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Beyond welcoming the strangers: Integration policies and practices in Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Ph.D. Sociology

Trinity College Dublin

2015

by Alessia Passarelli

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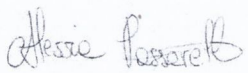

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Michel, for his love, presence, support, patience along and beyond this thesis; and our daughter, Alice, who arrived in the middle of this journey, for turning our lives upside down and at the same time for forcing us to put things into perspective, and for her unconditional love.

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Thank you to Michael and Salters; without their support and their shelter my being in Dublin would not have been possible. To my parents and in-laws who always came all the way to Bologna on very short notice over and over again to babysit Alice in order for me to continue working on my research. To the Trinity Chapel and especially to Darren and Julian for becoming over the years important points of reference for my 'lost' soul and for their friendship, of course.

Finally, I wish to thank the Department of Sociology and the Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences for their financial support without which this thesis would not have been possible.

Summary

This thesis focuses on the integration approaches and strategies developed by Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy following the arrival of an increasing number of migrants within their congregations. Ireland and Italy constitute interesting settings for my case studies for they share some similarities: first of all they share a similar narrative of becoming countries of immigration only recently, representing themselves as culturally homogenous before the arrival of migrants; secondly, Catholicism played an important role in shaping both Irishness and Italianness; thirdly, Protestant Churches constitute minority religious communities in both countries. As no previous sociological studies have focused on migrant integration projects in Protestant churches or on the juxtaposition of integration processes in Ireland and Italy, this study closes the knowledge gap in that regard.

The adoption of a grounded theory approach, applied to a multi-sited ethnography, as a methodological framework, enabled me to engage with data and theory throughout the research process and, thus, to refine the analysis as new questions and themes arose. The use of case studies as a research strategy is applied to the integration projects of the Anglican Church in Ireland (the Discovery Project) and of the Waldensian and Methodist Church in Italy (the Mezzano – Second District Project), which represent the main case studies of this qualitative research. In line with the methodology employed, this study also analyses the integration approaches of the Methodist Church in Ireland looking at two congregations in Dublin. Data were collected through a triangulation of methods combining participant observation, semi-structured interviews and archival research; interviews were secured through purposive sampling.

In both countries churches developed integration strategies to promote migrants' inclusion, to try to go beyond the 'welcoming the stranger' phase, and envisaged the creation of integrated churches, with a view to avoiding both the assimilation of migrants within the mainstream structure and the segregation of migrants in 'ethnic' churches. This thesis aims at exploring and deconstructing the notion of 'integrated church' not only to show the different meanings this definition may take

according to different people but also to highlight the complex and fluid negotiations of power relations which make up integration processes.

The findings from this study show that there are some similarities in the way Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy have dealt with the 'strangers in their midst'. In both places churches opted for the development of integrated churches rather than separate developments which was the experience of other Protestant Churches, mostly – though not exclusively – in countries with a longer immigration history. This research demonstrates that churches in Italy and Ireland have tried to include migrants' voices and contributions during the development and implementation of the integration projects analysed in this thesis (the Discovery and the Mezzano - Second District projects). However, in both settings, a lack of clarity in relation to the aims and objectives to be achieved soon became obvious, and nearly jeopardised the projects' success.

One significant element which emerged during data collection was the role of the symbolic paradigm embedded in the religious *habitus* of churchgoers. In both countries Protestant churchgoers from different countries have different religious *habitus,* which means they have different ways of expressing their spirituality, different attitudes towards ethics and the role of the church in society, and different expectations as to what mission the church should fulfil. While different religious *habitus* often coexist harmoniously, at times differences can lead to tensions and misunderstandings among congregants.

The research methodology proved to be valid as I was able to analyse the integration strategies of Protestant Churches, provide answers to my research questions, and generate other questions which can be developed through further research. One case study can help shed light on similar issues and challenges arising in another setting and offer a different and fresh perspective from which to address them. The intention behind choosing Ireland and Italy as settings for my study was to gain insights into the ways different Protestant churches react to similar phenomena, in the expectation that this study may offer participants in the integration projects in both countries an opportunity to learn from each other.

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Introduction

Welcoming strangers

> 'When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God' (Leviticus, 19: 33-34)
>
> 'As I was a stranger and you welcomed me in' (Matthew, 25: 37)

This thesis focuses on the integration approaches and strategies developed by Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy following the arrival of increasing numbers of migrants[1] within their congregations. Ireland and Italy constitute interesting case studies and share some similarities: first of all they share a similar narrative of becoming countries of immigration only recently, representing themselves as culturally homogenous before the arrival of migrants; secondly Catholicism played an important role in shaping both Irishness and Italianness; thirdly Protestant Churches constitute minority religious communities in both countries.

I decided to start this introduction with two famous and often quoted passages from the Bible because the theological narrative of 'welcoming the stranger' is precisely the framework adopted by churches when referring to the need to integrate migrants. A distinction needs to be made, however, between welcoming the stranger which could apply to both religious and non-religious migrants in

---

[1] I use migrant to refer to any person who, while residing in Italy or Ireland, does not hold Italian or Irish citizenship and, like Luibhéid writes 'is subject to the state's immigration control apparatus' (2013, viii). I use the word immigrant and immigration to refer to state and church official policies, laws, measures targeted at migrants. I use the term in-migration and out-migration to distinguish between incoming and out-coming migration flows.

need of help and support, and building up the 'Church of God' which makes no distinction between native and migrant, as articulated by one of my respondents:

> For a long period in our churches the discourse around migration and churches has been based on a biblical hermeneutic focusing on welcoming the stranger. I think that this has been misleading to some extent, because the biblical 'stranger' is almost always a temporary resident and a non-believer... But what if the stranger is here to stay and is a fellow brother or sister? Eventually we have come to realise that our call is not merely to treat the stranger kindly, but it is a much deeper and fundamental imperative to build together a church where there is no more stranger because 'there is no longer Jew or Greek... male or female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus'. What is really at stake in our 'being church together' is the unity of the church itself – the very right to call ourselves a church (Italian, male, ordained).

The above quote also reminds us that theologically and historically the Church was multicultural since its very beginning as highlighted by another informant (Irish, male, ordained) who described the first Christian communities in the Bible as examples of multicultural churches whose members came from different regions of the Roman Empire, and had different cultural and religious backgrounds, as some of them were Jews and other Gentiles. Thus 'welcoming the stranger' raises some questions: firstly in relation to the otherness projected onto migrants and how this is constructed (i.e. who counts as a stranger and who doesn't), especially in so far as the stranger is a unidirectional attribution; secondly in relation to the fact that the act of 'welcoming' often implies an unequal distribution of power between the host and those who are let in.

Furthermore according to Ortiz, who studies multicultural churches in the USA, 'The church's task is neither to destroy nor to maintain ethnic identities[2] but to replace them with a new identity in Christ which is more foundational than earthly identities' (Ortiz, 1996: 131).

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[2] The notion of 'ethnic' identity and 'ethnicity' is problematic and needs some clarification. The concept of 'ethnic' identity does not apply only to minorities or 'others' but to everybody as everyone has an ethnicity. I decided to use this term in inverted commas to refer to the churches set up by migrants and when used by authors and interviewees.

If 'earthly identities' did not matter, then perhaps there would be no need for any integration programme and consequently this study would be irrelevant. However, as I demonstrate in this thesis, the situation is more complex than it seems and other elements need be taken into account when reflecting on churches as communities who welcome migrants and want to develop integrated churches.

The presence of migrants within a congregation often presents a challenge not only to the congregation's structure but also to the way it sees itself at local and national levels, especially taking into consideration that Protestant churches are minority churches in both Ireland and Italy. Being members of a minority church in the countries under analysis, although in very different ways, has shaped Protestants' identity in the past centuries and has strengthened their sense of sharing a common history which has contributed to maintaining the communities despite the increased secularisation of European Churches. In both countries churches have developed integration strategies to promote migrants' inclusion, to try to go beyond the 'welcoming the stranger' phase, and envisaged the creation of integrated churches, with a view to avoiding both the assimilation of migrants within the mainstream structure and the segregation of migrants in 'ethnic' churches. My analysis aims at exploring and deconstructing the notion of 'integrated church' not only to show the different meanings this definition may take according to different people but also to highlight the complex and fluid negotiations of power relations which make up integration processes.

Since the 1990s Italy and Ireland, countries with long histories of emigration and which saw themselves as primarily migrant sending countries, have experienced increased in-migration, including from many African countries. In Ireland, the percentage of non-Irish nationals has increased since the early 1990s; in 2001 non-Irish nationals made up 12 per cent of the population (CSO, 2012b) [3] and the impact of in-migration has been studied extensively (e.g., Fanning, 2007, 2009, 2011; Loyal, 2007; Lentin and McVeigh, 2006; Wickham and Krings, 2010). In Italy there were three main migration flows for the period between the 1970s and the late 1990s (Kosic and Triandafyllidou, 2007). In contrast to Ireland, in-

[3] Although according to the Central Statistic Office after 2006 the growth in the number of non-Irish nationals has continued, albeit at a slower pace. See www.cso.ie

migration in Italy did not begin in a period of reconstruction and economic development. However, similarly to Ireland, the percentage of non-Italian nationals has increased since the 1990s and even in times of economic crisis in-migration has continued to grow: 'the 3.4 million foreign citizens residing in Italy in 2007 have became 4,387,721 in 2012, equal to 7.4% of the total Italian population' (Caritas/Migrantes, 2013:1). In-migration has impacted civil society in a variety of ways, and has had effects on churches in general, and in particular on minoritarian Protestant churches, which have been reinvigorated by the arrival of migrants at a time when church membership was in decline. Some of these churches have implemented integration projects aiming at fostering the inclusion of migrants, particularly from African countries. These factors, and my personal involvement in the project of integrating migrants into the Waldensian Protestant church in northern Italy (as detailed below), form the background for this thesis.

The main factors influencing Churches' attitudes towards integration are, on the one hand, the specific histories of Protestant Churches in the countries under analysis, including their self-identification as minority communities sharing a religious cultural *habitus*; on the other hand, migrants' needs and ways of expressing their spirituality which often differ from those of their fellow indigenous churchgoers. Another factor is the difference in status between migrant and indigenous members not only in terms of legal status or residency but also in terms of class and ethnicity.

Bauman (2005) and Simmel (1976) have written extensively on the figure of the stranger and what s/he may represent for natives. On the one hand the stranger fulfils a special role in society: as a person who is both far away and near, s/he has a certain degree of objectivity in relation to society; on the other hand, the ambiguous status projected onto the stranger, s/he is neither a friend nor a foe, complicates her/his relation with the native. These reflections, which are further discussed in Chapter II, apply also to churches and shed light on the difficulties they face when attempting to go beyond the welcoming phase and work together towards the creation of integrated churches.

Since the beginning of my fieldwork, it became clear to me that merely analysing the policies and the practices of those churches without an analysis of the symbolic paradigm [4] behind the actions of the various stakeholders would have led me only to identify the gaps between policies and practices. The critique of policies in itself could only partially explain the failure of the integration process, as promoted by the policies themselves. In particular it seemed to me that what was required was an approach that could explain the how and the why behind the *agency* of the various stakeholders involved in the projects: from policy makers to regular churchgoers. I therefore decided to broaden my analysis and to look at the religious *habitus* of churchgoers which acts as a *chain of memory* – as described in Chapter II – that enables the religious community to reiterate itself through time and changes in society. The research shows that with migrants' arrival, the religious *habitus* of the indigenous churchgoers is brought into direct contact with migrants' religious *habitus*. While different religious *habitus* often coexist harmoniously, at times differences can lead to tensions and misunderstandings among congregants. While the religious *habitus* of indigenous Protestant Churches is challenged by migrants, which consequently risks endangering the chain of memory, migrants' religious *habitus* is also challenged by indigenous churchgoers.

Where it all began

The journey of this study, which investigates integration policies and practices of Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy, was initiated by my work and my experience. Between 2005 and 2008 I worked as research and project assistant at the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe in Brussels. Two specific projects I was involved in are worth mentioning here: the POLITIS[5] project which

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[4] The symbolic paradigm I refer to is the set of beliefs, traditions, imagery, values that affect the way in which churches and their members understand reality. A paradigm (Kuhn, 1962; Harris, 2010) is understood as a system of thought shaped by the community's socio-cultural background and by the historical and geographical context. Clergies lay church members, and Protestant organisations give legitimacy and perpetuate the paradigm. This study analyses the symbolic paradigms of indigenous as well as migrant churchgoers.

[5] POLITIS - Building Europe with new citizens? An enquiry into the civic participation of naturalised citizens and foreign residents in 25 countries was a research project conducted between 2004 and 2007 funded by the European Commission, 6th research framework. See http://www.politis-europe.uni-oldenburg.de/9810.html

familiarised me with the sociological theories behind migrant activism in European societies (Vogel, 2008), and the research on mapping migration, mapping Churches' responses in Europe (Jackson and Passarelli, 2008). From the first project I developed the idea of conducting an in depth study of migrant activism within Protestant Churches in my country, Italy. While working on the second project, I began to collect data on Italy and to consider the possibility of choosing another country with similar migration patterns and where Protestant churches are a minority within a majority of Roman Catholic believers. Ireland seemed the perfect match, as I explain in Chapter III. The idea, however, to compare and contrast the integration projects of Protestant Churches [6] in these two countries was soon abandoned as I preferred to gain insights into how different Protestant Churches reacted to similar phenomena, from the presence of migrants to the development of integration strategies and the challenges faced in the process (see Chapter III).

The second aspect refers to my position and involvement within the Federation of Protestant Churches (FCEI) in Italy which has grown during my research. While working in Brussels I maintained a close working relation with the FCEI – especially with its Service for Migrants and Refugees (SRM) and its Commission Being Church Together (ECI) – and in 2008 I was appointed a member of the ECI Commission. Thus, since 2008 I have been directly involved in developing integration strategies and providing churches with tools to deal with the diversity in their midst (for instance I was involved in intercultural training). Since 2011 I was involved in a research project which mapped the changes in Protestant Churches, looking for instance at the composition of congregations, the nationalities of members, and the leadership position of migrants in churches (Naso *et al.*, 2014).

The other important element which shaped the journey of this study and had repercussions for the research (see chapter III) is very personal: my engagement with and marriage to a minister. In 2010 my husband was appointed minister in

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[6] The comparative approach was abandoned also because I realised that although the two countries presented some similarities, the variables were very different in Italy and Ireland, starting, for instance, from the huge difference of what being Protestant meant in Ireland and Italy and the different power dynamics generated by their position.

Bologna and Modena, two churches that in different ways have been modified by migration. That was the point when my research entered into my home and I became more than a participant observer. As a minister's wife, I had to be involved in certain aspects of the church's life and there were many expectations from me, especially from migrants, as I discuss in Chapter III.

In relation to my fieldwork I was both an insider and an outsider. While in Italy my insider position allowed me immediate and easy access to information and people; in Ireland my outsider/(insider) status required that I relied on gatekeepers. However, despite being an outsider in the Irish field, my being Protestant was an asset which enabled me to identify and approach key informants who acted as gatekeepers. This is the reason why I described my position in Ireland as an outsider (insider).

Situating the research

Integration is a problematic concept which has been used and misused in public and political discourse as I analyse in Chapter I. According to many European states' policies, integration is related to immigration and is often understood as simply the assimilation of migrants rather than a more nuanced two-way process involving both migrants and the receiving societies. In sociology, the term is linked to the concept of interculturalism which can be seen as an *alternative* to policies of multiculturalism and as the result of the implementation of integration policies (see e.g., Favell, 2001; Mac Éinrí, 2001; Lentin, 2001, 2002; Lentin and McVeigh, 2006; Fanning, 2007; Kundnani, 2007). Most scholars, as well as advocates of interculturalism, see integration as a two-way process involving both migrants and receiving societies. This is also the understanding of integration embraced by Protestant Churches when shaping their integration policies.

Depending on the socio-political context of the host country, religion can be seen as positive or negative in fostering or hindering the integration process. Religion is one reason why people leave their place of origin and religious connections are often among the first social relations people form upon arriving in a new country. Warner (1998: 3) notes that religious identities tend to mean more to individuals in situations of migration or exile than in their home countries because religious

institutions often become the places 'where new relations among the members of the community – among men and women, parents and children, recent arrivals and those settled – are forged.' Joining a well-established Protestant mainline church can help migrants build up a reputation, find a job and feel part of a community.

Relation to existing research

The research contributes to debates and scholarship on the sociology of religion and contemporary migration in Europe. When people migrate they bring with them a variety of social and cultural habits, religion often being one of those (Warner 1998; Jenkins P. 2002; Levitt *et al.*, 2003; Knott, 2005, 2008; Foley and Hoge, 2007; Ugba, 2009). Sociologists of religion in Europe have mainly focused on: a) the relationship between Christianity and Islam, looking, for instance, at Muslim networks and transnational religious communities in and across Europe (Ebaugh and Chafetz, 2002; Allievi and Nielsen, 2003); b) the analysis of the secularisation of Europe and the decline of religious practices (Bruce, 2002, 2003; Davie, 2007) and the place of religion in the public sphere (Casanova, 1994; Knott, 2005, 2008); c) the growing influence of evangelical movements, such as the Pentecostals, in European countries (Introvigne, 2004b; Ugba, 2006; Pace, 2013); and d) the increased study of non-monotheistic religions and non-religious movements (Knott, 2013b).

In relation to migration and Christianity in Europe, churches and church leaders are increasingly interested in the phenomenon of migrant-led churches and chaplaincies which in Ireland resulted in the publication of a directory of migrant-led churches published by the All-Ireland Churches Consultative Meeting on Racism (Bruce and Thompson, 2008). In Italy there have been studies focusing on migrant-led churches in specific areas, for instance Rome and Naples, which went beyond the mapping of the churches, providing an analysis of their situation and challenges (Di Sanzio and Maggio, 2010; Russo *et al.*, 2014).

To date very little attention has been given by sociologists of religion to the relations between migration and mainline Protestant Churches in Europe (but see Jackson and Passarelli, 2008; Passarelli, 2011, 2013; Naso, 2011; Naso *et al.*, 2014). My research intends to fill this gap by looking at Protestant churches in Ireland and Italy as social entities promoting integration and providing specific

forms of social capital to migrant members (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 2000). This study sheds light on the type of social capital that churches can provide to migrants and the type of capital migrants look for.

Furthermore, this study uses theories of community construction (Cohen, 1985), to analyse the complex processes of identification (Jenkins, 2004), in particular how boundaries between 'us' and 'them' are drawn and redrawn (Remotti, 1996), Protestants engage in, both in relation to the Catholic majority in Italy and Ireland and to migrants joining their congregations.

Finally, this study also contributes to the theoretical debates on integration in churches as social entities (e.g., Fanning, 2007; Vogel, 2008; Ugba, 2009; Mutwarasibo 2010), an area scarcely studied, intersecting theories of integration, communities and belonging.

Aims and objectives of the study

The project investigates:

a) Integration policies promoted by the executive committee of the Churches – on a national level – and the role played by migrants in shaping them.

b) The implementation of those policies into practices, from both top-down and bottom-up perspectives.

Central research questions

The research analyses the integration policies and practices employed by Protestant Churches in the Irish and Italian contexts looking at the following questions:

What type of ties (social and religious) can churches offer to newcomers?

How does religious belonging change in the new setting?

What type of changes (e.g., liturgy, theology) does migrants' inclusion bring to the churches?

Are these changes being conceived as instances of 'successful' integration practices?

In the process of conducting this research, I realised that other questions needed to be addressed, particularly around the different needs of indigenous churches and migrant congregants who often choose to attend 'ethnic' churches rather than indigenous Protestant churches. The change of direction is elaborated in the conclusion, but is apparent through the thesis.

