leads to aggressivity and rejection, meant to protect the local identity. The socio-economic and cultural modifications are not welcomed as they are seen as a threat to the integrity of the already existing identity.

The act of turning a space into a place is the result of social and/or cultural activity. This process is common to most communities, as they appropriate a part of the land they thrive in - the space - and transpose their identities onto it, hence making it a place. “Material, residual and topophilic relationships are saturated with expressive meaning as they are placed in the subjective and at times introspective context of the iconographies and landscapes of past and present occurrences”.²⁷² The land carries the identity, and this identity is charged with social and cultural features. Such an hypothesis is applied to the manifestation of support for specific teams, and also explains the production of conflict and reactive resistance resulting from it. When it comes to the process of creation of cultural identity and of the sense of place, socio-cultural modifications and alteration ought to be studied.²⁷³ Those theories exist in the discourse of football fandoms. As a matter of fact, socio-cultural domination and in the envisioning of space are present in football tribunes. In those tribunes, power relations are imagined a defensive reaction is triggered when social forms perceived as “alien, hostile and unacceptable”²⁷⁴ try to integrate it. Such a reaction is often based on racist and ethno-sectarian discourses.

The main argument of this essay is that football fandom in Northern Ireland interacts with the construction of political identity amongst working-class Protestant men. The study aims at determining the extent of this influence. We will focus on the Linfield club and on the Northern Irish national team. In fact, both teams play their home games in the Linfield stadium and comparing the extent of support for each team can help have a better understanding of the nature of the support. In that stadium, is fandom a form of cultural and political resistance?

Incidentally, Armstrong studied the supporters of Sheffield United, an English football club. Its intense rivalry with the Sheffield Wednesday is described as the “Constant Other”.²⁷⁵ This form of external identity has been present during the evolution of the Self and was constructed in parallel to it. Even though it is not local in the identity of the self or in the space of the self, it is a

²⁷¹ Bairner, Alan, and Peter Shirlow. *Op.cit.*, p. 6.

²⁷² Roseberry, W. *Anthropologies and Histories*. Rutgers University Press, 1997.

²⁷³ Beck, U., et al. *Reflective Modernisation: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994.

²⁷⁴ Bairner, Alan, and Peter Shirlow. *Op.cit.*, p. 7.

²⁷⁵ Armstrong, G. *Football Hooliganism. Knowing the Score*. Oxford, Berg. 1998, p.11.

landmark. When it comes to the Linfield supporters, the Constant Other varies. Linfield has regularly been opposed to the Glentoran Football Club, another Belfast club which was also one of the top teams of the Irish League. However, it did not embody the landmark which we regard as the Constant Other. In fact, the rivalry with Glentoran FC was a sporting rivalry. Rather, it is the Catholic community that is identified as the Constant Other as Catholic feature and integration were exploited to 'attack' the Glentoran FC and discredit it.

Bairner and Shirlow underline that supporters are often afraid of cultural dissipation, besiegement and disintegration. James Spradley and David McCurdy describe the reaction of many individuals who "cling tenaciously to the values they have acquired and feel threatened when confronted with others who live according to different conceptions of what is desirable. Thus culture is like a 'security blanket' which 'has great meaning to its owner'".²⁷⁶ With the passing of time and the evolution of our societies, cultural constructions evolve and are reshaped in different times and spaces. It is also the case for sectarian and racist discourses, which are cultural constructions too. Linfield fans have a discourse revolving around the defence of boundaries. For example, the Glentoran have been mocked by the song "Gerry Adams is your MP".²⁷⁷ The parliamentary representation of the district in which evolved the Glentoran FC was part of the boundaries that was controlled by the nationalists, as depicted by the Linfield fandom. The justification of such a resistance is often made through religion and race. The example quoted before demonstrates it. The integration policy of the Glentoran FC, which tolerated the presence of Catholics in its team, was condemned by the fandom of the Linfield FC with the song "No Fenian in our team... Not one".²⁷⁸ 'Catholic' clubs were targeted with even more explicit songs with allusions to the Orange Order in "The Sash My Father Wore", which refers to the regalia worn by its members. Bairner also quotes the song *Hello, hello, we are the Billy Boys* which contains the lines "We're up to our knees in Fenian blood, surrender or you'll die".²⁷⁹

Parallel to the construction of an identity, the Other is also imagined collectively. The lifestyle, culture and politics of the Other must be resisted and repelled.²⁸⁰ This reaction and conception of the self and of the other enable the group to establish closer bonds and to legitimise its discourse. Bairner and Shirlow present the interaction between the self and the other as such: a

²⁷⁶ Spradley, P., and D. W. McCurdy. *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*. Boston, Little, Brown and Company. 1987, pp.5-6.

²⁷⁷ Bairner, Alan. 'Soccer, Masculinity and Violence in Northern Ireland'. *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1999, p. 292.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

²⁸⁰ Jenkins, R. 'Rethinking Ethnicity: Identity, Categorisation and Power'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 17, 1994, pp. 199-231.

biosphere is created in which cultural opposition allows both groups to exist. For Linfield supporters, the collective self embodies the Ulster Protestant/loyalist community. It is constructed through the exclusion of Catholics and the defense of the territory. They put forward the Protestant way of life. Opposed to such a way of life and political orientation, they identify the Catholic-nationalist community. It represents a “Menace”²⁸¹ to the collective self. Finally, what makes those communities establish a relationship is the notion of “Defence”.²⁸² “‘Communal Devotion’ in this sense is produced and re-worked through animosity and identifiable defence strategies”.²⁸³

2. Seeking geographical authority

Academics specialised in sports research have stressed the importance of sports in the materialisation of frontiers. Grant Jarvie wrote that, with sports, “it is as if the imagined community or nation becomes more real on the terraces or the athletics track”.²⁸⁴ Furthermore, athletes and members of teams are often referred to as warriors, or “proxy warriors”²⁸⁵ as stated by John Hoberman. In the case of Northern Ireland, this analogy is more controversial, as there exists real-life warriors, who are self-appointed soldiers fighting for a political cause. The analogy is even more disturbing as both types of *warriors* are often young men coming from the working-class. Shirlow and Bairner’s comparative study of Northern Irish and the Sweden societies demonstrates that athletes may be described as warriors only in societies that do not suffer from an ethnonational cleavage. The very same process took place in Northern Ireland, yet it is much more problematic. The province suffered from decades of violence in which the youth was involved. There is no analogy in Northern Ireland since the ‘battleground’ was part of the reality of the province. The behaviour of the Linfield crowds demonstrates that part of this violence was not stopped, and that it was tolerated by both the RUC and the IFA. In this dissertation - and in most documentation studying sports, society and politics - the link between sports and politics is questioned. Does sport enable cross-community relations, or does it exacerbate sectarianism? Bairner and Shirlow seem to be willing to provide a nuanced answer to this tricky question. They consider that sports can do both, although they admit that there is a stronger tendency of exacerbation of social and cultural tensions. The development made so far does not bring any proof of successful cross-community

²⁸¹ Bairner, Alan, and Peter Shirlow. *Op.cit*, p. 9.

²⁸² *Ibid.*

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁴ Jarvie, Grant. « Sport, nationalism and cultural identity ». *The changing politics of sport*, édité par L Allison, Manchester University Press, Manchester. 1993, p. 58-83.

²⁸⁵ Hoberman, J. *Sport and political ideology*. Heinemann, London. 1986, p.6.

relations, yet. Still, football plays a specific role in the construction of identities, in particular with collective identities.

The issue of collective identities in football in Northern Ireland is closely linked with the constitutional question. The IFA is the only main sports association which chose to focus on the province of Northern Ireland when the partition of Ireland was decided. Interestingly, however, football is a popular sport for both Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland. However, they are willing to demonstrate why the Protestant community and tradition is much more motivated to lead football associations in Northern Ireland than the Catholic community. The control of the IFA by the Protestant community would be presented as a “continuation of traditional unionist discriminatory practice”, according to an “obvious nationalist”²⁸⁶ analysis of the situation. However, Bairner and Shirlow do not seem to support this view. After the centralisation of the government in 1972, the IFA was one of the “few visible indicators of the existence of Northern Ireland as a separate place”.²⁸⁷ Hence, the IFA might have been the only resort of the Protestant-unionist population to defend the Northern Irish province as they envisioned it. Bairner and Shirlow are aware that a thesis cannot be defended with only those elements. Hence, they describe the specificity of the province. Sporting grounds are generally located in places that are designated as either Catholic or Protestant. Before studying this alienation, Bairner and Shirlow develop a theory that might be judged controversial, but that still needs to be acknowledged here. When referring to the constitutional question, they mention a series of frontiers: the Sea of Ireland separates Northern Ireland from Great Britain in the UK. The province is separated from the rest of the island by a border. Within Northern Ireland, there is a pattern of spatial segregation as most of the Catholic population lives in the rural part of Northern Ireland, in the West of the river Bann, and, adversely, there is a dense population of Protestants in the East of the river. Somehow, the river Bann cuts the province in two approximate halves Northern Ireland right in the middle of the province. Bairner and Shirlow consider that the constitutional question and the physical and not so physical boundaries existing in Northern Ireland eventually affect territory politics.²⁸⁸ This leads to the “claiming and reclaiming”²⁸⁹ of territories in which Protestants are no longer included - or at least in majority. For instance, this claiming and reclaiming is expressed with marches organised by the Orange Order. The authors

²⁸⁶ Bairner, Alan, and Peter Shirlow. *Op.cit.*, p.11.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁸ Bairner, Alan, and Peter Shirlow. *Op.cit.*, p.11.

²⁸⁹ Anderson, J., et I. Shuttleworth. « Sectarian demography, territoriality and policy in Northern Ireland ». *Political Geography*, vol. 17, n° 2, 1998, pp. 187-208.

link those marches with sports. They consider that “[it] is sport’s relationship with the territorial politics of space and place in Northern Ireland which needs to be recognised if soccer’s role in the construction of the Collective Self vis à vis the Other is to be more carefully theorised”.²⁹⁰

The sense of alienation experienced by the Protestant and the Catholic communities is differentiated by Bairner and Shirlow. First, the alienation of the Protestant in sporting grounds is to be witnessed in Derry, or on the Cliftonville home ground. Indeed, the Derry City used to be supported by a majority of Protestants. However, because of the increase of support of the team by the Catholics, Protestant supporters of the club were less and less active for the Derry City. The main issue that caused the exit of Protestant supporters was the location of the home ground, the Brandywell. As we have studied above, it was part of the Bogside, the Catholic part of the Derry-Londonderry city. The authors go as far as stating that the club and the stadium now represent the “estrangement”²⁹¹ of the West part of Derry-Londonderry and of the nationalists from Northern Ireland. A similar process occurred in Cliftonville’s Solitude home ground. The stadium was built in a middle-class Protestant area in Belfast, but because of shifting demographics, a Catholic community established itself in the said area. It resulted in a rise of Catholic support for the team, and subsequently of the departure of Protestant supporters. Furthermore, because of security issues, clubs identified with the Protestant community were not authorised to play on those grounds, by order of the police force. Hence, home venues in the Solitude were taking place in the Windsor Park, home ground of the Linfield. For the authors, such a process resulted in the rhetoric that “real Protestants”²⁹² do not go to the Solitude.

The origins of the sports in itself also plays an important part in the alienation of the two communities. We have studied earlier that the Catholics were not represented well in the IFA, and that most Catholic clubs were pushed out from the IFA. Bairner and Sugden consider that this was predestined to happen as football was imported and developed in Northern Ireland by the British. Hence, “in the past, many Catholics viewed soccer with suspicion with the result that they were far less involved than Protestants in the game’s early formal development”.²⁹³ The early development of the football game in Northern Ireland, the way the Catholics were treated in the tribunes and the attacks the Catholic clubs suffered from doomed the Catholics to not be included in Northern Irish football. Considering this, one must differentiate the alienation of Catholics in the IFA and the alienation of the Protestants in the GAA. In fact, the GAA is surrounded by the

²⁹⁰ Bairner, Alan, and Peter Shirlow. *Op.cit.*, pp.11-12.

²⁹¹ *Ibid*, p.12.

²⁹² *Ibid*.

²⁹³ Bairner, Alan, and Peter Shirlow. *Op.cit.* , p.13.

republican and Celtic imagery, which was enough to keep Protestants from willing to integrate the Gaelic games and to follow the championships. As Bairner and Shirlow put it, “Gaelic games do not involve competition between the two major communities as to inherent political correctness on the part of the followers of Gaelic games”.²⁹⁴

To the sense of alienation experienced by the Protestants in clubs such as Derry City or Cliftonville, one must add the Loyalist rhetoric of siege. In fact, even though Northern Ireland was represented by the Stormont government until 1972, and was afterwards represented in Westminster, the feeling of insecurity is still present in the minds of some of the Protestant population. However, the legitimacy of the Protestants to call Northern Ireland their home has been defended in different manners, and Unionism was expressed through it. It calls back to what we have studied in the very first part of this dissertation. In the article studied here, Bairner and Shirlow allude to the marches organised by Loyalist groups, such as the Orange Order, and to the social integration and the feeling of security this might provide to “young Protestant males as they seek to come to terms with the diminished status of the Protestant working class”.²⁹⁵ Hence, the authors draw a parallel between the integration of the Orange Order and the support of specific teams that represent Loyalism and Protestantism. “Wearing the colours and singing the songs, young men avail themselves of the opportunity to exhibit their sense of what it means to be Ulster Protestants”.²⁹⁶ Unfortunately, integrating such groups also means rejecting the Other. Sectarian songs and the glorification of paramilitary groups and sectarian deeds are part of what animate those groups. As Bairner and Shirlow note, “[Ulster Protestants football fans] sing about being up to their knees in Fenian blood or chant the names of loyalist paramilitary organisations in what are amongst the few public spaces where such behaviour is possible”.²⁹⁷

Finally, the importance of football for the Protestant working-class population laid in the embodiment of the Northern Irish state, in the defense and maintenance of the unionist and Protestant culture and tradition. It has brought to the unionist, Loyalist and Protestant rhetoric of siege a place to defend, a place to stand for embodied in the home grounds. Hence, as football pitches were the place embodying Northern Ireland as a place, the Protestant crowds and the leaders of the IFA have shaped it at the image they aim to defend. There is an intricate link between the identity formation made by football clubs and the defense of the home grounds, and so of territory politics. Football helped “resolve at the level of the imaginary, the real contradictions

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.15.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.16.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

confronting the Protestant working-class in contemporary Northern Ireland”.²⁹⁸ However, it resulted in the construction of an exclusively Protestant working-class institution.

