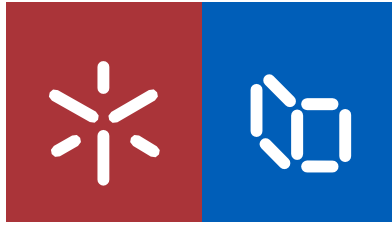


Universidade do Minho
Escola de Letras, Artes e Ciências Humanas

Carmen Atlanta O'Connell Teixeira

**Memory, collective identity and public parades
in Northern Ireland's Protestant community: the
case of The Orange Parade**



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Master Thesis

Masters in English Language, Literature and Cultures

Work developed under the supervision of

Professor Joanne Madin Vieira Paisana

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To my grandfather, Michael

All in the April evening

By Katherine Tynan

*All in the April evening
April airs were abroad
The sheep with their little lambs
Passed me by on the road
The sheep with their little lambs
Passed me by on the road
All in the April evening
I thought on the lamb of god*

*The lambs were weary and crying
With a weak human cry
I thought on the lamb of god
Going meekly to die
Up in the blue blue mountains
Dewy pastures are sweet
Rest for the little bodies
Rest for the little feet*

*But for the lamb, the Lamb of god
Up on the hilltop green
Only a cross, a cross of shame
Two stark crosses between*

*All in the April evening
April airs were abroad
I saw the sheep with the lambs
And thought on the Lamb of God*

STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY

I hereby declare having conducted this academic work with integrity. I confirm that I have not used plagiarism or any form of undue use of information or falsification of results along the process leading to its elaboration. I further declare that I have fully acknowledged the Code of Ethical Conduct of the University of Minho.

RESUMO

Memória e procissões públicas na comunidade Protestante da Irlanda do Norte: o caso da Orange Parade

O interesse crescente e duradouro no campo dos estudos da memória, indicou que seria pertinente dedicar tempo e consideração perante a interseção da cultura inglesa e a memória humana, examinando como certas memórias coletivas são preservadas através de atuações públicas durante o decorrer do tempo, como também o efeito que estas têm nas comunidades locais.

O foco será direcionado para a memória individual e coletiva Norte Irlandesa, investigando os efeitos que um tipo particular de expressão de lembrança cultural tem sob o grupo religioso/político que está associado ao mesmo, Protestantes, como também refletindo sobre o impacto nos diferentes grupos etários que a compõem. A atenção cairá para uma das procissões mais antigas e importantes que decorre em vários locais na Irlanda do Norte, no dia 12 de julho, melhor conhecida como a Orange Parade. O objetivo principal é analisar o impacto que a identidade coletiva Protestante tem entre as diferentes gerações e como é que isto influencia a procissão mencionada previamente. Esta procissão já tem sido alvo de foco no que diz respeito a estudos académicos, no entanto, esta tese distingue-se pelo facto que será desenvolvida através do prisma de estudos da memória.

A tese encontrar-se-á dividida em quatro partes: 1) uma introdução, onde o desenvolvimento dos estudos da memória e os conceitos que incorpora serão explicados; 2) uma parte teórica, com a apresentação da história associada à Orange Parade e à identidade coletiva Protestante que a acompanha; 3) aplicação dos conceitos relativos a memória cultural e memória coletiva ao caso em questão; 4) análise de trabalhos produzidos por uma autora conhecida dentro do campo, em relação ao poder, influência e efeitos que a procissão tem nas pessoas que se identificam com a mesma. *Northern Protestants: On Shifting Ground* de Susan McKay será usado como base, como também outras obras/publicações consideradas relevantes. Entrevistas serão realizadas com a autora e com indivíduos de diferentes grupos etários que integram a comunidade Protestante, permitindo entender se as perspetivas entre as pessoas são semelhantes e como é que se sentem em relação ao futuro da identidade coletiva em questão e, conseqüentemente, da Orange Parade.

Palavras-chave: identidade coletiva, Protestantismo, Orange Parade, procissões públicas, lacuna geracional, Irlanda do Norte

ABSTRACT

Memory and public parades in Northern Ireland's Protestant community: the case of The Orange Parade

The longstanding and growing interest in the field of memory studies indicated it was pertinent to dedicate time and consideration to the intersection of English culture and human memory, examining how certain (divisive) collective memories are preserved through public performance over the course of time, and the effect it has on local communities.

The focus will be directed towards individual and collective Northern Irish memory, investigating the effect of a particular type of expression of cultural remembrance on the religious/political community with which it is associated, Protestants, but also analysing the impact it has within the different age groups of which it is composed. Attention will fall upon one of the oldest and most important parades that takes place in Northern Ireland, the 12th of July, Orange Parade. The main goal is to analyse the impact that Protestant collective identity has on individuals of different age groups within this group, while also comprehending the role that the aforementioned parade has within its community. This parade has already been the focus of academic research, however, this thesis differentiates itself by the fact that it will be developed through the prism of memory studies.

The thesis will be divided into four parts: 1) an introduction explaining key cultural memory studies concepts; 2) a theoretical section which focusses on the history of the Orange Parade and the accompanying Protestant collective identity; 3) an examination of the Orange Parade in light of pertinent concepts concerning cultural memory/collective memory; 4) an analysis of the works of a renowned author, in relation to the power, influence and effects that the parade has on the people that personally identify with it. Susan McKay's *Northern Protestants: On Shifting Ground* will serve as the base for this section, although other relevant published works will be analysed. Interviews will be conducted with McKay as well as with individuals from different age groups from the Protestant community, as a way to understanding their opinion in regard to the future not only of their own collective identity but of the Orange Parade itself.

Keywords: collective identity, Protestantism, Orange Parade, public parades, generational gap, Northern Ireland

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND INITIALISMS

UPP – Ulster Unionist Party

DUP – Democratic Unionist Party

IRA – Irish Republican Army

INTRODUCTION

For human beings, survival depends on the capacity of maintaining social interaction and exchanges on a fairly regular basis, thereby establishing meaningful connections and allowing the generation of a sense of belonging between individuals of the same family, similar personality and/or with common interests. In other words, the collective is important.

Academics, especially sociologists, have dedicated their time to the analysis of different social behaviours. Through their efforts, many have been the theories and explanations that have been propagated, allowing us to understand human behaviour on a deeper level,

Although only gaining real momentum in the latter half of the 20th century, cultural memory studies is a relatively new scientific field which aims to shine light on the role of memory for the social being, whether this is individual or collective.

Cultural memory has always been present with any community and has constituted a key part of the members' identity. Through recollection, people come into contact with their own individual memories from their past, while also, through means of oral transmission or in other ways, coming into contact with memories which belong to a collective in which they may find themselves. Astrid Erll summarises the notion of cultural memory quite well, stating that it "entails remembering and forgetting. It has an individual and a collective side, which are, however, closely interrelated" (Erll, 2012, p. 238). This idea of collectivity in relation to memory allows us to understand the existence of different communities around the world and the affinity that they hold towards their group's past,

In Northern Ireland, collectivity, whether it is in association with collective memories or collective identities, holds extreme importance for its communities. Following an extremely turbulent past, Northern Ireland is divided between Catholics and Protestants, the two main religious communities in this country.

With this in mind, this dissertation will focus on the development of collective memories and collective identity within the Northern Irish Protestant community, specifically in most recent years. Through the reading and analysis of a multiplicity of different academic texts and varied publications, the main goal is to understand the relevance of Protestantism in Northern Ireland nowadays, not only considering the growing generation gap which is present in other areas of everyday life, but also by reviewing the role that the Orange Parade has, one of the main annual cultural events that takes place in Northern Ireland, as a consolidator of Protestant collective identity.

Keeping in mind the changes that are taking place today in Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland, and Northern Ireland itself, and given my own family connection and interest in Northern Ireland, the

Orange Parade was considered to be an important and indeed relevant topic for research. The political, economic and demographical changes that are occurring at a considerably rapid pace are affecting collective identity in this country.

Manifestation of collective identity in Northern Ireland, particularly for Protestants, reaches its peak during the months of the marching season (from April until August). One of the most important cultural events that happens during this time is the Orange Parade, a big parade which counts on the participation of members of the Orange Order and adjacent lodges and also many marching bands which fill the streets with music. It is an event that grabs the attention of many people due to the presence of a lot of colour, mainly orange, music, and also other rituals that the day implies (mainly speeches from important figures). Out of all of the parades that happen during the season, the Orange Parade is deemed as the most important as it celebrates the victory in the Battle of Boyne, which assured the ascendancy of Protestantism in Northern Ireland, a very important mark in Protestant history. Alongside others, the Orange Parade is an extremely important identity marker for Protestants, imbuing a sense of validation on witnessing or taking part in the parade, and also, for some, strengthening the ties between the members of said community.

The importance of this event is not only recognised by those who experience it directly or view the marches through their television, for example. There are many journalists and authors who have written about this event often in the context of the developments that take place within the Protestant community. Amongst many, it is important to highlight the role of Susan McKay, an author who was brought up in Northern Ireland in the second half of the 20th century and who writes about this community quite extensively throughout her many mediums of expression books, newspaper articles, online publications and so on.

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first chapter serves as a theoretical introduction, presenting the reader with the history behind cultural memory studies while also introducing key concepts which will be applied to the Orange Parade case study in further sections. For this chapter, works by Maurice Halbwachs, Jan and Aleida Assmann, Astrid Erll, Pierre Nora and Stuart Hall will be addressed.

The second chapter applies the concepts aforementioned to the case of Northern Ireland. Throughout this section, the reader will be able to not only obtain a historical contextualization to the rise of Protestantism in Northern Ireland, but also understand how the Orange Parade is relevant for this community, as a means of manifestation of tradition and collective identity.

It is in the third chapter that the reader finds the results of direct enquiry (questionnaires) regarding

Northern Irish Protestantism. It was deemed appropriate to elaborate two different questionnaires and conduct interviews with the renowned author Susan McKay and then with people of different ages from Northern Ireland. Susan McKay, as aforementioned, has vast experience in writing about Protestantism, and made it possible to obtain opinions from those with first-hand experience of Irish reality of all ages. The fourth chapter draws conclusions and points to further relevant research for this topic.

Chapter 1

CONCEPTS

1.1. Introduction

From time immemorial, humans have been viewed as social beings, individuals who constantly interact with one another and feel the necessity to establish connections with others. Through these connections, they learn and share information while also experiencing different occurrences that happen under different circumstances. Human memory is all-important as it serves as a place that allows people to access memories that have been created over time and subsequently share them with others. This process of creating memories, storing them for an undetermined amount of time and sharing them with others transforms into an endless cycle that goes beyond a typical human lifespan, allowing memories to be transmitted in one way or another from generation to generation.

There has commonly been an idea that memory solely corresponds to something stagnant, exclusively connected with the past, having no purpose besides allowing people to remember how certain events or moments in their lives played out. Academics involved in the promotion of cultural memory as an academic subject of study proved that this mentality towards memory could not be further from the truth. Between the end of the 19th and the start of the 20th centuries, a growing interest regarding how individuals store memories and how these significantly influence their social interactions and future stages of their lives became apparent. Many now consider that memory should be viewed as something “dynamic [that] connects the three temporal dimensions: evoked at the present, it refers to the past, but always views the future” (Meckien, 2013, para.1).

In 1902, the term “collective memory” was introduced by Hugo Von Hofmannsthal (1874-1929) who referred to it as “the dammed up force of our mysterious ancestors within us” and “piled up layers of accumulated collective memory” (Schieder, 1978, p.2). It referred to the existence of collective memories within individuals that are directly connected to their ancestors, and how people are intrinsically connected to the memories even if they have not had a direct interaction with them before.

In 1925, Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945), French sociologist, released ground-breaking research about human memory in relation to culture, coining the term “collective memory”, or *mémoire collective*, previously uttered by Hofmannsthal, paving the way for the subsequent development of an innovative academic field, cultural memory studies. In his landmark *Social Frameworks of Memory*, 1925, the pioneering Halbwachs, argues that “it is in society that people normally acquire their

memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories” (Halbwachs, 1992, p.38). Furthermore, according to him, all individual or collective memories that were to be constructed outside of the social framework were images originating in dreams (Id. *ibid*). He brings to light how although these single acts of remembering are an individual phenomenon, they are also a social matter, dependent on interactions with others for their comprehension, while also prevailing as a means of transmission of culture and tradition from generation to generation. This has always been the case, even if many were unaware of it, and allows the past to influence the future in an indirect way, but also the inverse, for future generations to establish a connection with their past and also create their own collective memories based on the ones established beforehand, repeatedly building, improving and densifying them.

Halbwachs’ publication set the stage for subsequent researchers who later began to develop their own interesting works in this field, people such as Pierre Nora, Astrid Erll, Michael Foucault, Ann Rigney, and Aleida and Jan Assmann. They elaborated on the fact that human memory is very multifaceted. Its complexity and the fact that it is intricately linked to many other social studies, implies that cultural memory studies may also be considered as a “wide umbrella term” (Erll, 2008a, p. 1), multifaceted, multidisciplinary, and somewhat subjective. It interacts with a significant amount of topics from the most varied academic fields, namely “history, sociology, art, literary and media studies, philosophy, theology, psychology, and the neurosciences, thus bringing together the humanities, social studies, and the natural sciences in a unique way” (Erll, 2008b, p.4).

The seemingly vast dimension of this field of study, embodying notions of remembering/forgetting, individual and collective memory and the role of mediation applied to a multiplicity of varying fields, as aforementioned, has led many to question the legitimacy of including some of the research that has since been produced as cultural memory studies. Some argue that the field should not address virtually everything as an example of cultural memory, as memory itself is thereby inevitably reduced to something less important. However, it is surely legitimate that researchers are able to elaborate such a consistent body of work that deals with all scenarios in which memory and culture manifest themselves. It is not so much a choice but an obligation to do so.

A number of key concepts pertaining to cultural memory will be presented in the following subsections. The reader will also find that these concepts are accompanied by arguments and perspectives from many sociologists that have actively contributed to said field of study. With this in mind, and following the order of the subsections, the reader will initially encounter exploration of culture and identity, through the perspective of Stuart Hall, a sociologist who was at the forefront of this field

and made very important claims which not only widened the horizons of the field, but also brought some clarity to the topics which he was focusing on at the time. Next, these ideas will be complemented with the concepts of 1) sites of memory, especially from Pierre Nora, 2) cultural and communicative memory based on Jan and Aleida Assman's work, and 3) individual and collective identity and how it is transmitted from generation to generation and also between members of the same generation, supported by arguments made from, once again, Stuart Hall, as well as from others.

1.2. Culture and identity - Stuart Hall

When talking about culture and identity, one must denote that this is a particularly important, and at times sensitive, topic for many communities. Stuart Hall (1932-2014), an important British-Jamaican cultural theorist, and sociologist, repeatedly manifested his interest for the relation between culture and society, especially in his books *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* (1990), *Cultural Studies 1983: A Theoretical History* (2016) and also evident in his contributions to publications such as, *Representation; Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (1997), a compilation of different texts from different authors edited by Hall, and *Culture, Globalisation and the World System* (1991) by Anthony King. In his views, culture is not a set of physical things, moreover, "culture is concerned with the production and the exchange of meanings – the giving and taking of meaning – between the members of a society or group" (Hall, 1997b, p.2). Its essence relies on the existence of shared meanings between the members of a specific group of individuals. Hall states that for these shared meanings to be made possible, there must be a common medium of transmission. In this case, the main, yet not exclusive, means is language, acting as a representational system. When one mentions the idea of language, it does not directly correlate to languages themselves, such as Portuguese, English, or French. Language in this context refers to the group of signs or symbols which are used to construct meaning within a situation, it can therefore assume the form of "sounds, written words, electronically produced images, musical notes, even objects" (ibid., p.1). This linguistic practice embodies identity, emotions and attachments, and it is through the way we make use of these signs that meaning is attributed (Id. ibid.) the way that we, as participants of a social group, use, feel or view certain things will attach a connotation and a framework to them, therefore transforming them from mere objects, for example, into something significant within a certain context.

For an efficient transmission of meaning, individuals must be able to understand each other in a broad sense. Hall implies that they must share the same "set of concepts, images and ideas" (1997b, p.4) but also linguistic codes and mind maps that will allow them to view the world in an analogous way

and, therefore, naturally group them into specific groups that share the same ideals. Meaning consists of a dialogic process which implies a speaker and a listener and a specific exchange of knowledge or emotions and that is why it is so critical for individuals to efficiently understand each other to prevent the incorrect transmission of information. In the realm of cultural memory studies, collective memory and collective identity, this passing of information from one person to another, whether through oral, written or physical mediums, is viewed as fundamental for many cultures as it permits the long-lasting existence of traditions or ideologies deemed important and that become cultural markers for said community, concepts which will be further explored later.

Culture is, consequently, a way to express one's identity and a way to identify and feel part of a group, a sense of belonging. Each individual carries with him/her a series of memories that are associated to his/her community, these pieces of the customised puzzle are what makes each community unique and allows a distinction between them. This kind of memory "preserves the symbolic institutionalised heritage to which individuals resort to build their own identities and to affirm themselves as part of a group" (Meckien, 2013, para. 8).

Considering many of Hall's ideas, one is left with the impression that the notions surrounding identity, culture and heritage are intrinsically intertwined, sharing some sort of common ground. In his own words, heritage is defined as

the whole complex of organisations, institutions and practices devoted to the preservation and presentation of culture and the arts—art galleries, specialist collections, public and private, museums of all kinds (general, survey or themed, historical or scientific, national or local) and sites of special historical interest. (2004, p.21)

Complementing these ideas, Daragh O'Reilly shares his own definition of the same term as "the evidence of the past with which to make sense of the present, and it may determine what we hand on to future generations" (O'Reilly et al., 2017, p.3). Heritage comes about as a manifestation of the past in the present and is usually relevant enough in order to be transmitted to the future, in the most various forms previously mentioned by Hall. For many, there is a desperate desire to preserve heritage to the maximum extent, as it acts as a part of a person's individual identity. Particularly speaking about minority groups, for example, something which Hall also touches upon in his 1991 publication *Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities*, there is an additional importance to preserve their heritage in order to effectively transmit the ideals with which they identify, mainly due to the reduced number of group members that may exist.

With this in mind and considering the weight of Hall's statements, made during a transition period between the 20th and 21st centuries, it is possible to recognise how culture, identity and heritage act as

significant pillars for human beings, while also being significant for the perception of the role of memory in society, the basis of cultural memory studies, which will be explored forthwith.

1.3. Cultural Memory Studies

Taking Halbwachs' research as a stepping-stone, it was only in the 1980s, 55 years after the initial publication of *Social Frameworks of Memory*, that there really began to be what is called a "memory-boom", an unprecedented interest in the interaction between memory and culture. In comparison to other fields of study, cultural memory studies is still seen as a novelty, a field that still has room for a lot of growth and that will inevitably change given its social facet. This explosion of interest and research at the end of the 20th century translated into the introduction of a multiplicity of additional memory concepts that up until that point had not been considered. People such as Stuart Hall, a pioneer for the development of cultural memory studies in Britain, Pierre Nora and Philippe Joutard should all be mentioned. Hall, as noted above, took current notions and established links between language and culture and how these are represented in society. Both Nora and Joutard touch upon the idea of cultural memory and shared collectiveness (Russell, 2006).

Nora was notable for combining the notion of cultural memory with the idea that specific places are able to hold different memories over a period of time, introducing the notion of *lieux de mémoire* or «sites of memory» towards the end of the 1980s.