The study employed a multi-sited ethnography (Marcus, 1995; Robben and Sluka, 2007), and a grounded theory approach (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2001). I collected data through a triangulation of methods (Denzin, 1989): semi-structured interviews, participant observation and archival research (see Chapter III). The grounded theory approach allowed for a constant interplay between theory and analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1997) which was beneficial to my study as it enabled me to apply a flexible approach and introduce changes when needed.

This research focuses on two historical Protestant churches: the Church of Ireland in the Republic of Ireland and the Waldensian Church in Italy. I have selected an area in both countries where the presence of migrants is highest, both in relation to labour market participation and membership in Protestant churches – Dublin in Ireland and the North-East region of Italy. The Church of Ireland responded to the increasing number of African migrants by appointing a pastor from Nigeria to liaise with the international community while the Union of the Waldensian and Methodist Churches of Italy [7] now has among its ministers a pastor from Ghana and another from the Congo. These appointments are part of wider projects (respectively titled the Discovery Project in Ireland and the Mezzano – Second District Project in Italy) aiming at dealing with the integration of newcomers within historical churches.

The Discovery Project and the Mezzano – Second District Project are the main case studies considered in this study in order to examine the integration policies

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[7] The Waldensian Church is the biggest mainline Protestant Church in Italy. Waldensians have been present in Italy since medieval times. Methodists have been present in Italy since the nineteenth century. Co-operation between these two churches increased after the Second World War, culminating in the signing of a Covenant of integration in 1975.

and practices employed by Protestant churches. I analyse how these projects were developed and focus on the role of ministers who came from Africa and were appointed to act as mediators between the Italian/Irish and the African parts of the congregations.

It is important to stress that using the term 'African' is controversial. People from different African countries are very diverse: cultures, traditions and languages differ from one country to another and within the same country as emerged from fieldwork in both countries. The same applies to the term 'European'. However, I have decided to use the terms African and European because that is the way my interviewees described themselves and others.

The adoption of a grounded theory approach, applied to a multi-sited ethnography – see Chapter III – enabled me to engage with data and theory throughout the entire research process and, thus, to refine the analysis as new questions or themes arose. One significant element which emerged during data collection was the role of the symbolic paradigm embedded in the religious *habitus* of churchgoers. In both countries Protestant churchgoers from different countries have different *religious habitus,* which means they have different ways of expressing their spirituality, different attitudes towards ethics and the role of the church in society, and different expectations as to what mission the church should fulfil.

Thesis outline

The overall structure of this research takes the form of eight chapters, excluding this introductory part. Chapter I discusses migration patterns and integration processes in Ireland and Italy (e.g. Grillo and Pratt, 2002; Fanning, 2007; Kosic and Triandafyllidou, 2007; Lentin and Titley, 2011; Lentin and Moreo, 2012). As integration is the focus of this dissertation, I outline state narratives and policies on migration and integration separately from the theory chapter.

Chapter II focuses on the theoretical framework employed in this study intersecting theories of religion, identity and belonging. First of all it looks at the relations between religion and secularisation (Berger, 1967; Casanova, 1994; Knott, 2005; Davie, 2007), and analyses the place of religion in contemporary society. Secondly, it highlights the ties between religion and national identity (Edensor, 2002; Guerrina, 2002; Furseth and Repstad, 2006) in defining Irishness

and Italianness (see Chapter IV and VI). Thirdly, it draws upon theories of community construction (Bauman, 1996; Jenkins, 2004) to analyse the self-understanding of Protestant Churches as minority churches and to reflect on how the dichotomy identity/alterity, which is central to Protestents' self-identification vis-à-vis Catholics in both countries, shifts and is redeployed in the notion of indigenous, Irish and Italian, Protestants versus migrant Protestants. Fourthly, the chapter uses theories of migrant belonging (Warner, 1998; Hirschman, 2007; Ugba, 2007a; Levitt and Hejtmanek, 2009) and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 2000; Adogame, 2013) to examine the role played by religion during and after the migration journey as well as migrants' tendency and need to retain, revive and rehearse aspects of their native cultures and religious habits, as developed further in chapters V, VII and VIII.

Chapter III outlines the methodological framework which has driven the research: a combination of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1997) and ethnography (Marcus, 1995; Robben and Sluka, 2007). The chapter outlines the research design, an exploratory case study (Yin, 2003), looking in particular at the integration projects (Discovery in Ireland and Mezzano – Second District in Italy). Subsequently, the chapter presents the context of the fieldwork in detail with separate sections for the Irish and the Italian fields. It then outlines the methods chosen for the data analysis, corroborated by a triangulation of methods (Denzin, 1989) – semi-structured interviews, participant observation and archival research - and it concludes with a reflection on the researcher's position and the challenges faced. Being reflexive about my situated knowledge was a relevant methodological tool (Davies, 1999) which helped me examine my own positionality and how it influenced the research process.

Chapters IV, V VI and VII present the data, the core of this study, in four parallel chapters: two chapters deal with the history and position of Protestant Churches in each of the countries analysed, and the other two analyse churches' integration policies and practices in Ireland and Italy.

Chapters IV and V discuss the history and development of Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy respectively, showing the links between religion and national identity, the role of Protestant Churches before and after Independence, and their relationships with the notions of Irishness and Italianness (Connolly, 1985; Tourn

et. al., 1989, 1996; Coakley, 2012). Chapter V and VII analyse specific integration projects in Ireland and Italy (the main case studies are the Discovery Project in Ireland and the Mezzano – Second District Project in Italy) and, through participant observation in local congregations, investigate how integration policies were translated into practice at the local level highlighting the gaps between policies and practices.

By way of conclusion, Chapter VIII draws on the findings presented in the data chapters, and summarises the key issues which emerged from the research. The chapter continues by discussing areas which deserve to be explored further such as the factors fostering and hindering migrants' participation in churches; the role of churches in providing social protection to migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, thus acting in a state-like capacity but, paradoxically, also often against the laws of the state; and how gender and leadership roles within churches are challenged and reshaped through the inclusion of migrants. Finally, the chapter reflects on the unexpected outcomes of the research and its limitations.

Chapter I

Intersecting migration and integration debates in Ireland and Italy

Introduction

This chapter has three main aims. The first is to provide a brief review of scholarly and EU debates on the meaning of integration and to analyse the development of policy measures, discourses and attitudes that tend to link integration with security and social cohesion. The second is to look at migration patterns in Ireland and Italy showing similarities and differences and to demonstrate that both countries were never monocultural, as dominant state narratives tend to claim, and that ethnic minorities were present even before both countries 'officially' became in-migration destinations. The third aim is to analyse the integration strategies adopted by the Irish and Italian states, and to highlight the differences between the two approaches. While the Irish debate has been shaped since the very beginning by privileging the concept of interculturalism as opposed to multiculturalism, the latter preferred in other EU member states, in particular the UK, in Italy state discourses continued to deny the reality of being an ethnically diverse society, at least until 2012, and to frame migration as a security and border control issue. Furthermore, the integration policies adopted in the two states are often at odds with the principles underlining theoretical definitions of integration. The chapter also challenges the very concept of integration, especially the assumption, often reiterated in policy documents, that economic self-sufficiency guarantees migrants' social inclusion and integration. Overall the chapter highlights the specific contexts in which Irish and Italian Protestant churches operate and sets the basis for analysing the impact that state debates and policies have on the integration strategies adopted by Protestant Churches themselves.

Integration

> 'Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of EU countries'. (COM, 2005: 389) [8]

To better understand how churches develop their integration strategies and seek to incorporate migrants into their communities it is useful to look first at how the concept of integration emerged specifically to name and address issues around migration and how the nexus migration/integration evolved.

The term integration appears problematic as it is open to different and conflicting interpretations (Baubock, 1994; Loyal, 2007). What does integration mean? And, moreover, integration of whom into what? Maguire and Titley (2010) trace the genesis of integration in Europe stating that the link between integration and migration does not have a long history but dates back to 1974 when the European Commission issued the *Action Plan in Favour of Migrant Workers and their Families*: 'When one looks back over developments in the 1980s and 1990s one can see the progressive instantiation of systems, institutions and policies that clearly hold migration, integration and security together' (Maguire and Titley, 2010: 2).

Following the 11th September 2001 attacks, the balance between the three axes – migration, integration and security – collapsed and security became the most important element of European and national policies: 'migration (understood to share a field with crime and terrorism) and integration (understood to share a field with cohesion, 'basic values', inviolable rights and national laws) were to be framed more and more as matters of security' (Maguire and Titley, 2010: 2).

In 2004 the European Commission issued 11 *Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy*. While stating that integration is a dynamic two-ways process, the adopted principles also tend to emphasise migrants' duty to integrate and the need to achieve a balance between tolerance of diversity and respect for 'the basic values of the EU' to ensure social cohesion. The basic values

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[8] See http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/free_movement_of_persons_asylum_immigration/l14502_en.htm (accessed 28/12/2011).

in question – inviolable European rights and national laws - are clearly not negotiable (Maguire and Titley, 2010). Despite the avowed commitment to fostering 'mutual accommodation between immigrant and residents of member states', EU policies illustrate that integration is closely linked to managing migration and security.

The governance of integration indeed includes border control to ensure the inclusion of the right type of migrants, those migrants who are wanted, skilled, who are not seen as a burden or a danger to the values and the social cohesion of nations, as highlighted also in 2007 by the former European Minister for Justice, Freedom and Security, Franco Frattini:

> If managed well, immigration is one area where our citizens will clearly see the added value of a European approach. Such an approach should help the EU to address, and to a certain extent reduce, unwanted phenomena such as unregulated migration and trafficking in human beings, while ensuring that Europe can welcome the migrants its economy needs and its society is capable and willing to receive (Frattini, 2007: 2).

Migrants' ability to integrate, according to EU discourses, is strictly linked to their status in the receiving country as noted by Maguire and Titley (2010).

> The trajectory of integration governance – extending, in theory, from a pricey automated phone test at 'home' to years of status-dependent tests, regulations and restrictions in the migration location – seeks to sort and manage subjects according to intersecting visions of labour market value, personal autonomy, cultural compatibility, and the socio-economic footprint of familial networks (Maguire and Titley, 2010: 4).

The value migrants can bring is framed by receiving states in strictly economic terms: at the top of the list there are highly sought after migrants, IT experts, doctors and other professionals; followed by nurses, students, and low skilled workers, often with precarious status; irregular migrants, refugees, asylum seekers are at the bottom of the list, the unwanted *human waste* Bauman (2004) refers to.

A question remains on how to integrate 'wanted' as well as 'unwanted' migrants. In different European states there have been different attempts to deal with diversity [9] resulting in different policy approaches, for instance assimilation, multiculturalism, interculturalism. At first glimpse there seems to be a clear distinction between the three. Assimilation implies the assumption that migrants have to become like the natives to be integrated. Multiculturalism implies a coexistence of different cultures and ethnic groups, while interculturalism implies not only the coexistence of different ethnic groups but focuses on the interaction and communication between them. These definitions, however, are not straightforward but rather open to different understandings which have different implications. I take the example of multiculturalism and interculturalism to show the blurred boundaries between these policies.

The term multiculturalism has been used and misused by politicians and policy makers. In addition scholars of multiculturalism provide different definitions of the concept itself and its possible applications (Wieviorka, 1998; Hall, 2000; Parekh, 2006). [10] According to Parekh (2006: 336) multiculturalism should be seen neither as a political doctrine nor as a philosophical theory but as a perspective on human life. He writes that, as each culture is inherently limited, and 'cannot embody the full richness, complexity and grandeur of human existence' society can only benefit from promoting exchange, dialogue, encounters between different cultures and groups.

Lentin, however, points out how often multicultural policies are negotiated with *leaders* of ethnic groups who do not necessarily represent the whole group as they

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[9] Lentin and Titley in The Crises of Multiculturalism argue that 'diversity, as a form of governmentality involved in specifying and acting upon forms of 'good' and 'bad' diversity in (post)multicultural societies, is prevalent in the European Union, where diversity is publicly and officially celebrated yet where not everybody qualifies to be recognized as the right kind of diverse subject... Diversity, like the headscarf... is bad diversity. It cannot be celebrated as a detachable, diverse good, it belongs to the resistant, risky communitarianism of the multicultural past... Bad diversity... is integral to the reworking of multicultural ontology after the failed experiment' (Lentin and Titley, 2011: 176).

[10] Hall (2000: 210) distinguishes between several varieties of multiculturalism – conservative, liberal, pluralist, commercial, corporate and revolutionary – where the emphasis is on the different approaches to diversity control and minority-majority relations; Wieviorka (1998) distinguishes between relatively integrated multicultural policies versus disintegrated ones where the difference is in the role given to economic integration as a source/tool of cultural integration.

are often male, old, religious. She argues that there is a contradiction between group rights and individual rights as '[m]ulticulturalist policies assume that all members of ethnic minority groups are equally committed to their group's 'culture', which is understood as fixed and unchanging, while, in reality, culture is a set of fluid and shifting discourses and practices' (Lentin, 2002: 231). Joppke argues, in line with Sartori (2000), that 'in no theory of multiculturalism is the explicit act of 'recognition' reciprocal, denoting instead an act that goes from the majority to the minority' (Joppke, 2004: 242).

It is evident that the multicultural paradigm has been developed and applied in different ways in different countries. Multiculturalism in UK is not the same as multiculturalism in Canada or the USA. Especially in Europe there have been critical voices against multicultural policies (Joppke, 2004; Vasta, 2007; Meer and Modood, 2008; Lentin and Titley, 2011). [11]

The other concept used to promote integration is interculturalism, which can be seen as an *alternative* to policies of multiculturalism (e.g., Favell, 2001; Lentin, 2002; Lentin and McVeigh, 2006; Mac Éinrí, 2001; Fanning, 2007; Kundnani, 2007). While integration is often misused to mean assimilation, interculturalism purports to understand integration as a two-way process involving both migrants and receiving societies. In practice, however, as highlighted by various scholars (Lentin, 2008; Lentin and Titley, 2011), intercultural policies tend to work in the same way as multicultural policies.

Before analysing how these debates have been incorporated into the Irish and Italian government integration strategies, I outline migration patterns in Ireland and Italy showing similarities and differences.

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[11] Joppke (2004) for instance, has been theorising the failure of multicultural policies or 'official multiculturalim' as he calls it, in the UK (Meer and Modood, 2008) but also in the Netherlands (Vasta, 2007). In autumn 2010 and winter 2011the German Chancellor and the UK Prime Minister respectively declared that multicultural policies had failed. However the research undertaken by Alana Lentin and Gavan Titley (2011) shows that 'a golden multicultural age' never existed and the crisis of multiculturalism is a projection of neoliberal societies' disjunctures'. In addition the authors note that the perceived failure of multiculturalism – or of a life lived in a multicultural environment – creates a climate where racism is both repudiated and reproduced.

Mapping Migration: From 'emigrant nations' to 'migration nations' and back to 'emigration nations'?

> 'There can be few people in either industrialised or less developed countries today who do not have personal experience of migration and its effects; this universal experience has become the hallmark of the age of migration' (Castles and Miller, 2003: 5).

Ireland and Italy share similar migration patterns. First of all they were both considered and saw themselves as emigration countries until the mid-1990s when statistics registered a reversal in trend due to increasing immigration rates. With the onset of the economic recession immigration started to decrease while emigration rates picked up again. However the economic crisis did not prevent migrants from continuing to arrive in Ireland and Italy; moreover the number of migrants who left as a consequence of the downturn was limited. In both countries state discourses around migration were premised on narratives of monoculturalism which did not recognise the diversity already present in society before the arrival of migrants in the 1990s.

While migration patterns might be similar, approaches to migration have been different in Ireland and Italy. In Ireland integration policies have pointed towards the creation of an intercultural society whereas in Italy, at least until 2012, there was still denial of the reality of multiculturality, and immigration policies focused primarily on preventing migrants from entering Italy. These scenarios, however, are not black and white: it is important to make a distinction between policies, their implementation and the perception society has of the changes that occurred due to migration as I describe below and in chapters IV and VI.

The next section analyses migration patterns in Ireland and Italy against the background of their narratives of being monocultural countries.

Managing migration in Ireland

Ireland experienced positive net migration for the first time in 1992; starting in 1996 the balance between emigration and immigration was reversed (Rhus, 2005; Ugba, 2007b): each year between 1996 and 2009 registered positive net migration. According to the data of the CSO (2012b) the estimated net migration ('000s) in

1992 was 7.4, in 1995 was -1.9, in 1996 was 8.0 and in 2002 reached 41.3. Until then the Republic of Ireland had considered itself an ethnically homogenous country despite the fact that minority groups and migrants had always been a reality. Migration was not a new phenomenon in Ireland: in fact, as Lentin (2012) points out, even before the 1990s, there were non-Irish residents, mainly from Britain and other Western countries:

> Over the centuries many waves of migrants and colonizers, including Celts, Vikings, Normans, and more recently British people, Jewish people, Italian people, Chinese people, have changed the composition of Ireland's population. However, since the 19th century Ireland was characterized by out-migration, particularly resulting from the 1840s Famine when millions were forced to emigrate, mostly to North America. In addition, Irish people have been migrating in large numbers to Britain: according to the 2001 British census, the first which allowed British citizens to express their Irish ethnicity, 1.2 per cent of the population of England and 0.98 per cent of the population of Scotland claimed Irish ethnicity. The Irish have been the largest group of migrants to Britain for over 200 years and currently as many as six million Britons have at least one Irish grandparent (including nearly everybody living in Northern Ireland). (Lentin, 2012: 9)

Since 1996 the ethnic profile of Ireland's population has considerably changed (Ruhs, 2005). Ugba (2007b: 169) stresses that the inflow of those years resulted 'in dramatic changes in Ireland's socio-cultural and demographic landscape' within a short period of time. However Lentin (2012), in line with Mac Éinrí (2001), highlights that Ireland's 'large scale in-migration was mostly driven by return migration' and 'other large groups come from other EU states or from the US' (Lentin, 2012: 11).

Net migration remained particularly high for the four years after 2004 due to the enlargement of the European Union through the accession of new member states, in particular Poland and Lithuania. Ireland, along with Sweden and the UK, did not impose restrictions on their access to the labour market. The table below reports the nationalities of the largest migrant groups living in Ireland at the time of the 2006 Census.

Table 1: Selected nationalities in Ireland according to CSO 2006

Nationality	Total
Poland	63,276
Lithuania	24,268
Nigeria	16,300
Latvia	13,319
China	11,161
Philippines	9,548

Source: CSO (2006)

The Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI, 2008: 55) compared the Census of 2006 with the 2001 Census, concluding that the groups who increased their presence the most between the two censuses were the Chinese (from 5,842 to 11,161), Indians (from 2,534 to 8,460), Lithuanians (from 2,104 to 24,638) and Nigerians (from 8,969 to 16,300).

> All these rapid population changes occurred within a short period of time, during which the Republic's economy experienced an unprecedented boom. At the same time, contradictory state policies emphasized both increasingly restrictive immigration and integration. (Lentin, 2012: 12)

The Irish state had actively encouraged immigration, through issuing work permits and work visas throughout the late nineties and early 2000s to address labour shortages. Yet Irish government policy, 'focused on migrant workers largely in terms of economic criteria (...) rather than examining the consequences of increased immigration in terms of access to housing, education, health services, transport, social welfare, and civil and political rights' (Loyal, 2003: 121). During the economic boom of the 1990s, dubbed the 'Celtic tiger' (Kirby *et al.*, 2002; Kirby, 2004), Ireland also experienced a considerable rise in the number of asylum applications, [12] a fact which did not sit well with the state's narrow economic concerns. Thus while continuing to issue work permits and visas to workers from outside the EU, the Irish government also started to introduce restrictive and

[12] According to the Office of the Refugees Applications Commissioner (ORAC, 2003) Ireland moved from receiving 39 applications in 1992, to 3,883 applications in 1997 to arrive at 11,634 in 2002. In 2012 the ORAC reported 956 applications for refugee status (ORAC, 2012).

punitive measures aimed at deterring asylum seekers from seeking refuge in Ireland.