²⁹⁸ Bell, D. *Acts of union: Youth culture and sectarianism in Northern Ireland*. Macmillan, 1990.

C. The importance of gender in Northern Irish football

Masculinity and the presence of women in sports has not been discussed in this dissertation, yet. Most of the documentation existing on sociological studies of sports in Northern Ireland ignores the subject. However, as this dissertation aims at studying nuances of Northern Irish identities, we ought to use gender studies. To do so, we will exploit the research carried out by Rachael Brooks.²⁹⁹ This chapter will provide a general overview of the treatment received by women in sporting fields, in the terraces and in sociological research. Then, we will approach the place of women and the perception of masculinity in the Northern Irish tribunes. To do so, the article “*Soccer, Masculinity and Violence in Northern Ireland*”.³⁰⁰ will be studied. This subpart was first meant to criticise and nuance the development of Bairner, who pictures Protestant fandoms as only masculine. However, the absence of consideration for women in the development of the article can be used as an argument. This development will lead to the demonstration of a gendered hegemonization of the the Northern Irish tribunes. We will exploit the parallel established earlier between the IFA and Stormont to gender studies. Indeed, the gender perspective brings to us new arguments.

There is a notable lack of documentation on the presence of women in Northern Irish sports. Most of the sports historiography and sociology studies were indeed written by men, and the issues they discussed rarely approached gender and the implication of women in it. Recently, a few papers tackling national identity³⁰¹ but also about the rights of women³⁰² and their political representation have been published.³⁰³ All three papers quoted here were written by women. The presence of women and their recollection in Northern Ireland was occluded.

1. Expression of the nationalist identity amongst women

In the chapter “*Women, sport and national identity in Ireland*”, Brooks discusses the expression of the women’s national identity in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The author claims to be the first researcher to lean onto that subject and is willing to provide Northern Irish women a voice, as well as understanding the role of sports in the expression of nationalist views.

²⁹⁹ Brooks, Rachael. « Women, sport and national identity in Ireland ». *The role of sports in the formation of personal identities - studies in community loyalties*, Edwin Mellen Press, 2012, p. 143-66.

³⁰⁰ Bairner, Alan. ‘*Soccer, Masculinity, and Violence in Northern Ireland: Between Hooliganism and Terrorism*’. *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 1, no. 3, Jan. 1999, pp. 284–301.

³⁰¹ Brooks, Rachael. *Op.cit.*, pp. 143-66.

³⁰² Wardrop, C. A. J., et al. « Domestic Violence Against Women: Needs Action From Doctors And The Health Service ». *BMJ: British Medical Journal*, vol. 311, n° 7011, BMJ, 1995, p. 964-65. JSTOR.

³⁰³ O’Keefe, Theresa. « ‘Mother Ireland, Get Off Our Backs’: Republican Feminist Resistance in the North of Ireland ». *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, édité par Lorenzo Bosi et Gianluca De Fazio, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam. 2017, pp. 165-84. JSTOR.

Considering gender, Brooks states that the views of the article concerning this question establish genre as “both socially constituted and performative in nature”.³⁰⁴ This view supports the “non-essentialist feminist theoretical framework”.³⁰⁵ This theoretical framework is opposed to essentialism, which views every identity as a set of attributes linked to its identity and function.³⁰⁶ All in all, non-essentialism breaks away from the gendered roles given to members of a society and from the traditional Western patriarchy.

Brooks highlights the feminist aspect of non-essentialism, for it denies the need to possess an essence, as defined by Plato. The essence is a series of properties that make an entity what it fundamentally is. There is a sense of necessity to it, as the essence maintains the identity of the entity. Contrarily, accident as mentioned by Cartwright, is a property contingently possessed by the entity. Indeed, the author considers that the properties of gender have been established by social institutions. Furthermore, “[social] networks of power were also examined as was the evolving nature of gendered expressions of identity, dependent on the context in which they are performed”.³⁰⁷ Considering the task undertaken by the author, she makes it clear that the development made in this chapter is based on the interviews realised with individuals, and that those interviews do not necessarily represent the opinion of a majority of the Northern Irish women.

The author mentions Bairner’s approach of the variety of sports present in Northern Ireland: the sports imported by the British, the Irish - or Gaelic - sports and global sports. In the chapter studied here, Brooks approaches hockey, Gaelic football and surfing. Brooks determines the extent of gendered nature of the national attachment to both hockey and Gaelic sports. To do so, the segregated educational system is studied. The approach of the educational system will enable us to deepen our study of the identity construction process in Northern Ireland. Quite rightly, Brooks criticised Bairner for the lack of documentation made on women’s relationship with sports and national identity. Indeed, “women are referred to it is merely to detail their relationship with men, and not as a focus of investigation in their own right”.³⁰⁸ Brooks’s article aims at defining the role played by sports in the construction of women’s identities, as well as the importance of national identity in the determination of the practice of certain sports. In other words, the author brings another level of study to that established by Sugden and Bairner by approaching

³⁰⁴ Brooks, Rachael. *Op.cit*, p. 144.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁶ Cartwright, Richard L. « Some Remarks on Essentialism ». *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 65, n° 20, Journal of Philosophy, Inc., 1968, p. 615-26. JSTOR, *JSTOR*, doi:[10.2307/2024315](https://doi.org/10.2307/2024315).

³⁰⁷ Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, New York. 1990.

³⁰⁸ Brooks, Rachael. *Op.cit*, p.147.

the gender issue. In this dissertation, the development made by the author will help us understand what determined the frequentation of football games in Northern Ireland and the practice of the sport.

Brooks studies the place of women in both the Protestant-unionist and the Catholic-nationalist communities. Concerning the nationalism and republicanism, there exists a “gendered symbolism”.³⁰⁹ Indeed, Ireland is described as a Mother and the Virgin Mary is often mentioned, due to the link existing between Irish nationalism and Catholicism. Amongst the Protestant tradition and the unionist community, there exists no such equivalent. First, the absence of iconography in Protestantism keeps the development of any kind of religious symbolism. Then, Unionism promotes a much more masculinised image. Furthermore, the participation of women in politics is also an indicator of the difference of representation existing in the two communities. Several female figures in the nationalist and republican parties - Bernadette Devlin for example - whilst almost no woman has been involved in unionist political groups. Brooks blames the Orange Order and Ian Paisley for the exclusion of women from the unionist parties.³¹⁰ The author quotes Rachel Ward, who considers that the “unionist culture is gendered as being male-active and female-passive”.³¹¹

Throughout this dissertation, we have claimed several times that all aspect of life in Northern Ireland are affected by the sectarian division. Brooks demonstrates that the expression of nationalist identity of women is also influential by it, but that they react in a different way than their male counterparties. In fact, women identifying with Irish nationalism tend to express their political views more openly than the Ulster unionist women.³¹² However, the effect of sectarianism on women’s implication of sport, and the choice of sports by women is less likely to be influenced by their political identity and opinions. In the Protestant-unionist community, young men are subjected to an intense pressure to defend their masculinity and political identity. Brooks considers that “females under the age of eighteen are highly unlikely to have experienced any direct repercussions from the days of the ‘Troubles’ or any serious ramifications with being associated with one particular ‘side’ of the community divide in Northern Ireland”.³¹³ However, this differentiation can also be explained by a prejudice from which the women suffer, as they are

³⁰⁹ Brooks, Rachael. *Op.cit*, p.148.

³¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.149.

³¹¹ Ward, Rachel. « ‘It’s Not Just Tea and Buns’: Women and Pro-union Politics in Northern Ireland - Rachel J. Ward, 2004 ». *School of Sociology, Politics and Law of Politics*, vol. 6, n° 4, 2004, p.502.

³¹² Brooks, Rachael. *Op.cit*, p.151.

³¹³ Brooks, Rachael. *Op.cit*, p.151.

considered to be “civically based and less ethically pronounced and emotive than men’s”.³¹⁴ The essentialism from which Brooks tries to break away in this development is thus depicted as being at the origins of this gendered pressure.

2. Representation of women in Northern Irish football

The lack of presence and of representation of women in Northern Irish football can be explained by two important factors. The educational influence and the overwhelming masculinity displayed in football games. The sectarianism present in Northern Ireland has had effects on the school system. In turn, the schools that follow the Catholic tradition were more inclined to expose the pupils to Gaelic games. On the other hand, rugby football is more likely to be proposed to pupils in schools following the Protestant tradition. However, in both cases, football is taught to the pupils. As a matter of fact, it is a sport that has a great integrative potential and that it is equally practiced on an amateur level by both traditions. What happened in Northern Irish schools is that sports are gendered - much like in most Western society schools. Hence, hockey is as popular amongst girls as football is popular amongst boys. From the very first years of social existence, gender influences the sporting choices of Northern Irish pupils. Beyond that, their cultural affiliation narrows their choices. In fact, even though there is less pressure put on young Protestant girls than there is on Protestant boys - has was said above - no Protestant teenagers integrated the GAA.

With the study of nationalist identity, Brooks also determines that women tend to differentiate themselves from the “negative ethnic connotations of nationalism”.³¹⁵ By doing so, a distance of protection is established between the women and the violent history of the Troubles. Throughout the third part of this dissertation, we have defined football as being a sport that embodies and exacerbates sectarian divisions. Hence, the absence of women in the football tribunes may be explained by the constant sectarian atmosphere of the senior championship of football. Alongside this argument, the education of children and the genderisation of sports may provide an explanation of the relative absence of women from the tribunes of the IFA. However, women are not completely absent from the football pitches. In 1977, the Northern Ireland Women’s Football Association was created. This body leads feminine football association in Northern Ireland and represents the national selection of Northern Ireland in female competitions. Prior to 1977, there was no association organising women’s football. The creation of the Northern

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ *Ibid*, p.155.

Irish body was simultaneous to the creation of the Women's Football Association of Ireland in the Republic of Ireland.

3. Masculinity in the Protestant football fandoms

Now that the expression of nationalist identity of women in Northern Ireland has been studied, we will scrutinise Protestant masculinity as displayed in the Northern Irish football tribunes. To do so, we shall study "Soccer Masculinity, and Violence in Northern Ireland".³¹⁶ At this time the article was published, an important peace process strategy was deployed in Northern Ireland with the Good Friday Agreement (1998). The author presents his article as studying the evolution of the manifestation of violence in Northern Ireland. The development in this article reveals the issue of gender through the study of the men in the Protestant working-class community and in loyalist paramilitaries. It is linked to the identity formation taking place within the Protestant football fandoms. Bairner's statement at the very beginning of the article is that "sport in Northern Ireland, and specifically sport spectatorship, feeds hegemonic masculinity, which in turn, can reflect and encourage violence by men at large".³¹⁷ This article aims to reveal the links between "certain forms of soccer crowd behavior, masculinity, and terrorist violence".³¹⁸ The hegemonisation of football tribunes has already been approached, and this article will conclude the development made on the matter. Indeed, it studies the relation between Protestant manship and the nationalist-Catholic alien, and the role of men in the Protestant community, opposed to that of women.

Bairner presents the importance of the gender issue in the study of the Northern Irish society. Understandably, the author states that this issue is neglected and that the study of sectarianism prevails over other sociological studies in the case of Northern Ireland. As an explanation to this lack of interest in gender studies, Bairner depicts the role of women in political, military and militant events as minor due to the overwhelming presence of men: "No woman has been elected to represent a Northern Irish constituency in the House of Commons since Bernadette Devlin in 1970 and only around 12 percent of local councilors are women".³¹⁹ Furthermore, the author complains that the actions of men are not regarded as such but as of "ministers, priests,

³¹⁶ Bairner, Alan. 'Soccer, Masculinity and Violence in Northern Ireland'. *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1999, pp. 284–301.

³¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.284.

³¹⁸ *Ibid*, p.285.

³¹⁹ Bairner, Alan. 'Soccer, Masculinity, and Violence in Northern Ireland: Between Hooliganism and Terrorism'. *Men and Masculinities*, SAGE Journals. vol. 1, no. 3, Jan. 1999, p.285.

industrialists, politicians, terrorists and so forth”.³²⁰ This gendered classification of actions blocks gender studies. It presents men as the basis of all political, paramilitary and association bodies. Women are thus excluded from it.

As cease-fires had been declared five years prior to the writing of this article - which is a short time when it comes to sociological studies - the outcome of such cease-fires was uncertain. The transition from global and daily violence to no violence on a daily basis seemed to affect soccer supporting. In order to illustrate the cessation of violence and its consequences on social behaviour, Eames is quoted:

We have moved from the culture of actual violence to the culture of uncertainty as we seek to find something better than violence as a means of ordering society [...] The vacuum following the cessation of violence has been filled by a peace process which has brought hop, but also uncertainty as people of both traditions have faced new situations.³²¹

Bairner seems concerned by the management of the transition from daily violence to cease-fires amongst the men in the Protestant community. Soccer is the most popular game amongst the Protestant community and was deeply linked to community violence, the transition seems to have taken place in the terraces.

[...] far from simply being replaced by uncertainty, terrorism merely gives way to other forms of violence that may increase or, at best, become more obvious in the absence of the higher profile activities of the paramilitaries.³²²

Furthermore, the absence of terrorism highlighted cases of domestic violence, such as child abuse and muggings.

Bairner presents sports in Northern Ireland as the source of conflict between different cultural groups. Those conflicts come from the origins of the sports themselves. In fact, three kind of sports can be studied in Northern Ireland: amongst them, there are universally popular sports, such as football or boxing. Those sports “might offer some seeds of hope in terms of cross-community reconciliation”³²³ since both religious denomination practice those sports. The common denominator that links all three categories is gender: masculinity go beyond sectarian and social issues, and national identity. “[...] sport is a domain of contested national class, and racial relations, but the hegemonic conception of masculinity in sport also bonds men, at least

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

³²¹ Eames, R. *Free to Open New Doors*. Guardian, 17 May 1997, p.17.

³²² Bairner, Alan. ‘Soccer, Masculinity, and Violence in Northern Ireland: Between Hooliganism and Terrorism’. *Men and Masculinities, SAGE Journals*. vol. 1, no. 3, Jan. 1999, p.286.

³²³ Bairner, Alan. ‘Soccer, Masculinity, and Violence in Northern Ireland: Between Hooliganism and Terrorism’. *Men and Masculinities, SAGE Journals*. vol. 1, no. 3, Jan. 1999, p.286.

symbolically, as a separate and superior group to women”.³²⁴ Hence, sports exacerbate sectarian issue and help sexist institutions and societies develop.