1.4. Sites of Memory

Nora's publication, *Les lieux de mémoire (1984-1992)*, consists of a series of essays that touch upon different francophone cultural elements, places considered by Nora as containing the essence of French culture (the Eiffel Tower, etc.) and it is possible from this to produce a definition for sites of memory. Nora alludes to sites of memory as "institutionalized forms of collective memories of the past" (Szpociński, 2016, p. 246), cultural objectivizations in which a community or an ethnic group deposit their memories, provide it with a symbolic impression and, from that point on, associate a certain memory to the place in question. These places of memory assume many forms, including a specific location that is relevant to the group in question, "monuments and works of art as well as historical persons, memorial days, philosophical and scientific texts or symbolic actions" (Erll, 2011a, p.23). Nevertheless, for something to be considered as a *lieux de mémoire* it must fulfil three dimensions that coexist conflict-free with each other: material, (being able to break a temporal continuity), functional,

(fulfilling a function in society), and symbolic, (being deposited with a symbolic aura by an entity, and, from this, gaining a purpose in society).

These places, whether they are physical or not, are not individual or collective memories in themselves, rather, they are sites containing the memories which people associate with them. It is incorrect to assume that one place only has one memory of a community tied to it for it embodies a series of collective memories and symbols that are unique and varying from group to group. According to Nora, *lieux de mémoire* represent the crystallisation of the *milieux de mémoire*, real environments of memory. They can be revisited repeatedly, yet they will never hold the same meaning or symbolisation in the present as they did in the past. One cannot relive or recreate the memories once experienced by others in these places or situations as one is no longer in the past, and this past can solely be retrieved through accessing memories represented in one media form or another. They are “simple and ambiguous, natural and artificial, at once immediately available in concrete sensual experience and susceptible to the most abstract elaboration” (Nora, 1989, p. 18).

The introduction and systemization of sites of memory became popular for advocates of cultural memory studies, and records from Italy, Germany and France were elaborated. One single site of memory can detain a multiplicity of different collective memories, as the number of collective groups that have accessed the site is also great. Each memory associated to the *lieux de mémoire* is unique in its own sense, can only be understood and accessed by a specific group because only they experienced it. For example, the collective memories of children on a school trip to Notre Dame Cathedral before and after its fire damage are specific. A broken stained glass window may have been seen intact by one group before the fire but only read about by another group visiting afterwards. It is for that reason that the same place can be replenished with positive and negative emotions simultaneously. Although some communities find it best to “immortalise” important figures or certain events through means of museums and monuments, it is important to note that not all communities find power in these means, rather, they search for other ways to celebrate their traditions and preserve specific moments in time, although that is extremely difficult to maintain over time. This happens given that collective memories are constantly “in the works”.

1.5. Cultural and communicative memory

Jan and Aleida Assmann are significant researchers in the cultural memory studies field. Both professors at the University of Konstanz, Germany, this couple advanced the theory of ‘Cultural Memory’, addressing the dynamic character that relies within memory itself and the different layers that

it detains, an inner, a social and a cultural layer. They distinguish between two memory frameworks, cultural memory and communicative memory, concepts that refer to separate entities but that are still intertwined. According to Jan Assmann, cultural memory “comprises that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose ‘cultivation’ serves to stabilise and convey that society’s self-image” (1995, p.132). It is significantly tied to material objectivizations and consciously established and ceremonialized by individuals who relate to a certain cultural memory. Its transmission is dependent on specialised carriers of tradition. It is unique and distinct from communicative memory due to its fixed point and “distance from the everyday”, (Assmann, 1995, p.129), while also allowing the concretion of identity, that is, it allows individuals to see themselves in others, relate to them and insert themselves in a certain cultural group. Communicative memory, on the other hand, “comes into being through everyday interaction” (Erll, 2011b, p.311), established through experiences that occur on a day-to-day basis and are shared between people through means of oral history, therefore being viewed as extremely informal and generated naturally amongst individuals. It occurs based on the existence of at least two participators, one being the listener and the other the speaker, roles that are easily interchangeable.

Cultural memory and communicative memory are substantial and important parts of a community’s existence, as culture itself and identity are unavoidably related. It is through these memories that members of a community are able to reminisce about their ancestors and are able to point out meaningful moments that happened in the past that contributed to the establishment of what is known as their own collective identity. Without the existence of this process of remembrance associated to key events, a community’s identity would be hindered significantly and would not have any connection to the past, therefore establishing something completely new and disjointed from any previous manifestations.

1.6. Collective and individual identity

Contemplating heritage and directly associating it with the idea of tradition, it is possible to introduce the term collective identity. This refers to the idea of when a person feels as if they belong to a certain group and has a set of markers that allow him/her to identify as part of said group. Although cultural memory studies is relatively new, it is undeniable that the idea of collective identity has existed long before its inception. It is a concept that has been carried through from the past to the present, allowing people to understand the sense of belonging they feel when they are with other individuals that share similar values or feelings towards something/someone. They may feel this sense of collective

integration in a broader community, an institution or a practice, and this helps with individual identity construction. The idea of cultural identity not only aids the group as a whole, as it strengthens a belief shared by many and therefore may allow it to be divulged further, but also aids the individual in developing their own sense of self and fosters a feeling of belonging.

Given the multicultural diversification of the contemporary world we live in, a group may not always be exclusively associated to a specific location, restricted to a singular city or country. It is important to highlight that collective identity does not restrict itself to a geographical location, rather, geographical location is one of the many aspects that the term collective identity involves. If someone were to say “I am from Braga, Portugal”, that does not provide the listener with a comprehensive view of who they are. Someone’s collective identity results as an agglomeration of different factors, from social, political, geographical, and ethnical, and many others that can be considered, almost becoming something as unique as a fingerprint. People associate themselves with different groups and, through this process of association, they are able to form a collective – a shared identity. This happens several times throughout life, meaning that someone’s individual identity results in a combination of many collective identities.

We complement this notion of collective identity with the Social Identity Theory, formulated by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s. This theory explains how, under certain circumstances, the identity of the collective overpowers the identity of the individual, while also laying out how the dynamic within the group itself can influence its predominance in society. As a theory, it is built based on three components: social categorisation, social identification and social comparison, in which,

social identification leads to activities that are congruent with the identity, support for institutions that embody the identity, stereotypical perceptions of self and others, and outcomes that traditionally are associated with group formation, and it reinforces the antecedents of identification. (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p.20)

Tajfel and Turner state that people tend to place themselves and others they consider similar into specific social categories, which vary according to religious affiliations, age groups, gender and also organisational memberships (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). The degree of inclusion can vary significantly, who is considered part of the group and who is not depends on the motivations of the group at hand and if said people meet the requirements. The relationships established between the members of a particular group can become extremely strong and close, almost resembling the sort of relationship one has with a family member (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Collective identity is expressed in “cultural materials – names, narratives, symbols, verbal styles, rituals, clothing and so on” (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p.285). In some cases, when the collective identity

is strongly associated to topics such as politics, religion or other social matters, public manifestations are chosen as efficient means to show collectivity, strongly contribute to the strengthening of the identity, as not only do people feel as they are integrated into something that is true to them, but they also sense that they are contributing to something that is much bigger than them, which in their eyes is a greater good.

It is under these circumstances that it is fundamental to highlight the importance that collective identity assumes when considering heritage and tradition. As beings who seek to establish social connections with others on a constant basis, it is natural that over time and through the multiple experiences that occur in their everyday life, people identify with specific groups of individuals who share the same purposes as they do, which do not have to be directly connected with who their ancestors were.

Although people are usually unaware of the fact, collective identity assumes an especially key role in their everyday lives. While exploring the notion of this term and how it applies to society, the idea of collective identity as a monolithic entity may have been transmitted, however, it is not the case in the slightest. One person is not composed of one singular identity that they share with a collective of people.

Stuart Hall explores the idea of identity as a fragmented element. For Hall, identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices, and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation. (Hall, 1996, p.17) According to Hall, each person embodies a series of identities which they identify with or which have been inherited from past generations. The nature behind the concept of collective identities allows each individual to be related to a series of different people, while at the same time being exclusively unique in their own sense, this meaning that, although it is highly likely to find someone who has one, two or even three identities in common, it is even more unlikely to come across someone who shares every single collective identity that another person may detain. This also occurs due to the ambivalence of identity, as one may identify with something, but not entirely, presenting a conflicting view towards said reality, setting or idea,

We have the notion of identity as non-linear, as composed of more than one element, as composed always across the silences of the other, as written in and through ambivalence and desire. These are extremely important ways of thinking of an identity as not being a sealed or closed totality. (Hall, 1991,

p.49) With identity, “we have always thought about ourselves as getting more like ourselves everyday” (ibid., p. 47). This quote by Hall alludes to the idea that identity is never complete, a constant growing entity which is changing with the social settings that surround people and influence the way they act, think and speak. Once again, in his own words, “identities are never completed, never finished; (...) they are always as subjectivity itself is, in process” (Id. ibid).

Identities assume such an importance, even if subconsciously, that people find themselves filled with innate feelings that they must work towards the consolidation of who they are and guarantee that their identities are enduring and are not being hampered with the passage of time. At times, when people feel as if one of their multiple identities is under threat, some resort to forms of violence and destruction to transmit their anger and message. This is not a viable path to take, as not only does it bring harsh repercussions, but it also places a dent on the particular group itself, questioning their legitimacy and lowering the respect that is directed to them on behalf of others.

There are instances where there is a minority that, at times, fails to establish a meaningful connection with its own past and present. Given the sensitive nature that the world currently finds itself in, riddled with social, economic and moral problems, there are people who refuse to directly associate themselves with what they believe to be their heritage and instead take an active stance in distancing themselves as much as they can, finding themselves a collective which shares the same ideals as they do and openly accepts them for who they are. For cultural memories, collective memories, sites of memory and even collective identities to maintain their relevancy, there must be a will to remember. As Ann Rigney states, the “development of cultural remembrance is affected by the changing social frameworks that influence what is considered relevant enough to remember at any given time” (2008, p.2). The appearance of new generations within a community is natural. Over time, new individuals are brought into a community and, most of the time, expected to take on its ideals. For many, and as stated previously, the transmission of traditional ideals is vital for the guarantee of continuity of a culture. If the group in question counts on an exceedingly reduced number of participants, the pressure placed on the members is increased.

Memory includes both space and temporal aspects. It is never stagnant, but it suffers alterations or is affected by its surroundings. There is a clear shift between generations, in the sense that younger generations are less inclined to worry about things of the past that are irrelevant to their everyday preoccupations, whereas the older generation are more likely to stray away from the present, where the action is occurring, and opt to focus on the past (Halbwachs, 1992). It is considered of high importance by some groups of people to find appropriate means through which they are able to transmit instances

of tradition and collective memory to the following generations. Communicative memory employs orality as its main means of transmission, devoting close attention to the role of story-telling and conversations as its way of guaranteeing that information is passed on from generation to generation. Although widely used across the world, oral history presents some flaws, the main one being the risk of alteration of certain details as people tend to forget certain aspects of information, therefore putting at risk the transmission of bone fide information which was meant to be shared. Solely depending on word-of-mouth to further the existence of a certain memory/tradition is extremely risky and may have significant impacts on the collective identity that is associated with said memory/tradition. With these ideas in mind, communities have sought to find different mediums, which have become more diverse with time, through which they can assert the transmission of collective identity.

1.6.1. Transmitting collective identity

Communities undertake multiple practices, besides oral transmission, in an attempt to avoid forgetfulness. Many cultures rely on the use of public performances, alongside sites of memory, as one of the main ways of celebration of collective identity. The main difference between these two relies in the fact that the former involves much more preparation and may be a lot more stimulating for people who attend or encounter it due its performative nature.

Public performances from a collective memory viewpoint vary in nature and can happen at any given time. They imply more or less organisation, rituals and choreography and allow most of the group to directly participate in the celebrations of an aspect of their collective identity that they consider vital. They allow the establishment of a narrative connected to the memory and, through this, consist in the repetitive “recounting or telling memory-stories, in both private and public contexts” (Kuhn, 2010, p.289). In other words, for many they correspond to moments of pure celebrations, allowing cohabitation and social interaction, translating into a strengthening of their collective identity. For many, the public performance is the highlight of their year. It is a multipurposed occurrence that shines a light on a part of their identity, but also aims to show this to those who are on the outside, grasping their attention and, if possible, therefore reaching a wider audience.

Typically, these public manifestations of cultural memory consist in the exhibition of tradition that is fond to the majority. Nonetheless, keeping in mind the constant evolving nature of collective memories, they actually serve as a method to build on the memories of the past and begin to create elements of reference for the future. Public performances can be manifested in many forms, and often incorporate dance, art, music and also parades – all being significant means of transmission of tradition. Each

public performance is distinctive in its own way, serves a specific purpose and highly influences the way that a group of individuals are perceived amongst the masses, therefore taking on a very important role in modern day society. In Meike Hölscher's 2009 article titled *Performances, Souvenirs and Music: The Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria 1897*, it is possible to view a clear example of the role that some performances assume for the public that witness them in person, and also those who are more distant from the event whether it be spiritually, in the sense that they have, for some reason, somewhat disconnected from it over time, or geographically. The performance that took place during Queen Victoria's 1897 Diamond Jubilee was organised with the intention of molding the way that the Empire was perceived and remembered in the latter 19th century, not only by those living in the United Kingdom, but also by those overseas that were viewed as part of this collective (Hölscher, 2009). The work of the "memory-workers" translated into the mediation of it, allowing it therefore to reach the dimensions desired by the organisers.

Regarding the creation of both individual and collective memories, public performances assume a role of significant importance within the lives of communities as they exist as a physical way one can pay homage to one's past while also maintaining the memory alive for the longest amount of time possible.

Parades, a word adopted in English from the French "to prepare", are also often compared to processions and pageants, having been used as mechanisms of cultural expression and also reinforcers of communal bond since antiquity around the world. They are distinctive in the sense that they allow the establishment of a connection between the past, whether it is recent or distant, the present and the times which are ahead, while also involving, according to the nature of the parade, individuals from the most varied age-groups, nationalities, and backgrounds. They are formalised events, ritualised, stylised, and repetitive symbolic elements which embody a series of additional matters such as banners, choreography, and music, being "constrained within a tightly structured format and restricted to specific times or places that are outside the normal flow of routine daily life" (Jarman, 1997, p.8). It is a performance which not only intends to "put on a show", but also desires to establish a connection with the emotive side of people in an attempt to remind them of the past and the symbolism behind the parade and/or reinforce those ideas that are already present.

With the passage of centuries, it has been possible to view the employment of parades in order to either celebrate an achievement or to lament a tragic occurrence. The reasons for a parade to be hosted nowadays are numerous and many cultures take advantage of any small opportunity in order to be able to organise an event which, in their eyes, will bring the community together. The rituals in

themselves are viewed, by Neil Jarman, as “‘porous’ activities: the meanings and values spill over into normal time” (1997, p.9) and their effects on the community begin before the event itself is even close to starting, as well as continuing well after it finishes. These events are exceptionally significant, people find themselves involved in them from early childhood and grow up surrounded by this routine, which can be weekly, monthly or even annual, and it becomes a part of them, it being rather hard to simply break off from it after so many years.

The importance that parading holds for many different people has been shown, but for the remainder of the work the case of Northern Ireland will be considered, where for many centuries parading has been extensively used as a “an important carrier of politico-religious identities and collective memories” (McQuaid, 2017, p.1). Even before the consolidation of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom, religious divide has always held significant importance and been at the forefront of everyday life for those residing there.

For Catholics and Protestants, the religious divide established determined the way that they were to live, each group creating their own traditions, and trying as hard as possible to refrain from interacting with one another. Religious segregation became the norm in Northern Ireland in the 20th century and was evident in everyday life. The way that life was carried out during this time had significant influence on the times that followed and still have influence in the present day. Although it may seem incredulous, religious divide held significant power over the most mundane everyday tasks such as going to the supermarket, going to church, interacting with other people and even attending school.

Chapter 2

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND THE ORANGE PARADE

2.1. Introduction

For Northern Ireland, collective identity has always been a sensitive issue. Even before it was established as a country and part of the United Kingdom, there was a significant separation between individuals which, in part, also influenced the consolidation of separate communities, each detaining its own collective identity.

Throughout the following chapter, it will be possible to understand the origins of such separation, through a brief historical contextualization, while also coming into contact with the history behind the Orange Parade and how this choreographed ritual began. This historical contextualization is deemed necessary as with cultural memory studies, one does not only consider the present, rather the present and the future. By understanding the past of Northern Ireland, one is able to interpret the present better.

The Orange Parade, a mark of Northern Ireland and the epitome of Protestant tradition, holds significant importance from a very early point in time. The repetitiveness of this event, which takes place every year on the twelfth of July, allows people to consolidate their feelings of belonging to a community, while also having something to look forward to. During this chapter, the Orange Parade will be analysed through the lens of cultural memory studies, bringing to light the weight that certain symbols have, while also showing the objectives of the parade and how it contributes to Protestant collective identity. By combining statements of several academics with the concepts of cultural memory studies, it will be possible to view how this real life ritual, which is intrinsically choreographed and prepared, activates remembering and reconstruction in people's minds, while also being able to build new collective memories which are unique in their own sense of the matter.

Although the Orange Parade holds meaningful importance for Protestants and is an active propellant of collective memories, the reality is that it is facing some difficulties in connecting with the younger generation. What is described as a generational gap brings into question the relevance of the Orange Parade and its adjacent Orange Order values in the modern 21st century. This chapter serves to analyse the Orange Parade as a site of memory and to examine the existing generational gap between Protestants in Northern Ireland.

2.2. Northern Ireland - historical contextualization

For many years, the social, political, and religious situation within Northern Ireland has been troublesome as there has been repeated difficulty in reaching a consensus on a number of issues. In simple terms, there are two main, distinct communities residing within the Northern Irish borders, these being distinguished according to political/religious affiliations: the Protestants/loyalists/unionists, and the Catholics/nationalists/republicans. The two groups will henceforward be referred to simply as Protestants and Catholics. They have historically maintained different views and values and, in some areas of the country, reside in completely distinct areas to avoid confrontation. If one wishes to understand how these communities reached such mutual animosity it is vital to be aware of the history behind the division of land which make up the Irish isle, namely the Independent Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Ireland was an integral part of the United Kingdom from 1169, when the Anglo-Normans asserted themselves on Irish land. However, the bestowment of the title of King of Ireland on Henry VIII in 1541 was a turning point in the British crown's effective affirmation of control. At that moment in time, besides the affirmation of dominance on behalf of the British, the Irish continued to be mainly Catholic, loyal to the Catholic church and to the pope. It was not until the 1630s, a decade which marked the start of the migration of British Protestants across the Irish sea with the intent to settle in the Emerald Isle, as Ireland is famously known, most specifically towards the north of the island, that the Catholics began to feel threatened and feared the domination of Protestantism throughout the entire country.

Following the death of King Charles II in 1685, monarch who ruled over the kingdom made up of England, Scotland, Wales and the entirety of Ireland, there were no legitimate children to take over the throne, and therefore he was succeeded by his brother, King James II. This sovereign, a Catholic, clearly intended to affirm the dominance of Catholicism in Ireland, at a time when the country was going through religious insecurity. His aims were not well received by the British nobles who opted to invite William of Orange, a well-known Protestant Stadtholder of the Dutch United Provinces, to jointly rule alongside his wife Mary II, leading to the so-called Glorious Revolution and King James II being dethroned virtually without a fight. The Protestants subsequently began to gain terrain with the so-called Plantation process due to the large number of Protestant settlers who had migrated to Ireland in the space of 60 years, mostly to the area known as Northern Ireland nowadays, but which at the time was still part of Ireland.