The 2004 referendum on citizenship is a clear example of the restrictive policies Lentin (2006, 2012) refers to. Until 2004 all persons born on the island of Ireland acquired *jus soli* citizenship regardless of the legal status of their parents. An automatic right to citizenship by birth became included in Article 2 of the constitution in 1998 as a result of the Good Friday Agreement 1998 [13] (Honohan, 2010: 14). Concerned with the fact that migrants were acquiring residency rights by giving birth to a citizen child (Luibhéid, 2013), the Irish government proposed a constitutional amendment to remove the automatic entitlement to citizenship; the government's proposal was supported by 78.9% of the voting population, and according to Lentin and McVeigh (2006), the amendment and the referendum, by underlining the supremacy of *ius sanguinis* citizenship over *ius soli,* were inherently racist. The adoption of the twenty-seventh constitutional amendment changed the law as follows:

> Notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution, a person born in the island of Ireland, which includes its islands and seas, who does not have, at the time of the birth of that person, at least one parent who is an Irish citizen or entitled to be an Irish citizen is not entitled to Irish citizenship or nationality, unless provided for by law. (The Irish National and Citizenship Act 2004, N. 38, Article 9.2.1)

Despite these punitive measures, the latest 2011 Census shows that the Irish immigrant population continues to grow: 8.2 per cent over the 5 year intercensal period (CSO, 2012). While the number of migrants (33,674) is less than the level recorded in the previous Census 2006 (93,200), it is important to underline that Ireland still remains a country chosen by migrants despite the economic crisis (CSO, 2012). The Census reports that during the intercensal period 2006-2011(April) the largest groups of immigrants came from Poland, UK, France, Lithuania, Spain and the USA. Between 2006 and 2011 'Polish nationals increased

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[13] Eithne Luibhéid specifies that 'birthright citizenship had been the rule since the establishment of the independent Irish state, even though it was not included in the constitution but was written into law' (2013: 151).

by 93.7 per cent from 63,276 to 122,585, accounting for almost half of the total increase among this group, and overtaking UK nationals as the largest non-Irish group living in Ireland. Other groups that showed large increases were Latvians, Lithuanians, Romanians, Brazilians' (CSO, 2012: 33). The number of Nigerians, which represented one of the largest in-migration group among Protestant Churches (see chapter IV), remained among the top 10 nationalities in Ireland showing a slight increase (8.2 per cent of change) compared to the 2006 Census data (CSO, 2012a).

The 2011 Census reported also emigration rates and the changes occurred between 2006 and 2011. Emigration among Irish nationals moved from 15,000 in 2006 to 13,000 in 2008 to 40,200 in 2011 (CSO, 2011b). 'Emigration among Irish nationals continue to increase sharply from 27,700 to 40,200 over 12 months to April 2011 while emigration among non-Irish persons fell for the second year in a row. Irish nationals were by far the largest constituent group among emigrants (almost 53 per cent) followed by EU12 nationals (i.e. ten accession states, Bulgaria and Romania) who accounted for just 20 per cent of the emigration group' (CSO, 2011: 1b).

Approaches to integration in Ireland have been shaped by three factors: the experience of states with longer histories of immigration, EU policies, and the specificity of the Irish experience of migration (Gray, 2006). As Mac Éinrí (2001, 2007) observes, the debate in new immigration societies, such as Ireland, has naturally focused on who gets in and on the conditions of entry. However he notes that there has been an increasing focus on *integration,* on the post-migration discourse (2007), as I further discuss in this chapter. The Irish Government's understanding of integration sees it as a two-way process, even though the definition of integration adopted emphasises more migrants' responsibility to integrate:

> Integration means the ability to participate to the extent that a person needs and wishes in all of the major components of society, without having to relinquish his or her own cultural identity.
>
> (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 1999)

The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform published two documents aiming at fostering integration and countering discrimination, *Integration. A two*

way process (2000) and *the National Plan against Racism* (2005), and appointed a Minister for Integration (2007) 'to develop, lead and co-ordinate migrant integration policy across other Government Departments, agencies and services'. [14] One of the first steps taken by the newly constituted Office of the Minister for Integration (later renamed Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration) was the publication of 'Migration Nation' (2008), the Irish government's official statement on integration strategy and diversity management. This document 'recognises that a key challenge facing government and Irish society is the imperative to integrate people of different cultures, ethnicity, language and religion so that they become the new Irish citizens of the 21st century', [15] and sets out the principles that underpin state integration policy. The key principles identified are: a partnership approach between government and NGOs; a link between integration and social inclusion; the necessity of avoiding parallel communities; a commitment to mainstreaming services; and a strong focus on the role of local communities in promoting integration. These examples are proposed to stress the complexity and the nuances of integration debates in Ireland- which I further discuss in the next section - and to show the different approach undertaken by the Irish government compared to the Italian one.

Integration discourses in Ireland: 'The Intercultural era'

As mentioned above, Mac Éinrí (2001, 2007) observes that in Ireland the debate on immigration has moved from 'who gets in' to the post-migration stage, namely 'how to integrate those who are here':

> What happens to people once they are here? Will they be expected, as used to be said about Ireland's various immigrants in earlier centuries, to become *more Irish than the Irish themselves*? Or will new immigrant countries such as Ireland move towards a more multicultural model? (...) The challenges posed by these issues are compounded by the fact that Ireland shares the traditions of the European nation-state, often defining

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[14] See: http://www.integration.ie/website/omi/omiwebv6.nsf/page/aboutusroleofofficepromotionmigrantintegration-overview-en.

[15] http://www.integration.ie/website/omi/omiwebv6.nsf/page/aboutus-migrationnation-en

> itself in exclusionary ways and grounded in cultural, linguistic and historical experiences, reflecting what Tracy (2000) has called a WHISC (White Heterosexual Irish Settled Catholic) discourse. (...) The WHISC is a social construct rather than a fact, and does not adequately represent the reality of a country that, contrary to myth, has always had some immigration (Mac Éinrí, 2007b: 215).

Ireland's approach to integration is based on the discourse of interculturalism rather than multiculturalism. The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI), established by the Irish government in 1997 to develop policies to address racism, was one of the first agencies to articulate the concept of interculturalism in Ireland. The NCCRI defined it as an 'interaction between majority and minority cultures to foster understanding and respect. It is about ensuring that cultural diversity is acknowledged and catered for. Developing a more inclusive and intercultural society is about inclusion by design, not as an add-on or afterthought. It is essentially about creating the conditions for interaction, equality of opportunity, understanding and respect' (NCCRI, 2008: 7). Despite interculturalism being the policy discourse officially endorsed by the government, the NCCRI was closed down by the government at the end of December 2008 as a result of Government budgetary cutbacks. [16] However, as Fanning points out, while intercultural policies have become partially institutionalised within the state, they have had limited impact on Irish responses to immigration. He highlights that in 'the Irish case debates about integration must contend with political responses to immigration that have removed a range of social entitlements from new immigrants' (Fanning, 2007: 238).

Lentin (2001) critiques both Irish multiculturalist and interculturalist politics as top-down policies, 'anchored in a liberal politics of recognition of difference, which do not depart from western cultural imperialism and are therefore inadequate in terms of deconstructing inter-ethnic power relations' (1.7). 'The ideology of multiculturalism', Lentin (2001) states, 'was developed, in the Irish context and elsewhere, not as eradication, but rather as an accommodation of the

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[16] See www.nccri.ie

persistence of inequalities despite the rhetoric of integration, assimilation and equality' (3.3).

Mac Éinrí (2007: 232) argues that policy innovation in the area of integration has been limited and in government reports it is still not fully clear what 'is meant by a politics of integration in the most comprehensive sense of the term, bearing in mind issues, debates and discourses outlined'. Maguire and Titley (2010) highlight the rhetoric behind the so-called 'two-way process' integration discourse in Ireland:

> Irish integration policy is a thin *laissez-faire* strategy aiming to cultivate and mediate tolerable forms of diversity. At the same time, it gathers an index of governmental strategies to stratify and divide migrants in a layer-cake model that runs from full exclusion to full citizenship, and that, as Gray argues, is interested in a particularly neoliberal form of action on the conduct of 'autonomous' subjects. (2010, p. 7)

Finally, in *Migrant Activism: Integration from Below in Ireland* (Lentin and Moreo, 2012), Lentin shows 'that migrants often explicitly appropriate state integrationist discourses, not always cognizant that interculturalism, diversity and integration are policy responses to what Hall (2000) conceptualizes as the 'problem of difference'' (Lentin, 2012: 196). For Lentin, to focus on the work, campaigns and activities of migrant-led associations, which she theorises as instances of 'integration from below', can provide a different angle from which to interpret integration, an argument I further develop when discussing the practices of migrant respondents in chapter V.

In the next sections I analyse migration trends in Italy, the Italian government's responses and its integration policies.

Managing migration in Italy

Like Ireland, Italy experienced net-migration in recent years, but the timing is different. While major incoming flows began in the 1990s, immigration rates had already started to increase during the 1970s (Kosic and Triandafyllidou, 2007; Amato 2008). Immigration as well as ethnic diversity in Italy were not new phenomena (Grillo and Pratt, 2002; Amato, 2008; Guolo, 2010). Amato (2008)

highlights that migrants' presence was not a novelty as political refugees and Chinese communities had been living in Italy since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Like Amato, other researchers have also challenged the rhetoric of Italy as culturally and ethnically homogenous (Grillo and Pratt, 2002), as I analyse in Chapter II.

Another element to be considered here concerns the relationship between immigration and the economy. In contrast to Ireland, immigration in Italy did not begin in a period of reconstruction and economic development; 'rather, it took off during a period of economic recession characterised among other things, by an increase in the rate of unemployment' (Kosic and Triandafyllidou, 2007: 186). Kosic and Triandafyllidou (2007) identify three main migration flows for the period between the 1970s and the late 1990s. The first wave, which started in the 1970s, included students and refugees from different countries and reached its peak in 1984 when Britain, France and Germany closed their borders. The second wave, between 1990 and 1996, was characterised by migration from the Balkans and Eastern Europe. The third flow, referring to the period after 1996, saw 'a major settlement of immigrants in Italy and a higher number of requests of family reunification' (2007: 186).

According to the Dossier Caritas and Migrantes (2009), at the end of December 2008, there were 4,329,000 regular migrants [17] living in Italy. The largest nationalities were Romania, Albania, Morocco and China. The Dossier states that despite the economic and labour crisis – which started in 2008 and is still ongoing – migration inflow has not decreased; on the contrary, there has been an increase of 458,644 non-Italian residents in 2008 which means a rise of 13.4 per cent compared to the previous year (Caritas/Migrantes, 2009: 1). According to the latest Dossier Caritas and Migrantes (2013: 1), even in times of crisis immigration has continued to grow: 'the 3.4 million foreign citizens residing in Italy in 2007 have became 4,387,721 in 2012, equal to 7.4 per cent of the total Italian population'. According to the Dossier the number of non-EU residents increased, from 2.6 million to 3,764,236, and the total number of regular immigrants increased from

[17] In this context the term regular migrant refers to individuals who have a regular permission to stay in the country. The distinction is made because of the high number of undocumented migrants living and working in Italy.; a number which is very difficult to track down.

3,982,000 to 5,186,000. Furthermore, the Dossier reports that the major groups came from Europe (50.3 per cent), followed by Africa (22.2 per cent), Asia (19.4 per cent), America (8.0 per cent) and Oceania (0.1 per cent). The report also shows that the majority of migrants (61.8%) live in the north of Italy (Caritas/Migrantes, 2013:1-2).

Similarly to Ireland, Italy's approach to immigration lacks a comprehensive and consistent immigration policy framework. Furthermore, political and media debates in Italy have been dominated by concerns on how to prevent the arrival of 'illegal immigrants' and making borders more 'secure': 'Because of its geographic position, this country is highly exposed to penetration by illegal immigrants from the south and from the east. Moreover, like other southern EU countries, Italy has a widespread informal economy, thereby providing fertile ground for illegal migration to operate. Combating undocumented immigration and the trafficking of human beings is a priority for both security and foreign policy. It is also an issue to which public opinion is extremely sensitive' (Kosic and Triandafyllidou, 2007: 185).

Several regularisation programmes (in 1986, 1990, 1998 and 2002) were enacted by the Italian government in order to attempt to overcome the issue of undocumented migration, which enabled more than two million migrants to regularise their status (Kosic and Triandafyllidou, 2007). The second half of the 1990s saw many requests for family reunification and at the time of writing (autumn, 2013) Italy has one of the best policies in EU as regards family reunification. However, despite the above mentioned laws, integration programmes in Italy are still at an early stage. Since 2002, with the enforcement of the Bossi/Fini law, [18] most of the legal efforts have concentrated on security – preventing migrants from entering the country – and on integrating regular migrants within the labour market. Furthermore, the law instituted the reato di clandestinità: introducing criminal sanctions for persons caught illegally entering the country or returning after being expelled. Under the law, an immigrant who is stopped without a residence permit can be subjected to detention and immediate expulsion.

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[18] Law 189/2002.

As I analyse in the next sections, until 2012 Italy did not consider itself a multicultural country and saw migration as a 'problem' to be dealt with. The best example is the hostile attitude towards migrants found in the media: 'Italian public attitudes, initially characterised by 'social tolerance' towards immigrants, have given way to hostile and xenophobic behaviour in recent years' (Bonifazi and Cerbera, 1999; see also Triandafyllidou, 1999). It is since the 1990s that creeping xenophobia in new forms (Balbo and Marconi, 1990) or virulent and explicit racist reactions, such a those seen in the propaganda of the northern Lombard League, have emerged (Kosic and Triandafyllidou, 2007: 193). Furthermore, the determination of the Italian government to repatriate migrants who reach Italian shores, de facto preventing them from applying for asylum and thus breaking the 1951 Geneva Convention , and the agreement with Tunisia to establish Centres for Indefinite Detention for migrants in Tunisia, has fuelled tension and fomented racism. [19]

Integration discourses in Italy: 'Migration without integration'

As the numbers reported in this chapter show Italy is a multicultural society where different ethnic groups coexist despite different attempts by the former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi to deny it through statements like 'Italy will never become a multicultural country'. [20] As Grillo and Pratt (2002) put it, it is multiculturalism Italian-style: the country is *de facto* multicultural – as statistics demonstrate – even though the government does not promote multicultural policies. It appears that at governmental level there is no will to promote migrants' social inclusion. Guolo (2010) argues that, although migrants have been part of Italian society for many years and their number is constantly increasing, Italians do not understand the changes that migration has brought. This can be considered a direct consequence of the lack of public and policy discourses on integration as

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[19] http://www.adnkronos.com/IGN/News/Politica/Emergenza-immigrati-accordo-governo-autonomie-locali_311875446191.html; http://www.stranieriinitalia.it/attualita-maroni_siamo_stati_lasciati_da_soli_nell_emergenza_immigrati_13584.html ; http://www.esteri.it/MAE/IT/Sala_Stampa/ArchivioNotizie/Approfondimenti/2011/04/20110406_Accordo_ItaliaTunisia.htm (accessed 02/11/2011)

[20] For more details see the following articles on different newspapers: We don't want Italy to become a multiethnic, multicultural country. We are proud of our traditions' Berlusconi at national radio May 2009 available at http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKTRE5491CC20090510 (accessed 02/11/2011).

government actors, and public opinion, have focused instead on how to prevent or stop immigration. Therefore political debates and government policies tend to concentrate on security and border control issues rather than on fostering and promoting integration.

Grillo (2002) reports that when dealing with immigration there is an overlapping of three agendas (see Rex, 1996; Castles, 1997): a 'control', a 'social' and a 'difference' agenda. He argues that recognition of difference is not always or necessarily positive. He points out that 'Italians have historically (at least since unification) recognised a difference between North and South (...) In fact there is a multiplicity of axes of recognition in Italy (some of them very old and well-established), and recognition of immigrants (extracomunitari) now finds its place among them. It might be argued that Italy is still at the point where the problem is to establish a politics of positive recognition, [21] rather than implement a politics of difference' (Grillo, 2002: 22).

Despite some legislative developments which facilitate the presence of migrants in the country (in relation to family reunification and access to long term residence status), research undertaken by academics (Naso and Salvarani, 2009, Triandafillydou, 2007; Colombo, 2011) and policy makers working for NGOs shows that there are two main issues which hinder the development of integration policies in Italy. Firstly migrants face difficulties in regularising their residency status, sometimes even when in possession of a job. Secondly, the government approaches in dealing with migration is best described as one of perennial emergency [22] whereby problems are addressed through measures like increasing border control and deportations.

I further discuss issues related to the Italian state's approach to migrant integration in Chapter V and VII where I locate church integration policies within the context of Italian government's policies. I now move to analyse the integration policies in

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[21] The concept of recognition has been critiqued as the question of who does the recognition remains (Lentin and Titley, 2011).

[22] The media also have a role to play in fuelling the status of emergency. See some of the newspaper articles which show the position of the Italian government and the agreement signed with the Tunisian government to repatriate migrants who reach Italian shores: http://www.adnkronos.com/IGN/News/Politica/Emergenza-immigrati-accordo-governo-autonomie-locali_311875446191.html (accessed 02/12/2011)

place in Italy and Ireland, assessing their efficacy and discussing the perceptions Irish and Italian people have on sensitive issues linked to discriminatory areas.