4. Crowd behaviour: expression of sectarianism

The features that characterise football in Northern Ireland are not much different than those one can find in Great Britain. It has patterns of heavy-drinking, profanity and sexism. However, the Ulster dimension is also to be found during soccer matches. Bairner is particularly interested in that feature because it reveals a sense of spirituality, even though football supporters do not seem to express any interest in religion. The testimony of young Northern Irish Protestants is also depicted by Gillespie, Lovett and Garner: “one of the overriding to emerge from our discussions with young Protestants is that when they speak of Ulster they are not merely referring to a place”.³²⁵ Such a symbolism laying in the representation of territory is meant “to resolve at the level of the imaginary, the real material contradictions confronting the Protestant working-class in contemporary Northern Ireland”.³²⁶ It explains the passion that comes from supporting local teams and the national selection.

Bairner focuses on the nature of hooliganism and compares it with the behaviour of crowds in Northern Irish terraces. To do so, the author demonstrates that there is relatively little hooliganism in Northern Ireland, and enumerates four reasons to explain it. First, the attendance to football games in the province is relatively low. Then, those small crowds were surrounded by the security forces. Most of the security forces in Northern Ireland were armed, and familiar with rioting, this even before the beginning of the Troubles. Bairner considers that their main concern was not hooliganism but the possible outbreak of general civil unrest. Hence, their presence tended to ease agitation. The third reason is the influence of the Church over young Protestants. The Protestant working-class attending to the matches were indeed not part of a hegemonic group. There were “rough and respectable”³²⁷ children living in Belfast, and the upbringing and church attendance of the latter group prevented them from taking part in hooliganism. However, Bairner nuances this view and states that there were still cases of respectable children taking part in

³²⁴ Messner, M. *Power at Play. Sports and the Problem of Masculinity*. Beacon, 1992.

³²⁵ Gillespie, N., et al. *Youth Work and Working Class Youth Culture. Rules and Resistance in West Belfast*. Buckingham Open University Press, Buckingham. 1992.

³²⁶ Bell, D. *Acts of Union: Youth Culture and Sectarianism in Northern Ireland*. Basingstoke, UK, Macmillan. 1990, p.23.

³²⁷ Jenkins, R. *Hightown Rules. Growing up in a Belfast Housing Estate*. National Youth Bureau, 1982.

---. *Lads, Citizens and Ordinary Kids. Working-Class Youth Life-Style in Belfast*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983.

hooliganism. Finally, the low ordinary criminal violence in Northern Ireland - when compared to Great Britain - kept hooliganism from expanding.

Just as in any other social event in Northern Ireland, sectarianism is present. It is demonstrated by Bairner as he depicts the different features of antisocial behaviors. Most of the sectarianism is expressed through chants, which reveal the position of the team towards the Catholic community. First, the fandoms composed of Protestants are known for singing songs that directly target the community, such as “The Sash My Father Wore”, “Hello, hello, we are the Billy Boys”,³²⁸ which we have mentioned earlier in this part. Those chants are so deeply anchored in the tradition that they are sung during international matches, and by supporters of teams that include Catholic players. Bairner also notes that those songs were sung by the Linfield supporters to demonstrate their Protestant-only engagement policy. The attacks on the Catholic community reached its peak when the national selections of Northern Ireland and of the Republic of Ireland met, and songs such as “You dirty Fenian bastards” is addressed to the supporters of the Southern state. Anti-social behaviours keep Catholic supporters from attending football games. The support for a team is politicised and so is one’s attendance at a game.

Catholics are not the only group excluded by such anti-social behaviour. In fact, sexism has been said earlier to be a feature of the fandoms in Northern Ireland. They are not targeted by songs like the Catholic community, but the behaviour of the predominantly male supporter groups discourage them from attending football matches. Few women enter the tribunes during football matches. When they do so, it is accompanied with other women, or under the request of a man - Bairner mentions the case of teenagers, who try and demonstrate their virility through hardness.³²⁹ However, the main reason that keep women from attending football matches are the sexist comments emitted by men. In fact, “male fans seem eager to exclude women from their preserve”.³³⁰ As an example, Bairner mentions comments made towards clad models promoting sponsorship deals and first aid ambulance workers.³³¹ All in all, the overwhelmingly racist and sexist imagery and rhetoric of the Protestant football fandom kept Catholics and women from attending football games in a peaceful environment, and there was high chances of physical and verbal confrontation. The results of the omnipresent violence in football tribunes has been studied

³²⁸ Both songs are quoted in: Bairner, Alan. ‘Soccer, Masculinity, and Violence in Northern Ireland: Between Hooliganism and Terrorism’. *Men and Masculinities*, SAGE Journals. vol. 1, no. 3, Jan. 1999, p.291.

³²⁹ Canaan, J., et al. ‘Is “Doing Nothing” Just Boy’s Play? Integrating Feminist and Cultural Studies Perspectives on Working-Class Young Men’s Masculinity.’ *Off Centre. Feminism and Cultural Studies*, HarperCollins, 1991, pp. 109–25.

³³⁰ Bairner, Alan. ‘Soccer, Masculinity, and Violence in Northern Ireland: Between Hooliganism and Terrorism’. *Men and Masculinities*, SAGE Journals. vol. 1, no. 3, Jan. 1999, p.292.

³³¹ *Ibid.*

earlier, and we know for a fact that this was responsible for the departure of Catholic clubs from the IFA. It is important to note that the integrative potential of football should have concerned women as well, and not only the Catholic community.

Conclusion

A parallel was drawn between the management of the parliament by the UUP and the organisation of the IFA in this part. In both cases, the Protestant-unionist identity was defended at all costs. The parliamentary policy of the UUP was based on the selection of the political identities present in Stormont. However, the IFA proceeded differently. First of all, there was no repression of sectarian actions, such as anti-Catholic or anti-nationalists songs. A constant pressure was put onto the image displayed by Northern Irish clubs by some virulent fandoms. In this case, the Catholic-nationalist identity and community were not tolerated. The IFA is not affiliated to a political or religious group, contrary to the GAA. However, it was demonstrated that it was ruled by a majority of Protestants. We have also demonstrated that the rhetoric of the defense of a territory was broadly expressed by Protestant crowds. It resulted in the complete exclusion of any identity that did not fit in that promoted by the Protestant crowds. It means that the Catholic community was not legitimate in the pitch or in the tribunes, and that Protestant masculinity prevailed over any other gender or identity. Moreover, the Catholic clubs were excluded from the Irish League and could not integrate the FAI, which feared that the safety of its members would be endangered by the location of Northern Irish clubs. All in all, the Protestant-unionist and masculine identity was defended by the crowds as they attacked any form of identity that did not resemble theirs. Protect the Self by repressing the Other. The means employed by the IFA and the unionists in Stormont differed, but the ends were quite similar. Furthermore, the Catholic-nationalist community could no longer be represented in football pitches. They belonged neither in Northern Ireland or in the South.

We have tried to complete our study of identity formation by approaching the gender question. Because of the lack of documentation on female football in Northern Ireland, the development is not as extensive as it should have been. Still, we have demonstrated that masculinity played an important part in the shaping of the IFA. It was closely linked to the religious identity expressed by the Protestant crowds. What oughts to be noted concerning the role and importance of women in Northern Irish football is that both researchers and supporters relegated them to a passive role. Yet, Rachael Brook successfully demonstrated that women are far from being passive in sports, rather they tend to compromise and let aside their cultural and religious

identity for the sake of sports. There is no direct confrontation in nationalist identity in women's sport, contrary to what we have studied in the IFA.

The conclusion to this third part is that violence has deeply affected the game of football in Northern Ireland. One can consider that the omnipresent violence in the Northern Irish society bled onto the game of football, as the Catholic-nationalist and Protestant-unionist identities were directly confronted to one another. We have demonstrated that sports sometimes embodies cultural antagonisms. National identity is transposed onto the players, who are seen as warriors fighting for its defence. However, the sectarianism present in Northern Ireland influenced this process of transposition and identification, and anti-Catholicism ousted clubs associated with this tradition from the IFA. One can consider that the specificity of football exacerbated the ethno-national clashes occurring in Northern Ireland. This violence was present in Northern Irish football ever since the IFA decided to operate in the province only. Clubs identified with the Catholic tradition have been harassed since 1921. All in all, the potential of football as an integrative sport has been wasted by the IFA leaders, who failed to protect the clubs involved in its championships and tolerated the open expression of anti-Catholicism. Furthermore, we have defined a sectarian society as composed of a dominant group and of a dominated group. The dominant group shapes the institutions as it wishes to. In the case of the IFA, the dominant group is the Protestant males, which successfully shaped the association at their image, whilst Catholics and women were excluded from the institutions.

IV. The GAA: Maintaining the tradition

The strong Irish nationalist imagery carried by the GAA and a strict set of rules kept the Protestant community from integrating it. This resulted in a certain opacity of the association, as external integration was not permitted. Cronin depicted the IFA as lacking integration, and the GAA as relying on exclusivity. In fact, the all-Ireland organisation of the GAA and the exclusion of members of the security forces represented a challenge to the authority of the Stormont and British governments. Furthermore, the facilities, the ideology and the identity promoted by the Association are soaking with Irish Nationalism. All in all, the purpose of this part is to understand how the Irish identity presented by the GAA evolved in times of civil unrest by taking into consideration its relationship with the security forces and the representation of women. In the last part, we will discuss the construction of the Gaelic body.

In the first subpart, we have studied in depth the relationship between the GAA and the security forces. We will take into consideration the political context in which the GAA was created as well as the evolution of civil order and of the security forces. The Rule 21 will thus be scrutinised. We will understand how the Irish nationalist identity was protected by the Association. Then, we will study the gender issue in the GAA. The depiction of the role of women by Irish Nationalism greatly differs from that of the unionists, when it is not dictated by the Catholic vision of gender. Those nuances will be approached in the second part. Furthermore, the games of *Camogie* and of women's Gaelic football will be studied. Those game are an adaptation of hurling and of Gaelic football, and are rare examples of game adaptations for women.

A. The GAA and the security forces

In this part, we aim at criticising the GAA to understand it better. To do so, we will tackle the issue of the Association and security forces of Northern Ireland relationship. Hassan's³³² work focused on the security forces of Northern Ireland. The extensive study carried out on the RUC and the Specials is quite unique. The treatment of the GAA by the executive powers of the Stormont government is criticised by a majority of authors writing about sports in Northern Ireland. However, Hassan provides a complete study of security forces, which is yet to be challenged. Furthermore, it was "Catholics and Sport in Northern Ireland: Exclusiveness or Inclusiveness?"³³³ that introduced me to the Rule 21 and the troubled relationship between the

³³² Hassan, David. « The Gaelic Athletic Association, Rule 21, and Police Reform in Northern Ireland ». *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, vol. 29, n° 1, février 2005, p. 60-78.

³³³ Cronin, Mike. « Catholics and Sport in Northern Ireland: Exclusiveness or Inclusiveness? » *International Sport Studies*, vol. 22, n° 1, 2000, p. 25-41.

GAA and security forces. Moreover, it led me to study the process of exclusion that took place in the GAA and in the IFA and to link it to the policy of the unionist government.

The approach of the Rule 21 and of Northern Irish security forces will deepen our study of the policy of the unionist government and their management of civil order. This will allow us to have a clear vision of the way security forces exerted their power in Northern Ireland. Then, we will study how security forces were constructed since the abolishment of Stormont. Regarding those changes, the evolution that took place within the GAA will be studied. Here, the main subject of study will be the Rule 21, which forbade members of security forces from integrating the association. The purpose of this subpart is to go further in the study of the political role of the GAA in the Northern Irish society, and how it evolved over the second part of the 20th century. Indeed, it will be finalised with a study of the stance took by the leaders of the GAA during the ‘Troubles’. The demand of removing the Rule 21 from the Guide of the GAA by the British government and a part of the public will enable us to understand how the Association reacted to the changes agitating the Northern Ireland. With it, we will understand how the Irish identity displayed by the GAA evolved.

1. Study of security forces in Northern Ireland

Security forces in a deeply divided society

The relationship between the Catholic-nationalist community and the security forces in Northern Ireland tends to be violent. By the end of the 1930s, the RUC was considered to be the executive hand of the unionist government. It was composed of a majority of members of the Protestant-unionist community. The Special Branches, which had been formed for the sole purpose of fighting republican paramilitary groups, were composed only of Protestants. In this part of the dissertation, we aim at understanding the Rule 21, which forbade members of police forces to integrate the Gaelic Athletic Association. For the purpose of this part, we ought to study in depth the way security forces were organised in Ireland when the GAA was founded, and how it evolved during the 20th century. The article “The Gaelic Athletic Association, Rule 21, and Police Reform in Northern Ireland”³³⁴ enables us to do so.

The issue of the Rule 21 reveals interesting aspects of the Northern Irish society. It highlights the importance of culture, the way Irish nationalists considered the police forces and the behaviour of the police forces towards the Catholic-nationalist community. This part is the opportunity to go further in our study. Furthermore, it depicts how identities were affirmed and

³³⁴ Hassan, David. ‘The Gaelic Athletic Association, Rule 21, and Police Reform in Northern Ireland’. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, vol. 29, no. 1, Feb. 2005, p.60.

defended in a deeply divided society. Indeed, the treatment of the nationalist community by the police force, representative of the executive power, can be analysed through a cultural prism. What can also be analysed is the comportment of the nationalists and of the GAA towards external elements. First, the method used by the unionist government to deal with internal security and civilian order is studied in Hassan's article, then, it is the openness of the GAA that is scrutinised.

Hassan defines Northern Ireland as a divided society. The influence of the way the *dominant* group's "[upholds] the rule of law"³³⁵, and the subsequent reception of the components of the society is described. Smyth considers that two main factors influence the embracement of the police by the communities in a society: "(a) whether the police are seen as direct agents of state power and coercion and (b) how the values and norms associated with a particular society are organized, broadly understood, and accepted".³³⁶ In the very introduction of this subpart, we described the Northern Irish security forces as representatives of the executive power, which answers to Smyth's (a). The development of this dissertation echoes to this statement. However, the values of the dominant group have not been discussed yet. Still, the hypothesis concerning the GAA's opacity somehow answers to it. It represented the rejection to British rule, at first, and then of the authority of Stormont and of the Northern Irish security forces. The way the GAA responded to the demand of the Independent Commission for Policing in Northern Ireland will help us clarify the acceptance of the norms of the Northern Irish society by the Association.

