

Profiting from the Troubles

How a profit is being made on the Troubles and what impact it has on the peace process in Northern Ireland

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Belfasts Child

you are so young yet you walk to the beat of belfasts drum,
there should be promise in your eyes but its replaced by historys hate and dispise,
you play your flute with prody pride, religion always by your side,
your anger shows in your reflective stare each note a declaration of how much you care,
will no surrender be your lifes claim,
will you kill and maime in ulsters name
what will take you to your peace, what will make this madness cease,
our fight for our counties well in the past, but this hatred between us will always last,
our flags now represents our unforgivable sins, belfast child when will you see this is now a
war that no one can win.

Emma Wilson, September 2010

Acknowledgements

*'It was Protestants that built the Titanic. It was Catholics that built the iceberg that sank it.'*¹

It is easy to judge. It is easy to look at places like Iran, Congo, Egypt, Colombia and Northern Ireland and wonder how in the world people can make such a mess of things. It is hard to really understand why and how conflict is taking place, and to take into account the complexities of it. This thesis was a challenge. Doing research sometimes felt like climbing a mountain, while not being able to see the top. Northern Ireland is an intriguing place to do research on. Admittedly that sentiment is stronger now that I have reached the top of the mountain by handing in this thesis. The mountain is called *Conflicts, Territories and Identities*. I often had a very good time climbing it. Fortunately I also reckon I have picked up a thing or two on the way. One specific stage of the journey stands out: the trip to Cyprus was magnificent. During the climb my fellow travelers as well as my guides were amazing. Learning from them was almost always a pleasure and worth the effort.

I'd like to thank a few people specifically. Haley, thank you for your straightforward and positive way of guiding me along. No pushing or pulling, you simply helped me with useful commentary when I needed it. I really appreciate that. Opa, thanks for taking a look at the unfinished draft of this thesis. Vera, you are awesome. Thanks for being so supportive whenever I left for a couple of weeks to work on this thesis. Moefti, and va, thank you for always being there. For now this is the end of an educational journey that started 23 years ago. There is too much to thank you for in all those years. Most importantly, thank you for showing me time and again how to commit to something (or someone) worthwhile. In regard to this thesis: thanks for having me over when I needed to focus on writing the following 96 pages. And of course thank you Ingram. It was your idea to go to Northern Ireland. Best plan you had in ages buddy. Thanks for the great time. And last but not least, John. Thanks for letting us use your coffee table.

This research would not have been possible without the cooperation and help of a lot of people in Belfast. Thanks for helping me find the answers to the questions I had. You have been fun and welcoming and I applaud the efforts many of you are making to promote peace in the region. I hope you will build many ships together in the future.

¹ Joke by tour guide Steven Lenahan, Belfast, May 2010

List of terms and abbreviations

BVCB (Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau)

DUP (Democratic Unionist Party)

EU (European Union)

IRA (Irish Republican Army)

IFI (International Fund for Ireland)

MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly)

MP (Member of the British Parliament)

NITB (Northern Irish Tourism Board)

OFMDFM (Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister)

PIRA (Provisional Irish Republican Army)

PSNI (Police Service Northern Ireland)

RFJ (Relatives for Justice)

UDA (Ulster Defence Association)

UVF (Ulster Volunteer Force)

SEUPB (Special EU Programmes Body)

UN (United Nations)

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1. Introduction

As a litany of bomb explosions, shootings, marches, and military brutality in a seemingly intractable conflict situation. That is how people often looked at the Troubles in Northern Ireland. When in 1998, after almost thirty years of violence the Good Friday Agreement was finally signed it came as a surprise to many. Fifteen years after this peace treaty Northern Ireland is often seen as a post-conflict society. The peace process is considered exemplary to other peace processes around the world. However, the progress that has been made to resolve the conflict should not hide the fact that Northern Ireland is still a segregated society with a high level of violence and political conflict. In the context of this thesis political conflict has to be seen as a predominantly non-violent conflict between the two antagonist communities that is taking place in parliament but also in public spheres such as education, church, media and tourism. Occasionally violence does erupt again. The January 2013 flag riots and the July 2013 parade riots prove that the violent aspects of the Troubles are not merely a thing of the past. Spatially the Troubles are reflected in the many walls and borders that continue to separate nationalist neighborhoods from unionist neighborhoods. Hence, the Troubles still play a role in everyday life. I have had many conversations with people in Belfast and in those conversations many claim that the Troubles are still a burden on the economy and have a negative impact on their work, freedom of movement and on safety and security in society. Northern Irish identity and society have been marked by the conflict and this mark will not easily fade.

In this thesis, I focus on the economic dimensions of the conflict. My central argument is that in various ways the conflict has been, and still is, economically beneficial to a number of actors in the region. I have done research on how certain actors are economically reliant on a continuation of the conflict, or use the legacy of the conflict for economic purposes. Concretely I will look at the role of tourism and the role of peacebuilding in Northern Ireland. Peacebuilding is to be regarded as a process that addresses the structural issues and the long-term relationships between conflicting parties. In doing so it tries to overcome the contradictions that lie at the root of the conflict (Galtung, 1996, p. 112).

Subsequently, I will ask the question how the financial benefits made through the use of the Troubles for economic purposes influence the peace process. I will describe how economic development through tourism can help Northern Ireland move forward. Simultaneously I will investigate if conflict tourism can hamper peacebuilding by reaffirming and exploiting a segregated identity. In a similar way, I will try to assess what impact the growth of a peacebuilding sector has had the peace process. This thesis will make clear how on the one hand conflict tourism and peacebuilding projects have brought Northern Ireland wealth, jobs, visitors, knowledge and development. On the other hand, I will show how financial gains serve as an incentive for some actors to continue the conflict, or to use contested conflict heritage to make money. Thus I have come up with the following research question:

Do actors in the tourism business and in the peacebuilding sector economically profit from the legacy and/or continuation of the conflict? And how does that influence the peace process?

Before presenting an overview of the conflict, and discussing the scientific and societal relevance of the project, it is necessary to elaborate on some of the key terms I will use in this thesis and to provide a historical overview of the Northern Irish conflict.

1.1 Historical background

This thesis is not about the question ‘how the Troubles have come about.’ The debate about that question has been going on for decades and has led to a vast number of publications on related topics (Tonge, 2002; McGratten, 2010; Jennings, 2008). The aim of this research is to inform how economic profit has an impact on the peace process. Hence, a conflict analysis is not the main aim of this research. It is however necessary to describe the position of the two communities and the academic debate on the question what the origins of the Troubles are. Having said that, it is of key importance to understand that there is no single way to describe the conflict.

Describing history is not a neutral thing to do. It requires the selection of historical events by a subjective author. These events are ordered and described. Meaning is attributed to past events through this process. And meaning holds consequences for the present and the future; a construction of history unfolds that may have less to do with actual historical

events and more with a narrative suited for present interests. Knowing that, how do we find historical truth? Foucault (1972) states that absolute historical truth does not exist; historical truth is a construction. It is formed through discourses that limit our range and understanding of what can possibly be true. These discourses are the building blocks of the historical narrative: the story we construct of the past. I explicitly mention this process of constructing the narrative before presenting a historical background of the Troubles. I find it of key importance because the Troubles and its legacy are saturated with 'historical meaning.' Both communities in Northern Ireland have constructed a version of history that allows them to further their own present interests. And both of them use discourse to frame these narratives. Their versions of history are expressed in wall murals, which have become one of the main attractions for tourists.

Currently this process of 'story making' is perhaps stronger than it was before the signing of the Good Friday Agreements in 1998. During the more violent stages of the conflict, the struggle between the two communities was a very physical one. Bodies bled, bodies were locked up, bodies were blown apart and bodies disappeared. The battlefield was located in the streets of Belfast and Derry and the physical impact on everyday space was there for all to see. The struggle still has a physical dimension. An important change has occurred however since 1998. Instead of a military struggle, groups from both communities are now engaged in a pre-dominantly psychological and political struggle. As Coiste director and former republican prisoner Michael Culbert stated: 'a battle for the narrative is going on'.² In this battle, mouths are constantly speaking, hands are writing, eyes are reading and the mind is roaming, for the battlefield is nowadays located in the mental sphere. This fight for the hearts and minds of people abroad and at home is ongoing because for some the aim of the battle has not changed; it is simply the tactics that are different. Some actors still pursue a united Ireland (nationalists) or they pursue a continued union with Great Britain (loyalists).

Early roots of the conflict

During my fieldwork in Belfast I took the 30th of April off to watch the inauguration of King Willem-Alexander, the Prince of Orange, on Dutch television. During my stay in Northern Ireland I was struck by the historical significance of that name to the people of Northern

² Culbert, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

Ireland. In the protestant areas of Belfast, ordinary working class citizens would often bring up the name of William of Orange (1650 – 1702) over a pint of beer in a pub. William of Orange (known as King Billy in Northern Ireland) was a Dutch stadhouder that was crowned King of England and Ireland after he invaded the British Isles to oust the Catholic King James. At the Boyne river the armies of both men clashed. The victory William booked that day is still being commemorated by the protestant Orange Order in Northern Ireland. On the 12th of July protestant marching bands organize large parades to celebrate this old victory. In July 2013 the tensions around the parades led to five nights of trouble. 71 police officers were injured and 62 people were arrested (BBC, 2013)

Williams' invasion of Great Britain was part of a much more extended religious conflict between Catholic and Protestant factions in Europe. In Ireland, the religious divide came to the forefront when British landlords started settling on the isle in the early 17th century. These landlords were often Scottish Presbyterians who came to Ireland to rule over the Catholic Irish farmers. It was the beginning of 400 years of segregation between Protestants and Catholics. In 1916 the marginalized Catholic community started an uprising against British rule. The IRA (Irish Republican Army) rose to prominence during this struggle for Irish independence. In 1916 the British government agreed to the independence of the 26 southern counties. This led to the Anglo-Irish agreement, which was signed by the British and by Sinn Fein, the Irish party for independency. Hence the South of Ireland became independent and in 1949 the Republic of Ireland was established as an independent nation. Six remaining counties in the North-East of Ireland stayed within the British realm as part of the UK. These six counties were part of a group of nine counties that is known as the province of Ulster, a name that is often incorrectly used to refer to Northern Ireland, because Ulster consists of all nine Northern counties. Why did only six of the nine counties remain in the UK? The answer can be found in a strategic decision made by the unionist community during the time of partition³. Only in the six counties that make up Northern Ireland, the Protestant community made up for a majority of the population. In order to acquire the advantage of a demographic majority it was decided to hold on to just six counties, and to stay loyal to the UK. Hence the Protestant community is usually referred to as loyalists or unionists due to their wish to remain part of the United Kingdom.

³ Lenahan, May 2013, personal interview, Belfast

After the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, politicians of the unionist community became part of the British government. A form of institutionalized discrimination (1991) was established that ensured the dominance of the unionist community on a number of levels. As a result the nationalist (republican) community was being discriminated against. Republicans did not receive the same benefits in housing, education and employment. In many respects Catholics were treated differently than Protestants.

According to some (O'Hearn, 1983 in Feldman, 1991, p. 18), feelings of deprivation among the Catholic community led to a civil rights movement in Northern Ireland in the late sixties. Similar civil rights movements in the U.S. and South Africa inspired protests that called for change through peaceful means. But the streets of Belfast and Derry saw little peace in years to come.

Recent violence

Broken bottles under children's feet

Bodies strewn across the dead end street

(U2, Sunday Bloody Sunday, 1983)

The civil rights movement was ill received by the predominantly hard-line Protestant unionists. Their response to the protests was harsh. Soon enough the region was torn apart by brutal displays of violence. The Troubles had begun. British soldiers shocked the world when people witnessed the massacre of civil rights protesters in 1972, an event that became known as Bloody Sunday. The massacre of civil rights protesters radicalized an already uneasy nationalist population. Republican paramilitary groups such as the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) started a campaign that was equally violent and ruthless. During the 1970's and 1980's international attention increased after the violence escalated. Republican prisoners lost their lives in the infamous Hunger Strikes led by MP Bobby Sands. British soldiers and members of loyalist paramilitary groups would assassinate republican opponents, killing many innocent Catholics in the process. A culture of violence was born. Former IRA member Paul told me about one of his own experiences as a teenager on the streets of Belfast: 'They [the British military] would give you a body search. And one of them soldiers cocked a pistol and stuck it right up against my head... And fired it...

[Pauses]... Obviously it was not loaded. I wouldn't be here now. But a mock execution when you are 14/15 years of age? He probably thought it was a big laugh. But for me... [Pauses]... at the end of the day it was normal behavior.'

In turn the IRA (Irish Republican Army) and other nationalist groups conducted horrible atrocities in the protestant parts of the region. Shopping malls and bars in area's such as Shankill Road were torn apart by bomb explosions. Assassination attempts were made on British political figures including Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher herself. The violence resulted in the death of 3,531 brothers, sisters, fathers, husbands and children between 1969 and 2001 (Sutton, 2002)⁴. A further estimated 40,000 people were wounded as a result of the hostilities (McGratten, 2010)

As often happens in conflict, ordinary people suffered most. In the early seventies more and more people refused to head the battle call, and started working towards peace instead, resulting in the failed Sunningdale Agreement of 1973. For many reasons (...) the peace process halted. In the 1990's a renewed effort was made domestically as well as internationally to resolve the conflict. In 1998 this resulted in a historical agreement that was signed on Good Friday. In the years that followed Northern Ireland took important steps towards a durable peace. The agreement however has drawn a lot of criticism as well. For one because it failed to address the sectarian divide (Sluka, 2009). Some of the criticism is well deserved.⁵ Still, for all of its perceived flaws, the Good Friday Agreement marks a very significant shift in Northern Irelands history, because in the subsequent fifteen years violence became less accepted as an instrument to further the interest of any of the actors.

1.2 Different narratives

History is written by the victors, they say. In the Northern Irish case that cliché brings up two new questions: What is history and who will be the victor? History often becomes more of a social construct of the past than a 'true' reflection of past events. In Northern Ireland this process led to two dominant social constructions of the past that are constantly written and

⁴ The dead should not be forgotten. For more information on the deceased, Sutton (1994) has done a wonderful job by painstakingly verifying the personal details of victims and information on their death. Found via: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/sutton/>

⁵ During a conference I attended called '*Mapping the Rollback? Human rights provisions of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement 15 years on*', Leading negotiators and experts had to admit that the agreement had failed to address sectarianism, leading to serious human rights issues.

rewritten. That leaves the historical timeline of events, as represented above, up for dispute. For example: in some ways the religious division I depict above is very misleading. In many parts of the world Catholics and Protestants live together peacefully. The days of the reformation and the subsequent religious wars belong to the distant past in most parts of Western Europe. Why then would religion be the defining characteristic of the Troubles? The same argument can be put forward on account of ethnicity. Why would Irish nationalists not be able to live together with English loyalists when in so many places in the world ethnic groups do live together in peace? So seeing religious and ethnic tensions as one of the causes of the Troubles raises all sorts of questions. Thus, to frame the conflict in such terms, as many academics do, is very problematic according to McGrattan (2012, p.10). He claims that by treating the conflict in terms of ethno-nationalism scholars fail to investigate why and how ethno-nationalism has come about. For even if it is the determinative force behind the Troubles what is the background of ethno-nationalism? McGrattan states that 'Questions of change, historical nuance or political agency are ignored in favor of sweeping assumptions regarding the determinative power of ethnic antagonism and highly tendentious (and in any case probably unverifiable) assumptions regarding the 'motivation' of the communal groups' (McGrattan, 2010, p.12).

In his work McGrattan shows how a different outlook on the root causes of the conflict changes the perception of the presence. In the theoretical chapter of this thesis I will analyze this mechanism with a focus on the role of economic gains. What is clear though is that different perspectives create different narratives, and can lead to a very different discourse. Coiste director Michael Culbert represents former republican prisoners. He referred to this process when he stated: 'to us it was a social class, colonizer issue in Ireland. Now as an offshoot of colonization, if people of a particular outspoken life, supporting the colonizer/pro-British/Protestants/Loyal people. And then you had the native people who opposed it, which were Irish/Catholic. So in simplistic terms the core issue could be Protestant-Catholic. But if you take it as part of the bigger process, it's Irish-British. And we have ever seen our problem as Irish-British.'⁶

⁶ Culbert, personal interview, April 2013, Belfast

1.2 Scientific relevance

What is true than? What narrative should one pick to understand the Troubles? Is the 'ancient' force of ethnicity the driving factor? Or is it colonialism? Could it perhaps be a combination of political, economic and cultural grievances? Or is it something different? Which lens do we pick? I believe a complex and long-term conflict such as the Troubles can only be understood by using a multitude of lenses. One of the main lenses to gain a better outlook on the conflict is often neglected (Dorsett, 2013). This lens is based on the groundbreaking work of Collier (2000) and Collier & Hoeffler (2004), and it is called greed. Researchers have come to realize the importance of economic profits as a motive and opportunity for conflict. Collier argues that economic gains are a key motive for rebels to take part in conflict. In his work Collier links his concept of greed to the outbreak of (civil) conflict. The start of the Northern Irish conflict is not the focus of this research but Colliers insights are useful since it opened the way to look at conflict from an economic point of view.

McGrattan (2010, p.186) argues that "It is only by studying who benefits from conflicts and by identifying the mechanisms through which conflicts are reproduced (...) we even begin to make any kind of definitive statements about how conflicts emerge and why ethno-national identity proves so resilient." McGratten mainly focuses on the political abuse of the past as one of the mechanisms through which conflict is reproduced. However, we shouldn't stop there. Politics is just one of the mechanisms through which conflict is being reproduced. Economic activity can be an equally powerful mechanism to reproduce and continue a conflict, even in a non-violent way. In his op-ed piece for *The Guardian* Jenkins (2012) argues against the immorality of conflict tourism and the exploitation of the conflict. And scholars such as McDowell (2008) show how specific economic activity such as tourism can have an impact on the peace process by using conflict heritage as a battleground for competing identities.