The Migrant Integration Policy Index: the integration policies in Ireland and Italy

The churches attended by migrants are not 'islands': they are connected, linked, to the territory they are located in. Consequently churches and churchgoers are influenced by the policies put in place by goverments – either in line or in contrast with their needs and goals – as I articulate in the course of this thesis. The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) 23 provides relevant data for my own research on integration policies in Ireland and Italy. The diagram below shows the seven areas identified by MIPEX as migrant integration indicators shaping the journey to full citizenship: labour market access; family reunion; education; long-term residence; political participation; access to nationality; and anti-discrimination. [24]

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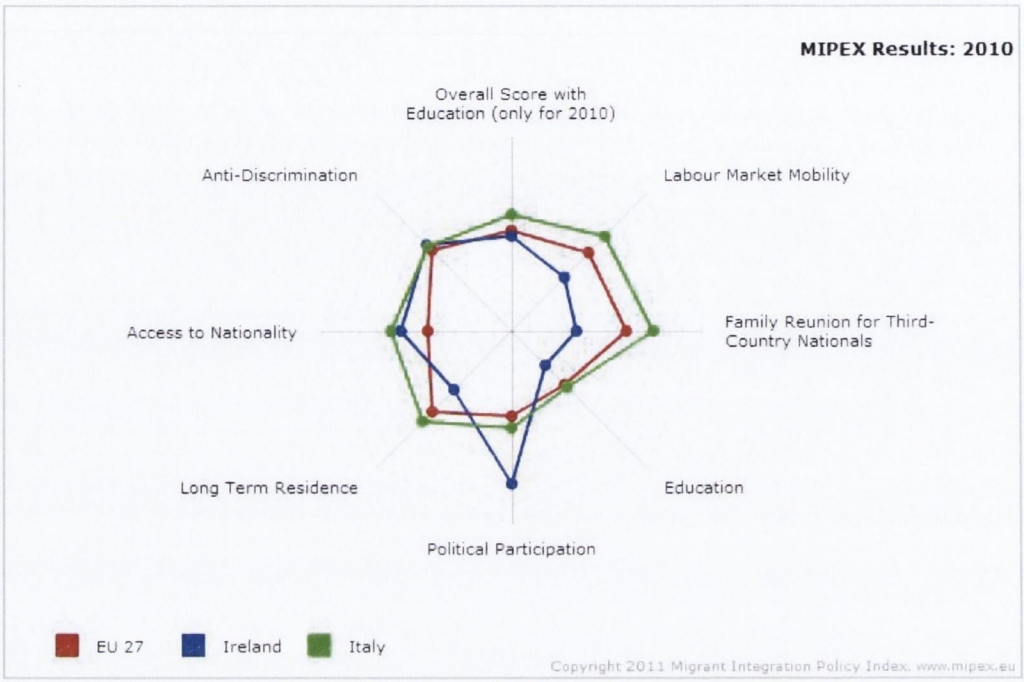
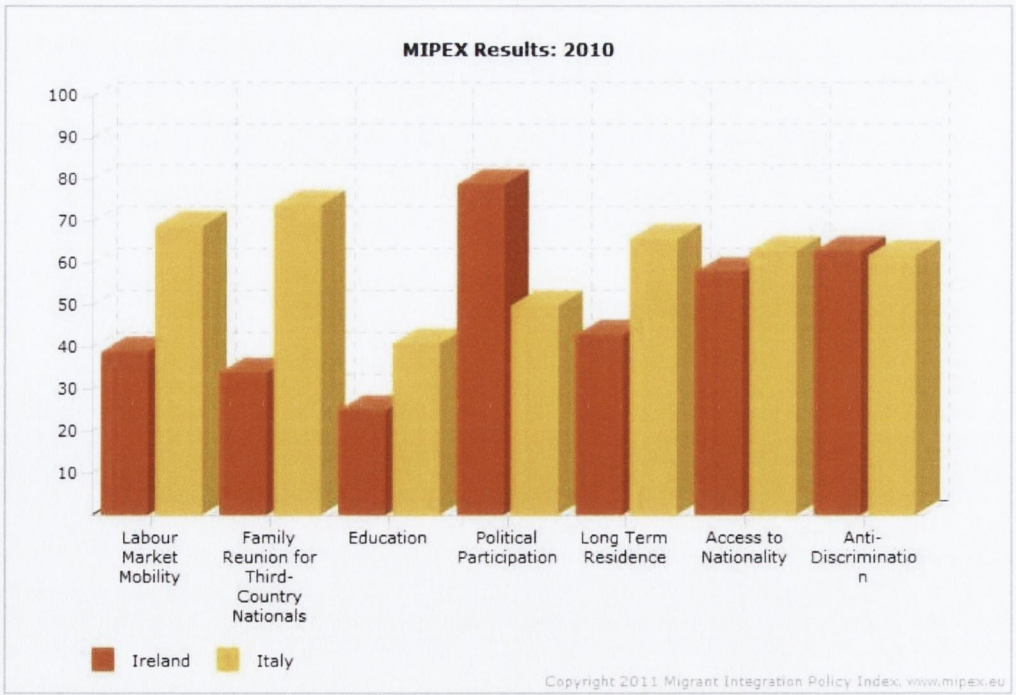
[23] The Migrant Integration Policy Index was first published in 2004 as the European Civic Citizenship and Inclusion Index. It was the first time that the policies of the EU-15 towards migrants had been presented in a concise, transparent and comparable format. The second edition of the MIPEX, conducted in 2007, measures policies to integrate migrants in 25 EU Member States and Canada, Norway and Switzerland. It uses over 140 policy indicators covering six policy areas which shape a migrant's journey to full citizenship: Labour market access; Family reunion; Long-term residence; Political participation; Access to nationality and Anti-discrimination. The data of the MIPEX were updated in 2010. http://www.mipex.eu/ (accessed 02/04/2014)

[24] The Multiculturalism Policy Index by Banting and Kymlicka records very similar policies and also groups and scores countries along the lines of access to dual nationality, education, media representation. Ireland and Italy have a very low total score (3 and 1 respectively). http://www.queensu.ca/mcp/index.html (accessed 02/04/2014)

Graphic 1: MIPEX results 2010 with the Irish and Italian scores



Graphic 2: Ireland and Italy integration indicators

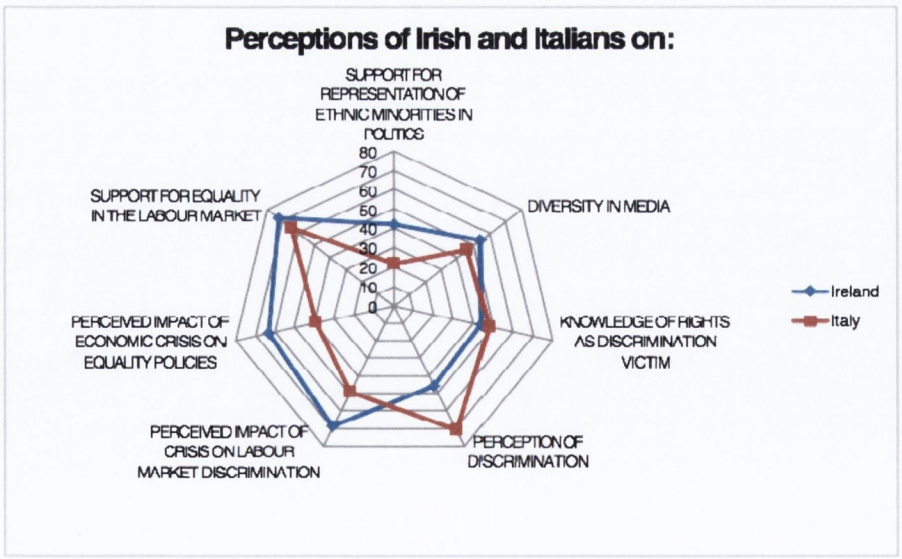


According to the MIPEX data Italy has good policies on a number of areas: labour market mobility, family reunification, long term residence; meanwhile, Ireland stands out for the high level of policies enabling migrants' political participation.[25]

Figure 1 shows the place of the two countries compared to the EU27 implying a more favourable position of Italy over Ireland. Looking at the 2010 data, Italy features at the 10th position considered as a country with 'favourable' integration policies while Ireland is in the 18th position among the countries which are considered 'halfway favourable'. Nevertheless, if we compare the 2007 and 2010 data (without taking into consideration 'Education' which was available only for the 2010 data) both countries have lost scores meaning that their integration policies in general are becoming 'less favourable'.

There is, however, a gap between these policies and the perception that citizens have of them. This is more evident in relation to the perceptions Irish and Italian people have of discriminatory issues such as access to political parties, representation in the media, equality in the labour market, impact of the economic crisis on labour market discrimination or on equality policies, and perceptions of discrimination.

Figure 1: Irish and Italian perceptions



SOURCE: Special Eurobarometer 317 - Discrimination in the EU. fieldwork May-June 2009

[25] However, the state of political participation of migrants in Ireland appears more nuanced as Chadamoyo, Fanning and Mutwarasibo (2007) demonstrate.

The data on Italy show a contradictory scenario regarding migration and integration: on the one hand Italy has some policies which foster migrants' economic integration; on the other, the 'perception of discrimination' is very high (71 per cent). 'The broad assumption underlying the legislation is that labour market integration – employment – is a necessary and sufficient condition to guarantee social integration, when coupled with parity of rights and access to public services' (Kosic and Triandafyllidou, 2007: 195). This dichotomy is well represented by the rhetoric surrounding the integration debate in Italy above.

The data on Ireland shows the impact of the crisis on integration and increasing fears of being discriminated on the basis of ethnicity and religion which is also reflected on the integration debates. Taking into consideration the research undertaken on 'Intolerance in Western Europe' based also on the European Values Survey data, it emerges that diversity is feared and that intolerance [26] is increasing in many European Western countries. Along with the rise of intolerance, the study illustrates 'a documented increase in support for and visibility of extremist and populist political parties, and an apparent rise in manifestations of intolerant attitudes, both in national policy and more widely in the behaviour of individuals'. [27] Trends varied across countries, and regions and also with respect to different ethnic, national and religious groups, however intolerance towards Roma has increased more than towards any other ethnic groups.

The negative perceptions of migrants and ethnic minorities in Europe on the one hand, and the mis-perception of the phenomenon of migration – including lack of knowledge and/or contact with migrants – on the other, does not help in fostering the integration process. In this regard it is important to note the research on perception and reality on immigration and religion (among various themes) carried out by *Ipsos Mori* (2014) which revealed how many European countries have a false perception of the reality when it comes to the percentage of migrants in their

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[26] Intolerance was defined in this study as a lack of acceptance of or hostility towards others specifically on the grounds of their minority status.

[27] http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR300/RR334/RAND_RR334.pdf. xi (accessed 10/12/2014).

midst. [28] On that specific question, the majority of Italians, for instance, believe that migrants represent 30 percent of the total population while in reality they account only for 7 percent.

By analysing the migration patterns of the last decades in Ireland and Italy, the migration management and the integration strategies set up by the two governments to deal with increased diversity, the chapter provided the basis from which to understand, theorise and assess the integration policies developed by the Irish and Italian Protestant Churches discussed in Chapters V and VII.

The next two chapters engage with the theoretical and methodological framework employed in this study.

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[28] https://www.ipsos-mori.com/DownloadPublication/1634_sri-perceptions-and-reality-immigration-report-2013.pdf and http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/oct/29/todays-key-fact-you-are-probably-wrong-about-almost-everything (accessed 10/12/2014).

Chapter II

Theorising Religion, Identity and Belonging

Introduction

As outlined in the introduction, this thesis analyses Protestant Churches' responses to the increasing numbers of migrants, especially from Africa, who joined their congregations; it focuses on the churches' integration strategies and the projects implemented at ground level to address migrants' needs and on the challenges both migrants and indigenous believers face when their religious landscapes change. Migration can be a traumatising experience even in today's world where communication has become easier and travel is relatively inexpensive. In fact, being in a strange land, coping with expectations, missing family and friends whose support can no longer be taken for granted are all potential causes of trauma. Hirschman makes this point succinctly, stating 'Even the most routine activities of everyday life - shopping for food, working, and leisure time pursuits - can be alienating experiences for many new immigrants who find themselves in strange settings that require constant mental strain to navigate and to be understood' (Hirschman, 2007:395).

Because of the complexities of the issues under analysis it is necessary to theorise a) the place of religion in the lives of both indigenous and migrant populations; b) the churches' role in supporting migrants during and after the migration journey; and c) the mutually constitutive relation between belonging, identity, and otherness which shapes not only the relationships between Irish and Italian Protestants and Irish and Italian Catholics but also between Irish and Italian Protestants and migrant Protestants.

Chapter I outlined the integration strategies put in place by Ireland and Italy in response to the increasing number of migrants since the 1990s, and laid the basis for chapters V and VII, the core of the thesis, where the integration policies and initiatives developed by the Protestant Churches are discussed in detail. This

chapter provides the thesis's theoretical foundation: drawing on the work of Coleman and Collins (2004) who state that there are ambiguous attachments between religion, identity and nation, I argue that these ambiguous attachments influence the articulation of *who is in and who is out* of the community, and that this distinction is central to the formulation of churches' integration policies no matter how different these may be in form and content.

I start this chapter with a review of theories of secularisation in contemporary Europe; I examine the place of religion in today's Europe, drawing upon the sociology of religion, and focus on the ties between religion and national identity, ties which differ from country to country. I continue by analysing the construction of Irish and Italian national identity and I look at the notions of Irishness and Italianness, highlighting how these are closely linked to the Roman Catholic Church, although in historically specific and different ways. I show how Protestants, a minority religious group in both countries, were largely excluded from the nation building narratives which laid out the seemingly constitutive elements of Irishness and Italianness. I then analyse the Irish and Italian states' position towards religious minorities in order to theorise the articulation of Protestant identity vis-à-vis national identity discourses.

In the second part of the chapter I rely on theories of community construction and belonging and contextualise them, both in relation to religion and to the specific realities, Italy and Ireland, under consideration. More specifically I draw on theories of community construction to outline the historical articulation and self-understanding of Protestant Churches as minority communities; I analyse the process of collective identification, based on the dichotomy us versus them, Protestants versus Catholics, which links Protestant Churches' members. I then look at how the terms of this dichotomy have changed following the arrival of migrants, and how migrants have become the new 'strangers', in the sense suggested by Simmel, against whom a community defines itself. Finally, the last section engages with social capital theories arguing that Protestant churches as communities constitute a form of social capital in so far as they provide benefits and advantages to their members. I begin by looking at the role played by religion and churches for migrants during and after their migration journey and continue by positing that church membership can be considered a form of social capital which

is bonding or bridging depending on the type of relations developed by the members of a religious community.

Religion and secularisation in Europe

A number of factors need to be taken into account when reflecting upon the place of religion in today's Europe. Davie (2006) suggests three ways of looking at the subject. First of all she highlights the role of Christianity in shaping Europe's culture. Secondly Davie describes the decline in churchgoers' attendance due to the shift from the imposition of the church to the personal choice of the believer. Thirdly, she focuses on how the arrival of migrants, carrying different religious needs, understandings and aspirations, has changed the religious landscape of Europe.

Though looking into the role of Christianity in shaping Europe's culture(s) is beyond the scope of the thesis, in this chapter I analyse the link between religion and the formation of nation states as it helps understand and contextualise the marginality of groups, such as Protestants in Ireland and Italy, not belonging to the majority religion. The decline in church attendance and membership merits a more thoughtful analysis. Until the 1970s the secularisation process in Europe was associated with modernisation and the decline of religious practices. Berger (1967)[29] and Bruce (1996), for instance, described the European secularisation process as the example and model that other countries would follow. However sociology's forecast that Europe's modernisation and secularisation would be accompanied by a slow disappearance of religion from both public and private life proved to be wrong. Davie's analysis of the British context provides a different and more nuanced account of secularisation and its effects in Europe (Davie, 1994, 2000, 2002, 2007). Religion did not disappear in the UK – or in the Nordic countries – but remained a private act that was not directly connected to church attendance. Davie conceptualises this attitude as *believing without belonging* in so

[29] It is worth mentioning that Berger (1999) himself admitted he was wrong as the data on religion all over the world seemed to contradict the secularisation theory. According to Davie (2007) many sociologists of religion did not agree with the change of directions taken by Berger. Bruce for instance, argued that Berger's new theory was not persuasive but rather resembled an unnecessary 'confession of sins' (Bruce, 2001: 87).

far as secularism and modernisation resulted in more 'private', secular forms of religiosity rather than a decline of faith *tout court*.

Particularly relevant for the purpose of this research is Hervieu-Léger's work (2000) and her notion of a *model of believing*. In her book *Religion as a chain of memory* (2000) the model of believing is characterised by two aspects: the chain connecting the individual to the community and *collective memory*, the tradition that becomes the basis for the existence of the community. Following Hervieu-Léger's formulation it is possible to deduce that people are less religious not because they are more secular but because they have lost the collective memory, the shared tradition binding individuals as members of a religious community. In *Religion in Modern Europe* (2000), Davie employs the theory of the chain of memory in different European countries. Davie adds another key concept in her analysis of the model of believing: the notion of *vicarious religion,* whose function is to keep the chain of memory alive. Vicarious religion refers to a religion performed by an active minority on behalf of a majority population – who understands and approves the minority's doings. When the chain of memory is broken, when people believe without belonging, and when vicarious religion no longer functions, then it is plausible to say that some form of secularisation has taken place.

The concept of secularisation is not straightforward and it is open to more than one interpretation (Berger, 1967; Bruce, 1996; Casanova, 1994; Davie, 2007; Martin, 1978). Furthermore the theoretical paradigm linking secularisation with modernisation and the decline of religion, suggested by some, is also questionable. Davie (2007) does not think that modernisation necessarily leads to a reduction of religious beliefs or a relegation of religion to the private sphere. Casanova's work (1994) is particularly useful here to test and expand upon Davie's point. Casanova talks about three different 'uneven and unintegrated' interpretations or manifestations of secularisation that need to be carefully examined and validated independently from each other: 'secularisation as differentiation of secular spheres from religious institutions and norms, secularisation as decline of religious beliefs and practices, and secularisation as marginalisation of religion to the privatised sphere' (Casanova, 1994: 211).

For Casanova (1994: 212) secularisation as differentiation is the essential core of secularisation theory. It is also important to note that the way in which religion and state are intertwined varies significantly according to different historical and geographical contexts. In this regard it is worth mentioning Martin's analysis (1978) of the manifestations of secularism in Europe and in the USA. According to him the difference between the two continents lies in the different relationship between religion and state. On the one hand in Europe, with the emergence of nation states, the power of one religion was 'spread' across the country (horizontal process) while in the USA, where the state was based on religious pluralism, different religions were allowed to coexist in the same nation (vertical process). [30] Martin also recognises the varieties of manifestations of secularism across Europe. In other words, European countries constructed their identities on the basis of the *cuius regio eius religio* (he who holds the realm, defines the religion, meaning that rulers could dictate their subjects' religion) which *de facto* conferred a privileged status and position to one particular church within the state, often at the expense of other confessions or religions. The French revolution marked a radical change imposing the separation of spiritual and political powers, thus setting the basis for the spread of secularism in Europe. [31] As I discuss in the next section, in both Italy and Ireland, national independence movements tended to embrace the concept of *laïcitè;* it was only after independence and unification were achieved, with the constitution of national governments, that strong links between religion, national identity, and the state were established. The nexus between religion and state was particularly evident in Ireland where, until recently, the power of the Roman Catholic Church was omnipresent and all-pervading (Inglis, 1987). It is important to note here that possibly because of the specificities of the Irish context Protestant churches in Ireland generally approve of the public role of religion in society, see for instance the issue of public schools and hospitals run by both Catholic and Protestant churches (Faas and Ross, 2012; Smyth, *et al.*, 2013) whereas Italian Protestant churches have a different approach to schools and to the relation

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[30] While it is true that the United States of America built their nation on the basis of the separation between state and church in the name of freedom, it is equally true that a particular religious group, the W.A.S.P (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant), has held a hegemonic position in relation to other ethnic and religious minorities.

[31] See Willaime's work on *laïcitè* in France and Europe (2009).

between state and church (Palmisano, *et al.*, 2009), as discussed in chapters IV and VI.

The last element in the debate on secularisation relates to the way migration has changed and reshaped Europe's religious landscape. According to Jenkins (2002) the movement of people from the Global South to the Global North will result in an increase of Christianity in Western countries. However, as he points out, the most successful types of Christianity in the Global South 'have been very different from what many Europeans and North Americans consider mainstream' (Jenkins, 2002: 123). These expressions of faith 'have been far more enthusiastic, much more centrally concerned with the immediate workings of the supernatural, through prophecy, visions, ecstatic utterances, and healing' (Jenkins, 2002: 123). Jenkins's analysis is not only in line with theories that challenge the secularisation hypothesis associated with the decline of religion but it goes further, explaining how and why new forms of Christianity are spreading across Europe and around the world.

Jenkins's theorisation can be applied to the situations faced by Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy. Historical Protestant Churches in both countries are confronted with a different symbolic paradigm brought in by African migrants regarding issues related to spirituality, theology and ethics as I discuss in chapters V and VII. This alternative paradigm and the challenges it poses have been linked by some scholars to the concept of *reverse mission,* which although not central to this research, cannot be overlooked. As Adogame (2000, 2005, 2013) and Ugba (2009) highlight, *reverse mission* or 'reverse flow of mission' is manifested in the (un)conscious strategies employed by churches and missionaries in Africa and Asia to bring back the gospel to Europe because, they argue, the continent has lost its original faith. The concept of reverse mission is controversial; even without entering into the debate of whether it is possible or not to talk about reverse mission for African Protestants in Europe, it is undeniable that the different role religion occupies in the lives of believers in Africa and Europe leads to difficulties when European and African symbolic realities clash. Despite the common ground of the confession and the creed, the encounter between these two symbolic spheres has often generated – at least at first – shock and sometimes distrust of the other. The analysis of the data (see Chapters IV, V, VI and VII) shows that the persistence

of a different religious *habitus* can jeopardise the integration strategies employed by Protestant churches.

The African symbolic paradigm risks breaking the chain of memory Protestant Churches have constructed, and which is still alive in the minority collective identity both Churches have maintained through the past centuries. However, before I elaborate further on issues of identification and collective identity it is necessary to analyse the construction of national identity in Ireland and Italy, and to highlight the role played by Roman Catholicism in shaping and cementing it. The centrality of Catholicism in defining what constitutes Irishness and Italianness also fundamentally impacted on the narratives of identity of Protestant Churches in these two countries.