The Independent Commission for Policing in Northern Ireland took place in 1999, one year after the Good Friday Agreement. It was a peace agreements reached by the government of Ireland and of the United Kingdom. It was lead by Mr Chris Patten. At the time of the commission, he was European Commissioner for External Relations, and had been named by Tony Blair, then PM. The commission aimed at strategically reform of "policing in Northern Ireland".³³⁷ It was meant to change the actual security forces, which were an instrument of control, into "an organisation that strives for the consent and support of the public".³³⁸ So as to be impartial and coherent, the Commission demanded the repeal of the Rule 21. If the security forces had to carry out changes, the GAA had to reform its integration policy. This demand alone testimonies of the importance of the GAA in Northern Irish politics and society. It was considered to have enough cultural and political influence to jeopardise the peace process taking place in Northern Ireland.

³³⁵ Hassan, David. *Op.cit.*, p.60.

³³⁶ Smyth, J.. Community policing and the reform of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, 25(1), 2002, pp.110-124.

³³⁷ Hassan, David. *Op.cit.*, p.61.

³³⁸ McGloin, J. Shifting paradigms. Policing in Northern Ireland. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, 26(1), 2003, p.118.

The police forces and their role in the Northern Ireland are then studied by Hassan. The composition of the police forces of the province evolved, and it strived in a society divided over ethnicity and culture. Its activity was thus linked to sectarianism, as it was an agent of it. It must be noted that the GAA and police forces are to be viewed in the 1990-2000 context, in this part. Indeed, it was at this time that the peace process undertaken in Belfast began to have concrete results over the sectarian issue in Northern Ireland. The sociological studies carried out in the first part have established that the dominant groups shape institutions and the rule of order in the state. In the case of Northern Ireland, the unionist government had secured their position constitutionally as well as in the streets by the end of the 1930s. Being a minority lacking parliamentary authority, the Catholic-nationalist community was the dominated group in Northern Ireland. Hence, the dominated group viewed the security forces as the executive force of the Stormont government.

With the creation of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) in 2001, both the unionist and the nationalist communities were consulted to build up a security force that would fit the objectives of the Patten report. However, *Sinn Féin* refused to be involved in the board meeting meant to establish the PSNI. Still, the Irish nationalist movement in Northern Ireland is far from being limited to *Sinn Féin*. Hence, the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), the Catholic Church and the *Irish News* considered that the nationalists should be involved in the “new policing arrangements by fully participating in the consultation process”.³³⁹ Let us remind that the SDLP was moderately nationalist, for it avoided the constitutional question, and that the *Irish News* was the main Irish nationalist paper in Ireland. Furthermore, the support of the Catholic Church is of the highest importance, due to the link between Catholicism and nationalism in Ireland. Support for the repeal of the Rule 21 was also emitted amongst the GAA in the Republic of Ireland. In fact, the debate over the rule divided the nationalists and the GAA. In Northern Ireland, no county except that of Down expressed support for the repeal of the rule, whereas all the counties of the Republic would do. So as to explain the reasons for such a division amongst the GAA, Hassan states that the high level of sectarianism in Northern Ireland and the fact that the congress was “recalcitrant and unreasonable”³⁴⁰ blocked any positive improvement.

Policing models

Before studying the specific case of policing in Northern Ireland, Hassan introduces us to the way a police force should be operating, basing his development on Mawby's.³⁴¹ To Mawby,

³³⁹ Hassan, David. *Op.cit*, p.61.

³⁴⁰ Hassan, David. *Op.cit*, p.61.

³⁴¹ Mawby, R. *Comparative Policing Issues: The British and American Experience in International Perspective*. Unwin Heyman, London. 1990.

three factors come into play when it comes to organise a police force: legitimacy, structure and function. The author also differentiates three separate models of policing: the Anglo-Saxon, the continental and the colonial models. In the Northern Irish case, we can limit our study to the Anglo-Saxon and the colonial models. For the Anglo-Saxon model, the source of legitimacy is to be found in local communities and civilian authority, as opposed to central government department.³⁴² This model was established by Robert Peel when he built up the modern British police with the Metropolitan Police Act in 1829. Peel had understood that the consent of the people was required to see the police force succeed in its function. Indeed, Mawby and Waddington correlate the association between the police force and the civilians and the local communities with the way past communities established order. In fact, those past communities used to maintain peace and order “within a flat, hierarchical arrangement and took account of local issues and [peculiarities].”³⁴³ In such a system, crime prevention was favored over the dealing with violent activities. This was the way the Anglo-Saxon model worked.³⁴⁴

However, the colonial model “was designed to police a foreign land to ensure security of the imperial elements and the colonial interests”.³⁴⁵ In the opinion of the British political leaders in charge of establishing peace in colonial grounds, the use of the Anglo-Saxon model was not possible. They assumed that the local population would not be receptive to it. “[...] police operating under this system were accountable to their political leaders rather than local authorities.”³⁴⁶ The trust that was established in Great Britain between the police force and the community did not exist in colonies. This lack of trust came from the political leaders themselves, who considered that the natives were not worthy of that trust, and first and foremost, that their interests had to be protected. “[t]he colonial police effectively operated as an instrument of control for the ruling government”³⁴⁷ McGloin describes the role of colonial police force: “[...] their function was to protect colonial interests, political and commercial, and to maintain (or attain) [public] order”³⁴⁸. The application of a colonial model in the establishment of civil order is partly responsible for the dominance of the unionists in Northern Ireland. Indeed, the fact that Ireland was ruled by a centralised parliament

³⁴² Emsley, C. ‘A Typology of Nineteenth-Century Police.’ *Crime, History and Societies*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1999, pp. 29–44.

³⁴³ Hassan, David. *Op.cit*, p.62.

³⁴⁴ Waddington, P., and R. Mawby. ‘Armed and Unarmed Policing’. *Policing Across the World: Issues for the Twenty-First Century*, Routledge, 1999, pp. 151–66.

³⁴⁵ Das, D., and A. Verma. ‘The Armed Police in the British Colonial Tradition: The Indian Perspective.’ *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, vol. 21, no. 2, 1998, p. 354–67.

³⁴⁶ Hassan, David. *Op.cit*, p.62.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid*.

³⁴⁸ McGloin, J. ‘Shifting Paradigms. Policing in Northern Ireland’. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2003, pp. 118–43.

and that a specific police force had been sent there to maintain order was the expression of the dominance of Great Britain over Ireland.

Following Hassan's development, the colonial model of policing found its roots in Ireland with the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC). Excepted Derry, Belfast and Dublin, all cities in Ireland were under the control of the RIC. In fact, the three main cities of Ireland already had metropolitan police forces. It must be noted that it was Robert Peel who initiated the formation of the RIC. Hence, his belief in the cooperation between communities, civilian authority and police forces did not apply to Ireland. It can be explained by the fact that for most of the 19th century, a majority of the British political leaders regarded the Irish population as tempestuous and hard to control.

The case of Northern Ireland policing

After the partition of Ireland in 1921, The Royal Constabulary moved North. Hassan states that the violent opposition against the maintaining of the RIC in the Free State pushed them to leave the Southern Irish soil. In consequence, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) was created. After facing the opposition of most of the Southern Irish civilians, the Royal Constabulary would face the opposition of the nationalist and Catholic community in the North. In fact, the community accused the police force of executing repressive orders against the Catholic community expressed from the unionist government. As Elliott states: "increasingly [the RUC] came to be seen by Catholics as a partisan force, soft on the Orangemen, hard on the Catholics when they clashed".³⁴⁹ Furthermore, the Army offices and Police headquarters in Great Britain were known for their strong support of Unionism. In some cases, this support would be complemented by sectarianism and vehemence towards the Catholic minority. As a matter of fact, the minister of Home Affairs from 1921 until 1943, Sir Dawson-Bates, was a "staunchly anti-Catholic"³⁵⁰ unionist. He ruled the RUC by giving orders to the inspector general of the Constabulary. Furthermore, "The RUC focused its attempts on ensuring state security by monitoring the IRA and other nationalist [organisations], but did not attend to Protestant extremists, even going so far as to claim that the Ulster Volunteer Force did not exist".³⁵¹ The exercising power in Northern Ireland was, as this statement shows, already displaying the dominance of the government over the nationalist minority. The use of a colonial policing in Northern Ireland was justified to Sir Dawson-Bates, as

³⁴⁹ Elliott, M. *The Catholics of Ulster*. Penguin, 2000.

³⁵⁰ Jeffery, K., and M. Mazower. 'Police and Government in Northern Ireland, 1922-1969'. *The Policing of the Politics in the Twentieth Century*, Berghahn Books, 1997, pp. 151-66.

³⁵¹ McGloin, J. 'Shifting Paradigms. Policing in Northern Ireland'. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2003, pp. 118-43.

“the minister of Home Affairs openly supported this differential treatment, because Protestants were loyal to the state whereas Catholics were not”.³⁵²

Alongside the different model of policing used, the inspection and the arming of the RUC differed from that of the security forces in Great Britain (GB). The inspection to which were subject the security forces in GB were much more rigorous than in Northern Ireland.³⁵³ First, the RUC was heavily armed, especially at the beginning of its existence. It was also kept from evolving and from adapting following the public’s demand: “The RUC was not required by law to investigate complaints against officers from members of the public or even inside the force”.³⁵⁴ The author adds that the Minister of Home Affairs would systematically reject or ignore any demand or complain on the matter of the RUC.³⁵⁵ Supported by the Minister of Home Affairs and by the Special Powers Act, the RUC had for a mission the “retention of Unionist hegemony in Northern Ireland”.³⁵⁶ “[This] required the establishment of law and order and the quelling of nationalist violence”.³⁵⁷ This demonstrates that the police forces were shaped to serve the interests of the unionist government.

After introducing us to the role of security forces and to the RUC system, Hassan justifies the maintaining of the Rule 21. Following his development, it was a way to denounce the policy of the Stormont government towards the Catholic community and Irish Nationalism. This rule was first emitted as the GAA was founded, at a time of the expansion of Irish nationalism. It found legitimacy in the unionist treatment of the nationalist minority. However, the author nuances this idea by reminding the reader that the unionist against nationalist scheme lacked nuances. So as to back this idea, Hassan states that 10% of the Northern Irish Catholics were part of the security forces in 1980.³⁵⁸ This percentage is shows that the peer pressure amongst the Catholics to not join the security forces present in Northern Ireland found its limits in individuals. With the creation of a new police force in the early 2000s, nationalists eager to join its ranks were blocked by the Rule 21. Hence, it was important for the improvement of the sectarian issue in Northern Ireland to put an end to it. The Rule 21 was created in reaction to ethnonationalist issues: the presence of the

³⁵² Weitzer, D. *Policing under Fire: Ethnic Conflict and Police-Community Relations in Northern Ireland*. State University of New York Press, 1995.

³⁵³ McGloin, J. ‘Shifting Paradigms. Policing in Northern Ireland’. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2003, pp. 118–43.

³⁵⁴ Weitzer, D. *Policing under Fire: Ethnic Conflict and Police-Community Relations in Northern Ireland*. State University of New York Press, 1995, p.52.

³⁵⁵ Hassan, David. *Op.cit*, p.63.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p.64.

³⁵⁷ Hassan, David. *Op.cit*, p.63.

³⁵⁸ Ryder, C. *The RUC 1922-2000: A Force under Fire*. Arrow, 2000.

British government in Ireland. It was maintained in Northern Ireland because the institutional construction of the province was a threat to the integrity of the association and its members. However, with the institutional changes carried out during the peace process, notably because of the Patten Commission, the GAA had to take part in the reforms. Hence, institutional reforms managed to question the ethnonational issues that were used to justify the policy of exclusion of the GAA.

2. The importance of the Rule 21 and the opacity of the GAA rules

Members of the British armed forces and police shall not be eligible for membership of the Association. A member of the Association participating in dances, or similar entertainment, promoted by or under the patronage of such bodies, shall incur suspension of at least twelve weeks.³⁵⁹

The political role of the GAA in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is troubled by ethnonational issues. In it, a variety of national identities are expressed. In the chapter “Northern Ireland and the Troubles”,³⁶⁰ Cronin studies the expression of those identities and the importance of the GAA in the expression of Irish nationalism in Northern Ireland. He reminds us that all aspects of life have suffered from the Troubles. The author hence studies the role of sports and of the GAA in the violence that agitated Northern Ireland from the 1960s until the 1990s. The opacity of the GAA and the exclusively Irish nationalist symbolic and imagery displayed by the association were at the origins of the reluctance of the Protestants and unionists to integrate it, as well as to consider it as solely a sporting body. The role of the GAA in the formation of martyrs of the nationalist cause, such as Padraig Pearse is a part of the suspicion emitted towards the GAA by the unionists. As an example, UUP MP Mr Jeffrey Donaldson “[...] said his party was not seeking to demonize the Gaelic culture or the GAA. He said, however, there were some features of Gaelic culture which were offensive”.³⁶¹

The GAA contests the authority of the Northern Irish administrative entity. Its geographical organisation does not obey the partition of Ireland, and the construction of the imagery of the association emanates Irish Nationalism. Let us study the way Nationalism was defended by the GAA. Cronin considers that an ideology can be considered as nationalist when it has a language, history, culture, religion, territorial aspiration, ethnic distinctiveness and a nation state. Under

³⁵⁹ *Official GAA Rule Book*, 2001, p.12.

³⁶⁰ Cronin, Mike. « Northern Ireland and the Troubles: Gaelic games, Soccer and Irish Identity Since 1884 ». *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic games, Soccer and Irish Identity Since 1884*, Four Court Press, 1999, p. 143-86.