The volume of literature on the Northern Ireland conflict is extensive but is mainly focused on the political and the ethno-cultural dimensions of the conflict. Dermott (2013) writes that surprisingly few studies have been conducted that look at the economic consequences of the Troubles. In his research Dermott focuses on the impact of terrorism on the economy during the heydays of the Troubles. Money derived from the drugs and weapon trade and

other criminal enterprises, as well as remittances turned into a toxic incentive for paramilitary groups and affiliated government officials to sustain the conflict by maintaining and deepening the sectarian divide. This was done for instance through the spatial division of society, allowing paramilitaries on both sides to work and control their own part of town. This is not directly the focus of my study. However, to some extent the same mechanisms that played a role in the conflict thirty years ago still do today.⁷ Almost always someone seems to profit from conflict. Or as Collier (1999, p.1) puts it: 'civil wars create economic opportunities for a minority of actors even as they destroy them for the majority.' Collier mainly focuses on countries with a low level of income, in the phase before civil war erupts. Hence it is important to notice that the situation in a country with a high-level income like Northern Ireland may be different. However, greed as a driving factor to promote and sustain conflict is also an important explanation to the current state of affairs in the Northern Irish conflict (Woodwell, 2005, p. 181). So what form is 'greed' taking in the Northern Irish context? I will focus on two concrete examples of greed. Thus, this thesis aims to contribute to a better understanding of the effects of economic profits in the fields of tourism and in the peacebuilding sector. Subsequently I will try to assess what the effect of this profit making is on the road Northern Ireland is taking towards a more inclusive and sustainable peace.

1.3 Societal relevance

*"The Shankill butchers ride tonight
You better shut your windows tight
They're sharpening their cleavers and their knives
And taking all their whiskey by the pint
'Cause everybody knows
If you don't mind your mother's words
A wicked wind will blow
Your ribbons from your curls
Everybody moan, everybody shake,*

⁷ Harland, April 2013, personal communication, Belfast

The Shankill butchers wanna catch you

Awake"

(‘Shankill Butchers’, the Decemberists, 2006)

When I first heard this song a couple of years ago, I didn’t understand it. I soon knew the words by heart, but I did not quite get what the Decemberist were singing about. The song had this strange quality to it with its soft melody and singing. Still, you could sense the fear: the threat hidden in the music and, more prominently, in the soft spoken words. So when I later found out that the song was about one of the most feared and violent paramilitary gangs of Belfast in the 1970’s, things fell in place. The Decemberists are an American band but they have been able to grasp the fear that must have been part of Northern Irish society for so long. It is a fear directly derived from the destruction and suffering that follows conflict in its wake. The Troubles have been horrific to many citizens in Northern Ireland.

Why is it important to know who profits in that situation? It is important because suffering and destruction are not the only effects of the Troubles. No, someone always profits of conflict. In order to truly understand the violence in Northern Ireland these economic motives have to be taken into account. Northern Ireland can only truly become a peaceful society if these issues are addressed. And maybe even more important, is the notion that the hundreds of thousands of people that didn’t profit from the conflict have a right to know who did. When I mean profit I am not necessarily referring to a group of people that deliberately continue a conflict in order to benefit from it personally. In my earlier work I came across examples of individuals and organizations that would profit from conflict in some way, but would also be working in the field of peacebuilding or conflict resolution. Some of them would use conflict in their art or in their politics. It seemed most of them possessed of the best intentions. But as is the case with some forms of development aid: good intentions do not necessarily lead to positive results (Moyo, 2009). Certain forms of peacebuilding may even be harmful in a peace process. Thus I came to realize that in conflict the line between having a negative or a positive effect on peacebuilding is often quite thin.

Gaining from conflict also has to do with morality. Shortly after the Egyptian revolution of January 2011 I was doing research on Tahrir Square. I interviewed a young musician called Ahmed. During the second week of protests, Tahrir Square became home to many

protesters. Musicians would often perform on one of the stages. In their future career many of them gained from the fame and fortune they acquired on the stages of the revolution. Ahmed didn't perform during the demonstrations. For him the greater cause of the revolution was more important than personal success. He felt that if he would use the revolution as a stage to launch his career he would befoul the revolution itself. For the same reason he refused to write songs about the revolution; making money on the uprising was no option for him. To other musicians however, an artistic interpretation of the uprising felt as a moral obligation and as a means to encourage the protesters. I am not arguing either way but I do believe that as individuals and as society as whole it is important to be aware of these mechanisms.

The societal relevance of this research is not merely in the moral questions that arise when the gains of conflict are discussed. European tax money has been poured into the peace and tourism industry in Northern Ireland and people have a right to know if that is money spent wisely. This is of even greater importance if the gains derived from foreign aid have a negative effect on the peace process. Hence a better picture of the money flows and the profits connected to the Troubles will serve to keep those in power accountable. If the effects of money flows are known, educated decisions can be made about the allocation of funds. Hopefully this will help Northern Ireland in becoming a more peaceful society. The Shankill Butchers are no longer. But recently violence has again erupted in Northern Ireland. The world has witnessed large-scale destruction and violence in the streets of Belfast and Londonderry/Derry. Let's make sure that economic gains are no reason for the violence to continue.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Defining the conflict

What is the effect of conflict tourism? And how do people take advantage of peacebuilding? In chapter 3 and 4 of this thesis I will discuss these issues in the context of Northern Ireland. But this contested part of a small island in the Atlantic is not the only place in the world that's had to deal with these questions. Scholars from all over the world studied these topics before. Much can be learned from experiences in other conflict zones. Hence, before focusing on Northern Ireland I will use this chapter to discuss the literature on conflict tourism and its effects on peace processes. I will continue by discussing the theories on peacebuilding, in particular in relation to the work of the European Union. I will also discuss the negative aspects peacebuilding can have on the peace process. Before focusing on these topics, it is necessary to define further the terms used in my research question. First I will discuss the timeframe of the conflict and second I will discuss the term economic profit.

Timeframe of the conflict

When did the Troubles take place? This is a vital question since many consider the Troubles to be over. The conflict is usually dated between 1968 and 1998, ending when the leaders of the two communities signed the Good Friday Agreement. By using that timeframe, Northern Ireland should be considered a post-conflict region. The violence between the two communities has indeed been greatly reduced. The conflict however is not a thing of the past. Progress has undeniably been made since the signing of the 1998 peace accords, but it would be a mistake to assume that the Troubles are over. Sluka (2009) argues that it would be incorrect to draw a clear line between conflict and peace in 1998. The conflict still persists in many ways. The violence has continued in subdued form, the segregation between the two communities is still in place (Nolan, 2012; Power, 2011). Recent tensions over the Union flag led to wide spread rioting in Belfast and Londonderry/Derry. Reoccurring violence is possible because, according to Sluka (2009), the Good Friday Agreement has not dealt with the underlying cause of the conflict: the segregation of the two communities. Sluka therefore characterizes the situation in Northern Ireland as one of 'not-war-not peace'.

Hence, when I speak of the Troubles or ‘the conflict’, it is not a reference to the past. It is a reference to the continued conflict between the two communities. This characterization of the current state of affairs is important because it allows me to do research within the setting of a current conflict. Economic activities and aid can therefore contribute to peace in the region or help sustain and prolong the conflict, even if violence is no longer the defining characteristic of the struggle that is taking place.

Economic profit – an explanation

The output of the Northern Irish economy is about £28 billion a year. In 2009 government statistics show that NI was responsible for 2.3% of the UK’s total economic output totaling £28.3 billion a year. Part of the economic output of NI is derived from activities closely related to the legacy of the Troubles. For example, a number of people are in business because of the conflict. And a number of workers gain from the conflict because their jobs are dependent on the legacy or the continued existence of the conflict. This applies to both the private as well as the public sector. One can think of construction companies who build and maintain the peace lines necessary to separate the two communities. Another example is the presence of law firms who specialize in hearing loss cases of police officers during the Troubles.⁸ And both within government bodies such as the Belfast City Council as well as private NGOs, government officials and community workers work diligently on problems related to the Troubles.

I have identified two key economic sectors to take a closer look at. I have picked these sectors because of their connection to the Troubles. Economic activity in these sectors is often directly or indirectly intertwined with the Troubles. This is important since it allows me to assess the impact on the peace process without having to amend much for other variables. I will focus on tourism because it’s an important growth market for the Northern Irish economy. Already visitors are worth over half a billion pounds for the local economy.⁹ This amount could become far larger if more visitors can be drawn to the region. One of the main tourist attractions is the conflict heritage Northern Ireland has on offer. Tour operators and others use this heritage to make money. The second is the peacebuilding

⁸ Sykes, May 2013, personal interview, Belfast

⁹ Strategic Framework for Belfast tourism, 2011

industry. Hundreds of millions of pounds are available every year for peacebuilding. A large number of actors are involved in this work. As a result a lot of financial gain can be made.

2.2 Political tourism and its effects on the peace process

Northern Ireland is not the only region where conflict tourism blossoms. In the past few decades much has been written on the links between tourism and war. In places such as South Korea, Cyprus and India/Pakistan tourism and conflict have crossed paths. Conflict tourism is not a new phenomenon. People have traveled to battle sites for centuries (Lloyd, 1998). In 1815, shortly after the battle of Waterloo, souvenir hunters preyed over the battlefield looking for artifacts. Tourism however was limited to the elite in earlier centuries. With the development of mass tourism, conflict tourism increased in volume. After the Great Wars, battlefield tours became more and more popular in Europe. Nowadays busloads full of tourists arrive at concentration camps such as Auschwitz. And conflict tourism is not just popular in Europe. Holidaymakers in South-East Asia visit the Killing Fields of Cambodia in flocks. Central to this form of tourism is remembrance. The horror of past conflict is being commemorated (Lisle, 2000).

Much has been written by scholars like the sociologists Stone and Sharpley (2008) about the fascination of tourists with conflict. Obviously conflict has an effect on tourism and on individual tourists. This however is not the focus of this study. I do not aim to explain why tourists are fascinated by conflict or what effect it has on them. My interest is in the effect tourism has on current conflict and local communities. That question is not easy to answer. The particularities of different conflict sites have to be taken into account. More in general, various scholars have tried to look at the effect of tourism on conflict. D'Amore (1998 & 2010) argues that tourism is an instrument that can be used to foster and implement peace. And Korean scholar Cho is even more positive in his analyses: 'Tourism can transcend governmental boundaries by bringing people closer together through the understanding of different cultures, heritages, and beliefs. Therefore, it is potentially one of the most important vehicles for promoting peace among the peoples of the world'. (Cho, 2007: 556).

Dark tourism

Can tourism really be a force for good? Is it a useful tool for peacebuilding? Some scholars state it is everything but an instrument for peace. According to Poria and Ashworth (2009) tourism can have a severe negative effect on a conflict zone: 'rather than enhancing understanding, heritage attractions may inhibit mutual acquaintance and indeed be an obstacle to it. The heritage site is a political resource and, as such, it aims to legitimize a specific social reality, which divides people into 'we' and 'they'. This makes the site a resource to reaffirm a segregated identity and a vehicle to express a particular narrative in order to serve to modern demands. It is used to underpin social, cultural and political identities of individuals, groups, places and states (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996). And since politics in Northern Ireland is still very much defined along ethnic lines, the heritage site becomes an identity marker used to influence governance processes and public perception.

In general this form of tourism has become known as political tourism, conflict tourism or dark tourism. The latter term was coined by Foley and Lennon (1996) and describes a niche type of tourism. According to Tarlow (2005) this type of tourism is built around the visitation of places where tragedies or historically noteworthy deaths have occurred. Foley and Lennon (1999) claim that tourism associated with sites of death is growing rapidly. Ten years later Stone (2009) concludes that dark tourism is seemingly becoming more popular and is receiving more attention. Smith (1998) claims 'that activities, sites or destinations associated with warfare are a major component of the wider tourist attraction market. So what do these sites look like? In order to come to a more detailed idea of what dark tourism entails, Stone (2006) sets out to draft a dark tourism spectrum. He does this by creating a typology of 'Seven Dark Suppliers'. I participated in several sightseeing tours in Belfast. Stone's categorization is useful to understand how conflict heritage is being transformed into a political resource in the region.

1) Dark Fun Factories. 'These allude to those visitor sites, attractions and tours which predominately have an entertainment focus and commercial ethic.' One can think of the London Dungeons for example. In Belfast the development of the Titanic quarter with the new 100 million Titanic Building being a great example.

2) Dark Exhibitions. According to Stone (2006, p.153) these exhibitions and sites are more about education. In the Northern Ireland context one can think of the Ulster Museum in Belfast or a variety of theatre performances on the legacy of the Troubles.

3) Dark Dungeons. The Dungeons refer to ‘those sites and attractions, which present bygone penal and justice codes to the present day consumer, and revolve around (former) prisons and courthouses’ (Stone, 2006, p.154). In Northern Ireland the Crumlin Road Prison would be such an example. The regeneration of former prison Maze Long Kesh, location of the famous hunger strikes, is one fitting example of using Dark Dungeons to attract visitors.

4) Dark Resting Places. This concept is based around the idea of using ‘cemetery or grave markers as potential products for dark tourism’ (ibid). The walking tours in Belfast are a good example of this. A large part of the tour by republican organization Coiste takes place on and around memorials and graveyards. The stories of the deceased are told and the events that took place on these graveyards are commemorated.



Image 1: Coiste tour group at Milltown Cemetery (source: author)

5) Dark Shrines. The idea of shrines as a tourist attraction is closely related to the concept of Dark Resting places. Stone (2006, p.155) characterizes these sites as an 'act of remembrance and respect for the recently deceased.'

6) Dark Conflict Sites. 'These revolve around war and battlefields and their commodification as potential tourism products.' In Northern Ireland some tours stop at the bookshop on Shankill Road that was the site of a famous bomb explosion.



Image 2: A nationalist memorial in West Belfast (source: author)

7) Dark Camps of Genocide. This most severe form of dark tourism 'represents those sites and places which have genocide, atrocity and catastrophe as the main thanatological theme' (Stone, 2006, p.157). Fortunately these cannot be found in Northern Ireland. One can think of the concentration camps in Germany and Poland as an example.

Effects on local communities

A lot of these 'dark' locations can be found in Northern Ireland. What is the effect on local communities of such places? The literature on dark tourism mostly deals with the perception and motivation of tourist to visit 'dark sites'. Lynch and Causevic (2008, p.13) state that 'often the relationship between the local community, the visiting of the site and the conflict is not clearly explained.' Only in the past five years more has been published on the effects of tourism on the local community. Marcel (2004: in Stone, 2006) characterizes the range and diversity of dark tourism as 'death makes a holiday', and consequently suggested that dark tourism is the dirty little secret of the tourism industry. That secret is dirty according to some because dark tourism can have a very negative impact on local communities, especially if it concerns sites where more recent tragedies occurred. The Huffington Post (2013) describes how 'Katrina tours' years after the hurricane hit New

Orleans are a reason for tension within the community: 'City Councilman Ernest Charbonnet, who represents the neighborhood, says residents complain the tour vehicles are blocking streets and damaging the roads. They also are weary of being gawked at.'

In a former conflict zone like Northern Ireland these processes could lead to exploitation and the reproduction of conflict according to McDowell (2008). Presenting conflict heritage to an external audience in a commercial setting could be offensive and divisive in an already highly sectarian region. Reason for this is that the two communities assess the conflict heritage on display differently. By using a particular site as a symbol of cultural identity and political experience it is possibly offensive or hurtful to the other community. In chapter 4 I will describe how this process has become visible in the current debate on the regeneration of the infamous Maze Long Kesh prison.

Positive and Phoenix tourism

The typology and terminology developed by Stone (2006) and McDowell (2008) is useful as an interpretation of political tourism, also in the Northern Irish setting. However, the characterization of political tourism as 'dark' is far too negative according to other scholars. 'D Amore and Cho (2007) feel that political tourism could contribute to understanding and openness between communities among each other and with tourists as a third party. And Jarman (1998) is particularly positive about commercial bus tours in Northern Ireland. 'The bus tours re-open the possibilities of seeing the city from other perspectives. They make links between areas and across sectarian boundaries in a way that is often not acknowledged or which are made difficult by the blocked entries and the numerous peace-lines.' Also Wiedenhoft Murphy (2010) is hopeful that the introduction of tourists as a third party in single-identity neighborhoods may make communities more perceptible and familiar to outsiders, or to put it differently 'the other'. In that sense conflict tourism could have the reverse effect as suggested by McDowell (2008) and Jenkins (2012). Instead of widening the sectarian divide it could help close the gap between 'them and us' in the region.

So if conflict tourism potentially has both negative and positive effects, wouldn't it be better to refrain from calling it 'dark tourism'. Lynch and Causevic (2008, p.15) do think so: 'In fact, a dark tourism concept does not resemble the real role it has in the process of tourism development and community reconciliation.' According to them the connotation and ascription through the academic use of the term 'dark tourism' is not shared or supported by local actors in Northern Ireland and is therefore not very useful in a practical sense (ibid). Government bodies, tourism agents and local communities alike, refuse to use the term. They even feel it may endanger their work to change the image of Northern Ireland. To all of these stakeholders it is very important that the region is seen abroad as safe and welcoming.¹⁰ That is opposite to the image of a region still haunted and characterized by its 'dark past'.

Hence Lynch and Causevic (2008) propose to use a different theoretical concept: phoenix tourism. They suggest that like the 'bird rising from ashes' phoenix tourism can be a tool for communities to further social reconciliation and urban regeneration. Translated to the situation on the ground they believe phoenix tourism can help communities by creating a sense of pride in their own heritage. This can be done concretely by helping small businesses and by developing infrastructure such as hotels and restaurants near conflict heritage. In Northern Ireland they argue, far too much of the profit made in tourism goes to commercial, multinational tour operators. Phoenix tourism would allow local communities on the periphery of the tourist centers to profit from the influx of visitors as well. And that should serve as a counterpoise against the dark, exploitative aspects of conflict tourism.

Conclusively the literature proves how tourism can either be a force to build peace or reproduce conflict. Or as Salazar (2006, p.330) states: 'every effort at making this world a better place is definitely worth trying. However in order to turn the peace-through tourism discourse into practice, more open dialogue is needed between policy makers and industry representatives on the one hand, and scholars on the other. It is only through more collaboration within the tourism sector (...) that tourism can ever become a true peace-builder, both within and outside tourism.'

¹⁰ Ure, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

In this thesis I am trying to find out what the effects are of political tourism in Northern Ireland. In order to do that I believe phoenix tourism offers a more comprehensive approach to look at the situation in Belfast and other cities. Dark tourism is useful to frame and understand the transformation of conflict heritage and the exploitative and/or immoral effects it may have. However, even if the effects of political tourism are predominantly negative, the reality is that tourism is there to stay in Northern Ireland. Phoenix tourism offers a more practical and nuanced theory to understand the developments in, and effects of, tourism.