In 1689, King James II arrived back on Irish soil, from France, with the intention of regaining his crown. He was met by his Catholic supporters, but also by opposition, an army of Protestants headed

by Frederick, Duke of Schomberg. The initial moments of the ensuing Battle of Boyne provided little to be spoken about and it was not until the following year, in 1690, with the arrival of William of Orange in Ireland, that it finally gained momentum and the Protestant troops, highly motivated and well-equipped, were victorious. This triumph manifested itself significantly in the years that followed, as not only did the Protestants concentrate themselves within Northern Ireland, but it was also seen as a key part of their identity as Protestants.

This battle also resulted in the start of what became known as intense sectarian division between Protestants and Catholics and ever since that moment in time, the island has been the stage for outbursts of violence and oppression, which only fuelled the hatred of each community towards one another. This antagonism culminated in 1968, the year which marked the start of what would later be known as thirty years of deadly sectarian violence, and one of the worst expressions of animosity in Ireland, The Troubles.

This victory in 1690 was the catalyst for the annual celebration known as the Orange Parade, a public performance in honour of the king who guided them to triumph, William of Orange. This public manifestation takes place every year on the 12 of July in several cities around the country, when Protestants from diverse backgrounds head to the streets with the intention of celebrating the Battle of Boyne and King William of Orange, this important figure in Protestant history.

The aforementioned events are important for the communities involved, whether this is in religious, demographic, political or economic terms. Viewed through the prism of cultural memory studies, the occurrences may be analysed *vis-à-vis* their importance for the consolidation of collective identity with emphasis on how the collective memories produced by past events have power and influence in the daily lives of those who to this present day live in Northern Ireland, 332 years after the Battle of Boyne.

According to Jan Assmann, what he calls communicative memory has the capacity to endure for approximately 100 years. The period from the Battle of Boyne to today is triple the amount of years, allowing therefore for anywhere in between nine and twelve generations to have been brought into the world. If the memory associated to the Battle of Boyne and Protestantism were to be solely a case of communicative memory, then it would have been long gone by the time the great-great-grandchildren of those who battled were born. However, we are not dealing with a manifestation of that because the memory of the victory of the Battle of Boyne was taken and ceremonialized by the Orange Order, a society founded in 1795 by Ulster¹ Protestants Daniel Winter, James Sloan and James Wilson, with the sole intent to maintain the Protestant ascendancy in Ireland. The Orange Order members were in

¹ Northern Ireland is also known as Ulster.

charge of organising and conducting the first Orange Parade in 1796.

2.3. What is the Orange Parade?

The Orange Parade, or Orange Walk, is considered to be the most important celebration to happen in Northern Ireland, “[the 12 of July] is an important holiday surpassed only by Christmas” (McQuaid, 2017, p.28), a holiday which was already being celebrated since the 18th century but which was officially proclaimed in 1893 (Bryan, 2000). In the words of Neil Jarman, “the past retains an unusual prominence in Irish social and political life” (1997, p.1). Northern Ireland, which continues to be part of the United Kingdom ever since 1921 following the Government of Ireland Act of 1920, is well-known for its devotion to rituals and manifestations of tradition.

The first parade accounted for in Northern Ireland took place in 1796 and was held to commemorate the Battle of Boyne that had been fought in 1690 (McKenna, n.d). Up until the 1870s, the practice did not garner as much attention as it would be expected, being described as lacking authority and respectability. It was not until the “later nineteenth century, with the help of public transport” (Bryan, 2006, p.125) and the wider support from the community that parades finally were able to flourish and gain significant momentum. Ever since that point in time, modes of public performance in Northern Ireland have become prolific and have been held annually during what is known as ‘the marching season’ that takes place between the months of April up until August. This nation has registered, according to the most recent official numbers, approximately “4000 parades annually in a country of approximately 1,8 million people” (McQuaid, 2017, p.3) and the tendency that these events have registered is to gather more individuals with every new marching season, whether they are mere tourists which desire to view and experience the parade or actual participants of the event, with every year that goes by.

In the specific case of Northern Ireland, although they are a source of happiness and festivity for the community which is being celebrated, these public manifestations are often also catalysers and generators of outbursts of conflict between the two main religious communities that have affirmed themselves since a very early period and that are closely related to opposing political and religious affiliations, the Catholics and the Protestants.

Although the main celebration falls upon the 12th day of the month, the preparations and anticipation surrounding it starts significantly before, once again reinforcing the choreographed nature of these events. On the 11th of July, multiple large bonfires made up of wooden pallets, composed in the way that would resemble staggering towers, are scattered throughout the Protestant areas, being often

accompanied by marching bands and extravagant parties that extend into the early hours of the following morning. These bonfires are burned as a way to pay homage and mark the victory obtained in the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the Battle of Boyne of 1690, symbolic events for the Protestants as they were significant in the assertion of the Protestant ascendancy in the land, as aforementioned.

What at first began as a small-scale tradition consisting of numerous small fires spread throughout the loyalist neighbourhoods has now grown in importance. The towers are less in number but they are more grandiose. Organisers opt to promote these events as family-friendly, therefore resulting in large crowds that spend their evenings observing the burning of the wooden pallets, yet there have been many instances in which police officers were required to attend in order to avoid any outbursts of violence between the Catholics, who regard the symbolic act as offence, and Protestants.

Though the bonfires are prepared with the intention to spread a celebratory cheer throughout the communities, safety concerns have grown over time, as expressed by UPP leader Doug Beattie to the BBC's Nolan Show,

I get the point that bonfires are a fair expression of identity and culture, they happen around the world. But these bonfires need to be safe, they need to be controlled, they need to be well-supervised and they need to have expert professional engagement to deal with the construction, the lighting and the safe distances, and we need to put that in place to ensure that we keep our communities safe. (...) [T]he reality of this is quite simple: some of these bonfires are not safe, and if they are not safe there needs to be mandatory regulations to stop them putting people's lives in danger. (McCambridge, 2021, para. 10 & 12)

Firstly, there is the main concern for public and environmental safety for the spread of the fires could easily lead to injuries, destruction of businesses and homes, and also have a detrimental effect on the environment (ibid). Secondly, with the growth of sectarian divisions and intensification of the rivalry between Catholics and Protestants it has become extremely common to view the presence of symbolic elements which are strictly associated to the Republic of Ireland, such as pictures of politicians and members of nationalist parties, the tricolour flag and pictures of the Pope attached to the bonfires with the sole intention of burning them (Edwards & Knottnerus, 2010). They are used as conveyers of beliefs and emotions, especially during times of increased tensions following certain political outcomes, that under other circumstances would not arise. These actions reflect devotion on behalf of Protestants, who wish to show in a performative manner how they remain faithful to the beliefs that were, at a given point in time, transmitted to them. However, it is also important to consider the impact that these burnings have on the other community, which is indirectly involved, the Catholics, the "others".

The selection of which symbols should be attached to these fires, and consequentially burned, is

not, in any sense, arbitrary or unintentional. The group of Protestants who put these together are conscious that by burning these items, they are transmitting a strong and clear message to the “others”. The monetary value of these items does not come into play for the aim is to burn the things that will cause the most impact. Following the bonfires, Catholics easily feel as if their culture, their collective identity, is being provoked and under threat, leading to quarrels between the communities that, throughout the rest of the year, are nevertheless somewhat able to live in peace with each other.

The tensions that begin to accumulate in the days prior to the Twelfth are important to keep in mind when analysing the cultural impact that the parade itself has on the different communities that coexist in Northern Ireland. Here we are not only talking about people walking along roads and burning pieces of wood, it goes beyond the literal occurrence of these events. When we analyse these events in combination with terms implied in cultural memory studies, we are led to a point where there are numerous questions, of which the answers will permit a clearer comprehension of what fuels a collective social group to carry on year after year and how they are able to preserve a collective memory over long periods of time in order to not fall into forgetfulness. It is with this that we must shine a spotlight on the matter of The Orange Parade.

With the Orange Parade, the memory that the Protestant community is so strongly holding on to is intrinsically correlated to the historical event that initially catalysed the occurrence of the first parade in the 18th century, 1795 to be specific. In cultural memory studies, there has always been a strong distinction between the roles of history and the role of memory. History, in its more formal sense, is structured, follows a form of logic and a narrative, permitting individuals to pinpoint a specific historical event to a time and place without much difficulty. History is the academic subject that society has created as a way to effectively organize the past². It allows the incomplete reconstruction of the past, something which people can no longer access, physically nor mentally, contrary to memory. (Nora, 1989).

Memory, regardless of its type, is not so simple, consisting of an agglomeration of different people, symbols, meanings and moments which allow society to have a better understanding of their environment, incorporating a sense of continuity between the past, present and future, therefore going beyond any instance of a historical narrative that one can access in any history book. “What we call memory is in fact the gigantic and breathtaking storehouse of a material stock of what it would be impossible for us to remember, an unlimited repertoire of what might need to be recalled” (ibid, p. 13). It is plural, yet individual at the same time. It is subject to the rituals of life, between remembering,

² The question of power and historical narrative is acknowledged here.

forgetting, and also under threat of suffering alterations (id. ibid). All these actions happen naturally and attribute memory with this unique characteristic that is unfindable anywhere else.

For the Orange Parade, both memory and history assume extreme importance. On the one hand one must recognise that the event takes place in order to celebrate a historic event, the victory in the Battle of Boyne, but, at the same time, it is also an event which allows the performance of a choreographed ritual, and also provides the strengthening of collective identity. Additionally, this event not only honours the historic past, but also acts as a creator of social memory, consisting, as Jarman states, in the

(...) understanding of past events that are remembered by individuals, but within a framework structured by the larger group. The group may range in scale from a single family, or residents of a particular town or village, right up to a national or state-based identity (...). (1997, p.6)

The social memory embodied in the Orange Parade is also historical memory in that the memories that are tied to the ritual “can only be stimulated in indirect ways through reading or listening or in commemoration and festive occasions when people gather together to remember in common deeds and accomplishments of long-departed members of the group” (Coser, 1992, p.24). This type of stimulation is the goal of the Orange Parade for by bringing everyone together in commemoration the organisers and participants desire to acclaim the past and honour those who have devoted themselves to guaranteeing the continuance of Protestantism.

These specific collective memories serve as the medium through which the people of today are able to live in the present, while connecting to the past at the same time. These images of the past that they are able to tap into are not disconnected from them, on the contrary, they serve as the means through which most individuals of said community are able to justify their identity. For it to maintain its relevance, there must be continuity established over time, without any major breaks, otherwise the event runs the risk of falling into the past and becoming something that people only occasionally remember, rather than something that is constantly present in their lives through remembrance, symbols or rituals.

The public performance of the Orange Parade consists of “complex events, characterized by pride, loyalty to Britain, and religious faith” (Edwards & Knottnerus, 2010, p.4). In other words, it is a commemoration which involves intense organisation and choreography, counting on the participation of hundreds of Protestant and Loyalist fraternities, the main one being the Orangemen (and women), who voluntarily participate in the walking of the streets of a designated city. Under normal conditions, each year, the 12 of July witnesses 18 large parades fanned out throughout the six counties that make up Northern Ireland. Each year the towns and villages that host the Orange Parade are different. However,

there are two locations in which the hosting of the parade is guaranteed every year, gathering the biggest amount of spectators, these being Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland, and Ballymena in county Armagh, where the foundation of the Orange Order took place.

The fraternal societies have the participation from people of all age groups, from young children up until elderly people, who make the effort to uphold their commitment to their organisation. In 1983, Eric Hobsbawm highlighted the term “invented tradition” in his publication *The Invention of Tradition*. This notion, which became widespread and used by other researchers in the field such as Meike Hölscher, introduces the idea that the traditions society holds are, in essence, merely invented celebrations. These days become marked as “a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.” (Hobsbawm, 1983, p. 1).

The Twelfth, as a ceremonialized and invented event that maintains relevancy in the modern day and age, makes use of “history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion” (ibid., p. 12) and is marked by various symbols which are significant in the formation and consolidation of collective memories. The day in itself is dominated by the colour orange, as the name suggests, and it is possible to view the participants carrying large banners and flags that are representative of their Orange Lodge, referring to King William of Orange and the United Kingdom, while also being accompanied by marching bands whose purpose is to fill the streets with melodies that are specific to the culture in question. The Orangemen are distinctive in the sense that their attire distinguishes them from the remaining participants, wearing black bowler hats, white gloves and orange sashes.

Furthermore, it is also important to bring attention to the demographic composition of the group of spectators that fill the pavements of the streets of Northern Ireland. Although an incredibly old tradition, the audience is made up of people who are from the most varied age groups. A lot of families make up the public audience, “where children are brought as a matter of course” (McQuaid, 2017, p.11), taking advantage of the overall atmosphere of the parade to introduce this tradition to the younger generation in a more indirect, light-hearted way. The presence of these families, the vast majority of them identifying as Protestants, especially the children is very important when one reflects upon the transmission of collective identity amongst generations.

Even though the mentioning of all these particularities may seem abstract, the reality is that when talking about the formation of collective memory and collective identity, the role that these symbols play is outstanding. If one wishes to reminisce on a past memory, there are two processes that are executed: firstly, there is the establishment of a visual aid, our mind attempts to recreate, to the best of

its ability, the memory we are trying to remember, and this is where the role of symbols comes in. When an individual has experienced the Orange Parade, whether directly or indirectly, she/he is most likely to remember aspects such as the predominance of the colour orange, the existence of patriotic music and the carnival-like atmosphere that was carried out throughout the parade. Following this, the preoccupation is no longer with the memory, but more about what it signifies. The meanings that are attributed by the experiencer, the emotions originating from them and what the parade means for their identity, and the contribution to understanding who they are and who they identify with is all important (Hall, 1990).

All of these are not simply fleeting hypothetical questions. Human beings have the desire to have a better understanding of who they truly are, constantly being on this journey of self-discovery and desiring to reach a point where they feel as if they know themselves entirely, that they know where they belong within a social setting. The panning out of these public manifestations are active contributors and catalysers to the unravelling of these thought processes that can allow someone to feel as if they are a step closer to understanding themselves. Not only that, but they also allow those who clearly find themselves integrated in a specific cultural milieu to feel even closer to those who surround them. When followed through successfully, they allow the establishment of a strong link between the past, the present and the future, in other words, they “powerfully unite individuals in particular collectivities, which leverage the past not only to mark cohesion, but to map out desired trajectories into the future” (McQuaid, 2017, p.11).

2.4. Contested sites of memory

When analysing everything involving the Orange Parade, we are devoting our attention to the role it assumes in the consolidation of Protestant identity exclusively. Although it is recognised that, due to the historical past, Catholic identity and the feelings that the elements of this community expresses towards the parade are contrary to those felt by Protestants, this work aims to understand on a deeper level how the parade acts as a means of Protestant identity consolidator, or not. As mentioned previously, the Orange Parade is seen as one of the most important celebrations within Northern Ireland, for “parades and military-style activities are a much more important feature of life for Protestants in Ulster than is the case for any group anywhere else in the Western world” (Heskin, 1984, p.10). However, what does the Orange Parade embody?

To complement the information in section **2.3. What is the Orange Parade?**, and in order to develop the argument concerning contested sites of memory, additional relevant details of the Orange

Parade are now given. First occurring in 1796, the annual Orange Parade is organised on behalf of the Orange Order, a male fraternity which embodies the Protestant values and aims to maintain Protestant identity in Northern Ireland and other locations where Protestantism is practiced, such as Scotland or Canada, for example. While Northern Ireland is marked by the existence of a multiplicity of fraternities, Orangeism is represented almost exclusively by the Orange Order. Composed exclusively by men of an older age cohort, the fraternity is a conservative, loyalist and unionist voluntary organisation that intends to put in place measures that will aid it in its goals. Although there is a Women's Orange Order in place, this group present a significantly reduced number of members which accompany the Orangemen and marching bands throughout the designated march route.

It is a result of a combination of different factors and aspects which, when combined, create a ritualised spectacle that is viewed by the population. The idea of organising such an event on a yearly basis leads the Orange Order, in association with the Parades Commission, to consider a variety of factors in order to present the best event possible for them. The Orange Parade is unique as it is marked by the abundance of the colour orange, present in banners, flags and also the sashes worn by Orangemen. It is also extremely frequent to note the presence of multiple marching bands, whose job it is to fill the streets with songs and melodies that are particular to the Orange Order and the Protestant community. These bands are not only a key element of the Protestant history, but also folk music history in general. To comprehend the extent of their history, it is important to highlight that the longest-standing marching band in Ireland was formed in 1826 (Stoune, 2008, para. 3), 30 years after the first Orange Parade. Made up of individuals of all ages, the flute marching bands exercise their talents beyond the parades in Ulster, also partaking in competitions that are held throughout the years and attending meets of a social character. For Orangeism, the presence of these bands is fundamental, and the art behind the music-making process has been considered a key part in the maintenance of political identities in Northern Ireland.

The history of parading has allowed the Orange Parade to assume multiple meanings according to the context and intentions of those partaking in it. Participants are able to embody the feelings of the group and project them to the wider audience, whether these are feelings of protest, disgust, revolt, overall happiness, or gratefulness. Everything that goes into the preparation of such a spectacle takes considerable time and organisation in order to have an efficient outcome and gather the attention of others. In the case of the Orange Parade, all the decisions surrounding the exhibition are symbolic for those who identify with the Protestant identity so tightly associated to it: the colours, the music, the order of the participants, the banners, and the specific route that it takes.

Following the logic of Pierre Nora and in the words of Sarah McQuaid, place “is an important host of memories” (2017, p.18). Sites of memory, *lieux de memoire*, occur from the necessity of creating archives that are able to store the memories we intended to be stored, as a way of guaranteeing continuity, while also being aware that such archives are being created with the intention of celebration of the memories being deposited. Certain memories gain specific meanings because of where they are stored, that is what attributes them with emotions that are shared by a group of people, or perhaps a single individual (Nora, 1989).

Sites of memory can vary extensively and be anything from the celebration of anniversaries to the placing of statues that honour a certain entity or figure. They are “simple and ambiguous, natural and artificial, at once immediately available in concrete sensual experience and susceptible to the most abstract elaboration” (ibid., p. 18). It is always important to not only consider the memory that is being archived, but also the site where it is being placed. Memories assume such importance for people that the way they preserve them is always particular to each person or group. In this sense, the same site of memory can generate many memories of different natures, making it intricate and complex.

Every time we find ourselves in a place of some significance, we are most likely attributing meaning to it because we associate a specific experienced or unexperienced memory to the place in question. The general feelings and memories that are associated to a location vary according to the experiencer (person or the group), being extremely subjective: “lieu de memoire is double: a site of excess closed upon itself, concentrated in its own name, but also forever open to the full range of its possible significations” (ibid., p.24). These holders of memory can be specific to the point where its connotation varies according to each individual person, or it can be viewed on a wider scale, varying in function of the beholding social groups. Communities are able to identify sites of memory because of the links they have established with them, and it is only natural, especially if we consider places of disputed memory, such as Auschwitz for example, for different memories, emotions and values to be connected to the same place.

Sites of memory allow individuals to materialise the memories and emotions they feel towards them. By choosing to commemorate at these sites of memories, as is the case with the Orange Parade, it shows that these communities are propelled by the moral message that the collective memories cause within them (Winter, 2010). These sites of memory, places where people express a collective shared knowledge of the past on which a group's sense of unity, particularity and individuality is based assume such varied forms and detain such significant importance for people that contestation is bound to become common, especially between communities which share a conflicting past (Assmann, 1995).