³⁶¹ *Irish Times*, Oct. 1997. Comments by Donaldson were in response to the decision by Mo Mowlam that the GAA and its activities would not come under the jurisdiction of the Northern Ireland Parades Commission.

this definition of nationalism, Irish nationalism in Northern Ireland has all of the features present in the list except for the nation state. Here is Guibernau's definition of a nation without a state:

the common feature lying behind any minority's nationalist movement calling for greater autonomy or independence is dissatisfaction with its current situation. The feeling that they could benefit from distancing themselves from the state [is thus] likely to be perceived as a threat to the state's integrity.³⁶²

Hence, the existence of two nationalisms in such an opposition resulted in direct competition between the two communities in all aspects of life. Such a phenomenon is explained by Breuilly:

the identity of the nation is provided in arbitrary ways. The leap from culture to politics is made by portraying the nation at one moment as cultural community and at another as political community whilst insisting that in an ideal state the insurgent national community will be split into cultural and political spheres.³⁶³

In the case of Irish nationalism, the political spheres studied by Breuilly operate separately, whilst remaining coherent in political, cultural, and military modes of action. Hence, the GAA embodies Irish Nationalism and makes it active in the cultural life, hence making it active in the political life of Northern Ireland. However, clarification needs to be made on the levels of cultural nationalism. First of all, Cronin notes that research on cultural nationalism in the context of the creation of the Irish Republic, of the nature of political nationalism during the Troubles, and of the impact of cultural nationalism lacked documentation on sports. In fact, a great emphasis was put on "high"³⁶⁴ culture. High culture, as defined by Hutchinson, includes literature and arts. There was much less documentation on low culture,³⁶⁵ which includes sports. Still, the GAA has proved to be a very efficient tool in the propagation of the Irish nationalist message at the beginning of the 20th century. Indeed, Cronin considers that the GAA "allowed for the interchange of nationalist ideas and aspirations as championed by the Association's hierarchy, dominated in the first four decades by members of the radical IRB".³⁶⁶

After the establishment of the Northern Irish government, the GAA enabled the Catholic-nationalist community to exist through its own culture and set of rules. The rules that organised the GAA had been established when the Association was founded in 1880. Still, some of the adherents considered the GAA rules as relevant as late as in the 1990s. Furthermore, the existence

³⁶² Guibernau, M. *Nationalisms. The Nation-State and Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, London. 1996, p.102-3.

³⁶³ Breuilly, J. "The Sources of Nationalist Ideology". Nationalism, J. Hutchinson and A.D. Smith (eds). Oxford University Press, London. 1994, p.111.

³⁶⁴ Cronin, Mike. 'Northern Ireland and the Troubles'. *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic games, Soccer and Irish Identity Since 1884*, Four Courts Press, Dublin. 1999, p.147.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p.148.

of a functioning cultural body that defended the Catholic tradition and the Irish nationalist ideology allowed the minority community to exist in a state where its identity was repressed. In the first and second parts of this dissertation, we have demonstrated the policies adopted by the unionist government to repress any form of political representation that might challenge its authority. The GAA succeeded in thriving under such a rule, and was not as affected as have been the nationalist party, the republican parties, the Labour Party and the Unionist Independent parties. However, the Troubles have impacted all elements of the Northern Irish society. Sugden even considers that during the Troubles, the Association “[played] its traditional role, asserting Irish national distinctiveness and espousing the cause of Irish freedom from a society run by the British and their Ulster Protestant agents”.³⁶⁷ The GAA hence found itself involved in Northern Irish politics.

There were two events during which the neutrality of the GAA as a cultural body was challenged. The first was the hunger strikes, and the second the repeal of the Rule 21. In 1981, republican prisoners had undertaken hunger strikes in order to contest the internment and the policy of the British government. Those strikes were widely supported by the Catholic community, and individual Gaelic clubs also expressed their support.³⁶⁸ Local newspapers collaborated with Gaelic clubs to openly express the support of the prisoners. However, the GAA as a body tried not to be involved in this issue. Peter Quinn, Chairman of the Ulster Board of the GAA in 1990 and President of the GAA in 1991 did not want to get into a debate that fell under sectarianism. By doing so, he aimed at differentiating the GAA from social divisions existing in Northern Ireland. Sugden quotes Quinn, to demonstrate that the President considered that the GAA “merely reflected existing divisions”.³⁶⁹

We cannot be held accountable for the fragmentation of society in this part of our island. To attempt to make sport, especially Gaelic sport, the scapegoat for the failures of politicians and for those paid to manage society and the economy is dangerous, if not hypocritical.³⁷⁰

Sugden considers that the GAA is affiliated to an Irish tradition and heritage, which makes it part of Northern Irish politics. The author criticises the discourse of Quinn and describes it as a narrow definition of politics. Quinn does not want to acknowledge the variety of political outlets in Northern Ireland, and so of Irish Nationalism. The Irish nationalist identity is defended by the SDLP, the Provisional IRA, but most importantly by the GAA. The implication of the association

³⁶⁷ Sugden, John P., et Alan Bairner. *Op.cit*, p.34.

³⁶⁸ Sugden, John P., et Alan Bairner. *Op.cit*, p.34.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid*.

³⁷⁰ *Belfast Telegraph*, 30 June 1989.

in the peace negotiations and in the reform of the security forces of Northern Ireland demonstrate its importance. Furthermore,

“[the] fact that the GAA eschews formal links with political organisations does not mean that it is apolitical. Considering the last argument of Sugden and the role of the GAA in the Northern Irish society, it is indeed hard to consider that the GAA was apolitical.”³⁷¹

This lack of intervention was even more unfortunate during the peace negotiations and social reforms undertaken in the late 1980s and 1990s. Indeed, Cronin stresses that the peace advancements were practical to all Northern Irish parties, including the GAA, but that the association did not contribute to it.³⁷² It is in this point that the repeal of the rule 21 is important.

The GAA and the security forces

To study the relationship between the GAA and security forces, we will exploit again “The Gaelic Athletic Association, Rule 21, and Police Reform in Northern Ireland”.³⁷³ Up until the third part of the article, Hassan’s development focused on the relationship between the GAA and the RUC. To nuance his views and introduce the general relationship between the GAA and Northern Irish security forces, Fahy is quoted. He claimed that “the RUC has by no means the worst record of harassment against GAA members, especially when compared with other units in Northern Ireland”.³⁷⁴ In fact, the RUC was unable to manage civil order as the CRM gained in popularity. The British government thus decided to send in Northern Ireland the British Army. This did not prevent the security forces from harassing the GAA. The activities of the association were controlled and a broad clash over culture was taking place. The control of the activities was such that:

[on] Sunday afternoons, checkpoints would suddenly spring up on the road to the local GAA pitch. Exhaustive Border searches would coincide with the exodus of GAA fans to Dublin on the Sunday mornings before important All Ireland occasions at Croke Park. The message was clear. To be associated with the GAA was to set yourself apart.³⁷⁵

The response of the security forces to the cultural activities of the association would be followed by much more dramatic actions. With the intense rioting taking place in the 1970s, several local regiments supplemented the ranks of the British Army, such as the UVF, the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) and the Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF). Hassan quotes the murder

³⁷¹ Sugden, John P., et Alan Bairner. *Sport, Sectarianism, and Society in Ireland*. Leicester University Press, Leicester. 1993, p.35.

³⁷² Cronin, Mike. ‘Northern Ireland and the Troubles’. *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic games, Soccer and Irish Identity Since 1884*, Four Courts Press, Dublin. 1999, p.156.

³⁷³ Hassan, David. *Op.cit.*

³⁷⁴ Fahy, D. ‘How the GAA Survived The Troubles’. *GAA Annual Report*, Gaelic Athletic Association, 2001, pp. 2–7.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p.73.

perpetrated against three men involved in the GAA in 1981, 1993 and 1997. The main complaint of the “Northern Gaels”³⁷⁶ concerned the agency of the security forces in the constant harassing of the security forces. The Hunt commission, which took place in 1969 would state that the security forces had a double role in Northern Ireland.

The key recommendation arising out of the investigation was an end to the dual role of the RUC— that of being both a police force and a security service responsible for protecting the state. The committee advocated that the RUC disarm and [abandon] the latter role, which would now be handed over to the military.³⁷⁷

The Commission advised to establish a policing closer to that established in Great Britain - the Anglo-Saxon policing model. However, the context prevented such a policing from being operated, as Northern Ireland was “on the brink of civil war”.³⁷⁸ In the end, the RUC and the republicans kept on clashing in the streets of the province.³⁷⁹

In conclusion to the third part, Hassan links the riots and armed clashes between unionists and nationalists with a widening cultural struggle amongst the Catholics. The GAA found more and more support amongst the Catholic-nationalist community, as there was a “noted rise to prominence of Gaelic pursuits among the Northern Nationalist community”.³⁸⁰ The rise of support for the GAA was closely linked to the discontent of the community against the policy of the government, the security forces and the constitutional question. Earlier in the study of Hassan’s article it was said that the Rule 21 found its justification in the policy of the government. It was also the case in the 1970s: “The GAA once again found itself embroiled in a wider political arena”.³⁸¹ Hassan’s third part is concluded with the quotation of Mr Pat Fanning, then GAA president, who claims the political role of the GAA and its allegiance to Ireland - in opposition to the Loyalist allegiance to the Crown and to the United Kingdom.

3. The repeal of Rule 21

So far, the development of this dissertation presented the Rule 21 as justified by the treatment of the GAA by the police force. However, the policy of exclusion of the GAA can be considered as a policy that exacerbates sectarian issues. More importantly, the policy of opacity

³⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p.66.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid*.

³⁷⁸ Fahy, D. ‘How the GAA Survived The Troubles’. *GAA Annual Report*, Gaelic Athletic Association, 2001, p.66.

³⁷⁹ Elliott, M. *The Catholics of Ulster*. Penguin, 2000.

³⁸⁰ Hassan, D. *Sport and National Identity in Ireland: The Case of Northern Nationalism*. University of Ulster at Jordanstown, 2001, [Unpublished doctoral dissertation](#).

³⁸¹ Hassan, David. *Op.cit.*, p.67.

of the GAA in the context of the peace process and of the police reform has to be criticised. Hence, the development of this subpart will show that there was no reason for the maintenance of the Rule 21 up until 2001 and that most of the researchers studying the Rule 21 controversy highlighted the need for change within the GAA.

The usefulness of the Rule 21 is tackled by Hassan in the article “The Gaelic Athletic Association, Rule 21, and Police Reform in Northern Ireland”.³⁸² First of all, the author considers that those rules had a symbolic role rather than an effective role. Indeed, he alludes to the Rule 21 and to the Rule 27, which forbade members of the GAA to practice ‘foreign’ sports. However, neither rule prevented its members from transgressing it, as “sanctions were only ever selectively applied with an administrative blind eye often shown to those who transgressed such rulings”.³⁸³ In fact, the author considers that those rules emerged at a time when one’s identity could be targeted. They were established as means of defense. Cronin also highlights the symbolism of the rule 21. There is a sense of “purity of Gaelic games”³⁸⁴ attached to this rule, and that is the main reason why it failed to be repealed until 2001. In fact, it kept away what is considered to be the enemy of the Irish nationalist identity, and so preserved the Gaelic culture. The fact that the Stormont parliament, the police forces and the British governments had no impact whatsoever on the organisation and ruling of the GAA has enabled it to maintain this tradition and preserve it. Cronin considers that “[by] doing so they have clung to their own peculiar notion of nationalism, their own place in and and version of nationalist history, and their over-inflated sense of importance as a national organisation”.³⁸⁵ However, the author questions the importance of this rule in the context of reconciliation and of peace process.

The Rule 21 was also tackled by a number of Irish and British political agents. Hassan considers that the first arguments emitted in favour of the repeal of the rule came from the organisation itself. Individual groups emitted their disapproval of the maintenance of the Rule 21. In 1995, the County Down - in which is located Belfast - passed a resolution to remove the Rule 21. It was the very first Ulster county to emit such a demand. The resolution was supported by the Counties of Dublin, Carlow and Sligo, but the Ulster Council refused, and it blocked any further advancement.³⁸⁶ Within the GAA, the issue would be debated on a frequent basis, but it failed to

³⁸² *Ibid.*

³⁸³ Fahy, D. *How the GAA survived The Troubles*. Wolfhound, Dublin. 2001. Quoted in Hassan, D. “The Gaelic Athletic Association, Rule 21, and Police Reform in Northern Ireland”, p.67.

³⁸⁴ Cronin, Mike. ‘Northern Ireland and the Troubles’. *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic games, Soccer and Irish Identity Since 1884*, Four Courts Press, Dublin. 1999, p.156.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁶ Fahy, D. *How the GAA survived The Troubles*. Wolfhound, Dublin. 2001, p.65.

result in the repeal of the rule. Intense pressure was carried onto the GAA. Cronin states that the debate over Rule 21 was “shaped by external forces”.³⁸⁷ Considering the extent of the press coverage on the question and the immobility of the GAA, this statement is coherent. Indeed, the consensus over the rule 21 question within the Irish and British newspapers was that it “represented an unnecessary and extremely damaging piece of historical baggage that should be removed forthwith”.³⁸⁸ Tom Humphries as he states that

Mainstream republicanism has stopped holding up its dead and its wounded as justification for eternal war, why should the GAA be persisting? For a great and unique sports body with so much to offer, it was a sad day.³⁸⁹

After ten years of negotiations, the rule 21 was repealed. The arguments emitted by the County Down GAA clubs have been of the highest importance in its repeal. Indeed, even though the question was raised by external elements to the GAA, only internal elements could bring to it a lasting and fair solution. The GAA clubs in County Down have dramatically suffered from the sectarian tension revolving around the association. Several of their members have been attacked and murdered, and clubs have been vandalised. Those actions were committed by loyalist paramilitary groups, who associated the GAA with republican groups. Hence they considered GAA premises and members as strategic targets in the context of sectarian clashes. Hence, the repeal of the Rule 21 would end all associations between republicanism and the GAA, and so protect its members. Secondly, the population present in County Down differs from the rest of Ireland. It has been involved in cross-community relations and are in contact with the Protestant-unionist population. Hassan also alludes to the youthness of the members of the GAA, who present a more open-minded vision of sports and culture than some of their GAA counterparts. This openness enabled the GAA in County Down to favour a policy of defense. All in all, protection of the members overran the protection of an out-of-date symbol.³⁹⁰ With time and patience, the rule 21 was repealed from the GAA status book. Once again, the President of the GAA aimed to separate itself from sectarian politics. However this time, its policy took part in the peace process.

B. Construction of the Irish identity and women

As was done in the third part of the dissertation, gender studies are integrated in the study of sport associations. The expression of the national identity by women is studied in the context

³⁸⁷ Cronin, Mike. ‘Northern Ireland and the Troubles’. *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic games, Soccer and Irish Identity Since 1884*, Four Courts Press, Dublin. 1999, p.159.

³⁸⁸ Hassan, David. *Op.cit* p.67.

³⁸⁹ Humphries, T. (1995b, April 11). Sad day for fine institution. *The Irish Times*, p. 14.

³⁹⁰ Hassan, David. *Op.cit*, p.72.

of Irish nationalist politics and of the GAA. It is important to include parliamentary and political representation in this bit of development as the GAA is considered to be a political body. Beyond the question of national identity, this subpart aims at studying the role of women in the GAA and how Irish nationalism have depicted their role. Hence, we will study the development of the game of *Camogie* and of the Ladies Gaelic Football League. Those games are adaptations of the hurling and gaelic football games to the practice of women. We will study the specificity of those sports to understand how gender identities are constructed in the Irish nationalist tradition. We will then link it to the role of women in republican movements.