2.3 The peacebuilding 'industry' and its effect on the peace process

Peacebuilding is a key term in this research. In Northern Ireland a peacebuilding sector, or industry as Power (2011) puts it, has emerged. In chapter 5 I analyze the role of the peacebuilding sector in Northern Ireland and how stakeholders in that sector may profit from a continuation of the conflict. First however, it is important to understand what peacebuilding is.

As early as the 1970's attempts have been made to resolve the conflict. In 1994 another round of negotiations was started when the IRA and loyalist paramilitaries declared a ceasefire. This led to the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. In 2007 a power sharing government between the DUP and Sinn Fein was established. As most scholars do, I will take 1994 as the starting point of the current peace process. That leaves the question what this peace process entails. Saunders (2001, p.483) defines a peace process as 'a political process in which conflicts are resolved by peaceful means.' (...) They are a 'mixture of politics, diplomacy, changing relationships, negotiation, mediation, and dialogue in both official and unofficial arenas.' This is a broad definition of the term peace process. And many similar or different definitions are available. In the literature many agree it consists of three elements: peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding. This typology is based on the work of Galtung (1975). Different typologies are possible as well. Ball (2001) uses only two main stages. The first is the cessation of violent conflict. The second stage is peacebuilding. The typology may be slightly different but most scholars agree that peacebuilding is a long-term process that is needed to move from a transition place to a consolidation phase instead (Ball, 2001).

In An Agenda For Peace The United Nations (UN) states that peacebuilding consists of a range of activities. These include capacity building, reconciliation, and societal transformation. The goal is to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid relapse into conflict. Boulding (1978) describes this aim as a situation of stable peace. In such a situation the probability of war is so small that it does not significantly affect the plans people make. Hence the aim of peacebuilding in Northern Ireland has been to enhance the capacity of people to live in durable peace. This sustainable peace has not yet arrived in full. Northern Ireland is still in the *process* of becoming a peaceful society.

How then is peacebuilding to help on the way towards durable peace? Peacebuilding has to work in three different areas according to Maiese (2003): 'parties must replace the spiral of violence and destruction with a spiral of peace and development, and create an environment conducive to self-sustaining and durable peace. The creation of such an environment has three central dimensions: addressing the underlying causes of conflict, repairing damaged relationships and dealing with psychological trauma at the individual level. Each of these dimensions relies on different strategies and techniques. In Northern Ireland work is being done on all three dimensions. Criticasters like Sluka (2009) however claim that too little is being done and that the Good Friday Agreement is only addressing symptoms and not the underlying causes of the Troubles. Hence sectarianism is still damaging relationships.

Barnet et al (2007, p.49) characterize peacebuilding by describing three dimensions: The first dimension is 'the desire to reinforce stability and discourage combatants from returning to war (...) 'Peacebuilding activities directly attempt to reduce the available means, and the incentives, for actors to return to conflict''. The second dimension is "helping to build or restore key state functions that have the capacity to generate basic public goods and possess a certain level of legitimacy" (ibid). Finally, the third dimension is 'the attempt to build not only the states but also society's ability to manage conflict peacefully and develop the socioeconomic infrastructure necessary to underpin economic development' (ibid).

It is important to note that these strategies should not be employed merely in a top-down manner. Peace has to take root at the grassroots level. In the Northern Ireland conflict but

in so many other intra-state conflicts civilians were directly involved in the conflict; sometimes being perpetrator and victim alike. Hence Verkoren (2008, p.56) notes that ‘as a result, ordinary people, living alongside the armed actors and greatly affected by them, have both an interest and a potential in contributing to the building of peace.’ Civil society and individuals all have a role to play.

2.4 Aid and its effects

In recent years a fair amount of research has been conducted on the relationship between security, aid and development. Scholars have become increasingly aware that these three topics should not be dealt with separately (Beswick & Jackson, 2008). They go hand in hand and should be treated as such. The debate often focuses on the question what effects aid has on security and development. The debate has centered on Africa and on the question if Official Development Aid (ODA) has helped underdeveloped African countries move forward. Some are highly critical of this form of foreign aid. According to Moyo (2009) aid has not only failed to help, but moreover, has had a severe negative effect on development in Africa. She even claims the continent would be better off without foreign aid. Others (Gerson, 2009) disagree, and claim foreign aid is a useful tool to promote peace and development. A more nuanced view can be found in the work of Collier (2008). He acknowledges that aid can sometimes indeed hamper development and peace. However, he also claims that statistically seen, aid has had a positive effect on growth figures for his selection of poor countries.

Funding bodies

Who gives aid? In this thesis I will mainly look at the role of the European Union as the primary funding body in Northern Ireland. Many other different public and private donors however, distribute foreign aid in the region as well. After the cease-fire of 1994, and later after the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, billions of Euros’ were made available for the development and promotion of peace in Northern Ireland. Donors like the USA and private charities contributed heavily. By far the largest donor, and hence the most influential one, was the European Union. In this thesis I will therefore pay special attention to the role of the EU in the region. In the light of recent events such as the decision by the EU to withdraw funds for the development of a peace and reconciliation centre on the Maze Long Kesh site,

and because of the availability of literature and secondary material on the role of the EU I felt it was appropriate and useful to take a closer look at the EU. The interview I was able to conduct with SEUPB managing director Shaun Henry provided another incentive to primarily focus on the EU. After almost twenty years one should ask the question what effects peacebuilding has had on the economy and if society is any closer to the stable, durable peace as described by Boulding. According to Phinnemore et al. (2012, p.8) the EU has done much to promote peace. The EU provided “crucial and sophisticated support for the process at the local community level through its Peace programmes. They state that the peace programs represented a “sophisticated and sustained example of a 'peace-building from below' strategy.” The results correspond with the general results found by Collier and Hoeffler (2004). According to the dataset used by the latter, aid is atypically effective in post-conflict settings. Collier and Hoeffler acknowledge that the results of aid in post-conflict regions are highly specific. In Northern Ireland both community workers on the ground as well as researchers and politicians claim that the thousands of projects funded with EU money have made a difference in Northern Ireland.¹¹ The question remains to what extent and what difference precisely these projects have made.

A view on the impact of aid in Northern Ireland can also be found in the work of Byrne and Irvin (2001) who look specifically at the success of economic peacebuilding in Northern Ireland. They claim that ‘economic aid on its own is not a panacea to resolve ethnic conflict within Northern Ireland, but it can be a part of an overall peacebuilding process that tackles structural inequalities that contribute to the protracted nature of ethno political conflicts like Northern Ireland’ (2001, p. 425). In the late 1990’s and the early 2000’s, economic aid was one of the main tools used to promote development and peace. In its Peace II program between 2000 and 2006 the EU specifically focused on the improvement of socio-economic circumstances.¹² Byrne and Irvin’s (ibid) conclusion that economic aid on its own is not enough to resolve ethnic conflict is based on a number of interviews with community workers, and donors. The community workers they interview give mixed reviews on the effectiveness of socio-economic projects. Some argue that ‘the person with the full belly is less likely to get into trouble,’ (p.426) and others say that economic development has been

¹¹ Harland, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

¹² Henry, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

good for self-esteem and self-efficacy. According to some, this is leading to economic development that includes the marginalized and serves as an alternative for young men to join paramilitaries. That however does not answer the question if economic aid has helped to build cross-community ties. Byrne and Irvin (ibid) finally conclude that according to a group of respondents the answer has to that question is 'no'. Their respondents claim that the paramilitaries will 'not be bought of by funds' and that people need to acknowledge and get past their own bigotry and sectarianism if structural aspects of the conflict can be addressed. How can aid help to do just that? Byrne and Irvin (ibid) do not directly answer that question. Their respondents do leave some clues: accountability on the part of both donors and community groups is important. And projects that require groups from different communities to work together seem to 'dispel some of the fear felt by community members' (p.423). The latter notion would be coherent with Lederach who argues that it is in improving the relationship between the two communities that most progress can be made. Engagement is the key word: 'it is perhaps self-evident but oft-neglected that relationship is the basis of the conflict and its long-term solution ... Reconciliation is not pursued by those seeking innovative ways to disengage or minimize the conflicting groups affiliations, but instead is built upon mechanisms that engage the side of a conflict with each other as humans –in- relationship. Such work has the potential to improve community relation, thereby negating the causes of the conflict, and its violence, as well as dealing with the consequences without erasing people's ethnic identities' (Lederach in Power, 2011, p.7).

Twelve years after the research conducted by Byrne and Irvin these notions are still part of the debate on peacebuilding in Northern Ireland. In Chapter 5 I hope to contribute by assessing if in the past decade peacebuilding has made a difference. Three questions remain that need answering. Question 1: Byrne and Irvin do not sufficiently investigate if the economic aid their respondents speak of reaches those it is aimed at. How is that possible? In 2013 levels of deprivation remain high in the back neighborhoods of Derry and Belfast. Hence, in 2011 Mary Power has to conclude in the book *Peacebuilding in Northern Ireland* that the main benefactors of funding are the middle classes and those able to deal with the bureaucracy of the system. That is why I ask question 2: Are donors and community groups held accountable or do they profit from peace money that should be made available to the lower classes And what is the role of the paramilitaries in all of this? And question 3 deals

with the inability of socio-economic aid to address structural violence, discrimination and sectarianism. Hence, I ask: do socio-economic projects have to be conducted on a cross-community base for them to be effective?

Negative aspects of aid

Besides the relevant questions about the effectiveness of aid, it is necessary to look at possible negative effects of peace money. This is needed because aid can have a very positive impact on peace but can be a tool used to fuel conflict as well (Anderson, 1999). Hence, the official assistance provided to Northern Ireland should be distributed in such a way that is not harmful to the peace process, making it of key importance to understand how peace money can be abused to continue the conflict.

In many post-conflict zones most of the funds available for peacebuilding are distributed through NGOs and government agencies. That is also the case in Northern Ireland where different government bodies work as a mid-level distributors of funding that often is used on the ground by community workers that work for NGOs (Nolan, 2012). Thus, it is important to take a closer look at the role of NGOs. These organizations often try to do a good job but there is also critique on their functioning. Fisher (2008, p.229-231) describes three central critiques on local NGOs:

1) NGOs are not independent per se, but often state-driven. This could mean that NGOs can become private branches of government and other funding bodies. NGOs can become dependent of their funders. That may lead to a very uncritical attitude towards peacebuilding. It is not necessarily true that NGOs in this situation won't criticize their donors but it is less likely.

2) The performance of NGOs has changed because of the requirements of donor markets. Especially in places like Northern Ireland huge amounts of money are available for peacebuilding. Part of that money is legitimately spent on the wages and expenses of NGO personal. Due to overhead in the organization and self-preservation there is a danger that NGOs do not prioritize the build up of peace but primarily aim to receive as much funding as needed. That does not imply that applying for funding is necessarily a bad thing or serves no purpose. The money may be used well enough for different social needs but could

contribute little to the original aim of donors: peace and reconciliation and is potentially primarily important to keep NGOs in business.

3) NGOs are not subject to any democratic controls and thus lack legitimacy. As a result NGOs are given the opportunity to use donor money to further their own agenda's. Jad (2007) calls this a process of NGOisation, and stipulates that NGOs often have the power to manipulate and re-negotiate with donors. This can lead to 'upward vertical participation' (ibid, p.627). Through this process power is concentrated in the hands of 'administrators and technocrats'. A large percentage of money thus stays in these organizations and is not being made available for the 'ordinary people' who actually need it. In the Northern Ireland context this critique is reflected in the work of Power (2011), who claims that the main benefactors are the middle classes and community workers themselves.

And what if the agenda of an NGO is linked to the agenda of one of the conflicting parties? It could lead to peace money turning into conflict money. Verkoren (2008) describes how NGOs, despite their aim to build peace, may become part of the conflict situation. These organizations cannot perform outside of their own context. Verkoren has not conducted research in Northern Ireland but describes how in other parts of the world, parties in the conflict may receive support from partners in civil society. Often these relationships have been formed during the conflict. That is also the case in Northern Ireland. A majority of community workers is, or used to be, a member of paramilitary organizations such as the IRA, UDA or UVF.¹³ That might result in NGOs or their employees promoting violence in order to receive grants meant for peacebuilding. In chapter 5 I will describe if that is taking place in Northern Ireland as well.

In Northern Ireland a number of large international donors like Atlantic Philanthropies and the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) are at work as well. Anderson (1999, p.1) warns for similar effects related to international NGOs: 'When international assistance is given in the context of a violent conflict, it becomes part of that context and thus also of the conflict. Although aid agencies often seek to be neutral or nonpartisan toward the winners and losers of war, the impact of their aid is not neutral regarding whether conflict worsens or abates. When given in conflict settings, aid can reinforce, exacerbate, and prolong the

¹³ Sykes, May 2013, personal interview, Belfast & Jenkins, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast.

conflict.’ Therefore it is important to take Andersons concept of ‘do no harm’ (ibid) serious in the Northern Irish context.

3. Methodology

This thesis is an analysis that is based on data that is both collected in the field and behind my desk. My aim was to answer my research question: *Do actors in the tourism business and in the peacebuilding sector economically profit from the legacy and continuation of the conflict? And how does that influence the peace process?*

3.1 Designing the research strategy

The question was simple: considering the research question, how do I gather data in the best possible way? And what is the best manner to analyze this data afterwards? A number of research strategies seemed feasible for research of this nature. However, most important was to pick the strategy that would enable me as a researcher to acquire and analyze the data I need. (Verschuren & Dodewaard, 2007) Three selection questions are at the core of every research strategy. By using these questions I set up the parameters for my fieldwork. After that I came to the conclusion that I was going to conduct a broad, qualitative research project that entailed two case studies on tourism and the peacebuilding industry.

A broad or a specific approach

First I had to decide whether to pick a broad or a specific approach to find the answers to the research questions. I found it most important to find a balance between an in depth approach and a more general approach. The sheer size of literature available on the Northern Irish conflict, forced me to pick a specific topic. The main research question therefore consists of two elements: the profits made by actors in 1) *tourism* and the profits made by actors in the 2) *peacebuilding sector*. These are still two very broad terms. When it comes to profits derived through a continuation of the conflict I came across other examples as well. I could have done research on the militarization of space in Northern Ireland and the profits made by construction companies. However, I had to draw a line somewhere. Hence, I decided to conduct two case studies: one focused on tourism as a way to make a profit and one focused on the peacebuilding sector. I picked tourism and the peace industry because these are two of the main ways in which a profit can be made out of the continuation the Troubles. And both are very visible. Secondly large sums of money are

involved in both practices. I decided to add the word economic because it's an under investigated factor. In my fieldwork I have, for instance, come across examples of political gain that's being made by a continuation of the Troubles. In this thesis I will touch upon that, but that subject is too broad for this thesis and requires independent research.

A qualitative approach

Secondly I had to choose whether to conduct research of a qualitative or quantitative nature. I chose a qualitative approach based on in depth interviews. This approach allowed me to understand who profits from the Troubles and how different actors perceive that. Motives and human action are at the core of this research, making a qualitative approach a more appropriate strategy. That is not to say I will not use any statistical data. I have used a variety of official reports on tourism statistics, peace money and related topics. Using hard data was very important for it enabled me to connect my qualitative findings with facts and figures.

Fieldwork

In order to conduct research I had to travel to Northern Ireland. I stayed in Belfast for a period of three weeks between April 17th 2013 and May 8th 2013. Together with a friend and colleague, I lived in a house in one of the most deprived areas of East Belfast. I remember feeling depressed with the neighborhood the first night we arrived. I realized later that this is part of the importance of fieldwork. Living in Belfast for a short while allowed me to understand better how people live in those deprived areas and how community work is taking place. I hope that is reflected in this research.

In the course of those three weeks I have had numerous informal conversations with all kinds of people. This differed from taxi-drivers to people on the bus, tourists and youngsters and staff in community centers in Belfast. And whenever I met people over a pint in a pub they were more than interested in my project and talked freely of their own experiences during the Troubles. Moreover I interviewed twelve key actors and I attended academic conferences. I also engaged in cultural activities such as the theatre production *'The History of the Troubles (accordin' to my Da)* in order to understand the conflict better.

I realize that while I was conducting research I was a social actor as well. In a cynical way I hope to gain from the Northern Irish conflict in the form of this thesis. Thus I agree with Portier (1997, p.206) when he states 'fieldworkers ... are part of the research scene, not detached from it. They are social actors endowed with an array of attributes and biases that influence the nature and outcome of their social inquiries.'

Biases, limitations and validity

During this study I have had to deal with limitations and possible biases. This may have influenced the results. First of all, it is a possibility that some of the interviewees answered in a socially desirable way. Secondly, I have investigated if there is truth in the accusations that former UVF members use violence to acquire funding for 'peace' building. These are sensitive topics. Not everyone seemed overly enthusiastic to talk about these matters. Some interviewees only spoke about it on the basis of anonymity. Time was another aspect. It takes time to find your feet in a new city. And it takes time to find the people that are most interesting to talk to. I have done a sufficient job in doing so I hope. It would however have been beneficial if I had been able to investigate whom within the UVF stooped up the violence during the flag riots. I do realize that these are questions that acquire far more time, contacts and trust.

Desk research

Besides fieldwork, desk research was crucial for my thesis. The existing data in desk research is divided in three categories: literature, secondary data like media reports and official statistical data. I have used all three. Most of the data used is based on existing literature. I have also used quite a lot of official statistical data. Evaluation reports of the Peace programs and specifically Nolan's (2012 and 2013) peace monitors provided valuable statistical material on levels of funding and deprivation.

3.2 The research methods

Interviews

I have used different ways to conduct the interviews. This enabled me to conduct the best possible interviews, depending on the respondent and location. All of the interviews I

conducted have been on a face-to-face basis. One institution (Belfast city council) I contacted was not able to grant me an interview. They however answered some of the questions I had via e-mail. One interview I could not attend because I had another interview at the same time. My colleague conducted that interview with the help of a questionnaire I provided. Three more interviews with community workers were conducted together. This was beneficial to us both since his research focused on the impact of the Troubles on the lives of affected youth. We were able to interview some of the same community workers about both our topics.