Religion in the discourse of national identity

The modern concept of 'nation' dates back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and was formulated during the Enlightenment which was marked by two main events: the 1776 U.S. Declaration of Independence and the 1789 French Revolution (Edensor, 2002; Guerrina, 2002; Furseth and Repstad, 2006). There are various definitions of what constitutes a nation or how national identity can be defined, which results in different strands and understandings of nationalism. Smith (1991, 1998) distinguishes between civic and ethnic nationalism; similarly Furseth and Repstad (2006) speak of two theoretical approaches when it comes to defining the nation: the essentialist approach and the constructivist approach. The former sees the nation as based on certain criteria such as language, religion and ethnicity which are considered the essence of the population, and given by nature. The latter emphasises how the nation is the result of the construction of people in a specific historical and social period. For the constructivist approach 'nations are 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1983: 16), and nationalism is a distinctive form of "imagining" collective identity and social solidarity' (Furseth and Repstad, 2006: 105).

Many nations are not constituted by a homogeneous population; on the contrary they consist of diverse ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious groups (Anderson, 1983; Edensor, 2002; Furseth and Repstad, 2006). However, 'the rhetoric of

nationhood tends to treat the nation as an integral unit or as a type of group' (Furseth and Repstad, 2006: 105). In the process of constructing the nation-state the control over history and memory becomes part of the nation-building process.

Furthermore there is an undeniable link between race and modern state formation (Goldberg, 2002; Lentin and Lentin, 2008). Lentin (2008), drawing upon Goldberg's concept of racial state (2002), highlights that modern states, through governmental policies, for example constitutions, border control, policies, census, but also through constructed histories and traditions, are defined by 'their power to exclude and include in racially ordered terms, aiming to produce a coherent picture of the population by keeping racialised others out (...)' (Lentin, 2008: 7). Lentin (2008) also stresses the difficulties inherent in speaking about racism in today's societies as modern states declare themselves to be antiracist and post-racial despite the fact that racism, as described above, has been linked to state policies since the onset of modernity.

The role of religion in shaping the nation-state varies in degree and function: it can be an 'essential' part of the state apparatus and rationale, whereas in other contexts religion can be a threat to the process of nation building. This also applies to the creation of the Irish and the Italian states as I now demonstrate.

While both countries' independence movements were very much influenced by the French principles of *laïcitè*, the envisaged separation between state and church did not take place; on the contrary Roman Catholicism and the Catholic Church were recognised as having a central role in the political and moral life of both countries, although in different ways (Tourn *et al.,* 1989; Honohan, 2008). First of all, in both countries, Protestant Churches were ignored or excluded from national identity discourses even though many Protestants had been involved in the fight for independence and national sovereignty and, subsequently, in the process of building a republic. In both cases, following Edensor's theory of nationalism (2002), one culture was selected as the symbolic culture of the state. Furthermore, both in Ireland and Italy, Catholicism became the state religion and an essential component of Irish and Italian identity. However, while in Ireland the

Catholicisation of Irishness had started prior to independence [32] (see chapter IV), in Italy the religious component was attached to Italianness only during the Fascist era, when Catholicism was heralded as one of the main elements of Italian national identity (see chapter VI).

Edensor (2002) points to the complex relations between the state and existing cultures: 'The position of the state towards already existing cultures is complex, for certain cultures may be eradicated (especially in the case of ethnic or religious particularity), or they may be adopted and adapted by the cultural establishment. Questions are also raised about who is left out of the national culture, how are ethnicity, religion, language and region accommodated by the state and who is marginalised or rejected as unsuitably national' (Edensor, 2002:3-4).

In Ireland, the relationship between Roman Catholicism and the Irish state has its roots in the struggle against British colonialism. Chapter IV further analyses the connections between Roman Catholicism, Irish nationalism, republicanism and the position of Protestant Churches, as a political, religious and cultural minority, after independence. Republican ideas were supported by Protestants who were also involved in the independence struggles (Connolly, 1985; Milne, 2003); for instance, Douglas Hyde (1860-1949) who served as the first president of Ireland from 1938 to 1945, was Anglican (Dunleavy and Dunleavy, 1991). However, according to Butler and Ruane (2007), for Protestants, independence posed challenges in respect of the British and Irish components of their identity. To complete independence, the intention of the Government was to dismantle what remained of British rule including any sign of British influence on Irish life and culture (see chapter IV). This meant that Protestants found themselves as a powerless minority, 'abandoned' by the British and surrounded by 'hostile' Catholics. However, as Inglis points out,

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[32] Hutchinson explains that: 'In the early years of the twentieth century, the Gaelic revival had something of a modernising thrust, directed against the otherworldly passivity encouraged by the Catholic Church and attempting to create a vigorous lay Irish Catholic middle class culture. But, faced with the continued sway of English culture over urban Ireland and the eruption of class conflict across Britain and Ireland, by 1913 its lower middle class intelligentsia, many of rural origins, allied increasingly with fervent neo-traditionalist movements that sought to mobilise the urban poor and the peasantry to shore up a crumbling community from foreign temptations. In this regard, cultural nationalists are neither outright modernists nor traditionalists, but ideological innovators' (Hutchinson, 1999: 404).

> Protestants in the Republic were, in general, a privileged minority. They did not lose out economically or politically, but rather culturally. Their identity as a cultural minority was eroded primarily through migration and intermarriage. At the same time, there was a policy (...) of ensuring that Protestants had no influence over the minds, bodies and souls of Irish Catholics. (...) But Protestants also withdrew into an enclave. Again, this had to do with fulfilling other interests, such as honour and respect in the community – symbolic capital – and maintaining existing networks of family, friends, colleagues and neighbours – social capital (Inglis, 2005: 66).

Chapter VI analyses the connection between Roman Catholicism and Italian nationalism, republicanism and the position of Protestant Churches, as a political, religious and cultural minority, after independence. It is undeniable that religion, in particular Roman Catholicism, played a role in the process of constructing Italian identity; however, compared to Ireland, the relation between Catholicism and the Italian nation state started off very differently. First of all the unification of Italy meant that the Vatican state (hereby Vatican) lost its large territories in Central Italy. The Vatican perceived the making of Italy as an occupation of its land; therefore it was hostile to the national independence project. Before I elaborate further it is important to stress that the construction of Italy was never fully complete as state building did not coincide with nation building. Ferrarotti (1998: 109) clearly states that Italy is still a fragmented and divided cultural-anthropological reality with differences not only between North and South, East and West, but also within the same regions. Furthermore religion, and in particular Roman Catholicism, was not one of the driving forces behind the independence movement, and did not function as an ideology holding 'Italian' patriots together (Ferrarotti, 1998, Grillo, 2002). Religious minorities, for instance Jews and Protestants, played an active part in the process of making Italy. Looking specifically at Protestants, they participated in the revolutionary waves (*moti rivoluzionari*) of 1848; campaigned and fought for the unification of Italy; and took active part in the newly established Italian government. The independence movement and the unification inspired in many Protestants hopes for a religious reformation of the country which did not occur. Protestants' disillusion following the non-reformation of the Italian religious landscape (Spini, 1989: 385), further

exacerbated by the Catholicisation of Italianness during Fascism, still lingers today, and can be seen in Protestant minorities' sense of detachment from Italianness (see chapter IV).

Having briefly analysed the role of religion in the processes of national identity construction in Italy and Ireland, in the next section I focus on theories of community, identity and belonging which helped me analyse the impact of migrants' arrival on Protestant congregations and the factors fostering or hindering integration strategies.

Self-identification and otherness

The link between integration and identity cannot be underestimated. Soysal (2001) highlights that, when discussing integration we have to tackle discourses of identity and belonging: 'The tales of integration, whose definition turns into a mystery even in the narratives of those who perpetually speak of ways to achieve it, rely on taken-for-granted conceptions of identity that singularly take 'national' as the defining parameter of identity and belonging' (Soysal, 2001: 22). Religion can be considered a powerful source of identity formation; similarly religious affiliation is often used as a descriptor of group membership. Coleman and Collins (2004) talk about the ambiguous attachments linking religion, identity and nation, attachments that determine 'the parameters of belonging'. While Coleman and Collins (2004) also stress that identity must not be reduced to its religious component, religion remains a powerful identity marker as my discussion of Irishness and Italianness demonstrates.

The concept of identity has been so ubiquitously used by scholars in various disciplines that some sociologists and anthropologists are questioning its use in academia. Brubaker and Cooper (2000: 8), for instance, propose to discard the notion altogether. [33] Despite its limitation and dangers, and in line with Gilroy

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[33] Donna Haraway, already in the early 1990s, expressed her dissatisfaction with the word identity speaking of a 'non-identity' in contraposition to a fixed and static one. According to her the '"knowing self" is partial in all its forms, never complete, always changing; it is constructed and saturated imperfectly therefore because of this quality is able to associate itself with others, to see with the other without becoming the other'. She also argues that this partiality can never be filled up, but 'in the tension towards the other, the self could get closer to it' (1991: 22).

(1997), I argue that identity matters, not only as an analytical tool but also 'as a contested fact of contemporary political life' (Gilroy, 1997: 301). The concept of identity is also useful to address some of the questions raised in this thesis. The question of how a specific thing – be it a song, a dance, a theological perspective – conforms to one's religious identity is relevant here not only because it helps identify the signifiers that shape a person's identity but also because it shows the contextual, historical, and interactive character of identity formation processes. Religion is a powerful identity marker because it encompasses and gives meaning to some of the most intimate and meaningful spheres of a believer's life. For Protestant churches the encounter with the 'other' often entails a profound renegotiation of important aspects of their religious identity.

In order to analyse the concept of identity in Protestant Churches I rely on the work of Hall (1996) and Jenkins (2004) who describe identity as a *social interaction* that can be understood only as a process of 'becoming', highlighting how one's identities are never final or settled. [34] Hall (1996), along with Bauman (1996), speaks of a process of identification [35] rather than identity. He also underlines the importance of the relation between identity and history, arguing that identities are 'produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies'. Furthermore he states that 'identities are constructed through, not outside difference' (Hall, 1996: 4). Similarly Butler (1993) argues that alterity is part of the very formulation of the I.

Identification can refer to one's sense of oneself as having certain traits, beliefs and belonging to certain groups but also to a collectivity's shared sense of belonging. Jenkins argues that 'the most significant contrast between individual and collective identification (...) may be that the former emphasises difference and the latter similarity. This is only a matter of their respective *emphases,* however: each

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[34] In fact 'not even death freezes the picture: identity or reputation can be reassured, and some identities – sainthood or martyrdom, for example – can only be achieved beyond the grave' (Jenkins, 2004: 5).

[35] Gilroy considers identification 'as a social process rather than as a property of individual subjects' which 'adds further layers of complexity to deliberations about how selves – and their identities – are formed through relationships with others, of conflict and exclusion' (Gilroy, 1997: 315).

emerges out of the interplay of similarity and difference' (Jenkins, 2004: 16). Thus, following Bauman (1996), Gilroy (1997), Hall (1996) and Jenkins (2004), I argue that the collective identification of Protestant Churches is a process constructed within and through the dichotomy of us/them, identity/alterity, Protestants/Catholics, and Native Protestants/Migrant Protestants.

Remotti (1996), in *Contro l'identità* (Against Identity), stresses that every society deals with otherness in a continuous tension between the poles of identity and alterity. He conceptualises four different ways in which the binary identity/alterity can be articulated.

a) Firstly, when identity refuses alterity. This results in not accepting or recognising the presence of others in society and it can also result in hostile acts (e.g. genocides).

b) Secondly, when identity recognises alterity but tends to marginalise it and consider it unwelcome.

c) Thirdly, when identity recognises alterity as an inevitable part of society but, as in the second case, tends to marginalise it.

d) Lastly, when identity not only recognises alterity (b), and considers it part of society (c) but also acknowledges that otherness is part of the very essence of identity itself (Remotti, 1996: 62-63).

Remotti here describes two groups who enter a relationship, willingly or not; however, the result of the encounter and the level of recognition depends on a number of factors. Firstly it may depend on the size of the groups and secondly on the power structure and dynamics between the actors (Sachdev and Bourhis, 1991; Huddy, 2003). The majority group is not always automatically the one that has the power over other group(s): the history of Protestant Churches in Ireland, for instance, illustrates that, before independence, the vast majority of Protestants (i.e. Anglicans) were considered a privileged minority with greater access to resources, education and politics hence having power over the uneducated Catholic farmers. As Flunger and Ziebertz stress: the 'status differences between groups tend to create negative emotions such as social identity threat (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) and can therefore intensify negative out-group attitudes' (Flunger and Ziebertz, 2010: 3) as documented in chapters IV and VI.

However, power relations are never only about identity but include other elements. When, for instance, the status of the groups is not equal but presents differences – not only in relation to wealth but also in relation to residing 'legally' in a country and/or having valid documents – tensions are likely to emerge. Issues of identity, education, citizenship and inclusion are recurring themes in states' integration policies, in accordance with their perception of what integration is or should be as I discussed in the previous chapter.

Remotti's discussion of alterity also helps shed light on, and problematise, Protestant Churches' tendency to promote openness towards migrants in terms of 'welcoming the stranger'; while this clearly references the teachings of the Gospels, it constructs migrants as a particular incarnation of otherness, which is both evocative and ambivalent, as the next section demonstrates.

The Stranger: a particular category of other

Writing in 1908, Simmel describes the stranger as a person who is both far away and near at hand. S/he is close to us, in the common features of a national, social, occupational, or generally human, nature between him and us. S/he is far from us, insofar as these common features extend beyond him or us, and connect us only because they connect a great many people (Simmel, 1908). The stranger Simmel refers to is not seen as 'the wanderer', a person that 'comes today and goes tomorrow', but someone who is here to stay, fulfilling a special role, a certain degree of objectivity towards the society which s/he lives in (Simmel, 1976).

In *Strangers to ourselves* (1991) Kristeva raises interesting questions in relation to the figure and role attributed to strangers and foreigners over time: 'Shall we be, intimately and subjectively, able to live with the others, to live *as others*, without ostracism but also without levelling?' (1991: 2). She also highlights how the modification in the status of foreigners in today's society demands that we 'reflect on our ability to accept new modalities of otherness'. If in the past the foreigner was an enemy to be destroyed, with time he has slowly been transformed into a different human being who, says Kristeva, provided s/he espouses the religious and ethical codes of the majority, 'may be assimilated into the fraternities of the 'wise', the 'just', or the 'native'(1991: 2).

Bauman (2005) recognises that since people were clustered as friends or enemies, there is an ambiguity in the figure of the stranger in modern societies. The ambiguity lies in the impossibility to categorise him/her according to the binary identity/alterity, friend/foe. Thus, the ambiguity can generate fear and marginalisation. Bauman (2005) refers to Lévi-Strauss's (1961) two strategies of neutralising the danger of the other. The anthropophagic strategy implies the annihilation of strangers by devouring them, which ultimately results in the 'assimilation' of the stranger. The anthropoemic strategy implies the exclusion of the strangers by vomiting them, banishing them from society (or exterminating them). These two approaches appear no longer sufficient to explain the relation between strangers and natives, as integration implies a third way which is neither annihilation nor assimilation of the stranger. However, today's migration poses fundamental challenges: what happens when the strangers are here to stay? How to deal with someone who may be radically different from us? How long do they have to remain strangers? In which way does the degree of objectivity that Simmel (1908) sees in the stranger help the integration processes of migrants into indigenous churchgoers? I further elaborate on these questions in the next sections and in chapter IV, V, VI and VI.

The next section looks at the meaning and role of community, especially for religious minorities such as Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy.

Community and belonging

Analysing the symbolism of migrants as *strangers* is instrumental in reflecting on what happens when the church-community includes migrants-strangers. According to Bauman (2001: 2) community means 'we are never stranger to each other'. The word community conjures up the image of a safe space where everybody knows everybody and where one can count on people. That said, Bauman also recognises other ways of theorising communities. First of all there is a gap between the narrative of the ideal community – as a safe and harmonious place – and the real community, 'a collectivity which pretends to be community incarnate, the dream fulfilled, and (in the name of the goodness such community is assumed to offer) demands unconditional loyalty and treats everything short of such loyalty as an act

of unforgivable treason' (Bauman, 2001:4). According to Bauman, renouncing personal freedom is the price to be paid in order to be part of a community.

Delanty (2010: XII) argues that the term community 'designates both an idea about belonging and a particular social phenomenon, such as expressions of longing for community, the search for meaning and solidarity, recognition and collective identity'. Barth (1969) stresses the symbolic nature of community, and sees communities as formed through the construction of boundaries which are not conceived as fluid and flexible as Cohen (1985) suggests.

For Brubaker (2004) there are three elements to take into consideration when analysing communities and belonging: commonality, connectedness, and groupness. While commonality denotes the sharing of some common attributes, connectedness defines the links between people. Commonality and connectedness may result in groupness which is described by Brubaker as 'the sense of belonging to a distinctive bounded, solidarity group' (2004: 47). Furthermore he makes a distinction between strong and exclusive communities and looser and open ones. Following from Brubaker, Ugba states that while both types of communities – the exclusive and the open – are important, they shape personal experience and condition social and political action in sharply different ways (Ugba, 2007a).

Jenkins, drawing on Cohen's theory of community construction (1985), posits that: a) symbols play a central role in generating a sense of shared belonging; b) community is itself a symbolic construct upon which people draw, rhetorically and strategically; and c) the meaning (and value) of community membership lies in sharing with other members a similar 'sense of things', a common symbolic domain (Jenkins, 2004). These three points are also traceable in the case of Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy, as I analyse in chapters IV and VI.

In addition, for Cohen community ties aggregate rather than integrate (1985: 20). This observation is particularly important for a study that looks at integration policies and practices of Protestant Churches. Very often church-members tend to argue that these policies are useless as a congregation – if it is a real community – should be able to include and hence integrate migrants. The reality emerging from the data, however, contradicts this assumption (see chapters V and VII). A community aggregates those who share the same sense of things and sometimes, especially at first, migrants seem to have a different 'sense of things' and they are

marginalised by community members (although this marginalisation is not the result of explicit or deliberate behaviour).

Thus, for historical Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy, being part of a community means to share a common history and a common faith, a similar way of expressing one's spirituality, a sense of being different from the majority of the population in view of one's beliefs: in short to share the same religious *habitus*. [36]

In some specific circumstances, as I further elaborate in chapters V and VII, being Protestant can also be considered akin to belonging to an ethnic group. Migrants, on the other hand, despite being Protestants and sometimes coming from the same confession (Anglicanism, Presbyterianism, Methodism, etc), once they join a historical Protestant Church in Ireland or Italy do not have the same symbolic paradigm and also have different expectations from the church as a community (see chapter VIII).

In the next section I introduce theories of migrant belonging and the role religious institutions can have in the migration journey.

Belonging in migration

Religion plays a major role in supporting migrants in their journey (Hirschman, 2007; Levitt, 2007; Levitt and Hejtmanek, 2009) and in their new abode. Looking at the American situation, Hirschman believes that religious beliefs can become stronger after migration. He argues:

> The certainty of religious precepts can provide an anchor as immigrants must adapt and change many other aspects of their lives and habits. Religious values can also provide support for many other traditional beliefs

[36] *Habitus* is a concept which was first developed by Bourdieu (1980) and then re-elaborated by Wacquant (2005), although it was already present in Aristotle. *Habitus*, according to Bourdieu is produced by particular conditions of existence and it is composed by 'systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them' (Bourdieu, 1980: 53). Furthermore '*habitus* – embodied history, internalised as a second nature and so forgotten as history – is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product' (Bourdieu, 1980: 56). It also shifts as a result of the setting in which it is produced and as a result of time: *habitus* 'is not fixed or permanent, and can be changed under unexpected situations or over a long historical period' (Navarro 2006: 16).

> and patterns - intergenerational obligations, gender hierarchy, and customary familiar practices - that are threatened with adaptation to the seemingly amoral American culture (Hirschman, 2007: 396).