1. Gender in the GAA

Gender in Victorian sport and in the Gaelic games

Throughout this dissertation, we have asserted that the GAA was created in order to promote the Irish nationalist ideals in Ireland. This promotion took place during the Great Revival, which put at the forefront of cultural activity Irish literature, poetry and leisure activities. In the context of sports, Gaelic games were meant to counter the expansion of ‘British sports’, such as cricket or rugby. Furthermore, the GAA and its patrons were aiming at constructing a masculinised ‘Gaelic body’. Hence, the Irish nationalist identity was also made in opposition to the British depiction of the Irish identity. In her study of the evolution of the Gaelic Body, Sara Brady alludes to the creation of the Gaelic pitch, which was a sentimental embodiment of the Gaelic field.

Sara Brady studies how the masculinised and local identity of the Gaelic games evolved over the time.³⁹¹ Furthermore, the author considers that the process of identity construction carried out by the GAA can be understood with the issues that agitate it today. Or, as she puts it, “The cracks in culture that the present-day GAA displays tend to run along the lines of gender and migration”.³⁹² Hence, the article tackles both the way the GAA imagery was formed, and the evolution of both the nationality and the gender issues evolved. In this subpart, we shall focus on the identity construction process linked to gender issues. To do so, we will exploit Brady’s development. Let us note that the development carried out on migration and the diaspora shall be used later, in the last part of the dissertation, for it brings out perspectives that had not been considered before in the making of this dissertation.

The role of sports in the process of identity construction has been demonstrated in this demonstration and in a majority of the sport studies exploited in it. Furthermore, the specific case

³⁹¹ Brady, Sara. « Home and Away: The Gaelic games, Gender, and Migration ». *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua*, vol. 11, n° 3, University of St. Thomas (Center for Irish Studies), 2007, pp. 28-43. JSTOR.

³⁹² *Ibid*, p.28.

of the GAA and its success in promoting Gaelic sports within the nationalist community throughout Ireland was studied as well. However, we lacked consideration for the role of gender in this construction. In the first part, we mentioned that the organisation and promotion of the Gaelic games imitated the way sports were promoted by the Victorians, in Great Britain. Sports and leisure activities were then exploited to stimulate physical activity, and trigger in young men a taste for physical development meant to complete their scholar education. Beyond the mere education of the youth, sports under the Victorians were well organised, and had been hegemonised by amateur championships. Michael Cusack, founding father of the GAA, had understood this and decided to promote it. He was also conscious of the success of this method, and argued that it was necessary to exploit it to promote Gaelic games. Brady quotes a part of Cusack's development in "A Word on Irish Athletics":

No movement having for its object the social and political advancement of a nation from the tyranny of imported and enforced customs and manners can be regarded as perfect if it has not made adequate provision for the preservation and cultivation of the national pastimes of the people. Voluntary neglect of such pastimes is a sure sign of national decay and dissolution... We tell the Irish people to take the management of their games into their own hands, to encourage and promote in every way every form of athletics which is peculiarly Irish, and to remove with one sweep everything foreign and iniquitous in the present system. The vast majority of the best athletes in Ireland are nationalists. These gentlemen should take the matter in hands at once... It is only by such an arrangement that pure Irish athletics will be revived, and the incomparable strength and physique of our race will be preserved.³⁹³

To Michael Cusack, the stakes of organising and developing Gaelic games all over Ireland were as high as the survival of the Irish race - as he defines it. The nationalist and self-determinative struggle through sports hence needed to be undertaken by strong athletes. In the development over the masculinity promoted by Protestant football crowds, we have alluded to a materialisation of the battleground in the football pitch. Footballers were then pictured as fighting on the forefront of a cultural battleground. In this case, Gaelic athletes played exactly the same role as the football players. Hence, Brady notes that the gaelic athletes "hold allegiance to the Irish 'nation'".³⁹⁴ With it, the Irish nation was created and materialised, regardless of the actual constitutional status of Ireland.

The GAA founding fathers were fiercely opposed to the influence of British games. During the very first meeting of the GAA, in Thurles County Tipperary in November 1884, the Archbishop Croke criticised the influence of the British production and government over the Irish way of life.

³⁹³ Michael Cusack, "A Word on Irish Athletics" *The Irishman*, 11 October 1884. Quoted in Brady, Sara "Home and Away: the Gaelic games, Gender and Migration", pp.28-29.

³⁹⁴ Brady, Sara. *Op.cit*, p.29.

“[We] are daily importing from England..., her pastimes, to the utter discredit of our own grand national sports, and to the sore humiliation, as I believe, of every genuine son and daughter of the old land”.³⁹⁵ Croke also blamed foreign sports for the negative influence it had over Gaelic sports, which were not as much practiced by the Irish people as British sports were. Brady resumes his arguments as follows: “Croke places the desire for revitalized Irish games close to the land while firmly rejecting the British body, whether male or female, from that land”.³⁹⁶ All in all, in 1884, the exclusion of identities alien to Irish Nationalism was already present in the GAA.

The construction of the Irish identity by the GAA was made with references to the imagery of ancient games. In *The Invention of Tradition*, Hobsbawm elaborates on the concept of invented traditions, which are a “set of practices [...] which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past”.³⁹⁷ However, in those practices were not structured enough, they would be manipulated. Hence, Hobsbawm warns us that “insofar as there is reference to a historic past, the peculiarity of invented traditions is that the continuity with it is largely factitious”.³⁹⁸ Since Gaelic games were not organised before the establishment of the GAA, the historical continuity claimed by the founding fathers is questionable. The depiction of games that survived famine and cultural repression promoted by authors such as Marcus de Búrca have also been contradicted by Cronin, who reveals that those events did impact dreadfully the Irish native games. Furthermore, Cronin criticised the continuity of Gaelic games as promoted by de Búrca since there is a lack of documentation on the practice of games prior to 1884. All in all, this overview of the actual history of Gaelic games contradicts the rhetoric of the GAA patrons, who denounced the negative impact of the British on the practice of Gaelic games in Ireland.

Mimesis of a mimesis, the development of camogie and of the Ladies Gaelic Football

After discussing the cultural and political basis exploited by the founding fathers of the GAA, Brady demonstrates how they succeeded in providing a unique essence to Gaelic games. In the process of the revival of the Gaelic culture, hurling and Gaelic football were put at the forefront of the GAA competitions. Those games quickly gained in popularity. Their uniqueness and Irishness made of them the most efficient tools of the nationalist development in Ireland.

³⁹⁵ Archbishop Thomas W. Croke, “The Gaelic Athletic Association”. *The Nation*, 27 December 1884.

³⁹⁶ Brady, Sara. *Op.cit*, p.29.

³⁹⁷ Hobsbawm, Eric. « Introduction: Inventing Traditions ». *The Invention of Tradition*, édité par Ranger Terence et Eric Hobsbawm, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1983, p.1.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p.2.

Furthermore, they were “distinguishable”³⁹⁹ from British games. As Gaelic games were once again gaining in popularity in Ireland, a new definition of the Irish identity was promoted and built up by the GAA. Consequently, the manliness of the athletes taking part in Gaelic games was highlighted. Let us study how this process took place by taking into consideration the way imitation enabled to quicken the results of the propagation of Gaelic games. Then, we will study how the importance of gender evolved within the Association.

What is interesting in the development of the GAA is that it imitated British organisation of sporting associations. Brady quotes Mandle to express this idea:

While adopting hostility to all England, the Association was forced, unconsciously as it may be, to imitate the features of Victorian sport, its emphasis on morality on health, on organization, codification and competition.⁴⁰⁰

Brady then tries and define the process of imitation and alludes to the mimesis. Michael Taussig defines the process of mimesis. “The wonder of mimesis lies in the copy drawing on the character and power of the original, to the point whereby the representation may even assume that character and that power”.⁴⁰¹ Hence, Brady makes it clear that mimesis - or “sympathetic magic”⁴⁰² - enabled the GAA to copy British sports, which were then popular in Ireland, so as to replace it. This idea is expressed as such by Taussig: “The ability to mime, and mime well, in other words, is the capacity to Other”.⁴⁰³ To the author, the mimesis helped the GAA connect Gaelic games from the past and the current organisation of the game. The continuity brought by it legitimised the GAA and discredited the British influence and games. Furthermore, it brought to it a sense of continuity, of national commonality, and, ultimately, of autonomy.⁴⁰⁴

Earlier in this part, we have alluded to the Gaelic body. After having determined the strategy of expansion of the GAA, Brady scrutinises how the Gaelic identity was constructed. Land and territories have often been personalised for propaganda and political reasons. In the case of the Gaelic games, a body contradicting the depiction of the Irish by the British was created. This, the Gaelic body was an “ambivalent and contested site of performance”.⁴⁰⁵ This body was a direct response to the creation of the colonial body by the British, which was that of a female: “womanly

³⁹⁹ Brady, Sara. *Op.cit*, p.30.

⁴⁰⁰ Mandle, W. F. *The Gaelic Athletic Association and Irish Nationalist Politics 1884-1924*. Intl Specialized Book Services, Dublin. 1987, pp.14-15.

⁴⁰¹ Taussig, Michael. *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses*. Routledge, London and New York. 1993, p.xiii.

⁴⁰² *Ibid*, p.31.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid*, p.19.

⁴⁰⁴ Brady, Sara. *Op.cit*, p.31.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p.32.

symbols were portrayed as passive, silent, suffering, in opposition to the active strength, courage, heroism and martyrdom of the men they inspired”.⁴⁰⁶ Brady also states that the Gaelic identity was portrayed by men whilst they practiced sports on the Gaelic field, which was feminised. It is important to note that the Irish nationalist - and especially the republican - speech values martyrdom. Finally, the violence present in Gaelic games - and especially hurling and Gaelic football - helped the GAA promote a virile and masculine image of the Irish identity. It is especially true after the rules of the games had been revisited. As Patrick McDevitt puts it, “the random violence of the earlier games was nominally replaced with order and virtuous manliness”.⁴⁰⁷

The symbolism of Gaelic games mostly revolved around masculinity. Patrick McDevitt approaches the hierarchy existing between men and women in the Irish nationalist movement and the Gaelic games: “the games helped to define separate spheres for men and women within the nationalist movement, reserving the most active and prominent duties for the men”.⁴⁰⁸ The strategy of the GAA and of the nationalists to get rid of the feminine image which had been attributed to them by the British was simple. But the task was much more complex. In fact, according to McDevitt, they aimed at displaying a portrait of Irish identity that went against the stereotype of the feminine and passive attitude of the Irish. The violence inherent to the Gaelic games was helpful in the process of virilisation of the Irish identity. This strategy was approached and defined by Stuart Hall in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Hall defines the strategy as a “transcoding”⁴⁰⁹ of stereotypes. It consists of going against the stereotype so as to display it wrongly defines one’s identity. Then, Brady successfully manages to link the formation of the Irish identity - which was in direct opposition to the British vision of the Irish - and the need for continuity of the nationalist movement and of the GAA. To do so, Taussig is once again quoted. “[All] identity formation is engaged in this habitually bracing activity in which the issue is not so much staying the same, but maintaining sameness through alterity.”⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁶ Ryan, Louise. « Aonach Tailteann, the Irish Press and Gendered Symbols of National Identity in the 1920s and '1930s ». *Sport and the Irish Histories, Identities, Issues*, édité par Alan Bairner, University College Dublin Press, 2005.

⁴⁰⁷ McDevitt, Patrick. « Muscular Catholicism: Nationalism, Masculinity and Gaelic Team Sports, 1884-1916 ». *Gender and History*, vol. 14, n° 3, 1997, p.263.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p.268.

⁴⁰⁹ Hall, Stuart. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London, Sage / The Open University. 1997, p.270.

⁴¹⁰ Taussig, Michael. *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses*. Routledge, London and New York. 1993, p.129.

A very similar process of mimesis took place in female Gaelic games. However, the issue of gender seems to provide different results on the importance of women in the Association and on the way the game is practiced. The author studies how the two major female Gaelic games - Gaelic football and hurling - have been constructed, and what is their relation with the masculine Gaelic body. Beforehand, Brady presents the game of *camogie* and of Gaelic football. The first was derived from hurling in 1904, its name coming from *camóg*,⁴¹¹ a synonym of the hurl, the stick used in hurling. It only differs from hurling in the feminisation of the rules. Skirts are compulsory, the pitch is shorter, there is less members in one team and physical contact is forbidden. However, Brady highlights the potential of the *camogie* to gain in popularity and to challenge the construction of the Gaelic body, which is strongly masculinised and exclusively male. In fact, it has grown in popularity and attracts hundreds of spectators.

The game of Ladies Gaelic football, on the other hand, contains much less feminised rules. To the author, it is important to remind us that Gaelic football was much more present in the Irish society than hurling was, and that it was defined as a men's sport. Up until the 1960s, when the Ladies Gaelic Football was created, the only role of the women in the game was to cheer for their team, and this, "not too loudly".⁴¹² The only concessions made to Ladies Gaelic football was the right to pick up the ball and the forbidding of physical contact. However, there exists much less differences between the female Gaelic football and its male counterparts, than there is between hurling and *camogie*. Moreover, female Gaelic football gained a lot of popularity in Ireland since it was created. Brady alludes to the games at Croke park that attract 70,000 spectators or more. The author then focuses on the inequalities that still exist in Irish games. The result of this is the lack of access to "sporting capital".⁴¹³ The sporting capital is defined by Katie Liston and is based on Bourdieu's definition of capital. The sociologist indeed considered that the economic capital was to be taken into consideration alongside social and cultural capital. Hence, the sporting capital is defined as

⁴¹¹ This word was created by Tadhg Ó Donnchadha, a scholar and poet. Brady, Sara. « Home and Away: The Gaelic games, Gender, and Migration ». *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua*, vol. 11, n° 3, University of St. Thomas (Center for Irish Studies), 2007, p.34. JSTOR.

⁴¹² Ladies GAA, "History of The Ladies Gaelic Football Association of Ireland, <http://www.ladies-gaelic.ie/history.htm>.