I have mainly used the semi-structured interview method. I would draft a questionnaire that- if requested - was available to the respondent before the interview was conducted. During the interview I would use the questionnaire as a guideline. The key to a good interview however is to listen. I would ask any question that I found interesting and beneficial to my research. Central to my interviews was how and why economic profit was being made and what affect it had on the peace process. In some cases I asked directly if in the tourism or peacebuilding sector economic profit was being made and what the impact was of that. That may have influenced my findings. I have tried to correct this by always phrasing the questions as statements from others, as to avoid any suggestion from my part that these hypotheses were correct or not. Due to my approach and questionnaire I believe the interviewees felt free to respond in any way.

A number of the interviewees are experts in their field, whether that is tourism or peacebuilding. Their contributions were valuable and helpful to me, because it allowed me to bring forward the hypothesis derived from the literature, as discussed in chapter 2. This centered on a number of basic but often critical hypothesizes I found in the literature.

- 1) Is it true that a profit is being made on the legacy of the conflict in tourism? And is that reproducing a segregated identity?
- 2) Is this form of tourism dark? Or should it be seen as something more positive?
- 3) Is it true that a peacebuilding industry has emerged that makes a profit from money meant to promote peace and reconciliation?

- 4) Are there actors within the peacebuilding industry that use peace money in a way that is having no effect on the advancement of a 'stable peace' (Boulding, 1978); or even have a negative effect on the peace process?

Participant observation

In order to get a better perspective on conflict tourism and on peacebuilding in Belfast I decided to participate in, and observe a variety of tours and community projects. For the case study on political tourism I participated in four tours from different tour operators. After asking permission from the tour operator I made recordings of the walking tour. On the bus tours I asked permission from the tour guides to record their commentary over the loudspeaker system. Since tourists were coming on and off the bus all the time it was deemed unnecessary by me and by the tour guide to inform tourists of my role as a researcher. This was also unnecessary because I had no interest in recording their private comments or questions during the tours.

For the case study on peacebuilding I have also visited two community projects for young people in order to conduct interviews with community workers and youngsters. This form of participant observation allowed me to study a group from the inside and observe its dynamics. Taking part as a participant was a very intriguing and rewarding way of doing research and was essential to my analyses on conflict tourism and peacebuilding as a source of revenue.

3.3 The research data

To gain an in depth but comprehensive and integral perspective on my topic, I felt it was of the utmost importance to talk to a variety of actors. Most of the interviews took place at the offices of the interviewees. Before leaving I had pre-selected a number of people I wished to interview. Most of these people work in the tourism business or in the peacebuilding sector.

Research in the tourism sector

During the spring of 2013 I participated in four conflict heritage tours. These were mainly commercial bus tours but also political walking tours. I talked to tourists on the bus and during the walking tour and I interviewed a number of the tour guides. Informal commentary from tourists on the bus was used to describe the stone-throwing event (see

the introduction of chapter 4). I had no interest in recording their comments but I use their comments to describe the incident. I have made sure their comments are only used in this thesis on the basis of anonymity.

Furthermore I interviewed representatives from several organizations associated with tourism. This includes Shaun Henry, managing director of the SEUPB, the Special EU Programmes Body. I also interviewed Fiona Ure from the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau and Michael Culbert, director of Coiste, which is an organization that organizes republican walking tours. I also talked to three tour guides, and for the section on the regeneration of ex-prison Maze Long Kesh I talked to Joe O'Donnell, member of the strategic board that oversees the project. Furthermore I talked to Chris Jenkins, criticaster of conflict tourism. Most of the interviews took approximately one hour. Ure, as well as representatives from different tour operators presented me with brochures and marketing literature. In combination with forms of online marketing this data was used to gain a better insight in the ways conflict tourism is marketed. I for instance analyzed how many times conflict heritage was mentioned in recent official brochures and in what manner. This gave me a better insight in the ambivalent way official agencies deal with conflict heritage as tourism potential.

I was not the first one to do research on these topics. Scholars such as Wiedenhof-Murphy (2010) McDowell (2008) and Lynch and Causevic (2008) have participated in political tours before. Their insights and data were very useful for this research. It allowed me to assess how my own findings and observations related to their experiences. Their conclusions were necessary as the basis of the hypotheses I used in my interviews.

Peace industry

For my research on the profits made in the peace industry I used a similar strategy. I interviewed a number of key actors. I made sure I spoke to a mix of people. I deliberately talked to people with a loyalist and to people with a nationalist background. Furthermore I spoke to people in a managing role, higher up in the hierarchy, and I interviewed people that worked within the communities. I ended up conducting eight semi-structured interviews with the following respondents.

- Ken Harland – Researcher at Ulster University
- Joe O’Donnell – Belfast Interface Project.
- Chris Jenkins – Integrated education fund
- Robert Sykes - Relatives for Justice
- David Robinson - Belfast City Council – Good Relations department - (via e-mail)
- Sam White - Belfast Conflict Resolution Consortium (interview by colleague)
- Paul McCrory - Short Strand Community Forum
- Shaun Henry - Managing Director at the SEUPB

Moreover I participated in two community projects. I observed in what way the youth centre in the nationalist neighborhood Short Strand works. And I participated in meetings with loyalist youngsters in community centre the Base in East Belfast. After participating in these meetings I conducted interviews with a number of these youngsters.

3.4 Analysis of the interviews

All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. After the transcription I have classified and categorized the interviews thematically. This allowed me to see similarities and differences in the answers and comments of the respondents. After this analysis I have linked these results to the existing data acquired through my desk study. In chapter 4 (tourism) 5 (the peace industry) and 6 (conclusions) the results of this analysis can be found.

4. Tourism

It was a sunny day. I was the only young person that was sitting on the top deck of the bus. Almost all of my fellow travelers were American pensioners on a tour through Ireland. It was the second time in two days I had decided to join a two hour long guided bus tour through the city of Belfast. The man that sold me my ticket had advised me to take another tour because the tour guide promised to be more exiting than the previous one. He was right. The guide, Steven Lenahan was a young man. He was to the point, charming and took every opportunity to slam the Northern Irish political establishment with one of his cynical, but funny jokes. The American tourists were enjoying their day, asking the tour guide questions. We turned a corner to Falls Road. People littered the street of the infamous nationalist neighborhood. The atmosphere was fine. It made it even more surprising when the rock hit the bus. It narrowly missed an elderly American women who was sitting in front of me. After checking up on her and making sure everybody was all right Lenahan soon made everybody smile again with one of his jokes:

‘The reason why our crime rates are now so low is that the majority of our criminals are now busy running the country. So for the lady upstairs that had a stone thrown at her, you actually saw there our future first minister. I guaranty that stone throwing will be on his election material.’

Ten minutes later however the same woman was yelling: ‘do I have a target on my head or something?’ A water balloon had almost hit her. I turned around to see a small group of young guys disappearing in the distance. They were smiling and making gestures at the bus. I wondered, was this simply an example of anti-social behavior or was there some sort of statement in their actions? Did they feel watched? Looked at like goldfish in a bowl? Did they feel their neighborhood was exploited by conflict tourism, as some critics claimed?¹⁴

4.1 Overview and economic impact

The Programme for Government and Economic Strategy identifies tourism as a sector with enormous potential for the NI economy. In the Belfast area alone, the latest figures suggest

¹⁴ Jenkins, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

that visits to the city are worth up to £529m per year for the local economy, supporting over 10,000 jobs in the Greater Belfast area¹⁵. Hence tourism has become an important sector in the Northern Irish economy in the post 1998 era.

Before the troubles began, around one million tourists visited Northern Ireland every year. In 1967 the number hit a peak at 1.080.000. After the eruption of violence in 1969 numbers fell drastically to only 321.000 by 1976. 'Tourist numbers remained stagnant throughout the 1980s and early 1990s; most (85%) were from the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland, visiting the North of Ireland to see friends and family' (Wiedenhof Murphy, 2010, p.539). Visitors largely avoided Belfast during the heydays of the Troubles. They only began to return in small numbers after a cease-fire was agreed in 1994. Currently the peak numbers of the 1960's are well exceeded by the number of people that now visit Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland statistics show that 'during 2011, 1.5 million overseas visitors spent at least one night in Northern Ireland (NI), an increase of 4% when compared with January - December 2010. Overseas visitors spent an estimated £368 million during the period, an increase of 20% compared with January -December 2010.'¹⁶

Key to the boom in tourism was the signing of the peace accords and the reduction of violence. It is stipulated that for a well functioning tourism sector you need peace (Boyd, 2000). In order to attract visitors, the reduction of violence, and the political steps taken since 1998, were necessary to convince tourists that Northern Ireland was a safe place to visit. The peace process was incremental to the developments in tourism. However, according to Fionna Ure from the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau (BVCB) a number of other factors weighted in as well: 'The arrival of the low cost airlines also helped because the barrier of price came down. So there were a number of reasons: marketing, political stability, affordability also in terms of access. And in the mean time a combination of public and private investment in the tourism product, whether it is new hotels, new attractions and restaurants. Generally seeing a regeneration of the city centre. I mean, ten years ago

¹⁵ Strategic Framework for Belfast Tourism

¹⁶ Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment, 2012

there was hardly anything in the Cathedral Quarter (...) the heart is truly back in now and beating in the city centre.¹⁷

The developments in tourism were made possible because of the ongoing peace process and have gone hand in hand with the regeneration of the city of Belfast and the growth of the economy in Northern Ireland. Tourism is now one of the major economic sectors. Hence it is understandable that the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and various governments on a local and regional level are trying to make the most of the economic opportunities that tourism offers: 'It is now seen as a credible industry. And I think in that respect that is why the council has much supported investment over the years. Whether it is help to set up the visitor convention bureau, it runs the Waterfront Hall, which is a key conference centre. They continue to invest the Waterfront and there will be more exhibition space for 2016.'¹⁸

According to the NITB 40.000 jobs are sustained by tourism activity. This amounts to 5.6% of the total workforce. 'The total revenue generated by the Northern Ireland tourism industry in 2009 was £529 million by tourism activity' (NITB, 2013). And many acknowledge the positive effects of tourism on the regeneration of the city centre and the economy: 'I think its a good thing, its very helpful very beneficial. And they [tourists] come for lots of reasons; you get people who want to study the peace process. You get the curious who want to come and look at where things happened. You get 800.000 tourists who come and look at Titanic, as a new signature project, MLK will draw tourist, business and opportunity. But more important it reinvents Belfast and it reinvents Northern Ireland in a much better way. And lets be fair, we need it.'¹⁹ The positive effects are acknowledged by many others: 'The effect is has had is fantastic. Because it is improving the life of those working in it and its improving the image of the city and its bringing in investment. In many ways what you could say is that tourism is the bread and butter of the economy.'²⁰

4.2 Political tourism

When you visit the webpage belfastsightseeingtours.com (March 2013) the first thing you find are pictures of the wall murals Belfast is famous for. Below the pictures you can book

¹⁷ Ure, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ O'Donnell, May 2013, personal interview, Belfast

²⁰ Lenahan, May 2013, personal interview, Belfast

your preferred tour through the Northern Irish capital. You have five choices: (1) the Belfast Landmarks Tour (2) the Titanic Shipyard Tour (3) the Historical & Castle tour (4) the Wall Mural Tour and (5) the Belfast Political Tour. If you click on the Wall Mural Tour you will find a short description claiming how famous and impressive the murals are and that 'These wall paintings often look intimidating but they have become as much of a tourist attraction as many of the regular attractions within Belfast and beyond.' And if you go to the political tour they promise to give you a perspective of a 'war torn city' from both Protestant and Catholic viewpoint. Tourists will be 'Getting up close to some of the famous scenes and visiting the museums where a large collection of artifacts are stored will give you a tour that you will never forget. You will get to hear first hand experiences from people who lived through the conflict and visit areas that still strive to 'normalize' and put the conflict behind them.'

Political tourism, by some referred to as conflict tourism, is popular. Especially in Belfast a wide range of tour operators compete with each other for the favor of the visitor. Belfast sightseeing is a black taxi tour company that uses the heritage of the conflict to make a profit. A number of other black taxi operators do the same. The black caps are specifically offering tours that show tourists the conflict heritage of the city. Besides the taxi tours there are three large companies that offer bus tours around the city. These tour operators compete with and sometimes work together with the black taxi tour operators. Besides these operators a variety of organizations offer walking tours. Especially in West Belfast republican groups such as Coiste and Failte Feirste Thiar take groups of students, scholars and 'normal' visitors around.

The competition among the operators is big. In the city center salesmen from different companies try to convince tourists to take a bus tour. Their tactics are not always subtle and the massive competition requires police attention from time to time. Ticket salesman Alfie works for Allen's Tours: 'whenever we first started here there was fights and so. They were calling the police about us. The police said: stop wasting police time again (...) if we think your wasting police time we are gonna charge you with it. So it actually stopped (...) but he [Mark Kelley, a competitor] actually phoned the police for me for calling him a dig head. Imagine phoning the police, excuse me: he called me a dig head? The police should go:

you're a dig head, go away! Stop, we have better things to do with our time. But it took them 8 or 9 complains. The police probably wasted 10.000 pounds on it.'²¹

As described in chapter 3 I have participated in a number of these tours over a period of three weeks in April and May 2013. I have conducted a number of semi-structured and informal interviews with tour guides, ticket men, and managers. The bus tours on offer do not differ significantly in the routes they take. Outside of Belfast it is possible to go and see famous scenery such as the Giants Causeway. In Belfast the bus tours take you in two hours through various parts of the city. The most prominent sites are the Cathedral quarter, Queens University, the newly built Titanic quarter and last but not least, the different sites related to the conflict. In particular the nationalist stronghold around Falls Road and its loyalist counterpart Shankill Road are the focus of attention. The wall murals in both communities, and the peace line that separates the communities, are focal points of the tours.

The taxis offer custom made tours. Some of these tours are completely focused on conflict heritage but others focus on the Titanic quarter for example. The walking tours are all completely centered on the legacy of the Troubles and are often provided by organizations like Coiste (nationalist) or Epic (loyalist), which are lobby groups for ex-prisoners. The reason there is such an abundance of political tours on offer is the demand tourists have for it. A large percentage of the tourists that visit Northern Ireland is specifically interested in political history. 'Statistics from the 2001 Belfast City Council Report claim that 43 percent of tourists came to Belfast out of curiosity over conflict' (Wiedenhof Murphy, 2010, p.542). And this percentage rate appears to stay relatively stable. In 2004 'the curiosity percentage was 42% (McDowell, 2008, p416). More recent figures are difficult to come by.

Come and see our murals! Promoting Belfast

What are these tourists curious about? What do they hope to see? One of the highlights that Belfast has on offer is its collection of wall murals. The murals are often large

²¹ Alfie, May 2013, personal interview, Belfast

elaborative visualizations of local culture. Sometimes they are not political of nature, but often this is the case. Many murals glorify paramilitary groups such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) or the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). Hence they are a way to mark territory and serve as a beacon to the people of Northern Ireland. Originally the murals were visual displays to declare allegiance to one of the warring factions.



Image 3: loyalist wall mural (source: author)

Through that the murals become propaganda. They reflect the ideology, history or achievements of one side of the community and serve as strong symbolic markers of identity. And according to Jarman (1998) the murals have to be understood spatially, for the effect of a mural is partly determined by the location of it: 'to regard the murals essentially, or only, as images is therefore to restrict their power. Their very location affects how they are interpreted and what they mean, while the location is used and treated differently because of the presence of the paintings.' Effectively they serve as reminders to the local community of their identity, past events on that location and in some cases their affiliation with one of the paramilitary organizations. Simultaneously it sends a message to other organizations or communities that the location has been claimed.

Many of the murals are well crafted and offer the tourist a touch of the 'couleur locale'. They are therefore attractive and offer important visitor experiences. However, tourists and the local communities often interpret these murals in a very different way: 'For tourists, many of the murals may suggest a romanticized view of the violence of recent years, even a nostalgia for the imagined sense of community which has provided the base for resistance and struggle, and at times encouraged sacrifice for the cause. For the communities themselves the walls have long been regarded as an appropriate place on which to honor and remember the dead and imprisoned' (Jarman, 1998).

Since the peace process started in 1994 a lot has changed when it comes to wall murals. Government agencies, community groups and individuals involved in the peace process were aware that many of the murals are seen as symbols of segregation, militarization and sectarianism. Jenkins: 'I think our political murals. In particular the once that depict paramilitary organizations are. I think they are very damaging. If you are trying to create a society in which areas aren't segregated, in which there is community cohesion, in which people feel comfortable in areas that historically or currently are seen as singular identity. Wall murals can't exist within that sort of vision.'²²

Jenkins' opinion is shared by the Belfast city council. In recent years the Good Relations Unit of the council has been actively replacing militaristic murals: 'As part of the development of shared space and transforming contested space, we have been working with communities for over 10 years to support them in removing militaristic murals and replacing these with softer images.'²³ This is done in cooperation with local communities who want their murals to be replaced. Hence, the conflict heritage of the city is being altered. Perhaps the attempts of the City Council to change the visual heritage of the Troubles is indicative of the struggle Northern Ireland is having with the use of its political heritage. Other government agencies such as the NITB are well aware of the tourist potential the conflict heritage of the region holds, but have traditionally refrained from promoting the city in such terms. In a 2011 report,²⁴ the Belfast city council identifies a number of key strengths and opportunities to promote tourism in the capital city. Most interestingly is that in both the final draft as

²² Jenkins, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

²³ Robinson, May 2013, personal communication, Belfast

²⁴ Belfast tourism: gateway to the future

well as the executive summary no direct mention is made of the wall murals and heritage sites in the city. While private tourism companies advertise these famous attractions, the city council and tourism board seem hesitant about the promotion of conflict tourism. At the same time close reading of the report shows that conflict tourism is a key part of the strategy to attract more visitors. However, instead of directly naming the conflict heritage as an attraction, a different terminology is used. In the strategy report, mention is made of 'the unique Belfast story.' And the contested Gaeltacht and Shankill quarters are 'distinctive communities' that offer 'important visitor experiences'. It seems there is ambivalence about the popularity of conflict tourism among government officials and within the NITB. This attitude dates back decades ago. In 1995 Rolston stated: 'three approaches have been used to promote tourism in Northern Ireland: 1) ignore the Troubles entirely; 2) highlight that Northern Ireland is not as bad as people think; and 3) acknowledge the curiosity factor, or that some tourists are attracted to Northern Ireland because of the conflict. The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB), the government agency for promoting tourism strategies, historically used the first approach, attempting to mute the Troubles in its promotional campaigns by using rural images of Northern Ireland to attract tourists (Rolston, 1995; in Wiedenhoft Murphy, 2010, p.542)

This attitude has changed since the mid nineties. The statistics proof the popularity of political tourism. The NITB had to recognize the commercial dimension of conflict tourism. McDowell (2008, p.416) claims that 'all the tours discussed here are recommended, funded or supported by official agencies, illuminating their implicit and explicit involvement in the marketing of the region's sectarian streetscape.' And the EU and other funding bodies have funded tourism initiatives: 'we have invested heavily in tourism. Before 1998 tourism hardly existed in Northern Ireland. So there were huge opportunities. We have invested in infrastructure, marketing all over the world, in all sorts of ways, the Titanic quarter, foreign investment. And Tourist numbers have picked up. A lot of tourists have come, but we still need more of them to come.'²⁵

The ambivalence remains though. In official publications by the Belfast City Council or the NITB euphemistic terms are often used. Wall murals become 'cultural heritage'. Peace lines

²⁵ Henry, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

turn into 'historical heritage'. If the conflict is mentioned it is often in relation to reconciliation and peace. This is partly done because organizations such as the BVCB and NITB feel that Belfast needs to be more than a city just for 'Trouble seekers'. 'The NITB and Belfast City Council orchestrate a two-pronged approach to this type of tourism. While approving and marketing political tourism initiatives in other parts of Belfast, both agencies have taken great care to promote the city centre as a neutral place for the large percentage of visitors who visit Northern Ireland for other reasons such as business or leisure' (McDowell, 2008, p.416).