Concerning the annual organisation of the Orange Parade, attention is focused on the path that the participants wish to march along, as this is not only of remarkable importance, but it has also been a source of disagreement, especially as the marches gain more relevancy with each year that passes. Sectarianism in Northern Ireland has a long history, being a source of misunderstandings, arguments, and violence. Although the majority of the violence has died down significantly between Protestants and Catholics, the reality is that the sectarianism which was particularly vigorous during the 20th century had a noticeable impact on Northern Irish towns, as many found themselves partitioned with areas which were specifically dedicated to Catholics/nationalists, and others for Protestant/loyalists. This transformed the division that was formerly mainly seen as symbolic into a concrete, spatial segregation present in most of the land.

The constant brawls between the groups, the majority in the 20th century, led to segregation in some areas. Physical walls, formally known as Peace Walls or Peace Lines³, were built on behalf of the British government in an attempt to reduce the interaction between the differing groups, allowing people to carry out their lives within their own community without any need to interact with the “others”. These physical embodiments, not manifested in every town but existing in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry since 1969, for example, transmit a very important and significant message. Although initially built to be temporary and reduce tensions amongst communities, they are boundaries that allow the population to comprehend the limitations that have been reached not only for those residing in the Northern Irish territory, but also for those who are on the outside. The walls serve as political, religious and social markers, reflecting the extent that the divergences reached, whether these were merely verbal or physical. They were/are a constant reminder of division “constructing a social world of two opposing identity categories of ‘us’ and ‘them’” (Selim, 2018, p.7). Furthermore, they detain more meaning than just that relating to the most common spheres of everyday life. Shirlow and Murtagh suggest that

(...) the borders between loyalist/unionist and republican/nationalist spaces are more than boundaries between communities, they are also important instruments defining discursively marked spaces. Interface walls do not just serve to impede violence between communities but can be construed as crucial structures that reduce contact and create distance between communities. (2006, p.57)

As towns noted the intense growth of sectarianism, the Orange Parade continued to take place every year, as the Orange Order would not allow the memory of the victory in the Battle of Boyne to dissipate, nor would these discussions hinder the consolidation of the Protestant/loyalist collective identity. The routes that were carried out remained the same, as they carried significance in terms of tradition and

³ A particularly ironic name given by the British.

collective memory, however, with the notable change in the layout of the land, problems began to become more frequent when it came to where the Orange Parade could or could not pass through.

The history attached to the Orange Parade and the ritual dates to a time well before the establishment of town division in Northern Ireland. This division only began to affirm itself following the separation of Northern Ireland from the Republic of Ireland in 1921. To not be overly extensive, the following segment of this dissertation will particularly focus on the significance of the route in Portadown, county Armagh, while also taking time to reflect on how these have an impact in the course of collective memory and collective identity.

Portadown is a significant town in the context of the history related to the Orange Parade, considered one of the most important locations, home to the birth of the Orange Order and also where the first Orange Parade was registered. Its traditional route, implemented since 1807, consisted in the marching that had as its starting point Orbins Road and its returning leg along Garvaghy Road, meaning that the participants would march to and from the Episcopalian Drumcree Church, members of the Anglican Communion. Even though there has been intermittent violence over the march since the 1800s, the trouble surrounding the significance of the route only became apparent and intensified towards the end of the 20th century, being even more prominent with the Troubles.

The ferocious protests that took place in the years of 1995, 1996 and 1997 resulted in what is known as the Drumcree Crises. Garvaghy Road is situated in the middle of a Nationalist neighbourhood, therefore, Nationalists residing in that area became extremely vocal in their wishes to refuse entry to the Protestant/loyalist group as they marched in the name of the Orange Parade. The former group believed that these members would choose to march through the neighbourhood “in a display of dominance and opposition to Catholicism” (Edwards & Knottnerus, 2010, p.14), whereas the latter claimed to do so in the name of tradition. This reflects just how much importance is related to the tradition of parading, it being able to challenge the boundaries that have been in place for a considerable amount of time, all in the name of traditional routes.

Following the intensity that the contestation achieved, the Parades Commission, a neutral organ created in 1998 after the Peace Agreement was signed with the goal of attributing stability and order within the parades themselves, while also promoting a better understanding of the parades to the general public, stepped in and banned the parade for several years consecutively, which for the Catholics/nationalist felt like “obsolete triumphalism” (Fitzpatrick, 2001, p. 64). Naturally, the Orange Order felt obliged to react in the face of what they viewed as oppression against their beliefs and religion, gathering every year in the town to protest against the commission’s decision.

The problem that arises in this situation is that Protestants feel as if they are entitled to march along the route that had been set at a time when what is now considered “Catholic grounds” were mere farmlands with no religious or political affiliation associated to them, whereas Catholics/nationalists feel as if Protestants should respect the new reality, compromise and, from this, alter their route in a way that will not cross any areas which are famously known by being dominated by Catholic/nationalist residents. This situation brings into play the role that collective identity and collective memory has in the propelling of certain actions. Protestants/loyalists feel a need to continue with the route that they have used for many years, as by doing so they will be honouring the memories of those who fell in the name of their cause. Even if they were not present in key events such as the Battle of Boyne, individuals desire to contribute to the re-enactment of history as a means of affirming themselves as active memory builders and perpetrators of a memory that has withstood the test of time and is so important for identity formation.

2.5. Mediation

Over the three years that were filled with altercations and riots, the Catholics and Protestants living in Northern Ireland were not the only ones that were aware of the Drumcree Crises that was further devastating the North. Media took on an important yet interesting role at this time, conveying all that was happening to a wider public and therefore shaping the image of these brawling communities that was shared with the world in real time. From the 20th century, mass media became more common and information was imparted not solely by the newspaper. With the rise of radio, television and the internet, news concerning these events reached a wider audience.

Mediation in cultural memory studies consists in the mediacy of cultural memory through the arts and academia. It is relevant in cultural memory studies as it acts, for example, as a mechanism of propagation of collective identity. Through it a general idea is understood, not completely legitimate, of a social group and how these act at a certain point in time. It is significant to note though that this practice is subjective, meaning that, depending on the means of mediation and the entity carrying out this transmission of events, the public will receive a specific portrayal of a group. Experiencing something first-hand does not have the same impact or significance as it has if it is experienced through the radio or other propagation forms.

For instance, if one were to focus on the mediation of the Drumcree events from the perspective of a television organisation which had strong Protestant affiliations, then perhaps the idea that one would gather from it is that Protestants had the right to march to and from Drumcree, whereas if one were to

direct one's attention to a radio programme with Catholic views, the script would be inverted, attributing reason to the claims made by them. Media has become an essential part in the circulation of collective memories and, consequentially, in the formation of collective identity, as modern-day society is dominated by mass media. These events have had drastic consequences in the spheres of everyday life and with each altercation media outlets have been able to take advantage of the situation and manipulate the wider audience.

Not only does media shape the way we perceive an event, it also then has an influence on the way events are collectively remembered by others. Media does not represent reality; it is a mechanism that reconstructs it and also allows the immortalisation of it in accordance with a very specific set of contexts. Medialisation of reality will never be completely unbiased to what truly happened regardless of the attempts to achieve such a goal. One may question whose truth is being narrated.

If we wish to research something that took place during a time when we were not alive, it is possible to do so thanks to the work that media has developed. We are able to access documents, photographs, online websites etc. that have registered the information we seek. In order to effectively construct and circulate knowledge and memory nowadays, we must use the media, combining it with the timeless transmission mechanism of orality. These means of mediation have, contributed to the widespread idea that most individuals have in regard to Northern Ireland. For many, the first ideas that come to mind when the conversation is about the Northern territory is sectarianism, violence, and division, “[p]eople look to our country and see repression” (McKay, 2021, p.11), however this mentality is more relevant to the past rather than the present.

The motives for someone doing something are nearly always questionable, and the same goes for this case. The reasons why someone feels the need to transmit collective memory and identity can be viewed twofold, this is, some people may do it with the intention of truthfully guaranteeing the transmission of the ideals associated with Protestantism and the Orange Parade, therefore feeling as if they have fulfilled their debt to the ancestors who fought so hard in order to obtain their religious freedom, whereas others do it with the sole intent of going against Catholics and causing a larger rift between the two sides. This latter motive feeds into the idea that Protestantism only exists in order to oppose Catholicism, resulting in horrid feuds, bloodshed, and destruction of public property. Some individuals who identify themselves as Protestants believe that their malicious actions against Catholics can be justified by their Protestant identity/affiliation, an idea supported by the following claim, these demonstrations [of violence] reflect not only feelings of religious righteousness and superiority, but also (...) of violence in the name of the Protestant faith. (King, 2018, p.6).

This statement from a member of Bogside youths, present in Gehan Selim's 2018 paper, shows the Protestant youths when questioned about why they display such attitudes stating,

We act like this because of what happened in the past... we were brought up with heartbreaking stories ... we did not witness them ... but my parents still have them live everyday ... riots and violence is not bad and my community supports it. (p.12)

These isolated cases lead to the damaging of the Protestant image and, through process of association, the Orange Order and the Orange Parade. This comes about due to, once again, the role that media and mediation has in the proliferation of collective identity in worldwide terms, "media portrays the group in a negative light" (Edwards & Knottnerus, 2010, p.18). With every Orange Parade, there have been instances of rioting and disruption between members that identify with either community, events which have always been mediated and are easily accessible in online articles and news reports. The way media chooses to present such encounters, the way in which they word their texts, the people they choose to interview, the images they show, have a big influence in the way this reconstructed reality is perceived by others. By encountering these sources, it is possible for people to be left with the impression that such disruptions are accepted, approved by higher organs and have inevitably become the norm in the North.

The purpose of the Orange Order has become lost through media coverage, especially digital, which corresponds to a significant percentage of media used in the present day. According to the media, the Orange Order is an anti-Catholic organisation with a very specific agenda, when in reality they affirm that their intentions are pure and solely wish to work towards their own goal within their community, rather than working against the *others*.

This is perceivable through the following quotes, first one being retrieved from The Guardian newspaper, in an article titled "Poison at the heart of the Orange Order", stating that in

rural areas of Ulster, there is a sizeable faction of Protestants and loyalists who regard Catholics and nationalists as an ever-present danger to both their temporal and spiritual well-being. (McDonald, 2000, para. 4)

Journalist Michael O'Dowd writes "[i]n modern society, an organization like the Orange Order which explicitly excludes Catholics from being members is an anachronism." (2022, para. 13)

However, the Orange Order is adamant that these media publications do not correspond to the reality lived in the order and subsequent community directly associated with it, Protestants. According to a member of the Order quoted directly in McCaldon's 2018 publication, "No I don't think [the Orange Order] is [anti-Roman Catholic...] we are not against the Roman Catholics' (...) 'this idea that we wake up and think "How can we do down the Catholic church?" is nonsense." (p.126)

2.6. The generation gap

The way Northern Ireland is perceived has significantly shifted since the Troubles ended. This is not to say that the violence and sectarianism has dissipated completely, as there still are cases of such, yet the intensity of such realities has significantly reduced and has allowed for the Protestant and Catholic communities to coexist in a more humane manner. This comes about especially due to the new generations. The older generations, closer to the times when the Troubles and other aggressive moments took place, seem to wish to continue to believe they live in a time of clear religious division, whereas the younger generations, aware of their past and its consequences, have other goals in mind in regard to the present and future of their community. Also, given that these younger generations access mass media more easily, it is only natural to assume that they will be affected by mediation on a deeper level in comparison to their ancestors. The amount of information that they are faced with on a day-to-day basis is immeasurable and this will have a significant impact on the way they view the world and how they feel about not only their individual identity, but their collective identity also.

Throughout the dissertation there has been considerable focus on the divisions between communities themselves, however, this is not the only one that has a significant impact. One must also consider the composition within the Protestant community, how it is structured, how that influences the fluidity of it, who represents it etc. With the Orange Parade, the entity which is viewed as detaining the biggest amount of social power is the Orange Order, whose members are responsible for setting everything in place, being the group which is able to uphold the existing memory of Protestantism in Ulster. As the main organisation within the community, the Order is able to answer the question posed by a protestant - "Who am I?" and it is for that reason that for so many years people would resort to members as a source of guidance amidst all the conflict.

As with formerly believed monarchical divine right, "members of the Orange Order arguably see themselves as 'Israelites', or as 'God's Chosen People', defending their Promised Land against 'heathens, foreigners and other villains'" (Forker, 2013, pp. 68-69). The Order, which counts of several lodges which do not restrict their localisation within the northern part of the Irish territory, "is essentially an all-male organization with the women's Orange Order being a separate loyal order" (Edwards & Knottnerus, 2010, p.6). The vast majority of its members fall into a specific age group, in fact "around 75% of the membership sits within the 50+ age bracket" (Choyaa, 2019, para. 10), meaning that the profile is getting older. It is these older individuals which still feel a very strong connection to not only what they experienced during their lifetime, considering that most of them were alive during the

Troubles, but also what their parents, grandparents or even great-grandparents experienced over the decades as they fought for what they believed in.

Protestantism nowadays is not as evident as it was 50 years ago. It has been noted that there has been a significant decline in the number of people who identify themselves as Protestants. According to the Census carried out in the years of 2001 and 2011, in the former it was registered that around 53% of the population residing in Northern Ireland either identified as Protestant or had been brought up Protestants, whereas in the latter, only 48% affirmed themselves as such. These values reflect a decrease of 5%, yet it is also significant to bring attention to the 7% of the population that in the 2011 Census stated that they either belonged to another religion, neither Catholic nor Protestant, or did not identify with any religion at all, meaning that the remaining 53% identified as Catholic in 2011.

Complementary to this information, the most recent Census of 2021, the centenary year of Northern Ireland, shows that the population in Northern Ireland is more diverse than ever before. Following the tendency noted at the start of the 21st century, Protestantism has registered a continuous decrease, as less people claim to identify as being Protestant. For the first time in Northern Irish history, Catholics outnumber Protestants, 45.7% and 43.5% respectively. The question of national identity also reveals a remarkable change. 42.8% of people identified themselves as British, with 33.3% identifying themselves as Irish. Ten years ago, these values were 48.4% and 28.4%, correspondingly. These statistics, all obtained from the published work on behalf of Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency,⁴ are extremely significant, as we must remember the desperate history that Northern Ireland carries. The decrease has an impact within Protestantism and the strength of its members' collective identity-

The reduction noted in the space of 10 years was not sporadic, for over the years and up until this point in time Protestantism has registered a rhythmic diminishing of its participants, reflected also on the number of participants that make up the Orange Order, (consistent loses over the years). For Devenport, the reason for the change is believed to be that Protestantism corresponds to "an older community with higher mortality" (2012, para. 6). The younger generations of today are not as likely to identify with the same beliefs that have stood in place over the last centuries. The collective memories that this younger group of people has is not anywhere near the same as those who preceded them. Even if there is a noticeable association with the culture and its subsequent identity, this new generation is not able to transfer the memories that their predecessors have into their own self and therefore embody them as if they were their own.

⁴ For more information and official documents, consult <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/census/2021-census>

Starting from the first parade at the end of the 18th century, each generation has presented their own set of collective memories that they are able to share, however, it is bold to assume that the collective memories that were once shared in 1690, or even in 1796, still have the same strength and significance in 2022, even if there has been this genuine attempt to keep the tradition of the Orange Parade and all that is associated to it, alive. This happens due to the constant changes that take place in the world we live in. Perspectives are not immutable and after a significant amount of years the belief system that once had a privileged position may no longer be as strong as it once was. Tradition must be able to accompany shifts in perspective in order to maintain its relevancy. With every new parade that takes place on the 12 of July, new collective memories are established that allow the tradition and, most importantly, the collective identity of the group to maintain some sort of renewed relevancy and importance, “Such enactments replicate, reproduce and perpetuate core myths and memories and act to ensure that memory is transmitted by way of: ‘a whole set of cultural practices through which people recognize their debt to the past’” (McAuley, 2016, para. 4) The importance of these practices lies in the ability of transmitting the memory that everyone still holds on to, therefore permitting a strengthening of collective identity. By continuing the ritual on such a regular basis and allowing the involvement of common people, the occurrence of the Orange Parade is also, in an indirect way, assigning a role to those who are involved. The commemorative aura that it is surrounded by, followed by its music and other influences, “leave a deep imprint on those who experience” the celebration (Becker, 2005, p.108). People leave at the end of the day feeling as if they are obliged to continue the trend, to take on the role of memory carriers, and through this find ways, usually through orality, to transmit the beliefs, messages, and reasons why the Orange Parade is still so important and idolised by Protestants. However, the important issue here is not in regard to those who attend the parade, more so it is focused on those who have chosen not to be involved in the celebrations surrounding the Battle of Boyne and Protestantism. The existing gap between generations is expected to create a rift between members of said community. With this, how does collective memory survive? What impact will this have on the continuity of collective identity? Is the generational gap existing in Northern Ireland going to hinder the importance attributed to the Orange Parade? Besides all of the alterations that have taken place over the years to reduce the intense impact of sectarianism, “young people are still growing up in a divided society where ‘us’ and ‘them’ beliefs endure” (Selim, 2018, p.3). This new generation that is embracing the real world are a key element in the formation of a collective identity for they are expected to correspond to expectations and continue what was built over the last centuries. Significant wars and protests all happened during a time when they were not alive. The only knowledge they detain about

these events is provided by their parents and grandparents, who either talk from first-hand experiences or recall their parents and grandparents' stories that they heard when they were children. In their lifetime they have only come across small outbursts of violence, nothing in comparison to what their ancestors had to live through.

The way that these older generations bring up their children has a substantial influence on the way that they see the world, how they interpret reality and how they feel towards these *others*. For many, even if they have not experienced sectarianism violence, the division between the groups is still somehow ingrained in their minds from the moment they are born due to the strong beliefs felt on behalf of those who provide care for them. A significant part of the youth does not get a chance, throughout the first years of their life, to question what is being taught. Contrary to popular, and perhaps old school belief, they should not be expected to "simply reproduce adult assumptions about the world they live in but develop their own methods of knowing" (Selim, 2018, p.3), rather they should be given the opportunity to make educated choices in accordance with what is best for them. Yet, with culture and identity, it is rather complicated for most to even consider such a train of thought because the mindset they detain has been ingrained from a very early point.

Older generations that identify themselves as Protestants correspond to the majority of individuals that attend the parades, not only the 12th of July, but those that are scattered throughout the marching season, "they plan their vacations around the parading season and they would never leave during that time, as it is a major part of their lives" (Edwards & Knottnerus, 2010, p.18). Many families involve their children in the Orange Parade tradition from an incredibly young age. The family-friendly ambient of the parade allows these families to feel safe enough to bring their children and allow them to be immersed in the music, the colours and the big banners that are paraded through the streets. Even though many of the children are not able to detain any specific form of information from attending the parade, given that they are extremely young and cannot grasp the real meaning of the parade, it is still important for some to bring them, slowly introducing these concepts to them. With time, once they become more aware, the act of attending the parade will no longer be an odd occurrence, it will have become innate and natural for them to go if they have attended the parade repeatedly in the past. In these situations, one can highlight what is conceptualised by Marianne Hirsch as postmemory, a notion which refers to the process of transmission of memory from one generation to another, in a vertical direction: 'the relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to constitute memories in their own right'. (Hirsch, 2008, p.103).