Already in 1975 Handlin (1975) theorised religion as a bridge for migrants, linking the old and the new worlds; this argument finds confirmation in the work of other scholars (e.g., Warner, 1998; Foley and Hoge, 2007; Jenkins, 2007; Ugba, 2007a; Levitt, 2009) and is also discussed in chapters V and VII.

While migrants often choose to migrate due to religious persecution, we also need to consider the role of churches in providing material and spiritual support. Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000) point out that the benefits of religious practices for migrants are not only psychological but that churches, synagogues, temples, and mosque also serve the material needs of immigrants. Hirschman (2007) also highlights the importance of religious institutions as tools to solve some of the practical problems faced by migrants: '[u]pon arrival, immigrants need to find housing and employment, enrol their children in schools, learn (or improve) their language skills, and begin to create a 'new' social life' (Hirschman, 2007: 397).

Thus, while churches are often considered by churchgoers as service providers, indigenous and migrant churchgoers may have different expectations as to what type of services the church should provide to its members (see chapter V and VII). In the next section I introduce the concept of social capital, which helps us to understand the role of churches in the integration process.

Capital: spiritual, religious and social

Analysing the African Christian Diaspora in Europe Adogame (2013) writes that 'religion serves as an important source of '"social", "cultural" and "spiritual" capital among African immigrants'; religious groups, he argues, 'can help bridge and break individuals and societies because of their bridging and bonding behaviours' (2013: 101).

Theories of 'spiritual' capital are not always connected with religious organisations or faith systems. Zohar, for instance, focuses on the kind of spiritual capital which produces wealth: 'wealth that we can live by, wealth that enriches the deepest aspects of our lives (…) wealth we gain through drawing upon our deepest meanings

(...) values (...) and by finding a way to embed these in our lives and work' (Zohar, 2004: 3). This understanding though not linked to faith systems, can be particularly helpful in shedding light on migrants' spiritual capital when they are not necessarily only interested in material and/or instrumental gain, but in spiritual health, wellbeing and spiritual enrichment.

Verter (2003) analyses the concept of spiritual capital with and against Bourdieu's. For Bourdieu spiritual capital functions 'in a similar way to cultural capital whereby institutionalised specialists (as the elite producers of meaning) guard and maintain their power in the religious field by means of their ability to 'modify... the practice and worldview of lay people' (Bourdieu, 1987: 127, cited in Baker and Smith, 2010: 8). With this framework in mind, Verter defines spiritual capital as follows:

Religious choice—that most personal of spiritual matters—is revealed to be inclined and constrained, not just by virtue of one's birth and education, but also by the continuously shifting dynamics of one's social context, defined in terms of both the macroeconomics of the field of power and the micropolitics of one's individual field. The structured nexus of attitudes and preferences that comprises the habitus engenders not only "commonsense" perceptions, everyday behaviours, linguistics abilities, and cultural knowledge, but also spiritual predilections: subcultural identity shapes religious tastes. As matters of taste, spiritual dispositions may be regarded as a form of cultural capital, as positional goods bought dearly and misrecognised as natural attributes, rather than socially structured ones (Verter, 2003: 169).

Furthermore, Verter takes a distance from Bourdieu's view of religion and spiritual/religious capital granting an agency not only to 'priests-prophets-magicians' but also to the laypersons that Bourdieu denied (Verter, 2003).

While in Verter (and Bourdieu) spiritual and religious capital appear to be overlapping, I found that the work of Baker and Skinner (2005) on 'Faith in Action: the dynamic connection between religious and spiritual capital' offers a satisfactory definition of the two concepts highlighting how, even if the concepts are connected, they have their own specificities:

Spiritual capital energises religious capital by providing a theological identity and worshipping tradition, but also a value system, moral vision and a basis of faith. Spiritual capital is often embedded locally within faith groups but also expressed

in the lives of individuals. Religious capital is the practical contribution to local and national life made by faith groups (Baker and Skinner, 2005: 4).

Baker and Skinner (2005) make a distinction between what motivates faith-based communities' engagement, and their practical actions: between the why (spiritual capital) that shapes the actions of faith communities and the what (religious capital) that results in the church's contributions to their communities. Some scholars (Verter, 2003; Baker, 2006; Adogam, 2013) have noticed the interconnection between spiritual and religious capital as well as between spiritual and religious capital and social capital. While Baker (2014) emphasises that spiritual capital is a form of social capital, Adogame (2013) stresses the similarities between spiritual and religious capital with the general concept of social capital that is seen as a resource for personal well-being and a gift to the wider community based on relationships that individuals and religious communities can have: 'Both religious capital and social capital include investments and participation in network and activities' (Agodame, 2013: 106).

The main contributors to the development of the theory of social capital are Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1990) and Putnam (2000). Bourdieu identifies three forms of capital – economic, cultural and social – and defines social capital as 'the aggregate of the actual potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (Bourdieu, 1983: 249). Coleman (1990) further elaborates on Bourdieu's concept, highlighting how social capital is embedded in particular relationships, suggesting that a group based on trust will be able to achieve more than a group lacking that aspect. Thus, Coleman understands social capital in terms of social obligations, expectations, social support, elements which are also tied to voluntary associations (Agodame, 2013) like churches. Putnam (2000) defines social capital along Coleman's line as he refers 'to connections among individuals – social networks, and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them' (2000: 19). Furthermore, he distinguishes between bonding and bridging social capital: bonding refers to the value assigned to social networks between homogeneous groups of people while bridging refers to the value of social networks between socially heterogeneous groups (Putnam, 2000).

Social capital, however, can have negative as well as positive consequences (Portes, 1998; Agogame, 2013). Portes (1998) in particular identifies four negative

elements of social capital: the exclusion of outsiders, the excessive claims on group members, the restriction on individual freedom, and the downward levelling norms. Also exploring the downside of social capital, Adogame refers to the work of Quibria (2003) and Briggs (2004): '[Briggs] suggests that the dark side of social capital, especially the potential of exclusion, is very evident in social capital as a collective good, a resource possessed by a social system that helps the system as a whole to solve problems. For instance, community norms can be tied to religious beliefs and symbols and to ethnicity, in ways that exclude others. Bonding social network can reinforce and deepen ethnic and class distinctions and conflicts' (Adogame, 2013: 107).

Churches can be considered a form of social capital as they are networks of relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition, based on trust, expectations and social obligations. However, churches, like other networks, are also in danger of developing the negative elements inherent to social capital. For instance, when ethnicity is a major bonding tie between members of a church, it risks excluding all other church members. In chapter VIII I investigate in more detail the role of Protestant churches as social as well as spiritual and religious capital analysing the bonding and bridging ties they provide to their members, both indigenous and migrants.

Conclusion

This chapter began by theorising religion in today's Europe, paying attention to the changes occurring in the European religious landscape. Contrary to secularisation theories' predictions, religion did not disappear from the European arena. Paraphrasing Gilroy (1992), religion still matters; religion still binds people together (Durkheim, 1976) but the way in which people express their faith and spirituality has changed not only as a result of secularisation but also as a result of the increased religious diversity brought by migrants.

Historically religion also played an important part in the construction of many national identities in Europe. In Ireland and Italy Roman Catholicism defined what counted as Irishness and Italianness; the Catholic Church's privileged status also shaped the relationship between Protestant Churches and the state, as well as Protestants' self-understanding as minority communities in both countries.

As argued in this chapter, theories of community and belonging are particularly helpful when disentangling the construction of Protestant Churches as minority communities in Ireland and Italy. While such theories highlight the benefits and the promises of community – belonging, protection, shared moral and cultural norms – they also point at the downsides, like the normalising effects of community and its power to exclude. While sharing the same history and the same symbolic paradigm are among the key elements which bind Protestant religious communities, these elements also risk marking migrants' difference and keeping 'newcomers' outside or marginalised within the community, as further analysed in chapter IV and VI.

The chapter also discussed the role of religion in recreating a sense of belonging for migrants, stressing how church membership offers newcomers opportunities to reconstruct social ties in the new setting. Religious institutions may also function as service providers and providers of material resources, and as places where migrants' identities are re-shaped and reinforced. However migrants may also feel that their spiritual and material needs are not fulfilled by mainline churches, because of their different religious *habitus*, and look for alternative congregations and churches (see chapter V and VII).

Finally, understanding churches as constituting a form of social capital able to provide both bridging and binding ties sheds light on the type of church migrant and indigenous churchgoers may look for – integrated and multi-ethnic congregations or more homogenous, close-knit ones; a topic which I further discuss in chapter V, VII and VIII when assessing the outcomes of the integration strategies employed by the churches.

The next chapter analyses the methodology that informed my research, the methods utilised for data collection and analysis, the complexities and challenges of conducting fieldwork across countries and the type of reflexivity that guided this study.

Chapter III

Methodology Chapter

Introduction: creating order out of chaos

Four years of research, theories tested, interviews conducted, codes created, challenges faced, and field notes taken. All these elements resulted in piles of documents surrounding my desk, leaving just enough space for the keyboard and a cup of coffee to keep me going. How to disentangle the different elements which have been part of the research process in a coherent way? How best to reflect on the methodology employed and the methods used to collect and analyse the data? And finally, how to critically reflect on my own position within the research? This is how this chapter started: trying to make order out of the chaos of my mind.

The metaphor of a messy desk mirroring the status of one's mind is often appropriate; so is the assumption that tidying up the desk helps the process of reorganising one's thoughts. However, in my case, even if I had physically divided the piles of documents and neatly arranged them on the desk after having studied and consulted them at different times, the act of tidying up did not result in making great progress. I was aware of the complexity behind the research, I knew that there was no 'objectivity' to be unveiled nor an 'absolute truth' to be told; I was also conscious that in the process of writing – transforming thoughts, experiences, theories into words – that I was interpreting events, constructing a narrative and generating theories, while reflecting on my positionality in both the Italian and Irish fields.

The way out presented itself when I lingered on three important aspects of conducting research: a) the understanding that the various phases of the research process do not necessarily present themselves in a chronological way; b) the understanding that methodology is 'a "work in progress" rather than an abstract and ossified set of technological prescriptions' (Dey, 2004: 92); and, c) the acknowledgment that the researcher's background and subjectivity inevitably

influence her study. The complexity and fluidity of the research process in all its components, including the long and sometimes exhausting process of 'giving birth' to one's research and transforming the chaos into words, became an asset rather than an obstacle when I accepted the complexity and the contradictions embedded in the research and in my own positionality.

This chapter aims at disentangling my mental knots reflecting upon the theoretical and methodological issues, including problems and doubts that were part of the research process. To do so, I rely on the work of Birch (1998), who suggests dividing the research into three phases: 'going there', getting ready for the field, exploring theories and choosing a methodology; 'being there', the actual fieldwork; and 'being here', leaving the field and reflecting upon one's work.

I begin this chapter by laying out the project's background and by discussing the methodology employed, justifying its choice and relevance. I continue by describing the research design and the questions underlying it. Subsequently I present the context of the fieldwork in some detail with separate sections for the Irish and the Italian fields. I then outline the methods chosen for the analysis of data, corroborated by a triangulation of methods (Denzin, 1989) and I conclude with a reflection on the researcher's position and challenges.

Project's background

The journey of this study which investigates integration policies and practices of Protestant Churches in two specific countries, Ireland and Italy, began as a result of two factors: my experience and my work. In the Introduction I highlighted how my position and involvement within the Waldensian and Methodist Church evolved during my research – from being a member of the ECI Commission to becoming the wife of a minister – carrying several challenges as I discuss in the course of this chapter. The second aspect refers to my former job as research and project assistant at the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe in Brussels (2005-2008) during which I developed the initial concept behind this research as described in the Introduction.

This study is a case study of integration policies and practices of African migrants put in place by Protestant Churches in Italy and Ireland. Informed by grounded

theory, it is a multi-sited ethnography, reflexively accounted for by a researcher who is involved in devising these integration policies in the Italian context. The specific research questions have been outlined in the introduction. In this chapter I describe the specific research instruments used – case study, reflexivity, multi-sited ethnography and grounded theory – and the methods of data collection and data analysis.

Choice of the context

I chose Ireland and Italy to conduct my field research for a number of reasons. In both countries the major Christian denomination is Roman Catholicism, which also had a strong influence in shaping discourses of national identity (see chapters II and IV and VI). Among the 'ethnically Irish' in Ireland, 93 per cent identify themselves as Roman Catholic, while the percentage decreases to 87 per cent if we include other ethnic and migrant groups (CSO, 2006). In Italy, as religious denomination is not part of the census, statistics are less accurate. Religious organisations estimate that more than 90 per cent of the Italian population is Roman Catholic (see chapters IV and VI).

Although the history of Protestantism in Ireland and Italy is very different, mainline Protestant churches in both countries constitute a long established minority within a majority of Roman Catholic believers; furthermore both have developed a strong sense of community and identity over the years (Ruane, 2007; Platone, 2008) as analysed in chapters II, IV and VI.

Both countries have similar migration narratives: from being primarily emigration countries they turned into immigration destinations in the late 90s, and then reverted back to an emigration pattern following the economic crisis. Furthermore, both countries lack coherent immigration policies, which impacts on migrants' different and often precarious legal status and has repercussions for migrants' participation in churches and in society (Ugba, 2007; Caritas/Migrantes, 2008), as discussed in chapter I.

To date there has been no sociological studies focusing on integration projects developed by churches in Ireland and Italy: this study closes the knowledge gap in this regard (see chapter V, VII and VIII).

This study looks primarily at migrants coming from Africa because the percentage of people of African origin within the Protestant churches' constituency is high; however, there are no official statistics on the number of African migrants in the church. According to the 2006 Irish census it is possible to calculate that among Africans, 31 per cent belong to one of the Protestant denominations, while 7.2 per cent belongs to the Church of Ireland (CSO, 2006). Looking at statistics on the main religious minorities among all migrants in Italy, Protestants represent 7.7 per cent of the total (CESNUR *et al.*, 2006). However this number is an underestimation, for it does not take into consideration the presence of new Evangelical and Pentecostal African churches. According to research carried out by the Federation of Protestant Churches migrant members among Protestant churches amount to 30 per cent; among the nationalities present in the Waldensian and Methodist Church 50 per cent is of migrants from Africa (Naso *et al.*, 2014).

In the next section I analyse the methodological framework behind this study starting with the 'going there' phase (Birch, 1998).

Going there: methodological approaches

Grounded theory in (multi-sited) Ethnography

Grounded theory in multi-sited ethnography is the main methodological framework employed in this research. This section discusses grounded theory and ethnography and their implications for my study as I am conscious of the variety of applications both approaches have in the social sciences. While reviewing the whole debate around grounded theory is beyond the scope of this research, it remains important to justify its use in this context.

Grounded theory, following Strauss (1987) and Strauss and Corbin (1997), is a theory that identifies inductively occurring themes emerging from coding and content analysis and it is described as the 'continuous interplay between analysis and data collection' (Strauss and Corbin 1994: 273). Rather than beginning with a theoretical framework, grounded theory allows the researcher to generate theory through the analysis of data: concepts and hypotheses are formulated 'in the field' and constantly modified to fit the data. Thus the researcher does not collect and analyse the 'data en bloc but in episodes punctuated by periods of data analysis'

(Seale 2004: 241) which allows to re-direct the research and to have a flexible approach to it. In this regard Glaser and Strauss (1999 [1967]) refer to the process of 'theoretical sampling which directs the researcher, through the continuous interplay between data and theory, towards new sites to test or refine new ideas as these emerge from the data' (Dey 2003: 80). While my study is guided by the above principles, following Charmaz and Mitchell (2001), I distance myself from the 'technical' or 'objectivistic' turn taken by grounded theory methodology (Smith and Sparkes 2002: 147), and prefer to interpret it 'as flexible, heuristic strategies rather than as formulaic procedures' (Charmaz 2000: 510).

The adoption of a grounded theory approach called for close attention to the context and to those circumstances influencing it, including the fact of 'being there' (Birch, 1998) as a researcher and participant observer. The process of data collection and my analysis were closely interwoven. It was a process of 'coming and going', in and out of the data and the field, and it definitely did not follow a linear, chronological pattern. When I started the PhD, as described above, the fieldwork had, in part, already begun – see for instance the preliminary work done at European level or my knowledge and position in the Italian field – and some themes and hypothesis had already started to emerge, waiting to be verified on the ground. In this regard, the work of Liz Stanley (1993) is useful as she states that before we start research we always have a theory with small t; then we collect the data and develop a theory with capital T.

For instance at the beginning I was exclusively interested in interviewing key actors in the field, the church leaders – both indigenous and migrants – who were shaping and developing the integration policies in the churches under study. However, while analysing and coding the first interviews – and possibly also following from informal conversations and discussions with churchgoers, as well as researchers in similar fields – I decided to attend and study local congregations and to conduct interviews with ordinary churchgoers in order to gather richer data.

While coding and analysing the Italian data I realised that one of the main projects of the Protestant Churches in Italy was developing outcomes which, in theory, were not in line with the policies or the rationale behind the project itself. This situation led me to rethink and reshape my understanding of the churches' models of integration to include those who were not sponsored by key policy actors but

were nonetheless emerging on the ground. Furthermore, the continuous interplay between analysis and data led me to include a section (see chapter VIII) on the role of churches and religion for migrants and indigenous believers which was not a topic I had planned to take into consideration, but which became relevant to my discussion of the reasons behind the success or failure of the churches' integration policies.

I want to highlight that grounded theory methodology informed my research rather than led it. Grounded theory with its flexible and heuristic strategy merges very well with ethnography, the other methodological pillar supporting this research. Charmaz and Mitchell (2001) argue that grounded theory techniques 'can sharpen the analytical edge and theoretical sophistication of ethnographic research. The benefits of combining ethnographic and grounded theory approaches go both ways. With ethnography, we can move grounded theory away from technology and turn it towards art' (161). Furthermore they argue that the use of ethnography encourages researchers to position themselves within the study and help them to take a distance from the 'objectified presentation of data typical of most grounded theory reportage' (161).

My research also benefited from the intertwined relations between grounded theory and ethnography techniques. Before describing the actual work undertaken to collect and analyse data, a closer look into some aspects of the ethnographic technique is required. Ethnography, though used mostly by anthropologists (e.g., Malinowski, 1922; Evans-Pritchard, 1987 [1940]; Radcliff-Brown, 1964), is also a central qualitative research methodology in sociology. Historically ethnographic methods were used for colonial expansion (see also Asad, 1991; Davies, 1999). This realisation led to profound changes in the way ethnographies were produced in the 1980s (Rabinow, 1977; Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Taussing, 1991). The ethnographic turn implied a critical examination of the standpoint of the researcher: it called for reflexivity – in the sense that 'studies of others must also be studies of ourselves in our relationships with those others' (Davies, 1999) – and questioned the objectivity of the writing process (Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Marcus and Cushman, 1982).

Ethnographic accounts were thus seen as the result of an individual's creative act and not in terms of realistic ontology. This approach further encouraged the

creation of 'highly individually reflexive works – subjective accounts of how fieldwork affected the ethnographer rather than accounts of understanding or perspectives gained about the nature of other peoples (cf. Jacobson 1991: 119–22)' (Davies: 1999: 30).

The ethnography employed in this study is based on my own experience and my participant observation (these two aspects of the research process are considered in more detail in the next section). I observed and took part in the events and activities of various churches in multiple places. This study is thus the result of what Marcus (1995) describes as multi-sited ethnography:

> Multi-sited research is designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some forms of literal, physical presence, with an explicit, posited logic of association or connection among sites that in fact defines the argument of the ethnography (Marcus, 1995:195).

Through multi-sited ethnography researchers 'are not bounded to a particular location, or social group' (Robben and Sluka, 2007:335). Likewise my own fieldwork was not bounded to specific churches, but often extended to include my informants' activities, public events and conferences. The boundaries of my 'fieldwork's site' were therefore flexible not only because they spanned two countries, Ireland and Italy, but because the field moved from within the church walls to churchgoers' houses, passing through steering committees and international seminars, as described in detail in the course of the chapter. All events I attended or participated in had a common denominator: they were all related to issues of migration and integration in churches.