And Lynch and Causevic (2008) state that: 'NI is trying to put itself away from the image of troubles and in that way NI is promoting itself internationally together with ROI. (...) This type of tourism activity is not included in any official promotional activities related to tourism development and is not an integral part of the process of image formation.'

Diversification may have been an important aspect of the strategies employed by the NITB and the BVCB. Their hesitation towards promoting political tourism may have another reason. A range of scholars (McDowell, 2008; Lynch&Causevic, 2008; Wiedenhoft Murphy, 2010) has raised questions about the effects and practices of 'dark tourism'. Jenkins (2013) and McDowell (2008) argue that political tourism can be exploitative and even immoral. Sites of commemoration can become political tools and the spoils of tourism do not end up in the working class communities that still bear the brunt of the legacy of the Troubles. Their neighborhoods once again are the battlefields where the future of Northern Ireland is decided. Fortunately this time violence is no longer the weapon of choice. Tourism has become one of the weapons that is used instead. The battle however, continues.

The battle of the story



Image 4: wall mural in West Belfast (source: author)

The winner they say writes history. But who is the winner of the Troubles? For many the future and the past of Northern Ireland are still in dispute. Both sides in the conflict feel the urge to justify their actions of the past. Representatives of both communities glorify efforts of paramilitary groups such as the IRA and UVF. Both communities are still searching for recognition that their historical narrative is the right one. Coiste, an organization that furthers the interests of nationalist ex-prisoners is very straightforward about their aims. The walking tours Coiste organizes for tourists are a tactic used to further their own interests: 'Is there battle of the narrative going on? Are we part of a battle to tell the story? Yeah. Because we are republicans and we have a particular perspective (...) To us it was a social class, colonizer issue in Ireland. Now as an offshoot of colonization, you have people supporting the colonizer/pro British/Protestants Loyal people. And then you had the native people who opposed it, which were Irish-Catholic (...) so in simplistic terms the core issue could be Protestant-Catholic. But if you take it as part of the bigger process, it's Irish-British.

And we have ever seen our problem as Irish-British, because we've seen the bigger issue. If you see the problem as being British-Irish you have to have a more political change.²⁶

Hence, it is not only history that is still contested; the historical narrative becomes part of an argument for political change. International support and understanding is actively sought because the future of the region is still undecided. Some nationalist leaders still hope to see the island united. Currently they receive relatively little support in the polls (Nationalist, 2013). But that does not mean they have given up on the idea of a united Ireland, as tour guide and psychologist Lenahan explained: 'it's now no longer a physical conflict; it is a conflict of ideologies here. That's the way it is now. It's a conflict of words and a conflict of the mind, which is a step in the right direction. But it is still not really resolved. And in many ways its difficult to think that it ever will be resolved, because for it to be resolved one side of the community will have to accept defeat to the other side at some point. Or accept that until a majority here votes in favor of one or the other that we have to stick to what we have. And as of yet there has been no acceptance of that really on either side of the community.'²⁷

And thus, the struggle moves on. It has moved in the direction of politics and economy. Nowadays on the battlefield of tourism the hearts and minds of the incoming visitors have to be won. Especially on the republican side there is an understanding of the political value of conflict heritage. Coiste shows around approximately 6000 visitors a year. Originally backpackers, student groups and political sympathizers from places like Basque and Palestine would participate in their tours. But interest is growing and the successes of the tours in nationalist areas have prompted loyalist organizations such as Epic to set up their own tours. These ex-prisoner groups use the landscape as a political tool to gain support.

'Political tourists, then, are permitted to share contested spaces and interpret conflict sites because those who control them wish to present themselves and their histories to the outside world in a certain way. Extending and externalizing localized interpretations of the past is acutely important in post-conflict or transitional societies where minority or

²⁶ Culbert, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

²⁷ Lenahan, May 2013, personal interview, Belfast

disputant groups compete for the status of victim or seek legitimization and power.’ (McDowell, 2008, p.408)

Thus, ‘a bitter conflict over the peace process’ remains (Sluka, 2009, p.296). The main reason for this conflict is that nationalists see the past twenty years as a way towards a united Ireland. It is envisioned as a process that goes from peace to power sharing (2007) to a union with the Republic of Ireland when the nationalist community becomes a voting majority. And in that process it is important to gain as much support as possible: ‘Both sides are aware of the fact that the world doesn’t really know what happened. And they don’t really know the ins and outs of the conflict and they don’t really know why the conflict started. For as long as that is the case the murals will stay there and if the murals stay there than the communities on both sides need to accept the fact that people will come and see that.’²⁸

Maze Long Kesh

The critiques of McDowell (2008) and Wiedenhoft Murphy (2010) on the possibility of conflict heritage becoming a source of contention and part of a battle of the narrative is reflected in the current redevelopment of the infamous ex-prison Maze Long Kesh. For years plans were made to regenerate the prison into a Conflict Resolution Centre. The EU was set to subsidize the project with £18 million, because as SEUPB managing director Shaun Henry told me in April 2013: ‘we believe the prison can be a symbol of peace and reconciliation to Northern Ireland.’ In early October 2013, the SEUPB however decided to withdraw its funding, stating that: ‘The SEUPB has been in discussions with the lead partner in relation to the viability of the Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre. It has been agreed that the project is no longer viable at this time and the SEUPB has therefore rescinded the letter of offer. The SEUPB will now consider the re-allocation of funding to suitable projects’ (The Irish Times, 2013). The lead partner the SEUPB mentions is the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). It is the leading office of the power sharing government between the DUP (Democratic Unionist Party) and Sinn Fein, the main nationalist party. The decision of the SEUPB to cut the funding came after first minister Peter Robinson (DUP) withdrew his support from the controversial centre. Deputy Prime Minister Martin

²⁸ Lenahan, May 2013, personal interview, Belfast

McGuinness, who stipulated that he still strongly supports the conflict resolution centre plan, immediately rebuked that move. And so after the flag riots and parade riots earlier this year, another symbol of the conflict became a source of contention and political conflict.

What is it that makes the site a source of dispute? Officially Maze Long Kesh is named Her Majesty Prison Maze. The complex has a long and contested history. First the site was used as a Royal Air Force station. In the early seventies it was converted into a prison and was used to house paramilitary prisoners. It was closed in September 2000. McGratten (2010) writes that during the Troubles the prison became famous for its H blocks. These blocks were used to house IRA-prisoners. The nationalist inmates felt like they were treated as criminals instead of political prisoners. When the inmates were forced to wear prison uniforms instead of their own clothes the first protest started. It was named the 'blanket protests' because inmates refused to wear anything but a blanket. This escalated after prison guards refused to allow blanket protesters to use the toilet without proper uniforms. The inmates did not give in and instead began to smear their excrements on the walls. The fight soon came out and a battle for public support began. In the mean time the government of Margaret Thatcher did not respond to any demands or actions of the protesters. In an ultimate attempt to gain political status a group of seven republican prisoners started a first hunger strike in October 1980. The government seemed to give in and the strike was called off. It proved to be of no use because political status was not given. Hence, a prisoner named Bobby Sands started a second hunger strike. Again the British government resisted. The inmates did so as well. And so, after 66 days of hunger, Sands died on May 5th 1981. Another nine hunger strikers followed his example. Just before his death the nationalist community outside of the prison elected Sands Member of Parliament. After he died he became a nationalist hero. To the unionist community however Sands was anything but a hero. A degenerate they called him. And he and his fellow IRA hunger strikers are still referred to as terrorists. What remains is the wall mural with his likeness. It is by far the most famous and most visited mural in Northern Ireland.



Image 5: wall mural of Bobby Sands. In the front a black taxi with tourists drives by (source: author).

In the two years after the Good Friday Agreement the prisoners were released and Maze Prison was closed. It took a few years but in 2003 the debate over the future of the prison started. This resulted in a 2006 master plan by the government to use the site to build a new £300 million multi-purpose stadium. The stadium has not yet been realized but was not the main source for contention. Another part of the plan became the focal point of the debate on the future of Maze Kesh. A few sections of the old prison received the listed status. These included the hospital and the H-blocks as well as a watchtower. These were precisely the locations of the protests and the hunger strikes in the 1980's. A plan was made and agreed upon by the OFMDFM to turn these sites into a conflict resolution centre. A Strategic Investment Board was established that listed the benefits of such a centre:

Key Benefits²⁹

- Model of best practice in regeneration.
- Establishment of a Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre (PbCRC) on the site will help to promote a shared society and facilitate ongoing dialogue.
- Support the international community in dealing with diversity.
- Potential to create up to 6,000 jobs.

Added Benefits³⁰

- Contribute to better community cohesion.
- Potential jobs for local companies during construction process.
- Improved infrastructure in the surrounding area.
- PbCRC will be a model of best-practice in peace building and conflict resolution.
- Increase in visitor spend in the surrounding area.

Especially in the nationalist community the idea gained wide spread support. Joe O'Donnell is one of the members of the Strategic investment Board and fully supports the idea: 'First of all I think it's a prime site. It lies directly on the North South arterial route corridor. I think it has a very close proximity to all the major cities. Within 90 minutes or so it has the potential to reach a population of about two million. I think it's a significant site in terms of the international community. But primarily I think it's a site that can have the potential to reinforce the peace process and that the idea of moving from conflict to peace and then peace to prosperity is something that I fully endorse, fully support. I think it is something communities need to see. I think it is a benefit that needs to be realized: the opportunity of creating jobs, creating investment.'³¹

To O'Donnell the expected economic profits are a key motivation for the development of the centre. The presentation of the peace process as a learning guide to other people is the second reason why he supports the regeneration of the site: 'I think the economic benefits can be particularly big, and I don't think any country in the world is in the position to turn

²⁹ Strategic Investment Board (2012) '*Maze Long Kesh*'

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ O'Donnell, May, 2013, personal interview, Belfast

down an opportunity such as that. But I also think that there is a significant peace and reconciliation aspect to it, where we can become an international destination for other countries, other conflicts, other discussions, debates. You know, we do have a peace process that worked. We do have a peace process that is working. We do have a process of how that was arrived at. And I think other people and other peoples could learn from it.³²

Others share his assessment of the economic profits through the redevelopment of the ex-prison offers. But redevelopment into a conflict transformation centre is causing great concern among loyalists and their leaders. While at a large 2012 protest on the Maze Long Kesh site, Tom Elliot, who is a MLA for the Ulster Unionists Party, stipulated that: 'It is patently obvious that the local economy needs all the jobs and investment it can get and sites such as the Maze can help deliver that.' (...) 'What Northern Ireland does not need is a centre built on the site of the former Maze Prison which incorporates an H-Block and the former hospital wing,'³³

The reason many unionists are opposed to the redevelopment of the H-blocks as part of a centre is their fear that it may become 'a shrine to terrorism' for republicans.' Elliot: 'For many victims of terrorist violence the retention of the Prison Hospital in particular does not lend itself to any notion of peace and reconciliation and it will inevitably become a place of pilgrimage for republicans. (...) 'Even if it is not intended as a terrorist shrine it will certainly amount to as much for those republicans who visit.'

Basically Elliot and other unionists became afraid of the meaning others would supposedly attach to this particular piece of conflict heritage and how it would be presented to visitors. Hence, Maze Long Kesh has become part of the same battle of the narrative that is already being fought over through the use of existing conflict heritage in tourism. Thus, because of its symbolic significance and economic value, the site has turned into a prime example of a political resource as described in chapter 2. If we take Lederach's (1997) vision of a relationship as the basis for a more stable peace, the use of such sites is not promoting good

³² O'Donnell, May, 2013, personal interview, Belfast

³³ U.TV Found via: <http://www.u.tv/news/Protest-at-Maze-over-terrorist-shrine/>

relations but is doing quite the opposite by increasing sectarian differences. Most cynically some people like Jenkins³⁴ feel this is done out of political and economical motives:

I don't see how that is going to really benefit community relations? I can be skeptical of it... I use the term vanity project. I think it is about politicians attaching significance to the different roles they played historically. I think it is about Sinn Fein and the IRA, I guess. In some ways making sure there is a remembrance for the hunger strikers. I wouldn't go so far to call it a shrine (...) It is about Sinn Fein and the DUP securing themselves in the narrative of the peace process. At the end of that presentation there will be a picture of McGuinness and Ian Paisley, who have secured peace in Northern Ireland. But peace is on a knife edge; certainly not one that has been cemented. 20 million pounds in a project like that? That could be spent better on interface projects.'

Will there be a Peace Building and Conflict Reconciliation Centre in the former H-blocks? It is hard to predict in what way the current political stalemate will affect the future of the centre. One thing is certain however, so far the plans to use conflict heritage in this manner has led to more division than to reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

4.3 Effects on the peacebuilding process

So what is the effect of the planned regeneration of Maze Long Kesh on the process of peacebuilding? And what is the effect of tourist buses driving around in the neighborhoods of Belfast? Is it possible to find out what drives those youngsters that threw stones at the bus? What is the effect of political tourism on them? And is their community being exploited by it, as some claim? (Jenkins, 2012; McDowell, 2008)

'I am not against tourism – quite the opposite in fact. But it seems to me that aspects of the current rebranding of Belfast are not only highly immoral, but also detract from the reality and the severity of our history. We need remembrance and we need reflection – such things will aid our reconciliation as a society. But we don't need the exploitation of our conflict' (Jenkins, 2012). Some do not feel any hesitation when it comes to exploiting tourists as McDowell (2008, p.416) found out: 'as one tour guide told me: 'that's why people come here: the Troubles. Why not exploit them? I'm in it for the money.' It is evident from this

³⁴ Jenkins, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

particular comment that conflict heritage has a clear economic purpose, which is recognized by many of those groups who engage in the commercial commodification of sites of conflict.' Jenkins and McDowell however are not particularly interested in the exploitation of tourists. Their focus is on the exploitation of local communities that often live in the areas that were once the sites of the most severe violence during the heydays of the Troubles. These are the deprived areas where segregation is still at its strongest.³⁵ Has conflict tourism reproduced the formation of segregated identities in the past 15 years?

The spoils

Who profits? Who actually benefits from the boom in tourism? The Belfast city council writes in its Peace III implementation plan 2011-2013 (p.20) that it sees the need to 'ensure that inward investment and tourism bring benefits to local communities within the city.' Criticasters however worry this is not happening.

Despite the fact that tourism as a sector creates over 10.000 jobs many believe that most profits made in conflict tourism end up in the pockets of private (bus) companies. Some of these companies like Allen's tours are local companies. Others like Citysightseeing are part of an international franchise. Jenkins states that very little ends up in the communities that are on sight: 'it's not my understanding. They are private companies operating these bus tours so they are for profit. A couple individuals that have a job through it, but your talking very small scale. Money filtering down into the community from it? I don't see that. So I don't see the community as benefiting from these bus tours. I don't see any positive impact on the communities.'³⁶

Lynch and Causevic (2008, p.9) acknowledge that the gains of tourism are often made outside of the community. 'The community lacks tourism infrastructure which is necessary for generic markets. Therefore, social and economic benefits from this type of tour do not stay within the community. Tourists come in large numbers, but due to the lack of tourism facilities appealing to generic markets; they do not stay within the area. In the community there are no hotels or tourism amenities. Furthermore, local communities are not in favor of tours provided in that way. They feel thus being stared at and in extreme cases are even

³⁵ Harland, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast).

³⁶ Jenkins, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

hostile as it was perceived that people from the outside (other providers) are exploiting the legacy of conflict.'

Dark effects of conflict tourism

The question how the rents are divided is relevant. Even more relevant might be what negative effects the commercialization of conflict tourism can have on local communities? Jenkins: 'I think it's an exploitative relationship. In which these bus companies, these tourist companies are using the tragedies communities experience, and using that separation. For example the Shankill, they will stop at the bomb at the gift shop at Shankill, the bomb in 1993. It is using the tragedy, the legacy of the troubles to make profit. I just think there is something quite distorted about that. I don't really want to use the term immoral but I think it is a very exploitative relationship (...) I don't know if it reproduces the segregated identities. But it certainly doesn't address them.'³⁷

These consequences are part of what Stone (2006) calls dark tourism. Sites of past tragedies are used to tell a highly contested story. A fascinating story but it is being told, according to Jenkins in places where it may lead to a feeling of exploitation. That may also be a reason for the stoning of buses by youngsters in the Falls and Shankill neighborhoods: 'The communities these buses drive through, do they actually want them? There have been a number of examples of buses being stoned by youth. Now you could argue that it is just anti-social behavior and that there is no political motive behind it. But equally there could be a political motive behind it. And I don't think these companies should be allowed to drive into people's neighborhood and show them off as an exhibition. Unless the community are supportive of them being there. And I don't think that community support is being demonstrated yet.'³⁸

Others like Coiste director Culbert³⁹ claim that stone throwing is mere vandalism. Culbert claims it is a form of hooliganism that doesn't reflect any sentiment towards tourism. Still local representatives such as MP Paul Maskey have voiced their concern that the Falls Road was becoming a goldfish bowl where tourists gazed upon locals. That would lead to anger

³⁷ Jenkins, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

³⁸ *ibid*

³⁹ Culbert, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

and discomfort within communities. To some this discontent explains the stone throwing at tourist buses. It is unclear how many precisely, but in recent years a number of incidents have occurred in which tourist buses were attacked with stones. On one occasion tourist buses were set aflame as well (BBC, 2013). It is difficult to assess if political anger and a feeling of exploitation are motivations for these attacks. Even if they are, are such sentiments legitimate? Some like tour guide Steven Lenahan claim that communities have only themselves to blame for the interest tourists have in their neighborhoods and that they have no reason to complain about tour buses entering their area's now:

'I suppose it could be taken as reluctance to accept tourists. I don't know if children of that age are able to make a decision that tourists shouldn't come to their area or that they are trying to send a message out. What I would say is a while ago one of our tour buses was attacked at the bottom of the Falls Road. And there was a guy who is the MP for the area. A guy called Paul Maskey who said: we understand this is not right, that a tourist bus is being attacked. But he said: There are concerns on the Falls Road and there are concerns within the wider community in West Belfast that they live in a goldfish bowl and that whenever tourists come into the area they come in to see Falls Road. They come in to see the murals. And those are people who have to live their normal everyday lives under the microscope of a tour bus driving through their area and showing up all of the things that happened in our past; usually bad things that have happened in the past. But at the same time I would level a criticism of Paul Maskey because he is an MP for Sinn Fein, which for 30 odd years put the Falls Road on the news everyday. You know, so at the end of the day, people in West Belfast they did support an organization that made their road infamous. They can't really expect that infamy to go away now that the conflict is over. People want to come here to learn about it.'