⁴¹³ Liston, Katie. « The Gendered Field of Irish Sport ». *Ireland Unbound: A Turn of the Century Chronicle*, edited by Mary P Corcoran and Michel Peillon. Institute of Public Administration, Dublin. 2002, p.239.

the forms of power held by athletes such as achievement, ability, sportsmanship and competitiveness, and its value is ultimately determined by its capacity to be translated into monetary reward, jobs, general status, star status, [and] political influence.⁴¹⁴

As a matter of fact, the ladies football finals would have to wait up until 1998 to be broadcasted on television. Hence, the support received by the ladies Gaelic football is yet to be improved on a national level. Just as in the IFA, the recognition and representation of women in sports is lacking. In the case of the GAA, one might consider that this is caused by the construction of a masculine body and the constant confrontation of masculine identities between Catholics and Protestants. Still, gender representation and valorisation is an issue common to a majority of Western societies and neither Ireland or Northern Ireland are exceptions to it.

2. The place of women in the republican movement

Definition of republican Feminism

Women are much more present in Irish republicanism than they are in the unionist parties. In fact, important figures of the republican movement in Northern Ireland happen to be women. However, a majority of the members of this movements are men. In order to go further in our study of gender in Northern Irish sports, we ought to approach gender in Northern Irish politics. We will exploit the chapter ““Mother Ireland, Get Off Our Backs””.⁴¹⁵ We will try and link it to the development made above on the place of women in Gaelic sports. In fact, the process of mimesis of male Gaelic games that took place in female Gaelic games might be echoed by the process of integration of women in republican paramilitary groups. As a matter of fact, we study the integration of women in violent fields that have been occupied by men for most of the time. Furthermore, we will complete the study of the identity formation in the Catholic-nationalist community.

The place of women in the republican movement is understudied. Feminism in this movement is even less studied. O’Keefe highlights the importance of such a study, which is on the verge of being “written out of history”⁴¹⁶ despite its contribution in the struggle of the Troubles. The purpose of this chapter is to depict feminism in Irish republicanism. Hence, O’Keefe aims at describing the process of identity formation in a deeply divided society through the prism of feminism. In fact, the author considers that this movement can provide a complete and detailed

⁴¹⁴ Liston, Katie. « The Gendered Field of Irish Sport ». *Ireland Unbound: A Turn of the Century Chronicle*, edited by Mary P Corcoran and Michel Peillon. Institute of Public Administration, Dublin. 2002, p.233.

⁴¹⁵ O’Keefe, Theresa. ““Mother Ireland, Get Off Our Backs””: Republican Feminist Resistance in the North of Ireland”. *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, edited by Lorenzo Bosi and Gianluca De Fazio, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam. 2017, pp. 165–84.

⁴¹⁶ O’Keefe, Theresa. *Op.cit*, p.165.

overview of the shaping of identities in the context of a deeply divided society. For the purpose of this dissertation, we will exploit the definition of republican Feminism provided by the chapter, the reasons that led to the creation of this branch of the republican movement and how the feminist identity evolved in the IRA. As this approach is quite unique, we can rely on it. Furthermore, the relationship between feminism and republicanism ought to be studied.

In the very first part of the development, O’Keefe differentiates republican Feminism from other political or social movements. As a matter of fact, its process of creation is specific. Instead of being formed through self-conception, it is constituted through “located action and interaction”.⁴¹⁷ Hence, relationship prevails. With only this bit of development, we can differentiate republican Feminism from Ulster Unionism, which focuses on the protection of the Self. What seems to be at the origins of the republican Feminist movement is the will to establish self-determination. O’Keefe quotes Claire Hackett, republican and lesbian and feminist activist:

The concept of self-determination is what best defines republican feminism for me. This concept is perhaps better known for its nationalist than its feminist connotations. Yet, it must be clear that it has meaning for feminist discourse – self-determination as the right and ability to make real choices about our lives: our fertility, our sexuality, childcare, the means to be independent in all the areas in which we are currently denied autonomy and dignity in our various identities as women.⁴¹⁸

In O’Keefe’s introduction, it is stated that what drove women to integrate the republican movement during the Troubles did not lay in cultural and political representation. Rather, it laid in the contest of the state repression, class issues and the overall “exclusionary nature of the Northern Irish women’s movement”.⁴¹⁹ This thesis can be linked to the development of Hackett and to the importance of self-determination for Republican Feminism. It must also be noted that the republican movement did not include the Feminists at first, and republican Feminists were excluded by the women’s movement. Still, it managed to influentiate Northern Irish politics. It evolved from a grass-roots movement to a major republican political group. Its evolution is linked to the come back of the republican movement in parliamentary politics. The different Republican Feminist parties were bound by “a belief that partition has put a particular shape on gender

⁴¹⁷ Whittier, Nancy. *Feminist Generations: The Persistence of the Radical Women’s Movement*. Temple University Press, Philadelphia. 1995.

Melucci, Alberto, et al. ‘The Process of Collective Identity’. *Social Movement and Culture*, University of Minnesota Press, 1995, pp. 41–63.

⁴¹⁸ Claire, Hackett. ‘Self-Determination: The Republican Feminist Agenda’. *Feminist Review*, vol. 50, 1995, p. 11.

⁴¹⁹ O’Keefe, Theresa. *Op.cit*, p. 166.

relations on the island of Ireland”.⁴²⁰ The link between the geographical identity of Ireland and gender can be linked to the development made earlier on the Gaelic body.

We have stated earlier that feminist figures are present in the Irish nationalist movement. Indeed, O’Keefe alludes to the very first political party that defended the nationalist and feminist cause. However, tensions were existing in this party. It was divided over the prevalence of the two causes it was fighting for: feminism and republicanism. This debate was already taking place in 1914, when the party *Cumann na mBan* was created. The reason for the debate was the lack of consideration for the feminist movement amongst the nationalists, which was mainly composed of men. As a matter of fact, Sheehy Skeffington addressed a letter to the *Irish Times* in which she denounced the members of *Cumann na mBan* for adhering a cause that underestimated and did not take seriously the feminist cause. The suffragette indeed described the organisation as an “animated collecting box”⁴²¹ for men. However, O’Keefe quotes Markievicz, who turns down the debate and highlights the double struggle of the Republicans Feminists. In 1909, she stated that the “first step on the road to freedom is to realise ourselves as Irish Women – not as Irish or merely as women, but as Irish Women doubly enslaved and with a double battle to fight”.⁴²² A sort of dual role was then undertaken by the women who were part of the Irish nationalist movement. They were meant to integrate feminism and gender consciousness in the nationalist movement whilst maintaining the pursuit of the nationalist cause. Eventually, the Feminist movement managed to integrate and mark the history of Irish nationalism. As Rosemary Sales puts it: “the visibility and celebration of historic feminist nationalist figures normalized the presence of women and feminist ideas within the republican movement”.⁴²³ Because of the multi-dimensional role undertaken by women, they succeed to integrate the nationalist movement.

Gendered violence and the state

The Irish nationalist movement was marked by the presence of eminent female figures since the beginning of the 20th century. However, the context in which Irish Nationalism developed in Ireland was not the same as during the Troubles. It must be taken into account. Furthermore, the implication of the British Army in the civil unrest that took place from the 1970s until the 1990s left deep marks in the minds of the civilians. In the article studied here, the place

⁴²⁰ O’Keefe, Theresa. *Op.cit*, p.168.

⁴²¹ Owens, Cullen Rosemary. *A Social History of Women in Ireland, 1870-1970*. Gill & Macmillan, Dublin. 2005, p.112.

⁴²² *Ibid*, p.115.

⁴²³ Sales, Rosemary. *Women Divided: Gender, Religion and Politics in Northern Ireland*. London, Routledge. 1997.

of women during such a context is approached. At this point of Irish history, the battleground was the streets, and male and female civilians suffered from it. Hence, male and female members of the Catholic community were evenly likely to be politically aware. O’Keefe quotes a former IRA member and feminist activist who stated that her engagement in militantism began when she was twelve, and that she integrated the IRA as early as sixteen, at a time when she “became more politically aware”.⁴²⁴ This demonstrates that the politicisation of the communities who experienced the Troubles is quick. Social movement scholars such as Piven and Cloward & Nilsen and Cox are mentioned as O’Keefe states that “[this] process of politicization is commonly recognized by social movement scholars as symptomatic of the lived experience of hardship and oppression around which grievances and mobilizations are based”.⁴²⁵

The vision of gender in Northern Ireland was also evolving during the Troubles. In fact, after the Second World War the men retrieved their place in the society. They had been temporarily replaced by women as they were on the battlefield. However, men who were forced to leave the active IRA as they were interned would have to share their place with women. The replacement was no longer temporary and women got to be included in the activities of the IRA. This comparison was emitted by a former female political prisoner interviewed by O’Keefe in October 2000. The engagement of women in militantism against the authority of the state was caused by the systematic repression of the Catholic community and of women. There was a double meaning to their engagement and it was closely intertwined. As a matter of fact, “women – women’s bodies, in particular – became the interface at which the struggle for power in the North was fought”.⁴²⁶ The gender normality of the time limited the role of women in Catholic communities to the care of homes and of the children. However, as the conflict intensified, internment was reintroduced and men were much less present to sustain to the needs of the household or in the struggle against the government. Hence, it led to the direct implication of women in IRA business. Even before the presence of men was diminished by the response of the government, it was the women who had to deal with house raids and street interrogations.

Gender was a major issue in the Catholic communities because it left room for of a different form of harassment. The bodies of women became a target. Harris and Healy mention all sorts of

⁴²⁴ Interview carried out by Theresa O’Keefe in November 2000 the 1st.

⁴²⁵ Piven, Frances Fox, and Richard Cloward. *Poor People’s Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*. Vintage Books, 1977. Alf, Nilsen, and Laurence Cox. ‘What Would a Marxist Theory of Social Movements Look Like?’ *Marxism and Social Movements*, edited by Colin Barker et al., Brill, Boston. 2013, pp. 63–82.

⁴²⁶ O’Keefe, Theresa. *Op.cit*, p. 170.

sexual threatenings and harassment.⁴²⁷ The harassment eventually became commonplace and was also carried out in prisons. Indeed, women were much more likely to go through strip searches, as it was a way to break those imprisoned. The bodies of women were hence used as leverage by the RUC and the army. Some of the women who were imprisoned and strip-searched compared the procedure to rape.⁴²⁸ The testimony of Sinn Féin MEP Martina Anderson is then quoted by O’Keefe to denounce the exploitation of women’s bodies by the RUC and the British Army. “The British government is using women’s nakedness to tyrannise them. We feel that our bodies are used like a weapon to penalise us with the intention of making us collapse under the pressure”.⁴²⁹ However, the political awareness of women grew stronger and united Republicans Feminists.

Exclusion of women in the IRA

Even though the Republican Feminist movement existed in the broad daylight of the Northern Irish political activity, the place of women within the IRA was still that of a second-role. Before the 1970s and the burst of the Troubles, women were playing an auxiliary role within the *Cumann na mBan*. The sole integration of women within the organisation was a struggle in itself. However, as the IRA leadership underwent changes, it was easier for them to integrate the organisation and to have access to armed training. Still, their participation in armed action was a matter of debate. One of the former female IRA volunteers sums up the exclusion of women from leadership and armed action: “Men are there because they are men; women have to earn their place because they’re women”.⁴³⁰ The relegation of women to missions of lesser importance was publicly denounced by the female members of the IRA, as they demanded to play a more valuable role in the struggle against the British government. This demand was also emitted during the peace-negotiations.

The Irish nationalist tradition values its image and the time continuity. The remembrance of the Easter Rising and of the republican agents of the 18th century is cultivated, and those who fell for the independency of Ireland are described as martyrs. This culture of martyr hood is used in all political and cultural bodies that carry the Irish nationalist identity. Moreover, it is to be found in ballad, poems and murals. However, the imagery conveyed by it fails to represent the

⁴²⁷ Harris, Helen, and Eileen Healy. *‘Strong about It All’: Rural and Urban Women’s Experiences of the Security Forces in Northern Ireland*. Northwest Women’s/Human Rights Project, Derry. 2001, pp.69,85,89.

⁴²⁸ POWs in Maghaberry Prison. ‘Strip-Searching ... Violence against Women’. *Women’s News*, vol. 21. Aretxaga, Begoña. *Shattering Silence: Women, Nationalism, and Political Subjectivity in Northern Ireland*. Princeton University Press, Princeton. 1997, p.24.

--. ‘The Sexual Games of the Body Politic: Fantasy and State Violence in Northern Ireland’. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2001, p.9.

⁴²⁹ McAuley, Chrissie. *Women in a War Zone: Twenty Years of Resistance*. Republican Publications, 1989.

⁴³⁰ Interview carried out by O’Keefe the 18th October 2000.

participation of women, as it is exclusively masculine. This lack of representation and of recognition led to the creation of exclusively female groups meant to organise collective memory of female participation in militant and political republicanism. The Falls Women's Centre is mentioned as an example of such collective memory organisation. This centre was created in 1982 in West Belfast, and was meant to improve the conditions of living of women in an area that suffered from the ethnonationalist conflict. It still exists to this day.

The Feminists Republicans were criticised for the exclusion of women from the Protestant community. As a matter of fact, the development of feminist movement in Northern Ireland also suffered from the antagonist identities of Northern Ireland. It resulted in the exclusion of Feminist Republicans from the overall feminist movement. The identity formation process of Feminist Republicanism was influenced, shaped and consolidated by that exclusion, according to O'Keefe. In order to support her statement, the author quotes Monica McWilliams, who is involved in the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, the Northern Ireland Women's Rights Movement, and the Downtown Women's Centre.

Regardless of the differences between some of the groups, the dominant voice within the women's movement in Northern Ireland has been that of the various shades of nationalism. Giving top priority to the nationalist question served to silence the voices of Protestant women.⁴³¹

However, relations existed between adherents to the feminist cause within the two communities. A contact was established by the Northern Ireland Women's Rights Movement (NIWRM). In it, discussion were filtered. Issues that were not universally accepted by the members of the movement were not debated upon. O'Keefe describes it as a "check your label at the door".⁴³² Hence, the issues that were not discussed were, for example, homosexuality, class issues or the constitutional issue. However, this policy kept republican women from alluding to the state repression, which we have seen, endangered their security as women and as persons. Claire Hackett describes the issue of the "lowest common denominator politics"⁴³³:

There were no concerted efforts on behalf of the women's movement to address [state violence against women]. It came from women organising within the republican communities [...] The daily state harassment wasn't articulated as a gender issue but a

⁴³¹ McWilliams, Monica. 1995. 'Struggling for Peace and Justice: Reflections on Women's Activism in Northern Ireland'. *Journal of Women's History* 6.4/7.1.13-39.