However, this methodological approach, especially since the 'reflexive' turn in the 1980s, also emphasises the positionality of the researcher as an integral and important part of the research itself. This leads to the next section where I introduce, analyse and justify the final methodological paradigm which shaped my fieldwork: the (act of) reflexivity.

Reflexivity

> Is knowledge of anything other than knowledge of reflexivity possible? And if so, how is it achieved? The answer may lie in consideration of the dual nature of social research: that it depends both on some connection with that being researched and on some degree of separation from it (Davies, 1999:28).

Being reflexive about my situated knowledge was a relevant methodological tool. Being reflexive was an act of self-awareness which kept me vigilant, leading me to recognise and examine my own positionalities within the research – positionalities that changed according to the Irish or the Italian field – and the influence I had on the research process (Hesse-Biber *et al.*, 2004: 115). Wasserfall (1997) distinguishes between 'weak' and 'strong' reflexivity. While the former means a 'continued self awareness about the relationship between researcher and informants', the latter is based on the 'the deconstruction of the authority of the author and/or of the power of difference in the field' (151). I tried to incorporate both typologies in my research.

Being reflexive helped me to disentangle my multiple positionalities within the research and, once I identified them, let them be in dialogue. I refer for instance to the fact that in Ireland I was an outsider (in terms of my ethnicity and my migrant status) but not completely, as my Protestant religious denomination created a bonding tie which made me also an insider; in Italy I was not only an insider but my active involvement in the church's integration activities made me a privileged informant. Davies (1999) reports Panourgia's auto-ethnography (1995) as an example of how to solve the gap between the personal self – in this specific case the ethnographer's family – and the anthropological self: 'to breach the space between experience and analysis' (1995: xxii). Panourgia breaks the central section of her ethnography into two narratives, literally dividing the pages horizontally. Thus, in one half she describes her actions and feelings as Myrto, the granddaughter, while in the other half she is Neni who analyses and contextualizes the occurrences and rituals surrounding the death [of her grandmother]. But the two dialogues are not mutually exclusive, rather they intersect in numerous ways as when the anthropological composure at the moment of death temporarily holds back the emotional expression of the family self' (201). Likewise I tried to

encompass my multiple selves by analysing the same event from different perspectives.

I think it is important to stress that this research is not an autobiography in the strict sense of the word; however, due to my own position, as mentioned above and described in the course of the chapter, autobiography became a more intimate part of the research process as I-the ethnographer was a member of the collectivity I was researching (Davies, 1999: 207). Keeping the self separate or being able to identify from which self certain considerations were coming was not always an easy task, and the closer I was to the field, the more blurred was the distinction between the parts. The peak was reached while I was in Bologna, one of the congregations under analysis, where my husband is the minister. On the one hand it was the perfect site for the research, allowing me open access to information and informants; on the other I had to deal not only with my personal and my anthropological selves but also with the way the collectivity perceived me and the expectations they had of me not as a researcher but as the minister's wife. Instinctively the reaction was to isolate all other selves but the researcher's in order to get out of the impasse; a formula used also by other ethnographers as noticed by Davies (1999):

> Thus ethnographers, even when they are their own key informants, commonly find their ethnographic self engaged in a process of othering their social self, so that Church (1995), Murphy (1987) and Panourgia (1995) all explicitly report how, in different guises, they were using their professional selves to deny or isolate their other selves. However, it is precisely in this process of interaction between ethnographer as self and ethnographer as other that social knowledge of general interest and significance is produced. The interaction of the ethnographer-as-researcher, informed by the theoretical positions of other social research and in a dialogue with a social scientific community, with the ethnographer-as-informant, with access to the knowledge and experience of an insider, differs in degree but not in kind to other manifestations of the research relationship through which generalisable knowledge about social and cultural realities is produced (207).

Finally, there is the issue of the researcher's influence within the ethnography: as Gobo states 'the presence of the ethnographer may also stimulate courses of action which perhaps would not have taken place if he or she had not been present' (2008:125). Another outcome of the self-assessment phase of ethnography in the 1980s was precisely the acknowledgement that the researcher always exerts a certain degree of influence; this is unavoidable, and does not change according to the nature, participant or non-participant, of the observation,. As underlined by Schwartz and Jacobs, by observing, ethnographers alter the field of observation:

> Descriptions about some aspect of the social world are simultaneously within (part of) the very world that they describe. As a result... there is no room in the social world merely to describe anything. [Descriptions] simultaneously affect social relationships, execute moral evaluations, produce political, moral, and social consequences, and so on. Descriptions are almost 'doing' many more things in a social situation than simply 'reporting' a set of facts (1979: 51). (Gobo, 2008: 125)

If my position as an (insider) outsider in Ireland did not allow me to perceive the effects of my presence and of my research - even though I published a journal article and a book chapter on the preliminary findings of the Irish case (Passarelli, 2011; 2012)- in the Italian field the situation was different: on a number of occasions, I felt the weightiness of the impact my theories and to a certain extent my entire work were having on churches' debates both at local and national level.

To conclude, reflexivity involved an act of vigilant self-awareness at every step of the research and of how I interpreted it; it informed my multi-sited ethnography and my use of grounded theory.

Having analysed the theoretical spectrum which informs this study, the next section accounts for the case study strategy employed for this research.

Case study as a research design

The research strategy employed in this research is a case study. Case studies can refer to 'analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of

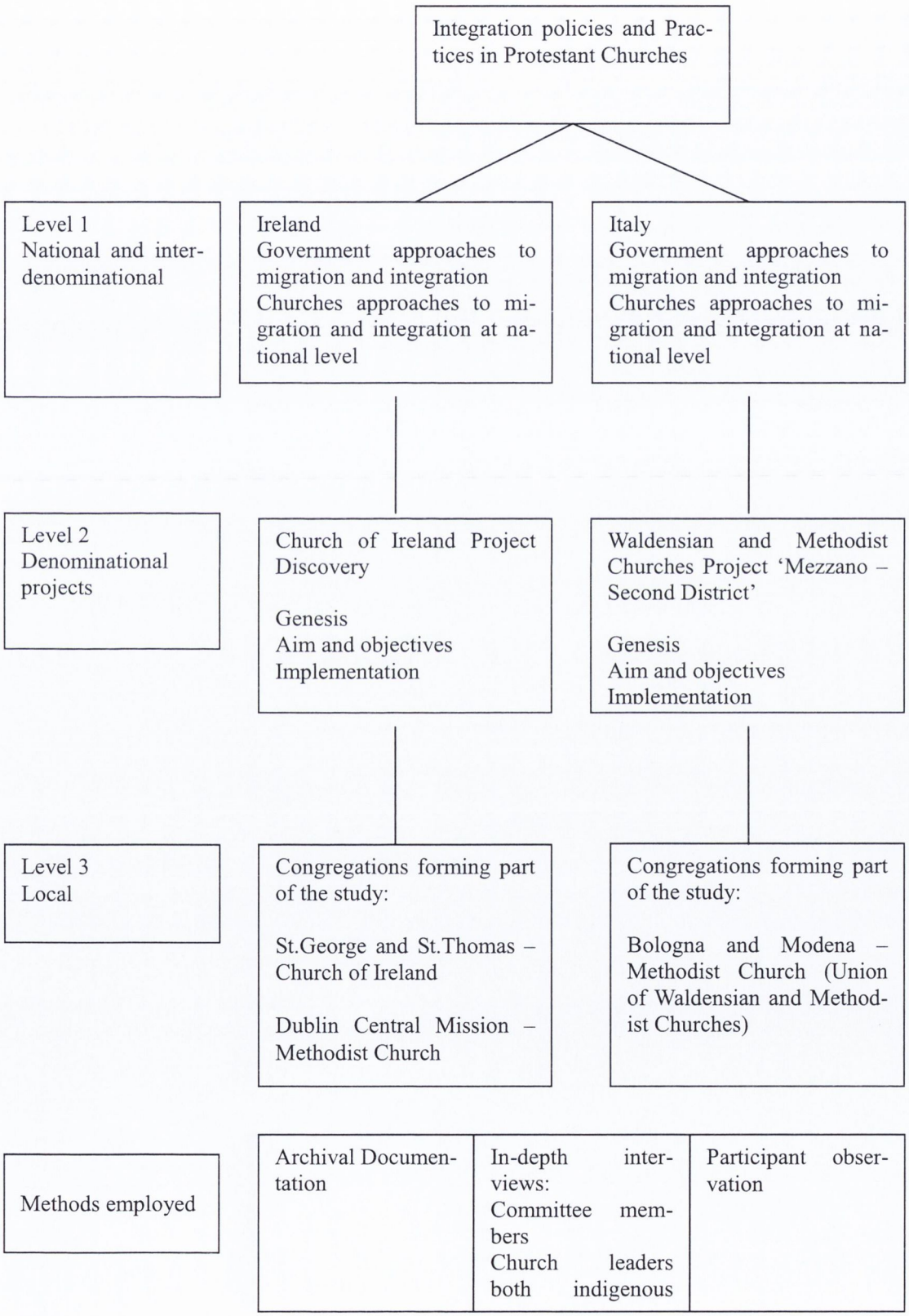
phenomena that provides an analytical frame — an object — within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates' (Thomas, 2011). A case study can be seen as a research strategy in its own right, as in this thesis. Yin (2003) describes how a case study can be descriptive, providing narrative accounts; explanatory, testing existing research; and exploratory, helping to generate new theories. This research belongs to Yin's exploratory category as it does not employ statistics, nor it does aim at reaching objectivity, but it rather analyses perspectives and subjective interpretations with an emphasis on words and actions (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

The decision to employ two case studies did not follow from a desire to incorporate a comparative strategy but rather to gain insights into how different Protestant Churches react to similar phenomena, in this instance the presence of a consistent presence of migrants in their communities. Furthermore, as Yin suggests, the case study strategy should be guided by two main questions: 'How' and 'Why'. Regarding the 'how' questions, I was interested in analysing how similar yet different churches reacted/responded to migration; how they defined, understood and articulated the concept of integration and how migrants responded to the integration policies promoted by the churches. Regarding the 'why' questions, I wanted to find out why churches decided to develop integration policies; and why migrants chose one congregation over another.

Figure 2 below shows the diagram of the research design informing the two case studies with the different levels of analysis and the methods employed. The first level had two objectives: one was to explore the macro-national approaches and policies on migration and integration and to what extent they influenced the churches' policies; and, the other was to analyse the national approaches/policies of different churches in relation to these issues. The second level refers to the analysis of the two case studies which constitute the core of the research, for this I focused on two specific integration projects, looking into their genesis, who was involved in shaping them, and whether their aims were met on the ground. The third level refers to the analysis of the implementation of integration policies on the ground, based on the researcher's participant observation. For this third stage of analysis I focused mainly on one congregation in each country, although I studied other congregations. The diagram shows also the multiple methods

employed in this research (Denzin, 1989). One of the advantages of choosing a case study is that it allows the researcher to use a variety of methods.

Figure 2. Research Design



The use of a flexible data collection strategy was also influenced by the grounded theory approach applied in this research. Furthermore this study includes a strong ethnographic component which needs to be contextualised in the general framework of the methodology.

Having presented, analysed and justified the methodological framework behind my research I now describe the second stage of the research: 'being there', the ethnographic part of the research and the methods employed to collect the data.

Being there: the fieldwork and its nuances

Gaining access to the field

It is often said that gaining access to the field can represent a challenge for the researcher (Gobo, 2008), who needs to obtain the trust of the group to be 'studied'. The first anthropologists (e.g Malinowski, 1922) called this phase 'initiation' as it required a real 'initiation' into the new environment, its culture and its language. Today both anthropologists and sociologists, even when they do not research unknown tribes and do not go to live among them, still have to gain that trust that allows them to have access to the community they are interested in. Without a good 'key informant', now as it was then, the researcher may not be able to start the research. The situation can be different when the researcher is an 'insider', although this opens up other challenges, as I discuss later. As I argue in this chapter, I was both an insider and outsider in relation to the field. In Ireland I was an outsider, as the field was new to me and I had to find informants who could introduce me to people in the Protestant churches, whereas in Italy, as a Protestant and member of the Commission of Being Church Together (ECI) of FCEI, I already had access to information and people.

The picture, however, is more complex for both environments. In Ireland my being Protestant created an immediate link, a *trait d'union* between the Irish Protestants and me to the extent that I was not seen as a 'real' outsider. This was evident during my participant observation in congregations, when informants had the tendency to treat me as a member of the community rather than as an outsider observant. I was asked to take part in the life and activities of the church – as I discuss later – and during formal and informal interviews people would often

discuss issues, stressing the fact that I could understand what they were talking about and relate to their situation as Protestant believers. At the same time I was a migrant myself, an element which should have linked me to other migrants but which, on the contrary, was almost totally unnoticed, by the people I interviewed and met during my fieldwork among the Irish Protestant churches.

In Italy my position was different: as an insider I knew the ground and the people, I was involved in shaping some of the integration policies at national level, and since 2010 I was living in a multicultural congregation led by my husband. To a certain extent I was the gate keeper of my Italian fieldwork, although I had many key informants who facilitated my research through the years. Paradoxically, precisely because of my insider position in the field, I found it more difficult to select information and sites to be included in the research. Furthermore, my position as an insider, a policy maker and a minister's wife had an impact on my work, as I analyse in the next section. Thus, the challenge in the Italian field was not about gaining access to the field and building trust with research participants, but rather about negotiating boundaries between my life and my work.

The dichotomy insider/outsider, as my experience demonstrates, is neither fixed nor neatly shaped. As Rosaldo (1989) points out, the ethnographer in the field exhibits 'multiple subjectivity' therefore 'which facet of our subjectivity we choose or are forced to accept as a defined identity can change, depending on the context and the prevailing vectors of power' (676). In describing the fieldwork I also unveil the multiple subjectivities behind my persona.

The multi-sited ethnography

While the 'going there' phase went on more easily than expected in both Ireland and Italy, the discourse is different for the 'being there' phase (Birch, 1998). In her ethnographic work on Italian women in Ireland De Tona (2008: 133) stresses how often, in her stage of 'being there', she would have preferred to be somewhere else as the expectations towards her role as 'an Italian, the degree of performativity involved in the interview process and the awareness of her 'role-playing' conduct were a difficult experience' for her. Similarly, at times I found myself wanting to be 'somewhere else' - for instance I 'missed' the Italian field when I was conducting research in Ireland and vice versa and I struggled with my insiderness, as a

Protestant researching Protestant churches, and with the representations people involved in the research had of me.

In describing and analysing the 'being there' phase I chose to divide it into three stages for each of the two countries. Despite my efforts to participate in as many services, activities, meetings as possible and to include many voices to represent different viewpoints, this ethnography is inevitably the outcome of a partial collection of data (Clifford, 1986).

The fieldwork in Ireland

The results of the Irish fieldwork were influenced by the way people perceived me. For instance, as described above, despite being an outsider, I was seen as a fellow church member and this steered the research and could not always be controlled. In addition my migrant status was invisible as others, but not me, were labelled as such. I was 'simply' an Italian Protestant doing research in Dublin. As a Protestant migrant researching Protestant migrants, at times I felt terribly uncomfortable with the fact of being and being seen on a different level of belonging/rights than the migrants I was researching. This attitude of placing people differently across a spectrum of diversity and migrancy according to their home country affected my work. I discuss this in more detail later in this chapter. The next sections delineate the three stages of data collection in Ireland including tables of interviews conducted, events attended and challenges encountered during the research on the ground.

Stage One

The Irish context was new to me and I spent the first academic year (2008-2009) focusing on three main aspects: a) gaining a deeper knowledge of Protestantism in Ireland; b) conducting informal interviews; and c) visiting and choosing research sites. In relation to point a) this consisted mainly of archival and library research on the history and position of Protestant Churches in the Republic of Ireland and analysis of secondary documentation such as church leaflets and booklets.

The table 2 below synthesises the work done during this first stage. It is important to stress that the actions reported in table 3 were not undertaken in chronological order, but rather proceeded in parallel.

Table 2: Synthesis of the work undertaken in Ireland (2008 – 2009)

Protestantism in Ireland	Informal interviews conducted	Research sites visited	Research sites analysed – Participant observation
Archival/library research Secondary documentation: leaflets, booklets, websites	With 2 key informants of CoI With 2 ministers of CoI With part of the church council of a Baptist Church (minister, his wife and three elders)	St. George and St. Thomas Parish (CoI, Dublin, city centre) St. Ann Parish (CoI, Dublin, city centre) Trinity Chapel (Dublin, city centre) Christ Church (CoI, Dublin, city centre) Whitechurch Parish (CoI, Dublin, suburb) St. Maelruain Parish (CoI, Dublin, suburb) Dublin Central Mission (Methodist, Dublin, city centre)	St. George and St. Thomas Parish (CoI, Dublin, city centre)

Table 3: Formal events attended in Ireland (2008 -2009)

Title	Date	Where	Organised by
Launch of the Directory of MIGRANT-LED CHURCHES and CHAPLAINCIES (Thompson and Bruce, 2009)	05/12/2008	Belfast	The All-Ireland Churches Consultative Meeting on Racism (AICCMR)
Book launch Counting the people of God	02/2/2009	Dublin	Church of Ireland Publishing
Fifth Anniversary of the Discovery Project (Macourt, 2008)	05/07/2009	Dublin	Diocese of Dublin and Glendalough and Discovery Committee
Harvest thanksgiving Worship	11/10/2009	Dublin	Church

The ethnographic work at this stage consisted primarily in visiting and choosing the research sites. Almost every Sunday I went to a 'potential' church with the intention to attend it more regularly during the research. The original thesis project

was to select two or three Protestant denominations in each country, and to look at their integration policies and their implementation in the local congregations. After numerous theoretical discussions with my supervisors, taking into consideration the time at my disposal for the research and the necessary travels back and forth between Italy and Ireland, I decided to choose one denomination, the Church of Ireland, as the main focus of the research. However, in light of the methodology employed, I left open the possibility, of revising this decision and enlarging the spectrum of the Irish field. Thus, while in the last months of 2008 I visited an Anglican Church and a Methodist Church in Dublin, in 2009 I focused on different Anglican churches and selected the Church of St. George and St. Thomas as the main research site for participant observation.

Gaining access to the field was relatively easy, thanks to the key informant who introduced me to the congregation where I was warmly welcomed. The challenge was related to the way I was perceived: I was seen more as an Italian Protestant worshipping in their church than as a researcher. At times, especially at the beginning when I had to visit different churches on Sundays, I felt the pressure of being or not being in one particular church; to be more specific I had the impression churches were trying to win me over as a member. The welcoming package received as a migrant in a new country was very positive and I noticed the congregants' interest in me and my life and work - which of course helped me to overcome some of the usual homesickness migrants experience. However, in relation to my fieldwork I felt I had to justify myself if I was not going to a particular church because I was researching another one. However with time I managed to control the flow of emotions caused by all these different demands.

In this first stage I relied heavily on the information and direction given to me by two key informants, both active churchgoers who were also involved in shaping the integration strategies of the Church of Ireland. Participant observation and informal gatherings were important in order to not only understand the position of the Church of Ireland but also to identify on the ground the dynamics between different churchgoers to be better able to formulate and conduct the interviews in the second stage. As the starting points for the Italian and Irish studies were 'uneven', considering my knowledge of Italian Protestant Churches and my own position there, I wanted to gain knowledge of the Irish field and to feel confident

with the situation on the ground before beginning the interview phase. Thus, even though I began the archival research, participant observation and informant conversations immediately after I arrived in Ireland, the formal interviews only took place in Dublin between 2009 and 2010 with the exception of a pilot interview which took place in autumn 2008. The pilot interview was not planned but it happened almost by chance: one Sunday, while I was at one of the churches I had begun to visit regularly, I met an Anglican Nigerian woman who was doing a Master in Dublin and, as part of her degree, had spent a semester in Italy, I thought it would be a great opportunity to interview her about her experience in both countries. I immediately transcribed the interview and 'let it lie' until I had other data to compare it with.