The question that seems to be most pertinent at this point is: Why do newer generations feel so detached from the ideals perpetuated by the Orange Parade? Maybe they see them as an intense burden that is placed on their shoulders. The generation of the 21st century is often viewed as rebellious, social activists, in a world riddled with social, political, economic, and religious issues. This has led to a break in the perceived dichotomy between them and “others”, no longer inevitably referencing Catholics as the other. They view reality from a different point of view and once they reach an age where they can make their own decisions they go against the grain and stand up for the causes they believe in, even if they are not socially accepted. This is the situation that takes place in Northern Ireland with Protestantism and the rituals, for the new generation is no longer identifying as Protestant as strongly as previously, opting to not be in accordance with them, rather, they prefer to find ways that will allow the reduction of conflict in the land, leading to a more peaceful environment.

What is noticeable nowadays is that most of the families are mixed, in religious terms. It has become increasingly common to see marriages that consist of a Catholic partner and a Protestant partner, meaning that the children that are brought into the world from that relationship will not feel the compelling need to abide to a certain religion or political affiliation. The rise of these mixed families has allowed for this new group of citizens to feel more open to difference, able to comprehend different points of view and decide on their own accord what they wish to identify with. For many, identity is a very important matter, not to be taken lightly, it can be a source of unity as it is also of conflict as we have seen throughout. With this new generation, Protestant identity finds itself in a place where it must either adapt to the views of what will soon become a wider majority or maintain its ways, running the risk of intense outbursts of discontent.

For a person to adapt and be fluid s/he does not have to discard his/her belief system entirely. If the group wishes to continue and honour the accomplishments, they must be open to change and be accepting of the new norms that are introduced into society on a very regular basis. Collective identity is a concept that shifts, adapts, overcomes difficulties that may arise and challenge its continuity. However, it is up to those who participate in this collective identity to decide if they are able to accompany these alterations in order to make it even stronger than it was before. This incapacity to keep up with the changes that are presented is what leads many people to lose contact with the identity and seek to find another one to fill its place. The inability to adapt has been seen in the narrative of the Orange Order, as Ian King describes:

the Orange Order in many ways exists in largely the same form as it did in the late eighteenth century. This continuity is a crucial aspect of the Order’s rhetoric and ritual, as the organization has,

even into modernity, consistently preached the significance of its Williamite roots – despite the constantly-changing nature of the Irish socio-political environment. (2018, p. 3-4)

In other words, “loyalist identity appears to be circumscribed and unchanging” (McAuley, 2016, Loyalist Cultural Memories, para. 6) and such positioning comes about as one of the biggest problems that Protestantism faces, somehow taking the physical walls that already exist in certain towns and establishing their own invisible barriers that will impede the entry of others who wish to adopt change. The newer generations simply do not feel a strong connection to the beliefs defended. By not feeling close to the identity, this directly influences the attendance at the Orange Parade.

As the older generations die these younger generations do not feel inclined to give continuity to these traditions. What does that mean for the long-lasting tradition in Northern Ireland?

Chapter 3

PERSPECTIVES ON THE ORANGE PARADE

3.1. Introduction

Following the description of the current state of Protestant identity in relation to the Orange Parade in Northern Ireland as described by others, in order to better understand the unravelment of collective Protestant identity and complementary notions, it was believed interviews with an acknowledged authority on the subject and also with individuals of varying ages from the Protestant community should be conducted. This approach allows for original insight and gives the dissertation an important innovative aspect.

When researching for this project, a name that stood out was Susan McKay. Famously known for her writings on the Northern Irish Protestant community, Susan McKay has, even before the Troubles, dedicated her attention to studying the Protestant community in a country where she grew up. Her publications, vary from newspaper articles and documentaries to books and others. It is believed that it would be appropriate to use her most recent book, *Northern Protestants: On Shifting Grounds* (2021) as the basis for this chapter, as it presents the reader with an updated perspective on the state of Protestantism in Northern Ireland. It uses oral interviews as a way to collect various points of view from people who have experienced it first-hand. Therefore, this chapter consists of a descriptive background of Susan McKay and an analysis of her aforementioned book; followed by an oral interview with McKay who provides her first-hand opinions. Lastly, the opinions of people from different age groups in relation to the questions on hand (how they perceive the Orange Parade and how they feel towards Protestantism as a whole), obtained through semi-structured oral interviews, will be analysed.

3.2. Susan McKay's *Northern Protestants: On Shifting Grounds*

Susan McKay⁵, renowned author, journalist, and documentary filmmaker has become well-known for her writings, especially her most recent publications, that focus on Protestant identity. Her publications, show the changes that Protestants have experienced over the decades, providing first-hand statements from those who still believe themselves to be the victims in the sectarian fight that was prominent for so many years.

McKay was born in Derry, officially known as Londonderry, in 1957. Being raised in her city of birth, she moved to Dublin in 1975 to study in Trinity College, with “a determination never to come back to

⁵ More information on this author made available on the following website, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susan_McKay

the North” (A Century of Women, n.d., para.1). Yet, soon after, in 1981, she returned to Northern Ireland, more specifically Belfast, in order to write her PhD. Her enrolment in The Queen’s University of Belfast marked the real start of her involvement in social matters, as she became one of the founding members of the Rape Crisis Centre in the same city. From that point on she continued to work in a series of social projects, aiming to make a momentous change in her community and eventually affirmed herself as a full-time journalist in 1989. Her background and upbringings led her to be particularly focused on themes which she believed she could efficiently write about and bring attention to, these revolving around social issues, the North and feminism.

Her dedication to the causes she defended led her to immediate success, translated into several awards that allowed her to build her reputation in her fields. By the year 2000, only two years after becoming an established journalist, McKay released *Northern Protestants – An Unsettled People*, a book which includes a series of interviews carried out with a range of northern Protestants. This allowed her to obtain understanding on the reasons behind the actions of the people she was surrounded by in the first decades of her life. McKay herself has described the process of writing this book as “a study of the people I uneasily call my own” (2021. p. 12), yet it is viewed as a masterpiece, creating a window for outsiders to gain an insight into the life of Protestants during the last decades of the 20th century, a time which was marked by the Troubles and other intense conflicts.

As a writer for newspapers such as The Guardian, The New York Times, The Irish Times and The Observer, McKay did not allow herself to be restricted by any oppression she would encounter, and between the years 2000 and 2021 she continued to write and publish journalistic articles that reached a wider audience, expressing her views on important themes that are relevant not only to Northern Ireland but to the wider world, while also publishing her books which over the years became more and more directed towards the reality of existing in Northern Ireland. These included *Silent People and Other Stories* (2007), *Bear in Mind These Dead* (2008), *Unseen: Willie Doherty* (2013), *From Belfast to Basra, and Back Again* (2013), and, most recently and the basis for this segment of the dissertation, *Northern Protestants: On Shifting Ground* (2021).

This most recent publication is an updated version of *Northern Protestants: An Unsettled People* (2000), providing a new view on contemporary Northern Ireland, showing how the overall ambience has changed but also how the community has reacted to those changes. Following her well-tried methodology, McKay conducts various interviews with people who she considers have been neglected and deprived from having a voice within their own community, “their voices are often overlooked or dismissed, I have given space in this book to people who are outside of the unionist mainstream”

(McKay, 2021, p.6). She presents these people with a chance to, whether anonymously or not, share their opinions on the political, economic, and social state of their country, while also being able to reflect about what has taken place in their lives over the years and how this has influenced them and those close to them.

The book is divided into four separate sections according to the geographical area the interviews were carried out in, these sections being “Far North”, “Belfast”, “Down to Mid Ulster”, and “The Border”, translating into a total of ten chapters throughout 368 interesting and eye-opening pages. One must note that although the author chooses to give a voice to those considered outsiders in order for them to speak about their identity, this does not mean that every single one interviewed presented a positive outlook on the subject. The interviews obtained contain a variety of perspectives and opinions, contributing to the outstanding nature of this publication, as it allows the reader to understand that McKay is not wishing to push any sort of agenda or perpetuate a specific political or social belief, and, due to this, the reader is able to obtain his/her own point of view from it and decide for him/herself how she feels in relation to what they read. In the words of Barry White, former Belfast Telegraph journalist and columnist, “Susan McKay has dug deep into a damaged psyche... Instead of contributing yet another dusty treatise, she has interviewed both ordinary and extraordinary Protestants, who have been victims, perpetrators and observers of violence and let them speak for themselves” (2008, para. 4).

The reason why *Northern Protestants: On Shifting Grounds* assumes such importance in this dissertation is not restricted to the fact that it focuses on Protestant life and identity in modern-day Northern Ireland. From reading this book and analysing the different interviews that McKay carried out so well, it was possible to gain a sense that there was a difference of opinions between those who are younger and those who are older. McKay’s text allows us to understand that the generational gap already alluded to in this thesis, is real, influencing the continuation of Protestant identity and the degree of power that this group detains. By combining McKay’s interviews with the comments of the author herself, obtained in my personal interview with her (available in section **The participation in** the interviews was completely voluntary on behalf of all participants and anonymity was assured for those who desired such. With cases that involve politics and religion, especially with the troublesome past, it is completely understandable why some may desire to maintain their opinions anonymous, as sectarianism and stigma is still a reality when one talks of Northern Ireland.

3.5.1 Interview analysis), it is possible to obtain a better understanding of how deeply this gap can affect collective identity in the North. It is thereafter inevitable to think about the role that the

Orange Parade, the most important public manifestation of Protestantism in the country, will have over the coming years on identity formation. In essence, the relation between collective identity and these rituals constitutes a constant cycle that is endlessly repeated. Without these choreographed rituals, collective identity fractures.

Here is where the complexity of collective memory and everything it entails lies. There must not simply be a willingness to remember. A variety of other factors come into play in order to guarantee the existence of a community and their identity. Without the presence of one, everything is questioned. Participants must either adapt and find a way to overcome the obstacle in question or succumb to the problem and deal with the consequences of such. Through reading Susan McKay's book, we are able to gain a perception of this cyclical reality and how the Protestants are trying to adapt to the constant changes, whether these are social, economic, political, religious, or demographic that dominate the North.

Protestant identity is complex in its nature. Initially, to be Protestant meant to be a practitioner of the Protestant faith. Later, Protestantism became a lot more than strictly a religious affiliation, involving a much wider cause and becoming tied to political beliefs also. From this, the North of the Irish island was no longer solely moved by religious beliefs, it also became a case of political views and a numbers game, trying to gather the most votes possible for a particular party in order to assert dominance in a specific town and also in the country in general. The idea of being a Protestant has significantly changed, although the root of it will always be associated with religion. It no longer has the importance that it once had, as can be seen from the following quote present in McKay's book, uttered by Rebecca Crockett, one of her interviewees:

It's interesting in Northern Ireland, how when you're talking about being a Protestant or being a Catholic, it's not even about religion. If you're a Protestant and you haven't been to church for years and years and years, you're still a Protestant. That's all you'll ever be to anybody. (McKay, 2021, p.270)

The younger generation today has been put off by the constant political feuds in Northern Ireland. Many take action to try to guarantee co-existence and put the past where it belongs, in the past. In other words, these teenagers and young adults are attempting to wipe the slate clean and start from scratch, something which is very difficult to do according to Jarman (1997). Although collective identity is a concern of theirs, the trajectory that Protestantism has had on the community involved and others has led these young minds to rethink their positioning and be apologists for a complete social reform.

Besides all factors mentioned prior, this existing gap between generations is also perpetuated due to the antagonistic political beliefs of the parties. As Sarah Laverty mentioned when interviewed by McKay,

“people are bored of Green and Orange politics. They really, really are. My generation is bored of it” (ibid., p.20). They reduce their existence to disputing rather than focusing on important non-sectarian matters. This is partially, due to the reduction in social influence and power of the Orange Order.

At one point in time, it was certain that the Order was the supreme organisation, the embodiment of Protestantism and the group which sought out to guarantee the fulfilment of Protestant wishes. “Ellen”, (pseudonym), explains to McKay, “[the Orange Order] has supposedly held Northern Ireland together through the Troubles. The Backbone of the whole Protestant community.” (ibid., p.265). However, the view has completely shifted nowadays. James says, “The Orange Order had lost all sense of direction. It had no idea how to look after the future of the Protestant community. It could not be trusted” (ibid., p.34), a quote in reference to the role of the Order in the situation that took place in Drumcree in the last years of the 1990s. From that point the feelings conveyed towards the order have always been divided, however they have continued to be the organisation that assumes the role of organising key events throughout the year.

What is clear nowadays is that those younger ones who are strongly involved in the Orange Order and subsequent Protestantism are those who were either brought up in a solely Protestant family or those who have their father or grandfather as participants in the organisation. These individuals find a way to become involved somehow, bringing into play the idea of following in their father’s footsteps, paying off a debt of some sort, “My wee brother and my granda and everybody in my family is involved in some way. It promotes our culture and identity.” (ibid., p.167), quote taken from the interview titled “You Connect” that registers the opinion of Molly Legget, a 20-year-old. Although she feels a strong connection to this order due to her family past, she is able to recognise that that is not the case for the majority, “I feel a very strong connection to the Orange Order (...) A lot of younger people feel disillusioned with the Orange Order and they do think that it’s sort of for older people” (Id. ibid).

This is what fortifies Protestant identity individuals who still find themselves in extremely Protestant families with a strong Protestant past associated to it, who therefore carry it on in the name of their family. Without this diminishing number of people, the majority simply does not feel the need to manifest themselves as either Catholic or Protestant. The times during which doing so was considered somewhat of an obligation have clearly changed.

It is important to note that even those who are younger and who have committed to the Order and the Protestant identity, still do not feel a strong enough connection to devote their entire lives to the cause like others, older individuals, have done for so many years, as John Greer explains in yet another McKay interview, “The younger members only really turn up on the Twelfth of July” (ibid., p. 168). This

shows that there is an extremely substantial risk for manifestation of Protestant identity in Northern Ireland to be reduced and, at some point in the future, vanish completely. This would have a significant impact in political and religious terms in the North, as Protestants have been present since the 17th century in significant numbers. For that to be reduced to barely nothing would shift the management of the land entirely. The imbalance in the demographic structure in Protestantism is more evident now than ever before,

When the state was founded, Protestants outnumbered Catholics by a ratio of about two to one, and ruthlessly discriminatory systems were in place to maintain control. A hundred years later, almost half of the population is Catholic, there are fewer Protestant than Catholic schoolchildren, and the only cohort of the population in which Protestants are in a significant majority is the over-sixties. (ibid., p.13)

3.3. Protestant identity markers

It was the “over-sixties” who filled the towns with identity markers that still remain to this day. Northern Ireland is famously known for its eye-grabbing identity markers that were placed in certain locales at contrasting times. Its towns, particularly those that affirm themselves as strictly Protestant/loyalists, count on British flags placed on streetlights or houses, kerbs of the pavement painted in red, white, and blue, and also colourfully painted murals that have become famous on a worldwide level⁶. These consist in large works of art painted on fences, walls and sides of buildings spread throughout different points of a town. Most of these, located in strategic cities such as Belfast and Derry, have clear political or religious themes, referring to key events such as the Troubles, the 1981 Irish Hunger Strike and the Battle of Boyne. The rise of these was during the end of the 20th century, where common people, those who were suffering the most with the surrounding environment, took to the streets and used the walls as their canvas so that they would be able to express their political and religious beliefs. The end of the 20th century was riddled with knife-cutting tension and big rifts between communities, something that is clearly perceivable when analysing these murals.

What at one stage were simple walls and fences that made up the landscape of a town, then became territorial markers and political propaganda, but also a clear manifestation of who each community was at that point in time, what they believed in, for they “have long utilised visual displays to convey their distinct and specific understandings of a shared history” (Jarman, 1997, p. 14). Even if we consider the fact that each mural was created by a restricted group of people, the feelings that were existing at that time allowed these murals to become something that people looked at and felt a connection to, as if they were seeing what they were thinking and therefore they felt seen and heard, no

⁶ More information on the murals and virtual tour available on the following website, <https://www.virtualbelfastmuraltour.com/>

longer insignificant.

The current political climate is in no way comparable to that of the 1960s up until the early 2000s. Sectarianism is still a reality in Ulster, leading to occasional violence and protests due to perceived inequalities between groups. With the lowering of tensions, the murals still stand with the original paintings and messages, albeit many in Belfast are now in a specially designated museum. The effect of these murals was clearly two-folded. On the one hand, they allowed communities to feel connected but on the other hand they were also fuellers of sectarianism and segregation. Nowadays, the murals are directed towards inclusion rather than animosity and division.

One may ask how these murals and the Orange Parade relate to one another. Even though they are different mediums, the former being several paintings and the later a parade, the reality is they are more similar than one may initially think. All over the towns and cities it is possible to find murals that refer to the Battle of Boyne in 1690, King William of Orange and Orangeism in general (representations of the Orange Order and the lodges). The intention behind them is clearly to remind individuals of their past, of the reasons why they are able to be who they are, while also educating others who might not have any knowledge on the subject. The nature of these works of art allows them to be the object of several interpretations, given that art is subjective and the meaning that each person obtains from it can vary accordingly. However, these are constructed in a way to transmit a very particular message, such as Neil Jarman describes in his book *Material Conflicts: Parades and Visual Displays in Northern Ireland* (1997), “while denotation and connotation expose the image to multiple interpretations, the intended meaning is often directed or focused through the use of words” (p. 15). These, alongside the Twelfth of July parade, function as identity markers, things that people can always resort to if they feel as if they need a reminder of who they are, *lieux* or events they can engage with and from them originate memories and meaning.

In spite of the fact that they have similar goals and aspects that they share in common, murals are present all year round and anyone can visit them at any point in the day or the year, being almost guaranteed that if they go to a certain street, they will find a specific mural that portrays what they wish to visualise, whereas the Orange Parade only comes about once a year. This can influence the impact that each medium has, and one can argue that because the murals are always present, people are most likely to take them for granted and not interact with them often, whereas with the parade, the importance that it holds and the spectacle that it originates, leads people to appreciate it more. Furthermore, the choreographed ritual allows individuals that identify with it to directly interact and be involved, therefore creating something much more meaningful and memorable.

One may wonder what measures are being adopted on behalf of those who remain “faithful” in order to convert the decreasing tendency of participation in the Orange Parade. When analysing the means through which the Order and other relevant organisations try to gain attention and involvement of new participants while also trying to maintain the interest and commitment of the ones who are already a part of it, there were no new measures noted. The rituals, the parades and symbols that have been in place for endless decades continue to be the resource used by the fraternities. The idea that remains is that if it has worked up until that point, in solidifying identity, then it will continue to do so.

Now more than ever, people are opting to neither identify predominantly as Catholic or Protestant, regardless of their political or religious affiliation. Over time the image of Protestantism has been damaged to such an extent, alongside the lessening of the power that the Orange Order has in society, that people no longer desire to place themselves into such a specific box. For them, Northern Ireland should no longer be a country filled with binaries that only lead to further problems, rather, it should be focused on establishing a solid collective identity which incorporates everyone regardless of their skin colour, their sexual orientation, their religious affiliation, and political party they vote for. Everyone should be able to state that they are proud of who they are, of their community and its actions, and at this moment in time, this is not the case for Protestantism. Through McKay’s book one is left with the impression that the means through which the Orange Order are attempting to gain participants is not, in its entirety, genuine. Kyle, interviewee, mentions that “People have been stirring the pot again, and young people are being manipulated. (...) It just made me overwhelmingly sad.” (McKay, 2021, p. 100). He means manipulation in order to influence people, especially younger individuals who are more easily manipulated, to participate in protests that may arise in opposition to a series of matters, whether it be directly related to Catholics, politics or other impactful social matters, whether direct or indirectly. This leads to something most people wish to avoid, which is violence, as interviewee DUP councillor Dale Pankhurst mentions “It’s incredibly sad that we’re twenty-one years after peace supposedly come to this country, and yet we have thirteen and fourteen-year-olds who were born years after the Troubles ended, and they’re engaging in violence” (ibid., p.105). This only reinitiates the cycle that was experienced in the 20th century and that had reduced in most recent years. By doing this, Protestants are not guaranteeing the transmission of identity, they are only permitting the growth of segregation and brutality that the majority does not wish to be associated to. This is what drives the younger ones away from ever identifying, even though they might relate to the roots of the identity, “For some people who lived through the darkest days, what happened is so awful they will never fully heal. For my generation it is about acknowledging that two wrongs don’t make a right and looking forward” (ibid., p.261), words

gathered from the interview carried out with young DUP politician Debbie Erskine.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to identify only partly. One cannot state that she is only 25% Protestant. People either believe that you must be completely in or completely out with the cause. The mentality moving forward is one of applying a solid reform when it comes to identity in Northern Ireland in hopes that it will resolve all the other problems implied by it, however this will never be an easy accomplishment, for as “[t]empers still flare too readily. Northern Ireland is now a place in which, as Jean Bleakney put it, the ground is shifting” (ibid., p.297).