⁴³² O'Keefe, Theresa. "'Mother Ireland, Get Off Our Backs': Republican Feminist Resistance in the North of Ireland'. *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, edited by Lorenzo Bosi and Gianluca De Fazio, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam. 2017, p. 170.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*

republican issue [...] They didn't deal with it because they would have had to take up a position themselves on the state and that was too scary.⁴³⁴

On the long term, the lack of consideration for the context in which the republican women were living led to the exclusion of the Feminist Republicans from the NIWRM. The campaign for the rights of female republican prisoners was ignored by the movement and support was to be sought outside of the Northern Irish frontiers. The gender violence committed by the state was not denounced by the movement. To resolve the issues of the province, the Feminist Republicans had to ask for support outside of the administrative entity they lived in. O'Keele then takes a step back from the Troubles and states that no evolution has taken place amongst the contemporary women's organisation, for they still look for social solutions outside of the constitutional and governmental issues.

Conclusion

Up to this day, the GAA is the most important cultural and sporting body in Ireland. It was also an essential actor in the promotion of Irish nationalism in Ireland from 1880 until the 1910s. In Northern Ireland, it represented the Catholic-nationalist community with a cultural body after the partition was established. However, the GAA is far from being spared from political controversy and sectarian backlashes. In fact, we have demonstrated in this part that the GAA protected its members and the culture it promoted from 'alien' agents. Hence, the members of the police forces and of the British Army were strictly forbidden from integrating the association. The reason for this exclusion was the protection of the members and of the association. However, as the police was reformed and politics in Northern Ireland were trying to establish cross-community relations, the GAA was asked to change its integration policy. As we studied the GAA, we have approached the construction of the Gaelic identity in Ireland. It was not limited to Northern Ireland but it enabled us to include gender studies in our development. In this part of the development, we have exploited Brady's article "Home and Away", which depicted the process of mimesis realised by the GAA in the construction of the Gaelic body. I was particularly interested in this article since it echoed and completed the study of identity formation of Irish nationalism made in the first part of this dissertation. Just as Protestant football, the embodiment of the Gaelic sports was exclusively masculine. The purpose of this masculinisation was to counter the stereotype of the passive and feminine Ireland. Still, the mimesis carried out by the GAA was copied by the female adaptation of Gaelic games. This copy was meant to impose female Gaelic games as legitimate games. In fact, the Catholic-nationalist tradition and movement is mostly led by men and the violence

⁴³⁴ Interview carried out by O'Keefe Theresa the 7th November 2000 with Claire Hackett.

undertaken by republican paramilitaries is most of the time in the hands of men as well. Hence, even though they are present in Irish nationalism, women were relegated to a role of second importance.

The study of the importance of gender in the republican movement brought another dimension to the construction of identity process in Northern Ireland. Even though women were part of the nationalist movement, they were a minority. They could not integrate militant and political actions at the same extent as their male counterparts. At first, Feminist republicanism was divided from the inside. It was moved by two issues: gender issues and state repression. In the end, the close link existing between those two issues united and strengthened the movement. What must be remembered from this development is that the bodies of women were targeted by the RUC and the British Army. Eventually, this led to self-determination. The conception of the female body is of the highest importance in the process of identity creation of the Feminist Republican movement as it strengthened it. The issue of women's body can be linked to the development made earlier on the Gaelic body. In the case of Gaelic games, it was the vision of Ireland as a geographical place that was represented by the Gaelic athletes. With it, the passivity attributed to the island by the British was countered. The engagement of women in the republican paramilitary groups enabled them to fight back the state repression that was exercised on their gender and on cultural identity. However, they received very little support from their male counterparts and from feminist movements in Northern Ireland.

Conclusion

In the first part, it is argued that the Catholic-nationalist community suffered from the ruling of the UUP over the province. The Irish nationalist identity was indeed repressed, and the powers detained by the executive power were often overused, leading to a containment of the Irish nationalist political parties and to prejudice against the Catholic-nationalist community. The repression carried out by the unionist government also targeted the GAA, for it displayed a strong Irish nationalist identity and contested the authority of the Stormont government. This fact is presented in most of the documentation used here. The challenge in studying this subject was to explain why the GAA suffered from this prejudice, since it was not a political body. Sociological studies helped us demonstrate that the origins of this prejudice was to be found in the sectarian feature of Northern Ireland, and to the ethnonational conflict taking place in the province.

The geographical organisation and the cultural heritage of the IFA and of the GAA demonstrated the impact of the constitutional question on society. Any cultural or political body that tried to take a stance regarding the constitutional question was instantly involved in the debate. The unionist government did not interfere in the organisation of the IFA, as it was not linked to Irish Nationalism. However, the GAA was targeted by the police forces and the government because of its organisation and cultural heritage. At a time when the Catholic-nationalist community failed to be represented in governmental institutions, the representation of the Irish nationalist identity provided by the GAA was targeted by the government. In fact, the unionist government envisioned any form of administration not managed by it as a threat to its authority. The relation between the executive forces of the government and the GAA demonstrate this. This resulted in the alienation of the Catholic-nationalist community in Northern Ireland. It is interesting to note that the IRFU, which claimed not to be involved in sectarian issues, did not suffer much from the situation. It was not completely neutral but its historical heritage and social position kept it away from a majority of the troubles the IFA and the GAA experienced.

The development of the second part described the failure of parliamentary means to provide Northern Irish communities with a fair representation and the exploitation of the constitutional issue by the unionist government. Furthermore, the study of the CRM demonstrated that the unionist majority in the parliament and executive body were not willing to address the grievances of the Catholic population. When concessions were made, radical groups of the unionist tradition openly rejected the measures taken, which were consequently abandoned. This was the case of the Sunningdale Agreement in 1973. When we examined the political and social contexts in which the IFA and the GAA evolved, we found out that the communities were seeking to defend

their rights and interests in different ways. It helps us understand that civilian associations grew in importance in NI as they enabled civilians to be more active. The IFA and the GAA provided the communities with a constant cultural representation. However, the exclusion of the Catholics by the IFA and of the Protestants by the GAA demonstrate that this representation was defined by sectarian motives.

The second part of the dissertation focused on political and social studies to introduce and scrutinise the period of the Troubles. It was hard to bring another perspective to this subject because the documentation already existing is quite extensive. However, this part focuses on the responsibility of the administrative entities in the conflict. This perspective is then completed by the third and fourth parts, which focus on the importance of culture in the Troubles, and so highlight its ethnonational feature. By assessing the issue with those two different perspectives, we combined two approaches. The first perspective focuses on the responsibility of the institutions in the escalation of violence from the 1970s on. The second defines the Troubles as an ethnonational conflict, in which nationalist identities are antagonised and the confrontation is inevitable. It must be noted that this method was not deliberate. It was Ms Etchart, my dissertation supervisor, who differentiated the two perspectives when correcting the first drafts.

The construction of the dissertation was the result of my shared interest in both sociological and historical studies. Each method was used separately in the documents exploited. Sugden and Bairner were the only two authors who openly used both methods. Yet, we managed to exploit both perspectives at the same extent. Moreover, the sources of the Northern Irish Troubles are hard to define.

The policy of the unionist government has been studied thoroughly in the first and second part of the dissertation. The systematic rejection of any form of Catholic-nationalist identity ran parallel to the the organisation of the IFA. The exclusion of the Catholics from the IFA has been studied by Cronin and Bairner, but no document used in this dissertation tried to highlight the similarities existing between the policy of the unionist government and that of the IFA. Moreover, the third part depicts the process of identity formation that takes place within the Protestant football fandoms. It is in this part that the link between religious, gendered, political and cultural identities is demonstrated. The conclusion of this part is that the Protestant fandoms defended their identity by repressing the expression of alien identities.

All in all, the objectives of the IFA and of the unionists were the same. It ensured the thriving of Northern Ireland as they envisioned it: mainly Protestant and masculine.

Football in Northern Ireland exacerbated the identity issue. Violence took place during football games and led Catholic clubs to leave the IFA. One can differentiate the intervention of

the security forces during GAA games and during IFA games. Fandoms of the IFA were underestimated and the security forces failed to contain violent outbreaks. On the other hand, GAA games were taking place under the strict surveillance of security forces. Contrary to the GAA, the IFA experienced no change whatsoever during the Troubles and the peace process. Indeed, the Protestant-unionist identity had established itself as the dominant and the exclusive identity. However, there was no written rule excluding the Catholic-nationalist community, which kept it from being involved in the reforms carried out during the peace process. Moreover, it did not have the same cultural and political importance and role in Northern Ireland.

This part was probably the most interesting part to construct. It led me to approach gender studies, which brought another dimension to the identity issue in Northern Ireland. It revealed that the absence of women in the IFA and the late creation of women's league in the IFA was caused by the omnipresence of masculinity in the association and in the tribunes. Moreover, it was when writing this part that the parallel between the policy of the association and the unionist government first came to my mind. This idea had not been expressed in any documentation. However, we have demonstrated that this parallel has limitations. The way the Catholic community was excluded from the IFA championships did not take place under the same circumstances as in the parliament. The confrontation was much more direct and open, and racism was expressed when Catholic clubs, fandoms and players were harassed. All in all, this parallel was used to establish a direct link between the cultural and political activities in the province.

The GAA is the most powerful sport association in Ireland. In Northern Ireland, its importance had a political dimension. In the first part, the contesting identity conveyed by the GAA was demonstrated. In the fourth part, we tried to explain the policy of the GAA towards the integration of external elements. Contrary to the IFA, the exclusion process was meant to ensure the safety of its members. At that time, civil order was managed by unionists who considered the GAA as a direct threat to the authority of the government. Furthermore, the identity formation process had taken place earlier than it did in the IFA. The Irish nationalist identity was already protected, since the association was limiting integration of external identities before the partition. However, this policy was highly controversial during the peace process, it contrasted with the policy adopted by Irish nationalist groups. In fact, the rules established under British rule in Ireland (1800-1921) remained active under the government of the unionists in Northern Ireland (1921-1972). However, the association was slow to react to the peace process and Rule 21, which embodied its, would not be repealed before 2001. In this case, the GAA presents itself as a victim of sectarianism in Northern Ireland. But, paradoxically, the process of exclusion does not differ

much from that of the IFA when it comes to the finality of it. It exacerbated sectarian issues and the confrontation of nationalist identities.

The application of gender studies to the GAA led us to study the role of women in the republican movement. More broadly, it led me to envision the role of Catholic women in Northern Ireland. Once again, we tried to demonstrate the link between the importance of gender in the political movement and in the cultural movement. Contrary to the unionist tradition, the Irish nationalist tradition is known for its inclusion of women. They are involved in games as well as in politics, but they do not occupy places of first importance. The construction of gender identity is present in the Irish nationalist movement since it was used to emancipate from the British influence. Moreover, this reconstruction of the Irish identity was also made by women involved in the republican movement, as they tried to occupy an active role in it, from 1921 until the end of the 20th century. Gender studies also exposed me to an issue that was not mentioned at all in any of the documentation exploited in the making of this dissertation: the sexual and physical harassment of women by members of the security forces. Throughout the dissertation we studied the repression of the Catholic-nationalist community by the unionist government and the security forces, yet we failed to take into consideration the repression of Catholic women's identity earlier than in the fourth part. This was caused by the separation of gender studies from historical studies. Women have been charged with roles of second importance by the political parties they involved in, and so historians and researchers do not necessarily take into consideration their implication in political events. My interest in gender studies grew at the end of the university year and I read about the issue only after my dissertation supervisor, Mrs Etchart, asked me about it. However, I did not have enough time or resources to integrate gender studies to the first two parts of the dissertation.

We approached both ethnonationalist and institutional issues to study sectarianism in Northern Ireland. However, the results of the study differed between the GAA and the IFA. The GAA positioned itself as against the partition of Ireland from the 1920s on. Rule 21 excluded members of Northern Irish security forces. With the geographical organisation and Rule 21, the authority of the Stormont government was contested. Hence, the GAA was an institution thriving in Northern Ireland whilst contesting the authority of Stormont. The ethnonationalism revealed by the study of the GAA lays in the symbolism conveyed by the association's stadiums, and the very nature of the games it promoted. The Irish nationalist identity displayed in the GAA makes of the association an actor of the sectarian cleavage. However, it was also a victim of sectarianism since the symbolism conveyed by the association was directly targeted by the legislation of Stormont in 1954. Moreover, its integrity was constantly threatened by the civil order policy of the devolved

government under the Special Powers Act (1929). The relationship between the GAA and Stormont led to the alienation of the Irish nationalist identity. One could argue that it is a continuation of the policy of the UUP in the province during the 1921-1972 period.

When defining the features of a deeply divided society, we established that there exists a dominant and a dominated group. Stormont was presented as being an institution shaped by a dominant group - the UUP. The study of the IFA has demonstrated that this association was also shaped by the male Protestant-unionist group. The exclusion of the Catholics from the Irish League was the result of institutional means as well as ethno-centered means. The IFA did not condemn the harassment exerted on the Catholic crowds and teams. During home games of Catholic clubs, security measures were undertaken only to favour teams representing the Protestant tradition. The IFA was directly responsible for the way the Catholic community was treated during football fixtures during the 1921-1960 period. Furthermore, it was the Catholic-Nationalist identity itself that was targeted by the Protestant fandoms. It is in this specific point that we can find ethnonationalist features. The process of exclusion carried out by the GAA and the IFA differ. The Protestant-unionist community was never interested in integrating the GAA. On the other hand, both the Catholic and the Protestant communities were involved in football before the partition of Ireland. The exclusion that took place in the IFA was thus virulent and had dramatic outcomes. It reflected the policy of the UUP but was not a continuation of it since the devolved government did not get involved in the management of the IFA.

Because of my interest in political institutions I had to limit my development to the study of sport associations. However, since the end of the 1980s sports that are not limited to associations with a cultural heritage are growing in popularity. Examples of those sports are surfing and motorcycle race. Studying those sports might put into perspective the limits of sport associations that are defined by their cultural and political affiliations. The recent importation of those sports in Ireland is interesting because they are somehow safeguarded from sectarian issues. They possess the same integrative potential as football, for example, without being limited by the antagonist identities.

Abstract

This dissertation studies social and political issues that agitated *Northern Ireland* during the 1921-1998 period. It approaches the *constitutional question*, the *Civil Rights Movement* and the modern '*Troubles*'. The originality of this dissertation is its combined use of *sport*, *sociological* and *historical studies*. The emphasis is put on three main sport associations: the *GAA*, the *IFA* and the *IRFU*. The historical and social issues studied in this dissertation are approached through sport associations so as to complete and put into perspective the study of the parliamentary activity.

Appendix

- Formation of identities
- Northern Ireland
- Sectarianism
- Sport associations
- Stormont

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