Lenahan works for a private tour operator that is not subsidized, many other local initiatives such as Epic, Coiste, or similar organizations in the contested neighborhood of Ardoyne do receive support. The EU actively promotes these programs with money attributed to peace and reconciliation. The SEUPB argues that funding these projects is helping communities to express their side of the story and to engage with others in doing so. It remains highly doubtful if these efforts truly contribute to peace and reconciliation. What happens is that the stories expressed in these tours are part of a narrative often not compatible with the

opposing narrative. That would make funding of these projects counterproductive to the aim of the funding bodies. However, as is always the case in Northern Ireland, others dispute this opinion. Coiste director Culbert feels that his organization is in no way responsible for the reproduction segregated identities and violence. 'The one thing I would say: If we were telling a story that glorifies the use of violence I could see the argument. But we certainly don't, we certainly don't. The story we tell is quite tragic. And I sincerely hope there is no glorification of violence.'⁴⁰ And to Culbert the question of morality is even irrelevant simply because of the opportunities tourism brings. 'Honestly I have never given it real thought. You can always moralize things. If people are getting employment out of it, if families are getting fed out of it, if people are taken out of benefits by it; these are the positives at the end of tourism.'⁴¹

Phoenix tourism

As Coiste director Culbert states: communities may also profit from conflict tourism. That would turn conflict tourism in Northern Ireland into a form of phoenix tourism (Lynch & Causevic, 2008). It would address concerns about exploitation. Jobs and business through tourism could significantly contribute to the improvement of the socio-economic situation of affected communities. Has this really taken place in Northern Ireland? To some extent tourism has had a positive impact by creating jobs and providing ex-prisoners with a way to work take part in normal civilian life with a job as tour guide. This effect cannot be underestimated since the incorporation of former fighters in civil society is an important aspect of any peace process.

The fruits of tourism may also be found elsewhere. It is not merely in the improvement of the economic situation of individuals and communities that benefits are found. The arrival of large groups of tourists has the potential to open up neighborhoods and improve the interaction between communities. That's where the theory of Wiedenhoft Murphy (2010) is useful. 'The idea that tourists constitute a third audience for murals in Northern Ireland and that tourists transcend the local territoriality that murals have been used for in the past is particularly intriguing in regard to the cross-community potential of tourism in general. The

⁴⁰ Culbert, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

⁴¹ Ibid

fact that official tour operators like CBT provide access to murals in both republican and loyalist neighborhoods means that local residents are becoming, if not necessarily more comfortable, then more familiar with outsiders entering their locally segregated spaces' (Wiedenhof Murphy, 2010, p.554). And as mentioned in chapter 2, Wiedenhof Murphy uses an argument put forward by Jarman (1998) twelve years earlier that bus tours for tourists link separated neighborhoods and can provide links between and across sectarian boundaries.

Maybe the buses have provided links across sectarian boundaries but in that case these links have had little effect. Fifteen years after Jarman's hopeful assessment, the city is still very much divided. (Nolan, 2012 & 2013) Segregation has not been addressed sufficiently and commercial bus tours do not seem to lead to more openness. Hence, Jarman (1998) and Wiedenhof Murphy's (2010) argument that tourism can create more openness is not supported by facts. There is no proof that in the twelve years since Jarman put his argument forward, segregation has been reduced. According to Power (2011) the number of peace lines needed to separate both communities has only increased. Interaction between working class communities on both sides is still at a minimum. And on none of the tours I observed any significant interaction between tourists and locals. The walking tours offer some form of interaction between locals and tourists though admittedly it wasn't much more than a short stop to buy some chewing gum or a pack of smokes. The bus tours just take people around before dropping them back in the city centre where they can spend their money.

Tourism initiatives that directly counter these problems are far apart with few in between. Phoenix tourism may theoretically provide a way towards a less 'darker' form of conflict tourism. In praxis though little has changed since Lynch & Causevic (2008) conducted their research. Working class communities in places like West Belfast, Ardoyne and Shankill still suffer from deprivation.⁴² The economic benefits of tourism still do not end up in the affected communities. Hotels, restaurants, and tour companies in the city centre mainly reap them.⁴³ The hopes of a more open society through tourism as envisioned by Jarman and Wiedenhof Murphy has not come to pass so far as well. With the research I have

⁴² Harland, personal interview, April 2013, Belfast

⁴³ Ure; Jenkins; personal interview, April 2013, Belfast

conducted it is hard to assess how communities precisely perceive conflict tourism. What is clear though is that in some cases the (proposed) use of conflict heritage in tourism, such as in the Maze Long Kesh case, is a cause for tension and political conflict. Tourism may provide some jobs, and may contribute to the economy of the city centre of Belfast, but little of those rewards seem to end up in the communities most affected by the conflict.

5. The peacebuilding industry

Tourism is not the only sector where a profit is being made on the Troubles. In this chapter I intend to take a look at the role of another important sector in the economy: the peacebuilding sector. The peacebuilding sector should be seen as a wide range of organizations in the semi-public sphere meant to strengthen civil society in order to promote peace and reconciliation. This is done by 1) improving the socio-economic circumstances people live in and 2) by subsidizing projects that aim to bridge the gap between the two communities. The former is an attempt to soften the negative impact of the Troubles on the economy (Dorsett, 2013) and the latter is an attempt to bridge the gap between the two communities (Phinnemore et al. 2012). In praxis this is translated to projects such as women empowerment groups, art lessons, public housing, youth education projects and a whole host of other initiatives.

Due to the availability of large sums of both public and private peace money a large peacebuilding community has emerged. One only needs to take a look at an overview of the beneficiaries of the EU's most recent Peace III program to see how extensive this peace industry has become. Hundreds of organizations in the field of peacebuilding receive funding up to millions of Euros' per project. Critics call this sector a 'peace industry' see, for example Power, 2011). Over the past 30 years very large amounts of money have been poured into the industry. Power (2011, p.11) claims the peace industry is the largest employer of Northern Ireland, amounting to 1 billion pounds per annum.

And problematically, this money is not well spent, critics argue. The industry is seen by some as a self sustaining cycle where 'there is an entire tranche of the population from 'euphemistic community workers' to quangocrats pocketing hundred-thousands pay packets who rely on Northern Ireland remaining different and on the distant shadow of the gunmen and the occasional bomber and riot for their livelihood' (Power, 2011, p.11)

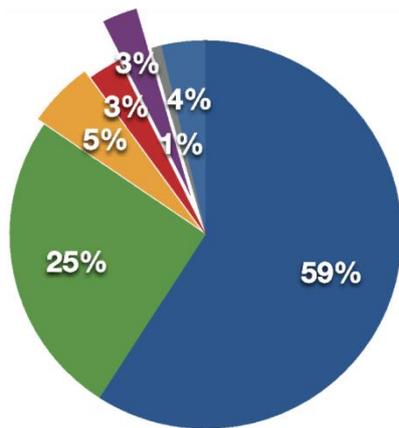
Power continues by stating in the introduction of the book *Peacebuilding in Northern Ireland* that there is evidence to suggest that segregation between the two communities may have worsened since 1998: 'The number of peace lines maintained by the Northern Irish Office

has grown from 37 in October 2006 to 48 in November 2010.’ Community workers and funding bodies alike do however claim their efforts have made a difference. And that, despite the fact that segregation is still in place in Northern Ireland, a lot has changed for the better since the peace process started in 1994.

So the question is: are the critics right? Is peace money wasted and does it indeed sometimes end up in the wrong pockets? Or is the remarkable progress Northern Ireland has made been possible because of the available peace money? Tax money from European and British citizens is spent in large amounts on peacebuilding. Few would object to this if it would bring a sustainable, long-term peace closer. But are these objectives met? In this chapter, I will first describe in more detail what the peacebuilding sector looks like. Second, I will try to assess how effective this peace industry has been in promoting peace and reconciliation and what obstacles it finds on its way. Third, I will investigate if the ‘peace industry’ has profited from and contributed to a continuation of the conflict.

5.1 The peacebuilding sector up close

Since the start of the peace process in 1994 and the subsequent signing of the Good Friday Accords four years later, a massive amount of time and money has been spent on peacebuilding. Billions of Euros’ have been made available as ‘peace money’. This money was provided for by a large number of private and public donors. This type of aid does not fall in the same category as development aid provided to low-income countries. The aid to Northern Ireland is a form of Official Assistance in contrast to Official Development Assistance. This form of assistance is provided to regions such as Northern Ireland that have reached a considerable level of development already. Official assistance to Northern Ireland totals 2.5 billion over the past twenty years. That is an extraordinary amount of money compared to other beneficiaries of aid. ‘Nowhere in the world has enjoyed such largesse in relation to population size’ (Nolan, 2012 p.173). The following chart provides an overview of the major donors and their contributions:



- EU PEACE Programmes
- International Fund for Ireland
- CCRU/CRU OFMDFM
- Dept of Education NI
- NIO/OFMDFM Victims
- Irish Government
- Atlantic Philanthropies

Programme	Total	Annual average	Duration
EU PEACE Programmes	£1455.5m	£76.6m	1995-2013
International Fund for Ireland	£628m	£27.3m	1987-2010
CCRU/CRU/OFMDFM	£134m	£5.6m	1987-2011
Dept of Education NI	£66m	£2.9m	1987-2010
NIO/OFMDFM Victims	£70m	£5m	1998-2011
Irish Government	£20m	£1m	1987-2010
Atlantic Philanthropies	£90m	£4.5m	1990-2010
TOTAL	£2463.5m	£94.75m	1987-2013

Figure 1 & 2: Donors and their contributions. Source: Morrow (2011), in Nolan, 2012 p.173

The chart only covers the major donors of peacebuilding in Northern Ireland. Other charities such as the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and the Esmee Fairburn Foundation, have also engaged heavily with the peacebuilding process in Northern Ireland. Money has been made available through a variety of other government departments and agencies. And not only through public money but also through private investments, including remittances, peacebuilding projects throughout Northern Ireland have received support.

Inherent to the sheer number of stakeholders, the landscape of the peacebuilding sector is very fragmented. Thousands and thousands of organizations and individuals all apply for grants from one or more of the funding bodies. Nolan stipulates in the peace monitor over 2012 (p.11) that ‘the policy direction is not an agreed or strategic one; rather it is driven by the priorities of the different funders’. As a consequence every donor sets its own agenda and funds projects and organizations, which promise to work in line with that agenda. That is coherent with the theories of Fisher (2008) who claims that NGOs can become branches

of funding bodies. Community workers I interviewed⁴⁴ explain that also in Northern Ireland this leads to dependency and bureaucracy. Projects are often run with grants from more than one funding body. That leaves community workers in a confusing situation where the execution and results of many project have to be adjusted according to the agenda of their donors. Hence, community workers complain how this ineffective and time-consuming way of work is frustrating them.

The EU

The main contributor of peace money is by far the European Union. Hence, as explained in chapter 2, this research takes a closer look at the role of the EU. In 1995 the European Union began to provide direct aid to Northern Ireland in an attempt to strengthen the peace process. In the 1998 Good Friday Agreements, a Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) was established that had to oversee the distribution of aid in Northern Ireland and six Irish border counties. Aside from several Interreg programs, Northern Ireland benefited from three tailor made programs aimed at the promotion of peace and reconciliation: Peace I, II and III. Recently Peace IV program got the green light from the European Commission, though significantly less funding will be available through it. How big the budget cuts will be remains unclear, as negotiations are still ongoing with the British government about an extra contribution from London. It will be far less though⁴⁵ than the €995 million available through Peace II (including an extension period) and the 333 million that was made available during Peace III.⁴⁶

The Peace I program was an example of peace conditionality where the EU was ‘tying aid to steps by the recipients to implement peace accords and consolidate peace’ (Boyce 2002, p. 1044). In a later analyses of the program, the EU states that Peace I ‘emerged in 1994 as a response by the EU to positive developments in the peace process’ (ibid). By doing so Peace I became the carrot that served as an incentive for the different parties to deliver peace. Added were the promises of direct investment by American companies and more official assistance through the International Fund for Ireland. Some think the carrot grew so big and so tasty that it became the primary reason for the antagonists to finally pick peace over

⁴⁴ O’Donnell; Harland; Jenkins, April-May 2013, personal interviews, Belfast

⁴⁵ Henry, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

⁴⁶ Peace IV report, 2012

conflict: 'There is the academic and romantic reason why the Troubles ended, such as the peace talks, if not weeks, if not months of negotiations. And then there is the very skeptical way of looking at it, which is money was offered and it was time to take the money. As much as that sounds awful, in many ways people here will respond well to that (...) The EU, the Irish government, the UK government, investment through the American fund for Ireland. Either way there was an awful lot of money that was put on the table as an incentive. Carrot and stick, and the British state had to use the stick an awful lot for 30 years so they decided they'd go for something a bit different. And in many ways that is what encouraged: money and the offer of power. That is what caused the Troubles to end. There is a very good reason why people who were diametrically opposed to the point where they were willing to kill each other are now sitting in the same chamber in government. Taking to one another, smiling for photographs. It's interesting how vain and greedy some people can be.'⁴⁷

And the carrot was not just a way to convince political actors. It was also meant to convince ordinary citizens to back the peace process. According to Shaun Henry, director of the Managing Authority of the SEUPB, the Peace I and II programs were specifically designed to offer a very hands on approach: 'We wanted to create dividends as soon as possible, to show the advantages of the peace accords. So we tried to create jobs. Jobs provide people with economic stability. (...) Our focus was on the creation of peace dividends. We wanted to show people here how the peace accords would affect their life's in a positive way. We wanted to show them that it would improve their way of life (...) so Peace II was very much focused on the improvement of socio-economic circumstances.'⁴⁸

To summarize, two approaches were picked that were supposed to help Northern Ireland on its way towards a peaceful and prosperous society. The first was the improvement of socio-economic circumstances. The second was the direct promotion of good relations between the two communities. In the following two subsections I will discuss both of them in more detail.

⁴⁷ Lenahan, May 2013, personal interview, Belfast

⁴⁸ Henry, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

Strengthening socio-economic circumstances

Economic regeneration and the promise of a concrete peace dividend were key aims of the funding bodies in the nineties. The improvement of socio-economic circumstance in working class neighborhoods of Belfast and Derry received particular attention. Deprivation had been a problem for decades in these area's and the Troubles had only worsened this trend. In recent analyses of the links between terrorism and economic development Dorsett (2013) suggests that 'the Troubles reduced per capita GDP in Northern Ireland but that this effect had all but disappeared by the time of the new millennium. At its peak, it was about 10% below what it would otherwise have been. However, if we exclude post-1968 subvention growth from the calculation of GDP, the estimated effect is much larger; a reduction of 15–20%'. And still, the economy is suffering from the Troubles. According to research by Deloitte and Touch (Power, 2011 p.5) the costs of division are an estimated 1.5 billion pounds for Northern Ireland annually. All in all, 'the collapse of the traditional heavy industries was the first major blow to the economy; the 30 years of armed conflict was the second. Now Northern Ireland faces its third major challenge – how to survive a global recession' (Nolen, 2013, p.22).

The deprived areas around interfaces in Belfast and Derry are the locations of the most severe violence during the Troubles. These are the neighborhoods now visited by tourists for their famous wall murals. But wall murals are one of the few things worth looking at in these areas. The houses are grey, there is no greenery in the streets and neighborhoods are torn apart by peace lines. At night the streets of East Belfast, the Short Strand, Ardoyne, the Shankill and the Falls are often rainy and grim looking. These are the places that have been in the 'top ten areas of multiple deprivation in the whole of the north. And they have been in the top ten areas of multiple deprivation for over half a century.'⁴⁹ Many believed that it would bring peace closer if the socio-economic circumstances many people live in are improved. Or as community worker Sam White put it: 'it's about deprivation. How can you talk about peacebuilding when people are living in poverty? How can you talk about peacebuilding when people are unemployed? How can you talk about peacebuilding when people are committing suicide on a daily bases? How can we talk about a sustainable

⁴⁹ O'Donnell, May 2013, personal interview, Belfast

society, based on peacebuilding when people don't really understand what peacebuilding is?'⁵⁰

White's concern about the effects of deprivation in interfaces on the peace process and on individual lives is broadly shared among the interviewees. Jenkins: 'Take a young person growing up in East Belfast. They will probably experience one of the worst educational systems in the UK, in terms of inner city schools in Belfast. Non-selective schools in Belfast are some of the worst performing in the UK. Secondly were they would have come out of school thirty years ago and got a job in the shipyards or something like that. All those industries are gone. And you have spiraling unemployment.'⁵¹

The director of the Belfast Interface Project Joe O'Donnell agrees: 'if you live in an interface area you are liable to die ten years earlier than if you don't. The lowest levels of academic achievement, the highest levels of alcohol related dependency, the highest levels of unemployment, the highest levels of a lack of health occur. All those multiple deprivation indices that we use to gaze into society are all increased at the interface. And the closer you get to an interface the higher the level becomes. So unless we begin to focus on changing that physically from an area of deprivation and change it for the community that lives there, in terms of opportunity and in terms of training in terms of education and in terms of employment and changing it physically in terms of investment and regeneration, we'd still have the same interfaces in 50 years.'⁵²

Hence Peace I and Peace II were focused on promoting peace through economic measures. The final report on the Peace II program (2005, p.10) states that [1]'Economic measures can have an indirect impact on peace and reconciliation by increasing prosperity which reduces social exclusion, supports social skills, empowers individuals and groups, and diverts attention from political or sectarian issues; and [2] at another more advanced level, economic initiatives can facilitate processes of engagement that have a direct impact on peace and reconciliation goals by building networks and facilitating relationships either on a cross-border basis or between divided communities or both.