The feeling of hopelessness has led many to resort to a solution that has become easier and easier with the development of the world. Young people are actively choosing to leave Northern Ireland in hopes of finding a place to reside, one that provides a better environment in which to live. In 2019, over 17,000 students opted to leave their place of residence and move to Britain with academic intentions. Most students opt to study during their university years away from their family home whether as a way to live new experiences away from the constraints of their family or simply because the opportunities are better in another city or country. The most worrying figure in the study conducted by The Irish Times is that from those 17,000, over two thirds expressed that they had no desire of returning, decisions fuelled by the ongoing political and economic climate experienced in the North,

Younger people in Northern Ireland were ‘living in a different world’ he [Kenny McFarland] said, and they had the right to thrive in it without being held back by old divisions, rigid positions and self-defeating confrontationalism. Sarah Lavery spoke about finding it exhausting to feel the perpetual drag backwards when you wanted to look to the future. (McKay, 2021, p.302)

This is the reality that they are so desperately attempting to fight against in order to live in a society that provides equal opportunities to people regardless of religion, something which was not the case for a long time, leading Protestants to, once again, feel as if they were the victims of a biased government.

3.4. Fragmented Protestant Identity

All the aforementioned changes have resulted in the progressive fragmentation of Protestant identity. What frightens most of the population today is the constant underlying tension present ever since the Troubles ended. Even if there were a common deal to remove use of weapons and halt the killings during the 90s, there is still a wide sense that at any given time, the smallest of actions can lead to a relighting of brutality and hostility across the North. Worries arose especially following two significant events: Brexit and the most recent general elections. Both of these carried hard repercussions affected the Protestants, economically and politically, but most importantly placed their collective identity under threat.

Firstly, Brexit has been the cause of discontent ever since its announcement by Prime Minister David Cameron in 2016. Following the results of the referendum, the majority of the United Kingdom decided to leave the European Union. This exit meant that they would no longer benefit from the European Union Single Market and the Customs Union, in other words, the free movement of people and goods across the UK/EU border would be hindered significantly. One of the main stumbling blocks that slowed down the exit process of the United Kingdom concerned Northern Ireland. Although Brexit implied Ulster would also exit the European Union, like England, Wales and Scotland, this matter was a thorny issue due to the fact that Northern Ireland borders a country that is still a member of the EU, the Republic of Ireland.

Negotiators of the Brexit deal were adamant that there would have to be some sort of border placed between the countries of the Irish island - in order to guarantee that there would be control of the goods that were entering the land, imported from Great Britain. The re-establishment of a hard border, consisting of 499 kilometres of fortified European Union and several checkpoints was one of the first suggestions placed on the table. However, it was immediately rejected in order to avoid reverting back to the end of the 20th century, a time which there was a hard border dividing the countries which eventually became the catalyser of three decades of sectarian violence. In an attempt to reach a consensus, parties agreed to the Northern Ireland Protocol in 2019 with effect at the start of 2021. This protocol consists of a specific Brexit deal applied to Northern Ireland as a way of preventing the return of a hard land border.

Tensions and discontent on behalf of Protestants/Unionists/Loyalists arose significantly, translating into several protests and campaigns against the protocol, especially because it meant that there was to be a border established in the Irish Sea. This meant that Northern Ireland would become separated from the United Kingdom in a sense, as check points on goods travelling between Great Britain and Northern Ireland would be set in place. The proposition of this protocol was not well received by Northern Ireland residents, as not only did it have an influence on the goods that would be received from that point forward, it also left Unionists with a sense of disconnect from the United Kingdom and fearing for the possibility of a united Ireland in the forthcoming future.

This proposed border, although not physically breaking apart the relationship between Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom, clearly caused a dent in the relationship between them. Unionists felt as if they had become a second thought, taken advantage off with less Britishness, becoming metaphorically distanced from the members of their group. Furthermore, it was also mentioned that such a border would facilitate the process of establishing a united Ireland, but for many unionists felt

the protocol “made a hefty concession to nationalists orchestrating a slow slide to a united Ireland and created a border in the Irish sea” (News Wires, 2021, para.8), which is something they never desired, far from it.

These decisions that constantly go against the initial desires of Unionists, to leave the European Union, (only 34% of them voted to remain, Ganiel, 2020, p.4), causes stress on the relationship between members of the same community but also with the “others”.

Despite the fact that the negotiations between the Irish Government and the European Union have always intended to preserve the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, by placing Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist identity under threat, people felt the need to defend themselves as a collective and, therefore, the divide between communities was enhanced.

Times of identity strain lead many communities to find ways in which they can show group solidarity. Forms of expression vary, but the way that some members of these communities tend to retaliate to such threats and risks is typically through brawling riots, involving weapons and requiring the intervention of police forces, affecting the visual of towns but also the economy. For other Northern Ireland Protestants, in these contexts, parades act as a way of fighting back without resorting to such violence. It is a tried and tested method for not only celebrating the past but also transmitting a message, whether it is of content or discontent, in the present. Parading “is not exclusively a refusal to accept social change but also a practice to ensure the continuity of identity, in a way where people are able to recognize the past and remember in order to belong” (McQuaid, 2017, p. 32). For them it is used as a way to reset, re-establish order and power, a time during which they are in total control of their identity and feel as if they are one once again.

In 2021, the marching season occurred at a time of growing division and the parades therefore were not only a way to celebrate the past, but also involved the present, “the tensions growing over changes that Brexit has wrought in the region are casting the parades in a new light.” (Specia, 2021, para.3).

Secondly, the results deriving from the most recent 2022 general elections brought new concerns for people wishing to live in peace, mainly due to the drastic changes that these outcomes implied.

As has been mentioned, the idea of Protestantism is not solely connected to religious affiliation anymore. Although most of those who identify as Protestant do practice its religion, the reality is that Protestantism has changed over time. For a considerable amount of time, Protestant has been associated with Unionist, desire for Ulster to remain a part of the United Kingdom, with Loyalist, loyalty to the British crown. Therefore, it is easy to comprehend the deterioration of collective identity through the analysis of political election outcomes, as they give insight into what different groups, varying in age,

gender, sexuality, and background, are hoping to see as their future.

For Northern Ireland, the May 2022 elections were considered to be the most important ones in a generation. Following the official establishment of the North as independent from the Republic of Ireland but therefore dependent on the United Kingdom in 1921 there was the necessity to open a new consultative forum, an Assembly. With the clear dominance of Protestants in the land, the first Assembly to take place had a strong Unionist majority. This allowed Protestants to feel some sense of security. As to be expected, Catholics/Nationalists did not react well to the dominance of Unionism in the Assembly, claiming to be victims of “discrimination and unfair treatment by the Protestant-controlled government and police forces” (Roos, 2021), and continuously attempted to put an end to this type of leadership and aimed to impose a Nationalist rule. The disagreements in relation to political leadership, alongside the divergences that dominated the relationship between these two main groups eventually exploded into three decades of extreme sectarian violence, known as the Troubles. Over the course of 30 years, over 30000 people were wounded and over 3500 were killed.

Ultimately, this civil strife was ended following the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, between the Irish and British government, alongside some of the Northern Irish parties, both Nationalist and Unionist. Only four months after the agreement, the IRA, Irish Republican Army, which had aided Catholics throughout the Troubles, an ethno-nationalist conflict with characteristics very similar to that of a civil war, carried out what is described as a terrorist attack, consisting in concealing a deadly bomb in a car and causing it to explode in the middle of the street, resulting in several deaths and injuries in the town of Omagh, county Tyrone. This IRA attack was seen as one of the worst atrocities of the Troubles. This horrific incident happened due to the discontent that some members of the IRA felt after the Good Friday Agreement was signed and it was then expected that the issue in the North, in regard to the border that was dividing Ireland, were to be resolved through the work of their political representatives, (Sinn Féin in the case of the Catholics/Nationalists).

In May, every household in the North received a copy of the agreement and were to vote in a referendum that aimed to decide if it were to be applied or not. With a staggering 71% of the votes in favour, from a total turnout of 82% of registered voters, the agreement was adopted shortly after and, due to this, Northern Ireland was to be led by a power-shared Assembly. By adopting this measure, which counted on the two major parties sharing the power and duties that came with governing, it was believed that both groups would work together and there would be the opening of communications

between the countries that were separated by a physical border.⁷

Up until 2021, the Democratic Unionist Party, initially founded in 1971 by Ian Paisley during the Troubles and also considered to be an evolution of the Protestant Unionist Party which preceded it, was always voted to be the biggest political party in the North, therefore guaranteeing most of the seats in the Assembly for the Unionist politicians. However, the May 2022 elections have proven to be the most important ones in a generation for an incredibly significant reason. For the first time in history, ever since the creation of the country in reference to, the Nationalist party, Sinn Féin, has come out as victorious guaranteeing a total of 27 seats in parliament whereas the DUP obtained 25. This victory for Sinn Féin, party which has governed alongside the DUP for over 24 years but also as the second biggest party, has dramatically altered the political landscape in Northern Ireland and will definitely open doors for a change the many Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist are vigorously against.

Protestants are now facing what for many of their ancestors would, without a doubt, have been their biggest nightmare - having to live under a nationalist rule. For Catholics, in contrast, this is a time of celebration, as Diarmaid Ferriter, professor of modern Irish history at University College Dublin stated in a New York Times Newspaper article, “[f]or nationalists who have lived in Northern Ireland for decades, to see Sinn Fein as the largest party is an emotional moment” (Landler, 2022, para. 5).

Not all adolescents and young adults are refuting Protestantism. There is still a percentage of people who follow in the footsteps of their predecessors and march alongside them, whether they physically or in spirit. Most of these are surrounded by realities such as peace walls, parades on behalf of Orange Orders, non-integrated schools, businesses, and work environments. That is a part of their identity, living with the consequences of the war rather than having to experience it directly. Many are the ones who comprehend the past of their ancestors entirely and strongly connect to such, feeling as if it is now their turn to take on the role that was previously taken by their relatives. This is the dilemma though, they are living within a post-war period, that “is rife with inequalities” (McKay, 2021, p.111). The idea of the Peace Agreement and therefore maintenance of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom led many to believe in change. After 24 years, however, the population is largely defeated and disappointed, living in a place that has not changed much in almost a quarter of a century. This lack of action has significantly impacted those who seek out economic stability and always wishes to live out their dreams in the Northern Ireland. The leaders are simply not providing the means through which

⁷ Although dissolved at the time of writing, Northern Ireland has always counted on a power-shared governing body. Power-shared governing implies that “in any government there must be representatives from both the nationalist community – who favour the unity with the Republic of Ireland – and unionists, who want Northern Ireland to remain part of the UK.” (BBC News, 2022, para. 5).

this can be obtained and there is even this generalized sense that ever since the Peace Agreement (Good Friday Agreement) of 1998, the North has become a secondary part of the United Kingdom. Once again, lack of faith in their country inevitably has led to the same feeling towards their identity, feelings which rely mainly within those who fall into the demographic known as Generation Y, or Millennials, those born between the years of 1981 and 1994, who are “pessimistic about the social order they are inheriting” (Clarke, 2014, para. 10).

The identity of Protestantism has been marked by so many events, most of which are dominated by violence; however, these teenagers and young adults have no direct correlation to it in any sense. When speaking of what Protestantism is or means, many speak of the Battle of Boyne, the Troubles, the parliamentarians, Civil Rights protests, yet today’s generation has no recollection of such occurrences, and everything that they have envisage is strictly based on oral stories and the murals and pictures they seen. Although collective memory does not strictly imply the direct participation in such events that are determinant in consolidation of identity, it is undeniable that they are advantageous. For that reason, the parents and grandparents of today’s teenagers feel such a fervent desire to honour their identity, to fight against the “others”. For the young, the only means through which they are able to connect with the past that they have inherited is through the visualization in rituals such as the parades during the marching season, namely the Orange Parade.

Especially for the generations which find themselves outside the time span on which a set of collective memories are focused (100 years), it is important to establish a coherent narrative that is easily transmitted. Narratives are extremely common when one talks about memory. Erll is adamant in her publication *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (2008) that narratives help us remember real events in an easier manner, so much so that those who are able to construct these short stories become active shapers in the way that things are remembered.

The younger generations base their identity surrounding narratives which are, in turn, based on real events, not fiction. Although Astrid Erll speaks of narratives directly correlated to literary works, here we must understand that we are speaking of mostly oral narratives, not written down in any specific place. Social developments and the passage of time inevitably influences what is remembered and what is forgotten, even if not on purpose.

Oral narratives take individual and collective memories and share them with a wider audience, and through this they are able to “shape the meanings that they give to their own lives and to their communities” (Golden, 1997, p. 137) and for loyalists, “learned memory, as opposed to actual

experienced memory, plays an important role in motivating and mobilizing” (McAuley, 2016, Shared loyalist memory, para. 6). However, in most recent years, learned memory does not seem to detain the same intensity as it once did for several reasons that have already been exposed. The current political and social climate since the end of the Troubles does not allow for people to stick to their roots to the same extent as expected.

In its own sense, the Orange Parade also creates its own unique narratives that are shared between those that march and also with those that are viewing. What seems to be causing people to refrain from attending is the high level of politicized narratives that dominate most of the Orange Parade, no longer being used to celebrating the past that they are so proud of, instead involving Orange politics and its narratives as a means to influence the masses. One of the most recent examples of this took place during the 2022 Orange Parade in Newry, when Rev Mervyn Gibson took the stage and delivered what is described as a “hard-hitting Twelfth of July speech” (The Newsroom, 2022, para. 1). Aimed at the heads of government, both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, the senior Orangeman took advantage of the Orange celebration, knowing fully about the number of people that would come across his speech, to not only criticise but also to appeal to those in power to aid Unionist during these troublesome times, touching upon themes such as: rebuilding relationships between nations and communities, the Northern Ireland Protocol and Irish unification. In his own words,

The consequences of allowing the protocol to remain would decimate the already severely damaged Belfast Agreement – and where would that leave us? Michael Martin – you decide. Do you want to move forward and rebuild relationships, or take us back to a time of cross-border boycotts and tensions? An Irish cold war of your making.

In this climate more than ever before, nationalists are constantly calling for conversations about our place in a new Ireland. Make no mistake, the only outcome they want from their so-called conversations is full political unification. Dream on. (ibid., para. 9-11)

While also directing his words towards his “own people”, demanding an end to the “the demonising and dehumanising of the Orange family” (ibid., para. 17), it is notable that the narratives that dominate the celebration of the Twelfth of July are replenished by a political tone, now more than ever, taking into account the instability of the community in question. By employing the use of rhetoric techniques, mainly *ethos*, members of the Orange Order, primarily those who occupy higher positions in the hierarchical structure, are faced with several moments during the year, as the marching season carries on throughout five months, in which they can speak to a much wider audience that which fills the streets to view the parades.

Disconnect arises here, propelled by the continuous drift between the main elements that make up Orangeism, the political and religious organisations. Following the quote by Sarah Lavery in Susan

McKay's interviews, stating that younger people are simply tired of Orange and Green politics, it is to be understood that they simply do not rely on the campaigns of the parties in order to provide what they seek, which is the end of the division, working towards measures that will allow this communal interaction between the "self" and the "other". The politicization of collective identity and collective memories in this case has undoubtedly led to the point where the younger generation finds themselves, by not being able to connect to the Orange parties, in a situation where they disconnect with the identity that is so strictly associated to it.

Returning to results of the 2022 general elections, there was concern they would eventually lead to a flare up in significant violence, therefore putting an end to the peace accord after 30 years. It is important to highlight that a Nationalist victory does not directly infer that Nationalism was able to obtain significantly more votes in comparison to previous years. On the contrary, Sein Féin gathered the same number of seats as they did in 2017, year of the last elections for the Northern Ireland Assembly. The big alteration is the decrease of number of seats on behalf of the DUP, losing a total of three, but also the big rise on behalf of the Alliance Party, a centralist entity, which was able to gain a further nine seats in contrast to 2017, obtaining a total of 17. This was a significant number not only in comparison to the big political parties in this country, Furthermore, another extremely relevant and interesting statistic that was gathered from these elections reflect, once more, the growing disconnection for the DUP, as they lost approximately 6,7% of their first preference vote, whereas the other two political parties mentioned in this section noted an increase in first preference vote (BBC News, 2022).

From these results it is possible to note two main aspects in regard to Protestant/Unionist identity: firstly, recognition of the discontent and attack felt to be made on their Protestant identity, considering that "Orangeism remains the quintessential expression of Protestant identity" (Finlay & McDonnell, 2003, p.24) the DUP being a part of that Orangeism, even if not directly; secondly, and most importantly, this defeat, even if only by two seats, shows the decrease in power that Protestantism is facing. This result will significantly impact the course of Protestant identity over the following years, weakening it. If Protestant identity tends to become less and less important in the community, then the rituals and other important manifestations of culture, tradition and identity will consequently suffer whether in regard to the people who turnout to watch them, the number of those who participate in them or, most drastically, those who pay attention to the performances.

The results are a clear reflection of the existing social environment experienced by Protestants and Protestantism as a whole. As the Orange parties, referring to those who have a clear incline towards Unionistic beliefs, affirm themselves as a component of Orangeism, the outcomes that arise from each

electoral period will therefore influence the other constituent elements of Orangeism. Attention must be directed to how these results have direct influence on the power attributed to the Orange Order, the most important organisation for Protestantism. The DUP has become the means through which the Orange Order is able to directly convey its desires and complaints regarding the most varied topics.

The relationship established between these two organs of society means that, for as long as the Unionist party is able to maintain its superiority in numbers, the outcome for matters concerning the Order will most likely be favourable in the majority of cases. This clearly influences the creation of new collective memories and consolidation of prior ones, as by having the support of their faction, the means through which they could traditionally establish their collective memories as a group was made an easier process altogether. Additionally, the relationship between this social fraternity and a political entity, which assumes an important role in the maintenance of occurrence of rituals, has therefore led to the realization that the memories that are established during moments of celebration end up being riddled with political affiliation even if inadvertently, as the idea of remembrance and celebration in this land has become highly politicized with time (McAuley, 2016, Shared loyalist memory). Whether one desires to or not, the memory surrounding the Orange Parade has inevitably become a political object, a form that politicians can make use of in order to pull at the heartstrings of those who are so strongly connected to it and, via this, gain the support of the majority. Once again, following the train of thought developed up until this point, this rhetoric on behalf of politicians is most likely to influence the minds of the older individuals instead of younger people, for these parades have left “a deep imprint on those who experience them” (Becker, 2005, p.118). With every electoral campaign, it is only natural for questions of the past to arise, causing suffering and emotional distress.