⁵⁰ White, April 2013, interview, Belfast

⁵¹ Jenkins, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

⁵² O'Donnell, May 2013, personal interview, Belfast

Good Relations as an approach

In the same report (ibid) the EU concludes that the latter objective (engaging with other communities) is a very limited result of the economic measures used. Therefore a different tactic was picked for Peace III. Because as SEUPB director Henry stated: 'economic development was bringing the region prosperity but was not having the impact on reconciliation and peace the SEUPB had hoped for.'⁵³ Furthermore the shift in strategy was motivated by the state of the Northern Irish economy that was doing well by the mid 2000's. Peace III became less about economic development and concentrated more on the funding of community projects directly aimed at reconciliation. These are projects with names such as 'Crossing the line' and 'Theatre of Witness programme', The latter is prove to SEUPB director Shaun Henry that projects aimed directly at improving the knowledge and understanding between the two communities are successful: 'Youngsters from different communities come together to express the stories of how they lost relatives and loved ones. It is really touching. I have never seen that an audience was not affected. And important is that these stories are articulated. And from both sides! So people that have heard these stories from one side, hear such stories from other communities as well'.⁵⁴ And also Phinnemore et al. (2012) suggest that the community work has booked its successes: 'Project leaders have spoken of their positive experiences, for example, through engaging in discussions on history, participating in storytelling, and in organizing cross-border, inter-cultural musical events or leisure pursuits for young people. This is reflected in the statements by some of the community workers and youth I talked to.'⁵⁵ Initiatives to bring together youth involved in the nationalist Short Strand community centre with their loyalist counter parts in East Belfast has led to some fragile cross-sectarian friendships. Events like football games between nationalist and loyalist youngsters have gone well on most occasions. Unfortunately though this has not prevented some of the same youngsters who participate in cross-community work to engage in violence and rioting on other occasions. So the question remains if either one of these approaches has been effective, judged on its primary aim: promoting peace and reconciliation in the region.

⁵³ Henry, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ McCrory, April 2013, personal interview Belfast,

5.2 The effectiveness of aid

When assessing the effectiveness of aid it is easy to point at the things that have gone wrong. It is easy only to look at the aid that has been wasted, the money that has ended up in the wrong pockets. In this regard I do believe that there are important critiques that have to be made, in the hope that in the future aid can be spent well. However, this research would present a distorted perspective on reality if it didn't take into account that spending over 2.5 billion in pounds by the EU alone, in a contested, traumatized region was ever going to be easy. Mistakes are inherent to that process and delivering aid has been work in progress. And aid has made a difference. Almost all of the interviewees and the dozens of people I spoke with informally would introduce their critiques and their concerns with variations of one sentence: 'we've come so far. You should have seen this place 15 or 20 years ago. Nobody would have believed that we could achieve such progress.'

And fact of the matter is that aid has made a huge contribution towards a more peaceful and prosperous society. According to researcher Ken Harland it is clear that EU funding has helped Northern Ireland on the road toward a sustainable peace. Harland stipulates that especially in the first five years aid is crucial because the risks are high of society slipping back into violent conflict. 'After 15 years here there is more optimism and hope and I know that from the past, that the worst thing can happen if you withdraw all funds from that. People have benefited under peacebuilding, you plan to say new paramilitaries have benefited. Our society has benefited. If you look around in Belfast and Derry, you can see the buildings here and the investment like that Titanic quarter, 31 million! So we benefitted that way. We have a very rich culture here, which in the past, tourist didn't come here because they were afraid of getting shot. Whereas now we have got cruise liners stopping in Belfast harbor, we have got an influx of people from around the world. Last year Belfast was in the top ten destinations to visit. So there are benefits peace money has brought to our society, and to the image of NI.'⁵⁶ And even President Obama in his most recent speech to the United Nations, (September, 2013) mentioned the successes booked by the Northern Irish peace process.

⁵⁶ Harland, May 2013, personal interview, Belfast

Having said that, it is important to take critiques on the peacebuilding sector serious. Therefore in the next subsections, I will take a closer look at two of the most important critiques.

Critique one: peace money has ended in the wrong pockets

The peace money hasn't reached those who need it most is the first major critique. This is an essential critique since the creation of peace dividend was an important tool to promote the peace process by making society more inclusive: 'we are doing a lot in Northern Ireland (...) the overarching aim? We are here to promote two things: inclusion. We work with partners that operate on the edges of the communities; directly targeting marginalized groups. We try to incorporate them within SEUPB. We work towards a more inclusive society and try to support all the local initiatives that work towards that.'⁵⁷

The question remains if that support has ended up where it was needed most. According to some of the interviewees the peace dividend has often not had the impact it was supposed to have. They attribute that to the sheer size of the peace industry, the bureaucracy and the lack of an overarching system of funding. Community workers, often paid for with peace money, spend a lot time wrestling through the bureaucracy of acquiring money for peacebuilding projects. O'Donnell:⁵⁸ 'So there is lots of different funders and most organizations are supported by a cocktail of different funders and it seems that while trying to do that, there is none taking a bigger picture, view of, in terms of how this all comes together in the longer term... and that is starting to change and we are hopefully part of the process of that change.' And O'Donnell continues by stating that: 'A lot of funders are looking to say: well we funded this, we see this as a good result, you got a publication, and you got some research work done. Well, well done. What do you do with it? Where does it go next? How is it used and how does it develop?'

The short-term thinking and bureaucratic way of work by some of the funding bodies breeds frustration. However, there is an argument to be made that this bureaucracy is needed and is to some extent even unavoidable. The amounts of money involved acquire a system of accountability. SEUPB director Henry stipulates: 'we are very strict in who we work with.

⁵⁷ Henry, April, 2013, personal interview, Belfast

⁵⁸ O'Donnell, May 2013, personal interview, Belfast

And I want to emphasize that a lot of community work is being done voluntarily.⁵⁹ He states because the SEUPB has become more and more aware of the importance of accountability that the organizations and individuals that apply for grants are just going to have to live with the requirements imposed on them.

Power (2011, p.13) acknowledges that bureaucracy is inherent to the system but points out that this may have a detrimental effect on peacebuilding: 'the marginalization experienced by interface areas is also apparent in the distribution of funding with the main benefactors being the middle classes and those able to deal with the bureaucracy inherent in the system (...) rather than helping to build peace funding schemes are deepening the conflict as competition for scarce resources increases.' And according to community workers like White, O'Donnell and McCrory this is indeed taking place as the requirements set by funders, as well as the urge for short-term results have had a direct impact on how community projects were set up: 'In community work, we were more focused on intervention and diversity work rather than planned and strategic development. That actually gave a much better result. There has been number of reasons for that; there has been the type of funding, the requirements of these funders, the short time nature of funding and the fact that a lot of organizations were trying to do a million and one different things, rather than focusing on what was specifically needed in their area.'⁶⁰

Others are very critical on the effects of peacebuilding. Community worker Sam White:⁶¹ 'it hasn't been effective at all. Peace money came from the top down, and it hasn't reached the very bottom where the conflict had really taken place. The peace money came through mainly through churches. Churches really related to middle classes and upper classes. So the money wasn't being fed to the working class communities. They never had the benefit of the peace money whatsoever. This is why we have current issues. The peace money was earmarked for peace and reconciliation but the peace and reconciliation didn't reach the families where civil society doesn't really reach into. And people that were secluded from all the processes were actually the former protagonist, that didn't benefit. Not one iota from the peace process or from the peace money.'

⁵⁹ Henry, April, 2013, personal interview, Belfast

⁶⁰ O'Donnell, May 2013, personal interview, Belfast

⁶¹ White, April 2013, interview, Belfast

And according to White the European Union among other funders was not aware of this process: 'I don't think that people from the European fund, didn't really realize what was going on. They didn't have a hand in where the money should go. They were only being told where the money was going. Because they thought the people that were handing out the money, had the experience and had the insight and the capability. But that wasn't the case. Absolutely that wasn't the case.'

And hence a peace industry (Power, 2011) saw the light of day. And more and more people became dependent on the money that was so freely offered by the funding bodies: 'the way they have been spent is that individuals had to apply for money. Whenever that European money comes in you can apply for anything. There are people that are running projects that have nothing specifically to do with peacebuilding, but they sell it like that. You know, what we do with young people, or older people, or people with disabilities, everybody wants that peace fund game. Everybody was trying to work. You write application forms for funding under the banner of peace, but it didn't necessarily mean that money was bringing about peacebuilding. I think there became a culture of dependence where people thought they could just get money. You just write the right words, you get the grant and then really you do with it whatever you want.'⁶²

To Sam White the bottom line is that benefits are reaped by the middle classes and by community workers instead of the deprived communities in the contested neighborhoods of Belfast and Derry: 'We had the middle classes from 1994 on that have benefited more from the peace money than the actual victims of the conflict, the working class people, the ex-combatants, the ex-prisoners, the mothers that had sons and daughters killed in the conflict, from both communities. And this is probably why we have the issues around interfaces still going on. This is why we still have peace walls.'⁶³

Critique two: what works?

The second major critique on the effectiveness of peacebuilding is born out of a debate on how peacebuilding should be conducted. What approach to pick? For even if peace money would have always reached those working class areas, the crux of the question is if the

⁶² Harland, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

⁶³ White, April 2013, interview, Belfast

economic measures that were often used can achieve lasting peace in the first place. The respondents in the research of Byrne and Irvin (2001, p.425-426) 'are of the opinion that external economic aid is not promoting cross-community ties because each community must rebuild its own economic infrastructure on a 'single identity' basis before it can reach across the sectarian divide'.

The SEUPB seems to be aware of these dynamics. In the evaluation of the Peace II program (2005, p.13) it is stated that the impact of economic measures on peace and reconciliation is very limited: 'Economic measures can contribute to peace and reconciliation by improving prosperity at the individual level for those most affected by the conflict. The analysis shows that individual prosperity can contribute towards peace and reconciliation across a number of different dimensions (...) economic measures under the Peace Programme create both economic and social benefits. Increasing prosperity and reducing social exclusion, however, only make an indirect contribution to peace and reconciliation by establishing the necessary conditions for engagement. These benefits mainly occur at the individual level or broadly within single communities and only establish the conditions for increased cross-border and cross-community interaction and understanding. This creates limited linkages with the programme specific objectives. It is by facilitating engagement that more direct impacts can be realized.'

Hence the second approach of engagement with the other community would provide the key to good relations. This idea, derived from the work of Lederach, is based around the notion that human relations are the key to achieve peace and reconciliation. The limited effects of economic measures on the issue of segregation and sectarianism are in that regard relatively easy to explain. Much of the funding meant for peace and reconciliation is granted to organizations that only work within one community, and not in a cross-community setting. If the fight against sectarianism and segregation can only be won by reaching out to the other community this has to change. Lederach argues that it is in improving the relationship between the two communities that most progress can be made: 'it is perhaps self-evident but oft-neglected that relationship is the basis of the conflict and its long-term solution ... Reconciliation is not pursued by those seeking innovative ways to disengage or minimize the conflicting groups affiliations, but instead is built upon mechanisms that engage the side of a conflict with each other as humans –in- relationship.

Such work has the potential to improve community relations, thereby negating the causes of the conflict, and its violence, as well as dealing with the consequences without erasing people's ethnic identities.' (Lederach in Power, 2011 p.7)

Because economic measures are often not aimed at the improvement of human relations some fear that aid may have helped subdue tensions and improve the economy, but has not been very effective in addressing the segregation that is at the core of the conflict. That is the reason why Sluka (2009) is highly critical of the peace process because the Good Friday Agreements provided a peace that was based on curing the symptoms of the conflict and not the causes. The sickness of sectarianism and segregation that permeates Northern Irish society was allowed to spread even further. Hence Power (2011) has to conclude that segregation between the two communities may have worsened since 1998: 'The number of peace lines maintained by the Northern Irish Office has grown from 37 in October 2006 to 48 in November 2010.' And these are only the peace lines that are registered as such by the Northern Irish Office. According to Joe O'Donnell of the Belfast Interface Project there are dozens of structures and spaces that also effectively serve as barriers between the two communities.⁶⁴

In the first peace monitor (2012, p.173) Nolan has no other choice but to conclude that 'This 'single-identity work' has often been presented as a precedent to cross-community reconciliation but it has tended to postpone that goal to focus on programmes that stay within one community: an early survey concluded that many viewed such work 'as an acceptable alternative to community relations, not as a progression towards it' (Church and Visser, 2001: 12). More than 80% of the voluntary organizations surveyed by Acheson et al (2007) reported no pressure to work in a cross-community way' (Nolan, 2012, p.173).

Conclusively, one must first say that if reconciliation and good relations are the main aim of the peacebuilding sector in Northern Ireland, economic measures have not been very effective in achieving that goal. Furthermore, bureaucracy and the demands of donors are obstacles for effective community work. Second, the 2.5 billion Euros' in aid, meant to fight deprivation and meant to create a peace dividend, have in large not been spent on the needs of working class communities. Hence the middle classes, the many community

⁶⁴ Belfast Interface Project, 2012

workers and other people involved in peacebuilding have profited from peace money. I cannot judge their intentions but their efforts have, in many cases, done little to bring peace and reconciliation closer. What might be even more concerning is the existence of another group of people involved in peacebuilding that not only profits from peace money, but is also having an adverse effect on the peace process.

5.3 Profiting from peace money

The perverse use of peace money for goals contrary to its purpose is rooted in the war economy of the Troubles. Important to notice is that the effect of the Troubles on the economy shouldn't be seen as something from the outside. It wasn't a force that had a particular negative impact on local economy like an international economic crisis may have. No, the Troubles changed the nature of the economy. As described in chapter 3, a viable economic sector such as tourism all but disappeared. The conflict itself became a playing field that offered different opportunities to make money. To some extent a war economy emerged, that was run by paramilitaries. Jennings (1998) stipulates that: 'the key point is that NI violence takes on more of the characteristics of gangsterism than of a revolutionary uprising.' Drugs, weapons, and extortion were all ways to make money. During the peak days of the Troubles that money was mostly used to fund political violence. Jennings proves how local paramilitaries such as the UVF, UDA, IRA and PIRA soon took on the characteristics of criminal organizations. In the mid nineties these paramilitaries were offered the chance to become involved in the peace process. Some took that chance, or as Lenahan⁶⁵ said: 'it was time to take the money also for them.' In the years that followed many former members of paramilitary organizations became involved in community work.

Paramilitaries

The Belfast based NGO 'Relatives for Justice' is currently conducting research on the question how public funding, that should be available for victims of the Troubles, is a source of profit for public officials and other individuals involved in the peace industry.⁶⁶ And mediator McAllister (2013) claims how 'Some have been critical of EU funding of projects associated with paramilitary organizations guilty of human rights violations.'

⁶⁵ Lenahan, May 2013, personal interview, Belfast

⁶⁶ Sykes, May 2013, personal interview, Belfast

According to Belloni (2010, p.111; in Nolan, 2012, p.173) funding goes to 'civil' but also 'uncivil' organisations with sectarian identities and, in some cases, a past or present association with violence. This is defended as 'conflict transformation'—leaving the battle lines as before but with a move out of violence into other forms of ethnic affirmation.'

The question is: what do these 'uncivil' organizations look like? And how do paramilitaries work? In some working class neighborhoods they work as de facto police forces. Especially in republican areas there is traditionally little trust of the mostly Protestant police force. One of the interviewees stipulated that 'republican paramilitary organizations are acting as a police force for their community. (...) Paramilitary influence is just a part of life within inner city working class communities. If you go 10 -15 minutes further down the road in middle class communities it won't be an issue at all. People won't even think twice about it (...) I think for the communities in which paramilitaries live, they still have a lot of control.'

And also according to Harland⁶⁷ these paramilitaries still run communities. It gives them the opportunity to effectively work as a mafia organization. Members of these organizations collect money from shops and serve as the 'law' in their neighborhoods. Community worker Sam White⁶⁸ calls them the 'real scourge of society'. 'The criminality, drugs and alcoholic abuse (...) they become the leeches in working class society. They sell their drugs and their cheap booze. They are making vast profits. You still have protection rackets; somewhere building sites still have to pay protection rackets. You have various criminal gangs. They live off the back of the UDA, UDF, the IRA, and PIRA. And they live off the backs of these organizations. But the real thing is, they are making vast amounts of money.'

These paramilitaries are intertwined with the peacebuilding work within their communities. According to RFJ researcher Sykes⁶⁹ up to 90% of the community workers on the loyalist side are (former) members of a paramilitary. And on the nationalist side he estimates the number is 'around 60-70 percent'. As mentioned before, many community workers are trying to do a good job, whether they succeed in it or not. However, some ex-paramilitary peace workers can be considered an obstacle to peace. Moreover, in some cases they profit

⁶⁷ Harland, April, 2013, personal interview, Belfast

⁶⁸ White, May 2013, interview, Belfast

⁶⁹ Sykes, May, 2013, personal interview, Belfast

from Troubles by exacerbating the violence and by strengthening segregated identities, as was the case during the flag riots.

Paramilitaries and peace money

2012 promised to be the most peaceful year in the recent history of Northern Ireland (Nolan, 2012), and then suddenly, the flag riots started. On December 3rd, the Belfast City Council decided to stop flying the British flag on the city hall every day. Instead, the Union Jack would only be raised on special occasions. Immediately over one thousand loyalists went out to protest that decision. The protest culminated in two months of wide spread rioting and looting. As a result more than a hundred police officers were injured. More than a hundred people were arrested and over 80 youngsters were charged with public order offences.