The politicization of memories implies that, with every election, Northern Irish communities are reminded of the struggles of the past, almost as if their scars they believed to have been healed for some time are once again opened up. In more simple terms, it “aims to control the meanings, to limit and contain what past events are supposed to mean, to identify the heroes to be followed and the villains to be rejected or forgotten” (Ribeiro, 2013, p.226). The historical past of these groups, the hardships they faced and the obstacles they had to overcome, are frequently brought to light with political campaigns. Politicians purposely use discreet rhetoric methods which cause people to recall, recognize and reflect on collective memories which are placed somewhere in the past and are intricately connected to those memories established in the present and it is through this that they aim to bring individuals together. With regard to the unsettling past between the communities, the outcomes that may derive from such projections of political policies and additional speeches directly spoken to

“their” people, may vary according to the level of tension felt between the two at given time.

The meaning behind the decrease in percentage of votes for the DUP can easily be examined through the concepts involved in cultural memory studies. Elections are a time that demand unity if a certain party wishes to succeed. The DUP noted a significant reduction in the number of votes provided that the younger people, those who are of age to vote, who simply no longer identify with the ideals defended. Not only has it been proven that the number of Protestants has decreased over the years, those who would be in a scenario where they could manifest themselves as such often restrain from doing so, regardless of the parades that take place or the murals that are painted throughout the towns. Some believe that it is these same objects of traditional expression that are putting the three fold identity, this is Protestant/unionist/loyalist, into question here, “[c]oncern that loyalism is under coherent psychological, cultural and political attack has manifested in recent times directly around the issue of Orange Order parades” (McAuley, 2016, Narrative and Memory, para. 8). We can therefore determine that the relationship between politics and the Order is not merely established for communication purposes, for they coexist mutually within Orangeism and have an influence on each other due to that proximity.

The young adults of today simply do not feel as emotionally connected as their ancestors felt in order to fight for the reversion of what is happening. For them, today's life has other concerns that should be paid bigger attention. The collective memories that encouraged the continuation of a group that was so determined to obtain their independence and not be submitted to change who they are is slowly becoming outdated. The regeneration that is taking place and will continue to do so regardless of any efforts made, as one cannot control the passage of time, will eventually lead to the slow fading of Protestantism in Northern Ireland, if the tendency continues to maintain itself as it is over the coming years.

This change in political landscape does not come as a big surprise. Through Susan McKay's publication one would almost predict the affirmation of Sinn Féin in the close future, for in the introduction one is immediately faced with the notion that in 2017, the results that derived from the elections held for the Assembly showed that the DUP only gathered 1,168 votes more than Sinn Féin. Along the following pages there are several opinions in regard to the parties that take on a leading role in the Assembly, some positive, others negative, some of which can be seen as a cry for meaningful change that is overdue by several years. With every significant event that one mentions in their interviews, shortly after the reader is met with the political climate of the time, how politicians reacted and how they determined the outcomes of such situations.

Following these elections, which took place during the month of May 2022, one wonders about the circumstances surrounding the Orange Parade that took place only two months afterwards. How deeply was this ritual affected by it? The overall image of Protestantism was significantly impaired from the outcomes observed, and the role of entities such as the Orange Order and other organisations significant in Protestant identity therefore assume a very heavy burden as they are now obliged to find a way that will restore the Protestant image. Maintaining faithful to their routes, the biggest and most significant way that they are able to re-establish faith in their community is through the parading traditions, which have “long been important carriers of politico-cultural identities and collective memories” (McQuaid, 2017, p.1). The outcomes that were to come from the parade this year would send a very strong message to every single individual that may come across the occurrence of such, it is perhaps viewed as the most important parade since the partition of Ireland.

The Orange Parade not only exists as a manifestation of the views of the wider collective, but it also influences the way that the individual perceives themselves. It may be hard to understand this ideology at first, because the day is described as a joyful event, full of colour, fun and an authentic celebration, but when one focuses deeply on the effect that it has on people that have attended it in person, have watched it on the television via the broadcasting channels that have divulged the event, or have simply seen a picture online through social media, public performances such as the Orange Parade has a much bigger impact for those who are still invested in Protestantism, leading them to reflect on the past, think about their present and figure out what they wish for the future within this collective. These parades embody the real meaning behind memory and identity, it is not so much the need to correctly remember every detail of the past, rather, it consists of continuous assimilation, observation, interaction and interpretation with the end goal of eventually conveying a specific point of view, regardless of the setting someone may find themselves in (Cabecinhas & Abadia, 2013).

Now more than ever, the attention is directed towards the actions of the Protestants/Loyalists/Unionists. Some expect history to repeat itself, referring to something similar to the Troubles but not with the same extent of violence. It is for this reason that it is so important to communicate with the younger generation, to obtain their insight and understand where they are coming from, why they are becoming the generation that is so different from the past and what that means to them.

3.5. Interviews

To investigate the changes in Protestant collective identity in various age groups, interviews were carried out with the author Susan McKay and with several individuals during the months of July and August 2022 (consult **Appendix II & Appendix III** for interview questions). The opportunity to ascertain contemporary opinions was deemed to be important in light of the weight that age was deemed to play regarding the formation of Protestant collective identity, past and present.

The Oral History Association defines oral history as “gathering, preserving and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events” (n.d, para.1). This dissertation contributes to the oral history of the Protestant Northern Irish community through analysis of the responses to the questionnaires, which were of a semi-structured nature, with open-ended questions, allowing opinions to be expressed freely. Two different questionnaires with different type of questions were used as the objectives for each of them were differing. On the one hand, in an attempt to complement the material presented from Susan McKay’s book, the first interview was carried out with the author in question, seeking a better understanding of the situation in Northern Ireland, while also gathering her personal opinion on matters associated to generational gaps, Protestant identity and the Orange Parade. Although her book served as a big basis for the interview, it was believed that the interview itself would produce additional useful material. The second interviews consisted of conversations that were carried out with individuals of different age groups that reside in Northern Ireland and have been surrounded by manifestations of religious identity. The goal was to gather their opinions and understand how they felt in regard to Protestant identity as a whole and the role that the parade has had and currently has on their lives. Thus, an extremely personal point of view was obtained, originating from individuals that have, or continue to, experience Protestant life on a regular basis.

Participants were recruited through contacting different organisations and social groups in Northern Ireland via electronic messages in an attempt to gather responses from people who have either been brought up in a Protestant setting or have found themselves identifying with this group from all different age groups. Although most organisations did not respond to the request, through the contact established with Susan McKay it was possible to establish contact with a member of the Belfast University Student Union and, from there, encounter people from all age groups, who manifested themselves as open and available to participate. It is important to highlight that the number of participants in these interviews is considered to be extremely reduced, six people in total, two in the older age group and four in the younger one. However, it is still possible to obtain a conclusion from here. Through their responses it is possible to have a better insight into the future of Protestantism and

also understand where they are coming from, how their past influences them today and what they do with the information that has been a part of their lives for such a considerable amount of time.

The participation in the interviews was completely voluntary on behalf of all participants and anonymity was assured for those who desired such. With cases that involve politics and religion, especially with the troublesome past, it is completely understandable why some may desire to maintain their opinions anonymous, as sectarianism and stigma is still a reality when one talks of Northern Ireland.

3.5.1 Interview analysis

As aforementioned, Susan McKay has become a well-known name in the field of Northern Ireland Protestantism. Her views have not only been the object of praise but also criticism. Through her publications *Northern Protestants: An Unsettled People* and *Northern Protestants: On Shifting Ground*, it is undeniable that the insight that she detains on Protestantism in Northern Ireland is considerable, and pertinent for this dissertation.

As can be seen in Appendix II, the questionnaire was divided into three complimentary sections. Susan McKay was vocal in her belief that collective identity in Northern Ireland varies considerably, not only in geographical terms, something which has been denoted when analysing results of elections, for example, but also between people from different social and occupational backgrounds, and, most importantly for this dissertation, generations. She regards collective identity in Northern Ireland as something rather hard to describe

I think it is complicated in a divided society to talk about collective identity. There isn't a huge allegiance to some notion of a collective identity within Northern Ireland because you've got a section of the community that is Irish, a section of the community that is British, and you have a section of the community who don't really care whether they're defined as Irish or British or both and some of those people choose to call themselves Northern Irish. So there isn't really a notion of a collective identity as such. Within the Unionist community there probably is still a notion of a Unionist identity but it's changing a lot and a lot of younger people aren't necessarily [pause] particularly strong in their view about their Unionism. (...). (2022)

The author mentioned the divergences between these generations, complementing the arguments portrayed throughout this dissertation. Young people living in Northern Ireland nowadays have no recollection of what the Troubles were and the impact that it had in people's lives, everything that they know of it originates from the stories told by ancestors or information they have been thought or have found in sources of media. Although there has been a growing decrease of Protestant manifestation over the last years, the younger generation particularly straying away from identifying strongly with the ideals defended, it is important to highlight that the reasons behind such are multifaceted, varying from

personal reasons, particular to each individual, but also some of which lying within the fact that there is such a big disconnect from key events that at a time were detrimental to the strengthening of Protestant identity.

For a particular collective identity to persist and withhold the test of time, it relies on the acts of its participants in order to be efficiently transmitted from one person to another. For many centuries, Protestantism has relied on the power of the Orange Order and the marches it organises as a way to reinforce the sense of belonging. Following the end of the Troubles, with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, resorting to violence as form of collective resistance when faced with possible change has become less and less common, although not completely. Through parades, residents of Northern Ireland are presented with events in which they know that they are being represented, and it has been through this that Protestantism has been able to survive under such inconstant circumstances and hurdles which are placed upon them. However, something which Susan McKay vocalises throughout the interview conducted is that the intensity behind the transmission of Protestant identity has been lacking considerably

Well I think a lot of young people are not interested in transmitting that sense of identity, they're relaxed about their identity, they're comfortable about being brought up on some background but that isn't necessarily a key element of their identity. (2022)

Faced with other concerns which they regard as more important for them personally, the younger generation that was brought up in Protestant surroundings, whether they are Millennials or Gen-Zs, find themselves fighting for other matters, rather than joining the older individuals, some of whom can even be their relatives or family friends, who feel extremely strong about the survival of Protestantism in Northern Ireland.

In McKay's own words, when questioned if it was important to interview people from different age groups

(...) there's a lot of younger people who didn't live through the Troubles who have a very different outlook than people who did. They're less fearful and they [pause] are troubled by the fact that there is a intra generational shadow cast by their troubles, there's definitely an awareness that there is trauma among the older generations but they themselves are... not so preoccupied with the border question, they're more interested in, a lot of them are more interested in things like - climate justice, and feminism, and gay rights, and green issues. There's [pause] They're less preoccupied with identity in the Northern Irish sense. (2022)

The final section of the questionnaire was significant in the sense that it allowed the author to establish a connection between previously mentioned cultural memory studies concepts and the Orange Parade in particular. It is to note that although the number of attendees of the Orange Parade has not

shown any significant decrease, as it continues to be attended by several thousands of people, from tourists, people who travel just to see it to families who reside in the area that the parade is taking place, the prestige surrounding it the Orange Order has been affected. This is evident by analysing the answer to question one of section C of the questionnaire presented to the author.

When interviewing people from the general public, (questionnaire available in **Appendix III**), all of them, regardless of their age, recognised that one of the most important events that takes place in Northern Ireland throughout the year is the Twelfth, however not all of them held it in high regard. People falling into the younger age group expressed that they do feel a considerable disconnect from the parade and the institution behind it, regarding it as patriarchal, misogynistic and racist, aspects which serve as reasons to why they do not incline towards supporting the Order. This discontent towards it has a direct impact on their outlook towards the parade, as it not only serves as a representation of Protestant people, but above all, it is an event in which individuals of the order participate directly and attempt to share their ideals through the most varied symbols that are present in banners, songs or signs.

Uhm, and so the Orange, I mean the Orange Order like I associate as being a very patriarchal, misogynistic, racist, sexist organisation that has very traditionalist values that completely erases women from within its own structures, never mind once you start and go outside of that, like the Orange Order, I don't know if they still do it, but they would've like excluded members for just attending say, like a Catholic funeral or, um, you know, uh, marriage or anything. So the parades are associated, you know, very strongly with what they are that organisation. (Sarah Lavery, 2022, age 30)

This point of view is not unique in any sense, as it possible to encounter similar opinions in other mediums, whether they are online or not. McKay shares a similar outlook in regard to this matter, stating

“I think that the Orange Parades are anachronistic and I think that they are sectarian and I think that they carry such a legacy of bad feeling that it is impossible for them to be seen by people outside of the Orange Order as being fun days out for the family. On the negative side I think that they do sort of create a feeling of a group of people who don't want to be integrated, who want to keep themselves separate.”

Contrary to this, there are always cases of the differing opinion, defending the power of the Order and the role it carries out in society. What it was possible to note from the interviews conducted with members of the general public is that such opinions were often expressed by the older members, as it has been argued before.

I, I believe that that the, [pause] we, we make a purge of sometimes of selling ourselves and putting our own cultural message out, uhm, and, and there's a perception that the message

going out is of a big base drunken down the road just to annoy everybody and beating, beating it as hard as what you can so was a particular section of the community. I don't believe that's what the Orange institution stands for. Uhm, I, I believe that we, we, we should be, um, engaging more to, uhm, get our message out because we have an important message to put out. (Spencer Beatie, 2022, age 72)

Additionally, another member falling within the same age group shared the following, when questioned about what meaning they associate with the parade,

Meaning? Uhm, I suppose that what I, uh, put to the Orange Parades is the Battle of the Boyne, very colourful, [pause], a big attraction. What else would I put to it? And I suppose from my point of view, very welcoming but that doesn't mean to say, I'm not talking for everybody, I'm talking for myself. (Anonymous, 2022, age 34)

As Jarman explains, the continuity of a key event within a community “is an important feature of its power” (1997, p.10), power that directly is transmitted to the Order, allowing them to strengthen their position towards society and reaffirm themselves for a longer period of time. In a sense, one can almost assume that the occurrence of the parade partially and temporarily restores people’s faith in the fraternity, however, as with everything, that can fade with time and with the returning of every day normal life. After a day of celebrations, once everyone returns back to their respective homes, the reality is still that the Order maintains its ideals of the 18th century, even if they have implemented minor changes, it still continues to be an exclusively male organisation with rules that distance its members from Catholic interactions.

Once again, this reflects the clear cut that exists within the Protestant community, more specifically, between the different generations brought up surrounded by Protestantism. Through the feedback provided by the younger members, one senses that the power that the Orange institution had at one point in time is no longer having the same effects as it did. Also, the power that the Orange Parade was believed to have, being considered a national holiday, an extremely important day within Protestantism, is also being reappraised. Thus, to what extent can the Orange Parade preserve the continuity of Protestantism in Northern Ireland if the younger generation feels less and less inclined to participate in it?

To complement this view, when presented with the question “Have you seen any change from the 2000s onwards in the way the younger generation associates the Orange Parade with their collective identity?”, Susan McKay states

I don't think that a lot of really young people do identify with the Orange Order. I think it's clear that when you look at an Orange Parade it's older men marching and young people I think don't really identify with the notion of something which is exclusively male.

It is associated with very traditional family values and conservative family values, so a lot of younger people just don't really relate to that. (2022)

It is not so much a matter of questioning the role that the older generation has as active transmitters of collective identity through their efforts of parading, it is more the reality that the ideals defended by the fraternity that is in charge of guaranteeing the occurrence of the parade, do not align with the views of the future generations, leading them to distance themselves almost entirely from it.

As mentioned previously, Protestantism is also limited by its geographical borders, areas of Northern Ireland which are known for being strictly Protestant, others Catholic and some that detain a mixture of both. During these interviews there was one statement that stood out regarding the exposure that people have with the "other" community. During one particular interview, the interviewee shared that they had not met a Catholic until they were 16, which is shocking considering that there has always been the idea that since the Troubles ended and with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement changes were implemented, allowing the co-existence between members of different communities that were harshly separated for so many years. Nevertheless, the reality in Northern Ireland continues to be one of underlying separation, with the presence of schools which make a distinction based on religious and identity beliefs, this is, Catholic and Protestant schools. Children's minds are extremely easy to mold, as they are receptive to a multiplicity of information. It is at these younger stages of life, starting at primary school, that they slowly begin to understand their surroundings and absorb information as if they were a sponge. According to the president of the Republic of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, 93% of Northern Ireland housing continues to be segregated, "meaning that most young people are educated in either a state-funded school that predominantly attracts Protestant families, or a state-funded school maintained by the Catholic Church", a quote made available in a recent article published in the newspaper *The Impartial Reporter*, March 4 2022, (Baxter, 2022, para. 8). Lack of exposure to other cultures, people with different outlooks and belief systems contributes to the intensifying of inequalities and tensions.⁸

By continuing to maintain these segregated schools, it transmits the message that there is a need for such, that Catholics and Protestants should not mix with one another and should maintain themselves as separate as possible. In order for change to happen, children should be placed in a

⁸ The Integrated School System was adopted in Northern Ireland in 1981, completing 41 years of existence in 2022. Integrated schools aim to bring together children and staff from the different political/religious backgrounds and teach them within the same establishment, in an attempt to combat sectarianism and encourage people from different backgrounds to get to know each other and mix.

neutral setting, without discrimination of gender, religion or political affiliation that they or their families may detain. By bringing such attention to these aspects, it only intensifies the situation and generates an issue that so many people are trying hard to avoid from happening by not engaging in violence and co-existing peacefully on a day-to-day basis. Jessica, 22, one of the interviewees, explains the hardships behind lack of exposure when asked about her opinion on the current ambient in Northern Ireland,

There are something like six post primary schools just to keep everything as separate as possible. There are of course shared education schemes and stuff, I went to a Protestant grammar, and you're next to a Catholic grammar, there you'd have the shared education scheme but you never spoke, you sat in your own class and you didn't engage. I didn't properly start meeting people from a different tradition until I went to cross community projects, which my mom suggested I go to, or I started working or started going on nights out. So the fact is that even if young people are willing to do these wishes, there's not a whole pile of mechanisms in place to start that from an early age, unless you are attending something like an integrated school, or you have mixed marriage parents, for example. (2022)

The growth of what is now known as “mixed” families has made it easier for people to grow up in perhaps a more neutral setting, meaning that, by being raised in a household which shares both views, opens young children's minds up to the world they live in, not a simple black and white setting. Such exposure allows them to be more accepting of different people from a young age, rather than delaying these interactions until they are more independent and seek them themselves or are faced with them at work, university or any other social setting. It allows people at opposite ends of the religious spectrum to come to terms with each other and also others that are outside this binary sphere of Catholics and Protestants, and accept them for who they are, not placing any focus on the past or with any religious/political affiliation they have been associated with. However, once again, this is a more recent concept.

It is not to say that every single person raised during the Troubles or born after them, this is, below the age of 30, is completely straying away from this fraction of their identity. Many are the individuals, particularly young men, who continue to show devotion to the Protestant faith and present themselves as willing to participate in events that surround their identity. Most of them have found new outlets to show their dedication, rather than joining the Order that presents guidelines and strict rules one must follow in order to remain a member, many are those who find themselves participating in the Orange Parade through the musical bands that exist throughout Northern Ireland.