Traditionally flags have been very strong symbols to both communities in Northern Ireland. Hence, the proposed changes in the flag protocol came as a big hit to many loyalists. Or as McDonald (2013) writes: 'there is a generation of loyalists who feel let down by the peace process' and he quotes one of the rioters: 'It's not just the flag. They want to take everything British away.' Some of the anger really was aimed at the Assembly for taking down the flag. Still, one wonders how it was possible that so many young people involved in the rioting suddenly came to such violence. Most of them did not even live through the hey days of the Troubles. Most of them were born after the cease-fire was announced in 1994. To cause this amount of havoc, it was believed by many that they had been actively pushed to do so. I talked to some of the youngsters involved in community projects in protestant neighborhoods of East-Belfast. And they admit that the paramilitaries still actively manipulate and control them: 'Sectarianism still plays a big role. People want to move forward but the likes of the paramilitaries, they don't want to move forward. The paramilitaries they basically run the road. They basically run out. Thugs, I call them thugs, I mean years ago they wouldn't have been thugs to me; they would have been heroes of mine. Because years ago they were the ones that defended your country. (...). But now there is just boys running about and beating kids. (...) They just make sure; if there is trouble down in the interface they come down and sort it out. They control us. So if we run an attack back into the Short Strand [nationalist neighborhood] they come down and tell us to

move away or they tell us to get back into them. They tell you what to do. And they do help the family and the community. Obviously there is bad but there is good as well. Your not allowed to sell drugs, so if you get caught doing it they punish you.’⁷⁰

The interviewees all point towards one of the major paramilitaries on the loyalist site as the main force behind the flag protests: the UVF. More generally they claim (former) members of the Ulster Voluntary Force (UVF), in contrast to members of the UDA (Ulster Defense Association) have had a hand in the violence that erupts from time to time. The UVF most notably had a hand in the flag riots: ‘During the flags dispute senior UDA figures let it be known, sotto voce, that they thought the protest was misconceived, and the working arrangements between the UDA and Sinn Féin in the interface areas of north Belfast helped to keep the lid on trouble while UVF heartlands became the focal points for the street demonstrations’ (Nolan, 2013 p.66).

Some of the interviewees only agreed to speak about the role of paramilitaries on the bases of anonymity. One of them was clearly concerned though because the incorporation of (former) members of paramilitaries in the peacebuilding sector was leading to the abuse of peace money: ‘a significant amount of money that is directed towards the Northern Ireland peace process from a number of different international actors and from public money is directed straight into the hands of paramilitary organizations. They are seen as community workers within their community. These are organizations that were at the forefront of the exacerbating Troubles. Now they have received funding to try and develop peace work. I am actually not against that in principle because I think these organizations need to be brought into the peace process and need to be encouraged to take a role. The problem comes whenever those paramilitary organizations manipulate the programs to get more funding. I think that is an example of what’s happened in shorts strand in east Belfast on a couple of occasions. In which to prove in a twisted way that there is still a need for funding they stooped up community relations, they stooped up rioting. (...) They stooped up tension and violence because they can then say to their funders: look at how many problems we still have here. You need to fund us to address that.’⁷¹

⁷⁰ Anonym comment of a youngster involved in community work, personal interview, April 2013, Belfast

⁷¹ Anonym comment of a community worker, personal interview, April 2013, Belfast

And his insights are broadly shared among the interviewees. O'Donnell: 'I think that there are some organizations that have been at least locally involved in some of that violence. I mean in East Belfast for example the police said that they believed the UVF were involved in generating some of the violence in recent years, and that their motives for that were at least questionable. So there are situations when some paramilitary groups or former paramilitary groups or dissident groups or whatever, have become involved in violence in interfaces and yes that does happen sporadically. It wouldn't be the norm. I suppose (...) they would probably argue quite strongly that they weren't actually involved in the violence but that they were supporting a political initiative and political agenda.'⁷²

And Sykes from Relatives for Justice is a 100 percent sure that the UVF is behind the violence. He argues that the traditional strong ties between the police force, the PSNI, and the UVF were an extra incentive to stooge up the violence. He even claims that the police force is blackmailing the Assembly to prevent cuts in the police budget and to force them to bring in extra recruits. 'They played the federation for 1000 extra police officers. Through the flag issue, the PSNI stressed give it six months and there will be a 1000 [police men] extra. Watch this place and see it happening. Extra recruitment will come in. Now they had to bring in extra police from UK. So now they will blame it on dissident threat (...) It all sounds very conspiratorial. But living here for 45 years. You start to see strands and threats of. It happens all the time.'⁷³

These comments are in line with the Maria Power who has to conclude: 'there is an entire tranche of the population from 'euphemistic community workers' to quangocrats pocketing hundred-thousands pay packets who rely on Northern Ireland remaining different and on the distant shadow of the gunmen and the occasional bomber and riot for their livelihood' (Power, 2011, p.11).

This is having a direct impact on the peace process. By manipulating violence and by using sectarian differences the paramilitaries are trying to deepen the divide between the two communities. If the improvement of the relation between conflicting parties is, like Lederach (1997) argues, the cornerstone of peacebuilding, than the attempts by

⁷² O'Donnell, May, 2013, personal interview, Belfast

⁷³ Sykes, May 2013, personal interview, Belfast

paramilitaries to manipulate violence undermine the attempts made in that directions and prevent the region from moving on the road to peace many would like to continue on. And most cynically, peace money serves as an incentive to keep Northern Ireland different as one of the youngsters stated:

‘There are still a lot of feelings of sectarianism. Paramilitaries are still very active. (...) They do a lot drugs and a lot of self-policing as well. They were in control of a lot of the flag protests, you know. They would send a group out of, you know, 30, 40, 50 kids of like 14. It’s the paramilitaries. They’re hiding behind the scenes and if they go forward and people see their faces in the news than they’ll lose the community funding that they have. You know a lot of the funding from the government and the councils are going, not to the paramilitary organizations but supposedly ex-paramilitary organizations. And if they are seen causing trouble or at these flag protests they will lose their funding, because they are supposed to be moving towards peace. They are supposed to be disarmed and have no weapons and not really say anymore. But that is far from the case. They hide themselves under the mask of community representatives.’⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Anonym comment of a youngster involved in community work, personal interview, April 2013, Belfast

6. Conclusions

The Troubles have been beneficial to a number of actors in Northern Ireland in the past. This differed from paramilitaries to politicians and others involved in the war economy of the conflict (Dorsett, 2013). Much has been achieved since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. Violence is no longer the key characteristic of the ongoing conflict. The Troubles and its contested legacy are however still used to make a profit. In this research I have given examples of how in both the tourism as well as the peacebuilding sector the conflict is used for economic profit. In some cases this is having a negative impact on the peace process.

6.1 Concluding remarks on the tourism sector

Tourism is a viable, important sector of Northern Ireland's economy. In recent years we have seen a small decline in the number of tourists coming to the region, (Nolan, 2013) but since the beginning of the peace process the sector has bloomed. This has brought Northern Ireland jobs, wealth and has created a better image abroad as well as domestically. One of the main reasons for tourist to visit Northern Ireland is the conflict heritage of the Troubles. For over thirty years people have watched on television how the Troubles evolved. It is no surprise that they are interested in seeing the sites where the conflict took place. This curiosity factor is enhanced because of the presence of visually attractive and intriguing wall murals and memorials. These forms of conflict heritage are often located in the working class neighborhoods that were also the sites of the most severe violence and deprivation during the conflict.

The interest in political tourism has led to a two-faced approach by official agencies, tour operators and other actors. The NITB was traditionally very hesitant in promoting the conflict heritage of Belfast and Derry. It still is to some extent. This hesitation is largely based on the desire to move away from the Troubles. Memory and heritage are still very much contested issues in Northern Ireland. Commercial operators have not felt that hesitation. Bus tours and taxi tours are in fierce competition over the visiting tourist. In the mean time political groups such as Coiste and Epic have set up walking tours through their neighborhoods. These walking tours have become part of a battle of the narrative. Loyalists

and nationalists tell their version of events in order to gain public support. Through that process the heritage that is being visited, is being used as a political resource. The proposed regeneration of the Maze Long Kesh prison is proof of how the use of contested heritage as a political resource is leading to increased political conflict and tensions within society. Hence, some of the respondents in this research agree with McDowell (2008) that conflict tourism is exploitative and is strengthening sectarian identities. Conflict signifiers such as wall murals and memorial sites represent power struggles. According to some respondents the constant use of heritage for political purposes is reproducing and reconfirming segregated identities in a battle of the narrative. Stone (2006) describes this form of tourism as 'dark tourism'. Lynch and Causevic (2008) argue that the term dark tourism is too negative in the Northern Irish context, claiming that actors within the tourism branch do not support the concept. They hope that the Northern Irish tourism sector can move towards a form of tourism that is less exploitative. The term Phoenix tourism is coined to describe a tourism industry that would allow local communities to profit from the influx of visitors.

Five years after the work of Lynch and Causevic (*ibid*) the concept of Phoenix tourism has not had much impact in the tourism branch. A few large tour operators such as City Sightseeing and Allen's Tours show around tens of thousands of tourists every year. Smaller organizations like Coiste have far less visitors to show around. This is of specific concern since few of the profits made in tourism end up in those working class neighborhoods that are 'gazed upon by tourists'.⁷⁵ Some of the respondents state that locals feel looked upon, and exploited by tourism. During the tours I participated in, hardly any significant interaction between tourists and locals took place. The tours show visitors the contested neighborhoods, before dropping them back in the city centre where they can spend their money. Ideas from Jarman (1998) and Wiedenhoft Murphy (2010) that the bus tours could lead to more openness between communities have not come to pass. The city is still very much divided (Nolan, 2012 & 2013). Segregation has not been addressed sufficiently and commercial bus tours do not seem to lead to more openness. The number of peace lines needed to separate both communities has only increased. Interaction between working class communities on both sides is still at a minimum.

⁷⁵ Jenkins, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

Does that make conflict tourism in Northern Ireland 'dark'? To some extent it is. Of course visitors come to learn and there is no need to hide the stories of the Troubles. But the battle is not over in Northern Ireland and conflict heritage is used as weapon, some respondents claim. In that sense 'dark tourism' is a more appropriate term than phoenix tourism. The latter may theoretically provide a way towards a less 'dark' form of conflict tourism. However, unfortunately little has changed since the introduction of the term by Lynch & Causevic in 2008. Working class communities in places like West Belfast, Ardoyne and Shankill still suffer from deprivation. The economic benefits of tourism are not reaped by the affected communities on display, but often end up in the city centre. I do agree that a form of 'phoenix' tourism would be less exploitative towards local communities. In that sense I would applaud the NITB and other actors for implementing such a strategy

It is hard to measure the impact of 'dark' elements of political tourism on the peace process in Northern Ireland. However, the battle of the narrative that is now being fought can possibly have very dark consequences. There are two main narratives in Northern Irish society. Local communities may profit from it economically if they can narrate their story to tourists. But to say that, as the EU hopes,⁷⁶ doing so will promote reconciliation is a conclusion that cannot be drawn yet. Involving local communities in tourism could just as well mean a further deepening of the sectarian divide because opposing narratives are strengthened. And since enduring sectarianism is one of the main obstacles Northern Ireland is still facing on the road to peace, political tourism may have a negative impact on the peace process in years to come.

6.2 Concluding remarks on the peacebuilding sector

Billions of Euros have been spent on development aid in the neighborhoods of Belfast, Derry and all those other places in Northern Ireland. It has undoubtedly helped the region on its way forward.⁷⁷ It is very important to acknowledge that all the hard work and money that has been spent on peacebuilding has not been for nothing. Doing so would be an insult to those hard working individuals that have seen the positive impact of their work in the lives

⁷⁶ Henry, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

⁷⁷ Harland, April 2013, personal interview, Belfast

of others. Simultaneously it would be an insult to all those that have seriously contributed to peace in Northern Ireland if the mistakes with - and abuse of - peace money would not be acknowledged.

Official assistance from foreign donors is being rapidly reduced. Large donors like the International fund for Ireland and Atlantic Philanthropies will leave the region by 2015. The involvement of the EU as main contributor of aid will be significantly smaller in the Peace IV program. It remains to be seen if there will ever be a Peace V program. This will have an immediate impact on peacebuilding in Northern Ireland (Nolan, 2012, p.11): 'approximately 80% of peace and reconciliation work in Northern Ireland is sustained by external funding – most notably, the EU Peace funds. That money is soon to run out, and while the Northern Ireland Assembly has pledged in its Programme for Government 2011-15 to bring forward a new draft of Cohesion Sharing and Integration it is not expected that there will be a resource commitment that will match that which Northern Ireland has enjoyed from European and American funders.'

However, for at least a number of years to come the peacebuilding sector continues to have a large impact on Northern Ireland. And it has had an enormous impact on society in the past two decades. Thousands and thousands of people are employed in the 'peace industry' and a wide variety of projects have been invented, implemented and executed with the available peace money. Thus, after almost twenty years of continued peacebuilding in Northern Ireland it is time to draw some conclusions.

Funding bodies and operatives in the field, like the SEUPB, have work diligently to distribute aid. This has helped build a peace dividend in Northern Ireland that helped legitimize the peace process. There is however a flip side to this success story. The 'peace industry' (Power, 2011) has also had a negative impact on peace and reconciliation. In such a fragile environment this can have dire consequences.

The effectiveness of many programs is also rightfully under question. The first critique on peacebuilding is that peace money has often failed to reach those who need it most. People in the deprived working class areas of the big cities feel left out (Nolan, 2013). Instead respondents claim that most of the benefits of peace money have gone to 'community

workers' and the middle classes. That's why community worker White has to conclude: 'Profit to a degree is being made by certain organizations who apply for large sums of funding and then advocate that their bringing knowledge and education in the lower tier of society. And they're not doing that, but they are doing it on paper. And people in high positions in the hierarchy read the paper and believe that. They tick their boxes, and as far as they are concerned it's OK. So people are making profit out of the peace process money, out of the Peace III money, and the peace IV money.'⁷⁸

The second critique of respondents is that promoting peace and reconciliation through economic measures has not had the affects funding bodies hoped for. Most community work that was aimed at improving the socio-economic circumstances in working class areas has been conducted on a single-identity basis. That needs to change since segregation and sectarianism are still at the core of the conflict. These roots of the conflict have not been sufficiently addressed in the Good Friday Agreement.⁷⁹ Subsequently the peacebuilding sector has not been able to develop a comprehensive approach to address these issues. This leads Nolan (2012, p.11) to claim that 'as a result Northern Ireland has completed another year without a framework to address sectarianism. This does not mean that reconciliation and anti-sectarian activities have not taken place. On the contrary, there are countless organisations, groups and projects working on peace-building activity. The policy direction is not an agreed or strategic one; rather it is driven by the priorities of the different funders.'

Besides these two critiques many respondents, both community workers and youth, are worried about the influence of paramilitaries in the peacebuilding sector. In order to acquire funding, community workers are dependent on the funding bodies to provide aid. These funders agree to fund projects or organizations if they are convinced that it is needed to promote peace and reconciliation. In some cases, like during the flag riots, this has led to the deliberate promotion of violence and rioting by (ex) paramilitaries. Former UVF members involved in peacebuilding have stooped up youngsters to use violence in order to proof to their donors that more funding is needed.

⁷⁸ White, April 2013, interview, Belfast

⁷⁹ Mapping the Rollback? Human rights provisions of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement 15 years on' April, 2013, personal communication during conference, Queens University, Belfast

Hence I agree with Power (2011) in her recommendation that ‘now that the political structures have been implemented, emphasis needs to be placed on relationships between communities and peacebuilding work focused on dealing with the sectarian divisions within society in required.’

The use of economic measures to create a peace dividend was important and necessary. It has been a huge challenge to improve the life standards in working class communities. However, the efforts made towards that goal have had a limited impact and have done relatively little to counter sectarianism. Hence peacebuilding needs to be conducted in a different manner. That is not to say that deprivation in working class neighborhoods is not an important issue. It is, but it is also an important issue in the backstreets of Liverpool, Glasgow, Liege or Naples. The EU is certainly not as much involved in those cities.

Thus, when it comes to peace and reconciliation, it is necessary to move beyond the minimal conditions for peace. Sluka (2009) characterized Northern Ireland as being in a state of ‘no peace, no war’. This situation cannot last if real peace is to be achieved. First it is vital to find ways to use the available peace money in a more effective way. Second it is important to make sure (former) members of paramilitaries cannot use peace money to make a profit.

6.3 Recommendations and reflection

How do we make sure peace money is spent effectively? My first recommendation for future research is related to that question. More detailed research into the nature of peacebuilding and the changes needed would be useful. I have been able to visit a few community centers in Belfast. Extensive research however is needed on specific projects to see how sectarianism can be countered through peacebuilding.

The second recommendation I have is to do more research on the role of paramilitaries in peacebuilding, and specifically on the role of the UVF. I suppose it might be very hard to gain access to the world of paramilitaries. Through this research I have been able to gain a better perspective on their role in the peacebuilding sector. I cannot tell however what the scope is of paramilitary involvement in peacebuilding and how it is intertwined with criminal enterprises and local politics.

I have had to limit my research to two relatively broad case studies. The third recommendation would be to do more case studies on other sectors in economy. Respondents talked of the way construction businesses and private security companies profited from a continuation of the Troubles. Doing research into these matters may lead to a better understanding of how economic profits influence the peace process.

When it comes to the profits made in the tourism industry, future research should be focused on the perceptions of local communities of conflict tourism. Some of the respondents in this research live in the working class communities that are on display during the tours I participated in. Most of the interviewees however work within the tourism sector or offer elitist interpretations of the issue at hand. While conducting the analyses of the data I acquired back in the Netherlands, I regretted not doing any interviews with the local inhabitants of contested neighborhoods like the Falls or Shankill. An inquiry into their perceptions of conflict tourism may provide interesting results.

These recommendations are proof of the limitations I have encountered in this research. I am happy I have been able to conduct two broad case studies that have provided me with useful insights in the ways a profit is being made in the tourism and peacebuilding industry. To some extent I have been able to answer the question what impact these dynamics have on the peace process. I hope that my recommendations will lead to more research. Scientifically that may be interesting. As a society Northern Ireland is dealing with the heavy legacy of the past. That is hard enough without people making a profit out of it. And to all those people who genuinely are trying to make peace work in Northern Ireland, I say: hopefully this research can be in some small way of help to you. I may have been critical of your line of work in some cases, however I truly applaud many of your efforts to make Northern Ireland an even better place to live in.

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