These bands are organisations which allow young, mostly males, to not only represent themselves, but also find a place to interact with people who share the same values, while also learning a new skill,

whether that involves learning how to play an instrument, read music sheets or other significant skills like patience or organisation. Unlike the Orange Order, the bands seem to be more accepted by the younger generation, while also seen as something positive by the older one, in other words, it is an element that, at this point in time, is still seen as an optimistic and constructive thing, “the rhythmic repetition of sounds, whether liturgy, singing, chanting or music helps to create a sense of a collective identity where before there was only a collection of individuals” (Jarman, 1997, p. 10). Another interviewee expresses these ideas in a very concise way, explaining

But I would imagine now that the younger generation follow the bands right? So there's band competitions and these kids travel far and away to watch 'em. So the band competition is that the bands go on a parade and they get, uh, trophies after. So there are people there who listen to music and stuff again, uh, and people who participate. (Anonymous, 2022, age 66)

[...] because I do know that like that the bands within their own communities are seen as a way for something for young people to do in, in, uhm, summertime. Something to like occupy ones where like youth services have been like strangled and caught for like a decade, so like they're, they're away for somebody to learn an instrument, you know, have a group around them. People look out for each other a bit. (...) . I think that they're, I think they're slightly armed, more arm's length. So like, while you have Orange Order members who march in the parade or in the bands, I think that there are people who enjoy the bands and who go to the bands and take part in the bands who wouldn't really be deeply associated with the Orange Order (...). (Sarah Lavery, 2022, age 30)

Bands have become such a communality in Northern Ireland that some have even begun to organise their own parades, which fall outside the “the auspices of the loyal orders” (Jarman, 1997, para.5). Rather than organising events that are replete with underlying political manifestations and speeches of devotion, directly connected to a specific event, these are categorised as social events where the goal is to interact with the community and raise money for foundations they deem as in need of help. This aspect of the bands gives them with a more humane facet, therefore leading communities or individual people to empathise with them more or inclined towards supporting them, contrary to the Order itself.

Protestantism in Northern Ireland embodies a multitude of aspects that have been developed over the course of four centuries. What at the start was a battle in order to guarantee ascendancy has now become something much bigger, a key part of history but also of cultural and social memory. As mentioned, to maintain its legitimacy and its power, not only is it necessary to guarantee the public rituals to take place, but also depend on the participants to effectively transmit information, stories, memories between each other and create narratives that will easily be recognised 50 years down the road. The interactions carried out during the months of July and August with the members of the

general public all ended with the same important question:

How important is it for you to be able to efficiently transmit the ideals that you associate to the Orange Parade to those that come after you? [Please consider the role of your ancestors and contemporaries]

Different answers were given. The younger people expressed little to no desire in transmitting ideals directly associated with the parade and the collective identity as a whole. For them, it is not a main priority, rather, it is deemed as much more important to share their personal values, things that are particular to them, as one interviewee responds:

Uhm [pause] I don't know. I think that when I think of like Protestant ideals I think of Orange parades, [pause], burning Lundy things like that and I can't see myself passing that on. The things I do see myself passing on are things that I learned from like my time growing up on a farm or living along the border, and a lot of them could be classed under an Irish identity. Yeah, I can't really see myself doing that, maybe, [pause] yeah, no. Not a protestant identity but maybe stuff from my family. (Rebecca Crockett, 2022, age 20)

I have no interest in bringing up children to going to Orange Parades. It's not something particularly important to me, then again, I don't know if my future partner will be interested in something like that, but it's not something I see as part of my culture in a way that that needs to be protected. I appreciate that it's important to protect for other people but [pause] no, I have no interest in bringing kids up to be doing that sort of thing. (Jessica Hadden, 2022, age 22)

Contrary to this, the older individuals interviewed showed the completely opposite desire, "Oh, no. I mean, that's the most important thing you can do." (Anonymous, 2022, age 66) and also,

I think it's very important to get the message out. (...) People can come along, should come along, and enjoy the day without, uh, any abuse from people maybe having too much alcohol. And, and there are time, there are times for that celebration part after the parade has finished. (Spencer Beattie, 2022, age 72)

The Orange Parade holds meaning for everyone, however that does not mean that the meaning they associate with it is the same. People who lived through the Troubles and find themselves at a point in their lives where they still feel an intense connection to the hardships they had to go through, find affinity with the people who fought in other wars in order to guarantee the existence of Protestantism in the Irish isle. Others, who were born shortly after this milestone in Northern Ireland's short history, are more focused on building a narrative of redemption (Ribeiro, 2013, p.221). Complementing what Halbwachs states, older people have more time on their hands and therefore are more likely to reminisce on the past, attempt to reconstruct it, attempt to get in touch with emotions felt at the time, "we preserve memories of each epoch in our lives, and these are continually reproduced; through

them, as by a continual relationship, a sense of our identity is perpetuated” (Halbwachs, 1992, p.47). Therefore, one understands better why they feel it is so important to attend the Orange Parade, as the lack of ability to efficiently recreate their past, which was filled with tormenting encounters with law officials and people they consider their opposition, leads them to seek events in the present which they connote with meaning and values which are appropriate to them. “Old people ordinarily are not content to wait passively for memories to revive. They attempt to make them more precise, ask other old people, go through old papers, old letters;” and also “by giving old people the function of preserving the traces of the past (ibid., p. 48). In other words, in this case particularly, parades and rituals which embody social gatherings and moments of recollection for many.

Although adults are aware of the past, comprehending that it holds deep meaning, their primary concern is more towards the now and what they can do in order to improve their future. By stating that their core purpose is not to transmit ideals related to Protestantism and the Orange Parade to their future relatives or people they come into contact with, that mainly relies on the fact that they themselves did not experience anything traumatic to the point of feeling so connected to it, and that reason alone demonstrates why it is so important to recognise the role of individual identity within collective identity, as each person has his/her own experiences that will influence them differently and will dictate what parts of their identity they view as most determinant for them personally.

The semi-structured oral interviews led to valuable insight in the sense that it was possible to gather information that is extremely specific to Northern Ireland’s history. None of the statements by or stories told on behalf of these people are available online. Subjectivity in cultural memory studies is a constant for things people say or do can be interpreted in a variety of ways which can, in turn, lead to multiple outcomes. What became clear through these interviews is the facility that people have when resorting to using personal experiences and memories as a means to strengthen their point of view. In the majority of these encounters, most interviewees were at ease to share stories that they have either experienced themselves or that their relatives have lived through. The power of oral transmission of memory is something that people can easily access through acts of remembering. Additionally, in these interview moments there was also a lot of expression of different emotions, varying according to the person and corresponding opinion that they shared on the topic. Whether the participants of the interviews chose to make use of their anonymity or not, all claims made were deemed as valuable even though it was not possible to make use of every single statement.

Chapter 4

CONCLUSIONS

It is difficult to predict what the future holds for Protestant collective identity in Northern Ireland. Even though Protestant memory is infused with a turbulent and upsetting past for many, the reality is that with a matter such as identity and collective memory formation it is hard to say if the tendency for a weakening of Protestant identity as expressed especially through the Orange Parade will remain for a short or long period of time, as society is constantly changing. Research results obtained through this dissertation are a reflection of Northern Ireland Protestantism over the last several years, but especially in more recent times, meaning to say that it is not certain that such a tendency will remain in place. However, it would be wrong to ignore what is happening at the present.

Protestants in Northern Ireland have fought for many years to maintain Protestantism in the country and it is believed that they will continue to do so for as long as it is required, especially as they enter this new era, a time where Catholicism and Catholics have reached a majority demographically, according to the most recent Census data, and also politically. From this point, it is expected that new collective memories will form, but under new settings.

Everyone has the tendency to forget, even key details of things that they deem as important. Cultural memory is made up of different points of view, opinions, recollections and practices that make it exclusive and incomparable to any other study or subject. Analysing cultural memory allows for the comprehension of social behaviours while also focusing on how those behaviours correlate to past memories and other civilizations. For Northern Ireland residents, both Catholics and Protestants have always felt as if their narrative have been misconstrued. These communities, both feeling threatened, resort to finding means through which they can feel seen and heard. In this sense, McKay's work in this field, mainly through the employment of oral interviews, semi-structured with open-ended questions, allows many individuals to share their own perspective and brings attention to matters that they deem to be important.

McKay continues to play a significant role in the publication of articles and other texts which shine a light on life in Northern Ireland throughout different time periods, but mainly focusing on nowadays. Through the publications mentioned in this dissertation, *Northern Protestants: An Unsettled People* (2000) and *Northern Protestants: On Shifting Ground* (2021), the public is presented with interesting matter concerning Protestant identity, combining the Protestant historical past with the reality that is being experienced in Northern Ireland. The author is able to bring attention to matters that for many

residing in Ulster are taboo or rather sensitive to talk about. The collaboration with Susan McKay in this dissertation was extremely appreciated, as not only does it provide a reflection on the elaboration of her own publications, but it also allowed the obtaining of crucial first-hand opinions and knowledge.

For the reasons mentioned prior, it is believed that conducting oral interviews with open-ended questions directed to different members of the general public of all age groups permitted the obtaining of different points of view, as “verbal transmission is more usually presented as the most appropriate or dominant means by which memories are shared” (Jarman, 1997, p. 13). Through this, it was possible to give different people of a similar background the opportunity to not only give their opinion, but also share their own memories and encounters that they have had with Protestantism. Each interview was special in that sense.

Collective identity in Northern Ireland has become much harder to explain, straying away from a black and white palette and presenting itself as something much more complex with underlying issues for several centuries. Due to the unforeseen obstacles of Brexit, Protestants find themselves under constant threat to their culture, their identity, who they are. For them, their social memory is at risk of either being even more harmed and dented through resources such as mass media, elements which they cannot directly control, or begin to slowly dissipate as a result of a combination of different social factors that are active elements in this interplay between culture, memory and identity. For that reason in particular, one cannot underestimate the value that each component has in the formation of a solid collective identity, replenished with collective memories, it is not only something that depends on the collective, but also on the individual as a unique contributor,

[social memory] is a product and process embedded in the social milieu, which cannot be understood without taking into account the power relations, the asymmetric forces and filters operating in a given cultural context, the individual and group agency, the personal experiences and trajectories, and the “tools” and “vehicles” of memory, both in its embodied and technological forms. (Cabecinhas & Abadia, 2013, p. 5)

Following the interviews, it was possible to understand, almost immediately, that there is a clear distinction between the two age groups, a generational gap. With all the changes that are happening in the world, and particularly in the North of Ireland, whether of political, economic or social nature, the tendency is for the gap to be furthered, as the younger generation distances itself more and more. For this younger generation, their main concerns centre on matters that affect not only themselves but society as a whole. Matters of collective identity are important to them although the reality is that they tend to identify less and less with Protestantism.

People of the older generations share a bigger affinity with Protestantism and everything it stands

for. For them, the personal ties that they have held stand the test of time and they are adamant they will hold on to that for as long as they possibly can, while also contributing to the divulgence of the Protestant identity, whether this relies on oral transmission, the participation in Orangeism and its parades or other means.

Protestantism is going through a process of separation as the younger members of society begin to detach themselves not only from the parade it is marked by but also from its values that have been in place ever since the formation of the Orange Order in the 18th century. Although it is so highly renowned, the Orange Parade is no longer able to grab the attention of the younger generations. For those who are younger that do participate, they do it through means of the bands, organisations which stand out for being places of social gatherings rather than being exclusively linked with Orangeism and the Orange Order. Although the Orange Parade continues to take place every year in several towns throughout Northern Ireland, the prestige associated to it and the Orange Order continues to decrease. The main organisation dealing with the Orange Parade and Orangeism as a whole is a completely male fraternity which has ties to values that many nowadays may classify as old-schooled and out of touch with the society of today, using the celebrations of the Twelfth as the epitome event to celebrate their values.

The changes that Northern Ireland is facing politically come as a result of the social shift that has been occurring over the most recent years. With this, the Protestant community has to deal with the fact that the majority of the population residing in Northern Ireland either identifies with the Catholic identity or other identities that are neither Catholic or Protestant. Collective identities will continue to be a part of everyone who resides in Northern Ireland, or anywhere for that matter, however, the distinction that must be made here is that not everyone will recognise Protestantism as one of their multiple identities. For young individuals, this is where the break between them and their ancestors lies. Although they recognise their past and what their ancestors have been through, they themselves are not able to defend the ideals that the institution behind Protestantism, the Orange Order, stands for, and therefore tend to stray away and redirect their attention to other issues or ideals.

It has been possible through this dissertation to obtain a descriptive overview of the importance that collective identity and parading has for the communities in Northern Ireland, in particular for Protestants. Although parading has always been a means of manifestation of tradition and identity used extensively throughout the many communities of the world, Northern Ireland has stood out as one of the countries that uses parading and similar choreographed rituals as its ritual of choice, dedicating several months to it and taking key aspects of their identities and transforming them into social

celebrations This is bound to create a set of collective social memories which strengthen the relationships within a specific group, while also, even if unconsciously, sending a message to the “other” group.

By analysing the generational differences in attitudes to Protestant identity and the Orange Parade, through a combination of mainly online research and also conduction of practical interviews, it was possible to understand on a deeper level the complexity that exists within the Protestant Northern Irish community and how this can and will influence the propagation of collective identity and tradition over the course of the following years. Furthermore, it has been possible to understand the role that Protestant identity has amongst the many different individuals that make up this community, while gaining insight into the role that the Orange Parade has within said community and how each generation relates to it.

The future in Northern Ireland is uncertain, especially regarding Protestantism. All of the changes that have taken place have allowed for this study to be conducted through the prism of cultural memory studies, however, the possibilities of further exploration are extensive. It would be a good decision to choose to accompany the developments that are set to take place over the following years and study the impact of these changes on the transmission of collective identity and memories. With this new generation, studying the impact of the Orange Parade on different age groups would be appropriate, especially through the lens of mediation, an area of study within cultural memory studies which is considerably growing with the technological innovations of the 21st century.

The type of memories produced derived from the Orange Parade could also be studied and compared, particularly contrasting distant time periods in order to view the growth and possible alterations the type of memories may have suffered, even though the parade has claimed to have maintained the same ever since the 18th century.

Northern Ireland’s history and current unravelment of social matters allows for many studies to be conducted within the field of cultural memory studies, whether one opts to focus on sites of memory, through the murals, for example, collective and individual memories associated to the Orange Parade or other events, mediation and remediation, symbols, and many more.

This only shows a minute percentage of the horizons that cultural memory studies reaches. All of the fields, subjects and institutions that it embodies and is possible to study leaves us with the impression that this subject is only at its starting point and will grow massively over the following decades.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

AUTHORISATION FOR CONDUCTION OF ORAL INTERVIEWS - CEICSH



Universidade do Minho

Conselho de Ética

Comissão de Ética para a Investigação em Ciências Sociais e Humanas

Identificação do documento: CEICSH 082/2022

Relatora: Cristina Maria Moreira Flores

Título do projeto: *Memory and public parades in Northern Ireland: the case of The Orange Parade*

Equipa de Investigação: Carmen Atlanta O'Connell Teixeira (IR), Mestrado em Língua, Literatura e Cultura Inglesas, Escola de Letras, Artes e Ciências Humanas da Universidade do Minho.; Joanne Madin Vieira Paisana (Orientadora) Departamento de Estudos Ingleses e Norte-Americanos, Escola de Letras, Artes e Ciências Humanas, Universidade do Minho

PARECER

A Comissão de Ética para a Investigação em Ciências Sociais e Humanas (CEICSH) analisou o processo relativo ao projeto de investigação acima identificado, intitulado *Memory and public parades in Northern Ireland: the case of The Orange Parade*

Os documentos apresentados revelam que o projeto obedece aos requisitos exigidos para as boas práticas na investigação com humanos, em conformidade com as normas nacionais e internacionais que regulam a investigação em Ciências Sociais e Humanas.

Face ao exposto, a Comissão de Ética para a Investigação em Ciências Sociais e Humanas (CEICSH) nada tem a opor à realização do projeto nos termos apresentados no Formulário de Identificação e Caracterização do Projeto, que se anexa, emitindo o seu parecer favorável, que foi aprovado por unanimidade pelos seus membros.

Braga, 13 de julho de 2022.

O Presidente da CEICSH

(Acílio Estanqueiro Rocha)

Anexo: Formulário de identificação e caracterização do projeto

Appendix II
QUESTIONS FOR ORAL INTERVIEW
SUSAN MCKAY
UNIVERSITY OF MINHO

Memory and public parades in Northern Ireland: the case of The Orange Parade

SECTION A: APPROACH WHEN WRITING *NORTHERN PROTESTANTS: ON SHIFTING GROUND*

1. Why was it important for you to write this book?
2. When approaching this new project, what were your main goals that you wished to reach?
3. What was the methodology behind the selection of whom to interview? How did you structure these interviews?
4. Did you find it important to interview individuals that belong to different generations? What outcomes did you obtain from these instances?
5. How would you describe the underlying climate that has existed in Northern Ireland ever since the Troubles?
6. Following your previous book on a similar topic, *Northern Protestants: An Unsettled People*, there is this idea that Northern Ireland is associated with repression, division, sectarianism. Did you expect this to still be the case at the time you wrote your most recent publication?

SECTION B: THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

1. How would you describe the term collective identity? What role is each generation, the older generation that lived through the Troubles and the younger generation that was born after those occurrences, taking on nowadays in the transmission of collective identity?
2. In your personal opinion, how important has it [collective identity] become in Northern Ireland since the start of the 21st century?
3. How important is it nowadays to publicly identify as either Protestant or Catholic? What does being Protestant mean nowadays?

SECTION C: CONNECTION TO THE ORANGE PARADE

1. When researching about Northern Ireland, one of the events that often comes up in articles and online sources is the Orange Parade. How important is the Orange Parade within the context of Northern Ireland? Why?

2. In your book you gathered an interview which presented the quote “To me those days are extremely positive. Even nowadays, I would still go to the Twelfth. It’s full of colour, music, everybody’s happy. It’s a family event. (...) I do find it disappointing when I see that people view it in a negative way.” Could you possibly expand further on your views when it comes to the positive and negative outcomes that the Twelfth has within the two main communities in Northern Ireland?

3. Have you seen any change from the 2000s onwards in the way the younger generation associates the Orange Parade with their collective identity?

4. Do you think the younger generation has a collective consciousness regarding this parade? Why is the vast majority now disconnected from its symbolism?

5. Do you believe that at some point in the future there will be a complete transformation of the collective memories associated to the Orange Parade?

6. In a concluding tone, what do you think the future holds for Northern Ireland and the Orange Parade in terms of collective memories, identity and overall culture?

Appendix III
QUESTIONS FOR ORAL INTERVIEW
GENERAL PUBLIC
UNIVERSITY OF MINHO

Memory and public parades in Northern Ireland: the case of The Orange Parade

Age:

Sex:

County of residence:

1. How would you describe yourself?
2. Do you regard yourself as a practicing religious person?
 - a. If answered YES, which religion do you identify with?
3. What do you understand by collective identity and how important is it to you?
4. What, in your opinion, are some of the most important annual events that take place in Northern Ireland?
5. What meaning do you associate to the Orange Parade?
6. Over the course of your life, have you attended the Orange Parade? If so, at what stages of your life?
7. If the Orange Parade were to be cancelled indefinitely, how would that make you feel?
8. Northern Ireland has more often than not been described as extremely sectarian, with clear divisions between Catholics and Protestants. Do you believe that the division is still as clear as it was, for example, during the Troubles?
9. Do you notice a difference between you and your parents/grandparents when it comes to the importance of the Orange Parade?
10. How important is it for you to be able to efficiently transmit the ideals that you associate to the Orange Parade to those that come after you? [Please consider the role of your ancestors and contemporaries]