Stage Two

After one year spent attending church services, church events and regular meetings with churchgoers, in the autumn of 2009 I officially started the interviews. The interviews were secured mainly through purposive sampling but on occasions I reached interviewees thanks to snowball sampling (Gobo, 2008).

Between 2009 and 2010 I conducted eight formal interviews, and three informal interviews as shown in the tables in Appendix 1. At this stage I deemed it necessary to restrict the interviews only to members of the Discovery Committee and those closer to the project. I emailed all Committee members explaining my research and asking for an interview. Not everybody replied. I was then told that in that phase the Committee was undergoing a 'crisis' and some of the people had disappeared. I eventually interviewed seven Committee members and the former Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough. A trend in relation to the Discovery Project and its development emerged from all interviews: the image of the descending curve, as I discuss in more detail in chapter V. Though I had reached 'theoretical saturation', as far as the Discovery Project's committee was concerned, I still wanted to analyse the repercussions of the project for local communities.

Furthermore, by keeping in regular contact with the key informants, I was able to elaborate further on the data collected and to notice that other interesting phenomena were emerging in the Protestant Irish scenario outside the Church of Ireland. I then decided to investigate more closely two Methodist congregations

which led me to the third and final stage of the Irish fieldwork described in the next section.

Stage Three

The last stage of the Irish research, covering the period between September 2011 and March 2012, was characterised by two main aspects. First of all, the impact of the economic crisis on the development of the Discovery Project (shortage of money and decline of enthusiasm). The other aspect was my decision to look more closely at the integration approach of the Methodist Church.

At the end of 2011, following a change of leadership in St. George and St. Thomas parish, I decided to interview two female active members of the congregation to gain data on the transition period as well as to hear their opinions and reflections upon the development of the Discovery Project, especially in light of the fact that the newly appointed minister had been in charge of the 'International Community' within the project.

These two interviews were accompanied by my own field notes and follow up interviews with two key informants as detailed in the Appendix 1. Through the interview material I was able to retrace the steps of the project, analyse the impact of the economic crisis on migrants in Ireland and in churches, discuss the different integration approaches of the various Protestant denominations, and officially end the case study on the Discovery Project.

However, as mentioned above, during this third and last stage, I included two Methodist churches in Dublin: Dublin Central Mission, a historical congregation which had become a multicultural church, and a new community – a spinoff of Dublin Central Mission – in Blanchardstown formed mainly by migrants. The observation of these two realities, the interviews carried out with ministers and key informants in those churches, and the documentation collected provided a more accurate picture of the different integration approaches promoted and implemented by Protestant Churches in Ireland. My participant observation during this third stage was more scattered, as a result of the inclusion of the Methodist component, but I tried to maintain regular contacts with the informants. With the exception of two key informants, contacts started to become less regular when, once I reached theoretical saturation, I started to gradually detach from the field.

The fieldwork in Italy

The fieldwork in Italy was characterised by my different roles which influenced the research to different extents. On the one hand there was my role as a member of a committee which was shaping some of the integration policies at national and interdenominational level and as a research consultant on the process of Being Church Together. On some occasions the fact that I was wearing three hats (PhD researcher, committee member and research consultant) created misunderstandings among stakeholders and interviewees. It is important to highlight that the project Being Church Together (ECI) of the FCEI is not the primary object of this study and there was no involvement on my part in the Mezzano-Second District project, the main object of this study. Nevertheless, my work with the ECI commission had some influence on the way I read my data. The ECI Commission functions as a mediation tool for churches and it is consulted by different Protestant denominations on matters related to integration policies. Thus at times I found that when looking at the data collected I tried 'to shape policy rather than analysing it'.

On the other hand there was my 'unwanted role' as a minister's wife. It is not that I did not know who I was marrying or that that I was not happy about my choice, the point is I was not always ready to incarnate the traditional but apparently still alive – in some communities – role of the minister's wife. All the old stereotypes and expectations surrounding the figure of the pastor's wife were actually becoming real, attached to my persona, and consequently I had to deal with them. This unwanted role, however, had a double side effect: there were indeed expectations and stereotypes from the congregations, but there were also open doors to many houses and deep conversations on a variety of topics linked to my research. Furthermore there was the distinction between being married to a minister and being seen as the minister's wife. At times I was one or the other, at times I was both, but I was rarely just myself.

Stage One (2005- mid 2009)

My involvement in the study of migration and religion started in 2005 when working for the NGO Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe in Brussels. I began collecting documentation for my Italian case in 2007 for the pilot study 'Mapping Migration, Mapping Churches' Responses' (Jackson and Passarelli,

2008). The autumn of 2008 was particularly significant for my research, as it was signposted by three important events: a) the beginning of my PhD project in Dublin; b) my appointment as a member of the commission 'Being Church Together' of the Federation of Protestant Churches (FCEI); and c) the first appointment of my husband-to-be to an Italian parish in Trieste.

Point b) and c) highlight the different levels of involvement as researcher in the Italian field, compared to the Irish one. Even though the actual fieldwork for the thesis started in mid-2009, during the autumn of 2008 I visited various congregations in the area chosen for the study – the North-East of Italy – to identify those churches more relevant for the PhD project.

When my husband-to-be was appointed to the church in Trieste in July 2008, a city on the border with Slovenia, we both moved there from Brussels, although shortly afterwards I moved to Dublin. At first I thought that the congregations in Trieste could be included in the case study but very soon it became clear that, for a number of reasons, the church was not significantly affected by migration, [37] and therefore it became difficult to test the implementation of integration policies. Nevertheless, through my participant observation – it is difficult to turn off the researcher in me – I noticed that lay members of the congregations and clergy were both interested in issues related to migration and the social inclusion of migrants in churches and in society, as also evidenced by the Synod acts analysed in chapter VI.

In the period between autumn 2008 and spring 2009, while I was focusing primarily on collecting data in the Irish field, I began to organise my interviews in Italy for the summer and to collect material on the project 'Mezzano - Second District'. As for the Irish case I secured my interviews through purposive setting sampling.

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[37] In the study I conducted for the FCEI/ECI in the years 2010-2012, it emerges that the presence of church members in Trieste with migrant background is less than 5 per cent.

Stage Two (August-2009 – 2010)

This period was characterised by interviews and participant observation. Most formal (13 out of 16) and informal (4) interviews were carried out over the summers of 2009 and 2010, as listed in Appendix 1.

Before moving to Bologna (July 2010) the fieldwork consisted of visiting churches in the North East and attending regional meetings, as table 4 shows.

Table 4: Formal events attended in Italy (2009 – 2010)

Title	Date	Where	Organised by
Circuit assembly	October 2009	Venice	Circuit of Waldensian and Methodist Church
After worship sharing and discussion at the Pordenone church with International guests from USA churches	February 2010	Pordenone	Pordenone Church and ECI Commission
Visit to the Conegliano Congregation	February 2010	Conegliano	Church worship followed by a focus group
Ghanaian Easter Convention	March 2010	Udine	Ghanaian leaders of the Waldensian and Methodist Church

In July 2010 my husband moved from Trieste to Bologna to be in charge of the parishes of Bologna and Modena: this had an impact on my own work as both communities, although at different levels, were changed and modified by migration. This is why I felt the need to dedicate a stage on its own to this period of intense participant observation.

Stage Three (July 2010 – 2012)

Moving to Bologna represented a big opportunity for my research, as the two congregations represent the different scenarios within the project Being Church Together: on the one hand there was the Bologna church, a historical community present in the city since the establishment of the Republic of Italy and which, considering the city's position and the presence of a renowned university, has

always had some international members; and on the other hand there was the Modena church, newly constituted in 2008, and formed entirely by Ghanaians.

During this period I also worked on transcribing and analysing the interviews and, in view of the changes in Italian society as well as the structural changes that occurred within the Ghanaian component of the church, I felt the need to conduct two follow up interviews with key informants which were done at the beginning of 2013.

Being here: leaving the field and formalising the analysis

> Withdrawal from the field is not simply a matter of physical distancing; it also involves a degree of intellectual distancing from the minutiae of ethnographic observations in order to discern structures and develop theories (Davies, 1999: 193).

This phase was challenging in both aspects described by Davies. I had difficulties in physically distancing myself from the field. While in Ireland I wanted to remain on the ground as long as possible to try to feel comfortable enough in analysing the situation of Protestant Churches. In my mind there was the idea of handling/controlling both fields equally and I struggled until I realised that it was simply not possible as my different positionalities did not allow it. Once I accepted this 'obvious' fact I was able to look at the data and the fields with different eyes and I continued to collect the necessary information until I reached theoretical saturation. However I never fully detached myself from the field(s). As long as I stayed in Dublin I continued to attend the churches I researched - I was not able to choose one - it was impossible to turn off the researcher in me.

In Italy for all the reasons I explained above I was never able to leave the field as the field was in my home. However, I managed to distance myself from the (Italian) field during the periods I spent in Ireland. Those periods were highly valuable as they helped me to physically and intellectually distance myself from the minutiae of ethnographic observations, at least in relation to the Italian field, and to look at the data from another perspective.

The methodological framework employed allowed me to do parallel work on theory and data analysis from the very beginning, therefore I did not have to wait

until reaching the being here phase to discern structures and develop theories. It was an ongoing process which, however, came to an end once I declared the fieldwork and the collection of data officially closed – a partly arbitrary decision necessitated by the lifetime of the PhD process.

Towards a 'thick' description

As mentioned in the research design section, another technique I used during the course of my project was to triangulate the data (Denzin, 1989) through three main sources of evidence: varying degrees of participant observation, semi-structured interviews and documents collected. Following Yin's (2003) distinction between 'convergence of evidence' triangulation and 'non-convergence of evidence' triangulation, on the basis of whether the phenomena of the case study are supported by more than one source of evidence, my research findings were supported by 'convergence of evidence'.

The reason behind choosing a triangulation of methods was not only to facilitate validation of findings through cross verification, as explained above, but also to ensure that findings were not idiosyncratic (Hammersley, 1998) and to gather a considerable amount of details about the data (Denzin, 1989) as a way of getting a 'thick' description of the phenomena studied (Geertz, 1973).

I have already described my multi-sited ethnography, below I present the nature of the ethnographic work employed in this research, including the use of interviews and secondary sources.

Varying degrees of participant observation

Participant observation was a central part of my ethnographic work; however the degree of participation varied according to the circumstances. I can relate to Halilovic-Pastuovic (2012) who, while describing her fieldwork, stresses how her ethnographic experience went beyond 'the dichotomy of observer and participant observer' but 'was rather characterised by varying degrees of participation': 'In some settings my participatory role was more pronounced than in others, in some settings my observations did not accompany direct but rather indirect participation (…) and in other situations the roles merged into one another' (54).

Participant observation in multi-sited ethnography often takes the shape of 'scattered' participation as the researcher follows different types of activities in various places according to her research objectives. In my case participant observation was confined to church services and church activities, as the examples below demonstrate.

In Ireland I usually attended the Sunday morning services and, occasionally, I went to the evensong prayer service officiated by the Anglican Church. With the exception of the Anglican Church, all other Protestant Churches have their service once a week, generally on Sunday mornings. This is also the reason why it was almost impossible for me to attend more than one service each Sunday. The service usually lasts between forty-five minutes and one hour and afterwards tea and coffee are often served to allow congregants to greet each other and talk informally and reinforce their relationships. These informal occasions were highly important as they allowed me to meet many members of the congregations and to get timely updates on church activities and events.

In the church of St. George and St. Thomas, the core of my participant observation in Ireland, at times I was asked to read some passages from the Gospel in front of the community. I was also asked to take more responsibilities in church but I had to decline as my other PhD commitments did not allow me to spend significant amounts of time in one specific congregation. As a sign of being accepted and considered a member, when my husband and I got married (September 2009), the church's weekly newsletter announced our marriage and when I visited the church, after my return to Dublin, I was invited to stand up in front of the congregation and received an applause and greetings. As mentioned earlier it was difficult for me to explain to the congregation that I was there firstly as a researcher, and that therefore I could not commit myself to one church.

In addition to attending services I also participated in special services organised by the Discovery Project Committee and the Discovery Gospel Choir, which were always followed by receptions. These events, and especially the receptions afterwards, were extremely useful, as they enabled me to network, to remain in contact with informants, and to meet new potential informants.

Ecumenical events and activities were part of my participant observation too, although sometimes I was more of an observer than an active participant. Such

ecumenical events were useful as they gave me a broader picture of the Irish Christian landscape and offered an opportunity to see how the different churches worked together on the issues of migration and integration. The best example in this respect was the formulation of the ten recommendations for promoting intercultural churches, analysed in chapter VI, which were signed by all Christian churches after a number of meetings and consultations.

In Italy I attended the church regularly every Sunday morning and took an active part in the service by reading the Gospel, singing in the choir or welcoming members at the church door. Once I moved to Bologna, I took part in the English/African service, which follows the main service every Sunday: this service was established to allow church attendees who do not have a good command of the Italian language to have a liturgical moment and a reflection on the sermon in English. I also attended the church in Modena, formed mainly by Ghanaians, whose Sunday service usually lasts between three and four hours. Especially at the beginning, when the environment and the people were new to me, I was expected to sit in the front row as the minister's wife, who in twi is called *osofu mame*, meaning the church's mother.

Furthermore I attended, as a participant, the national activities organised by the Ghanaian members of the Waldensian and Methodist churches such as the biannual service called 'Conventions' at Christmas and Easter time. As an observer I also attended the Synod of the Waldensian and Methodist churches which takes place every August and lasts for a week.

Lastly, I actively participated – and still do – in the ECI Commission of FCEI as a full member. The ECI Commission is an inter-denominational group which analyses the integration strategies of different churches, provides intercultural training for church members and acts as a consultant for the churches.

Having described the different strands of my participant observation I now move on to the other method employed: the interviews.

The nature of formal and informal interviews and free conversations

If gaining access to the field went on smoothly in both settings, the interviewing process took a different course. I conducted 28 semi structured interviews with key actors. While the informal interviews were carried out in cafés, the formal interviews were conducted mainly in private spaces, mostly offices, or churches, where interviewees could feel comfortable and where we could not be easily interrupted. A comfortable setting was an important element as it allowed the interviewee to freely reflect upon the policies of the churches under analysis. I began all the interviews by outlining the purpose of the interviews and describing the project. I took as much time as was required to assure each interviewee that I would guarantee their anonymity even though I could not prevent other people from identifying them, especially if the person in question held a specific task/job.

The interviews were all conducted after I became more acquainted with the setting of the Irish field and with the people I wanted to interview. As described above I first engaged in participant observation and held informal discussions and only in the second phase I began conducting the formal semi-structured interviews. This two-stage process ensured that I did not have 'to break the ice' and that interviewees opened up easily.

The interviews were semi-structured – more semi than structured - guided by few questions and follow up questions which varied according to the answer given by the interviewee. To be more specific I used two different guides: one for people directly involved in shaping the integration projects under analysis and one for people active in local congregations, as the table below illustrates. In addition, when I interviewed migrant leaders – either involved in the integration project or only active on a local level - I added a few more questions in relation to their encounter with the church, their experience within the congregation and the similarities and differences with the church in their country of origin. In line with the grounded theory approach I tried as much as possible to design the interview as a narration leaving to the informant the possibility to add any other information related to the broad topic of integration and immigration in churches and society.

Table 5: Interview Guide(s)

Interview Guide for people involved in integration projects	**Interview Guide for people active in local congregations**
1) What is your role in the committee related to the integration project? 2) What is your role in the integration project? 3) How did this project come into being? 4) What are the aims and goals of the integration project? 5) How would you evaluate the project? What would you change? 6) How would you define integration? And integrated churches? 7) What are the challenges of the integration process?	1) How long have you been a member of this church? 2) Do you have any specific role in church (e.g. church council member; choir conductor)? 3) Could you tell me the 'story' of your church? Since when can it be considered a multicultural congregation? 4) Has the church benefitted from the integration project of the Church? 5) Have you or other members of the church participated in intercultural training course(s)? If yes, what was the feedback at local level? 6) How would you define your church in relation to integration? 7) Could you tell me how an integrated church would look like to you?
Additional questions for migrant leaders	
1) How long have you been in this country? And how long have you been in this church? 2) Do you remember your first encounter with the Protestant Church in this country? Was it is easy to find? What was your impression? 3) What are the similarities and differences with the Church in your country of origin?	

I conducted 12 semi-structured interviews in Ireland and 16 in Italy; with the exception of one in Ireland I recorded all of them. As well as semi-structured interviews I also conducted three informal interviews in Ireland and five in Italy with key informants who wanted to speak freely without being recorded; I then wrote down the main arguments which emerged during these informal discussions and included them in my data chapters. Those who asked for informal interviews/conversations were consulted on different occasions during the

fieldwork, and in the Irish case, one key informant agreed to be recorded towards the end of the fieldwork; he felt that the conditions seen as an obstacle were no longer in place.

Conversations and discussions were also an integral part of my research. Reflecting on her own experience of doing qualitative research, Okely (1994) stresses that the number of people encountered in the field who participated in her research amounted to several hundreds. In this light, when analysing the process of qualitative data collection, to refer to formal and informal interviews only is not adequate as it does not capture the reality of the work in the field. This holds true for my own research, as the people I encountered and with whom I had conversations were far more numerous than those enumerated in the list of interviewees. These conversations generally took place after the Sunday service, during dinners or coffees at church members' houses. In Italy I met and spoke to people during coffee breaks at regional church meetings or intercultural training courses which I attended in different capacities.

I always left open the possibility of returning to the interviewees after a certain time and, whenever possible, I also sent them my articles and drafts and asked for comments, suggestions, missing information. Especially in Ireland, informants were very cooperative, they replied to my emails and requests often with positive feedback and a wish to further expand my study to other Protestant denominations. As far as I recall, I never received negative feedback from the respondents who read my work.

Finding and selecting documents

The process of collecting data also included gathering, through archival research and analysis, secondary documentation on the history and position of the Protestant Churches in Italy and Ireland. Church documents provided a body of textual evidence which shed light not only on the churches' histories but also on the ways churches understood and presented themselves and circulated information among their members.

As Gobo argues, 'organisations are also made of texts, whereby by 'texts' is meant process-based information created by the ordinary activities of people or private and public organisations. This is information which is 'produced, shared and used

in socially organised ways' (Atkinson and Coffey, 1997:47) by participants, instead of being created by researchers – in the form of field notes for example' (Gobo, 2008:129).

Gobo identifies three main types of texts: public documents (files, databases, forms, official statistics, reports, and so on); personal documents (letters, diaries, notes, etc); and images, photo, websites etc. 'Organisations and institutions are full of texts which are not merely appendices or annotations to practices, but instead constitute integral and important parts of the organisations' (Gobo, 2008:129). While the content of the churches' bylaws and policies were the main focus of my analysis, the way they were presented to and received by the public also yielded interesting insights. I remember an informal conversation in Ireland which involved some members of the Discovery Project discussing how the leaflet for the project or the Discovery service should look and the best way to convey information. On this particular occasion a 'simple' leaflet became emblematic of 'two' different world views, the Irish and the African: 'if you want to attract, catch the attention of African fellows, you need to do it [the leaflet] differently, more colourful and with images and faces instead of just text' (Migrant, male, ordained).

The archival part of the research was not difficult as there was a number of publications detailing the history of Protestant churches in both countries (see chapters IV and VI). However, when it came to the topic of migration or the steps undertaken by the various Churches to respond to it I found little information as regards the Irish context and almost none for the Italian context. For instance most of the twenty year long history of promoting the process of being church together in Italy was largely undocumented. It was possible to retrace the years and the topics of training courses and conferences but there was no public written reflection on it. By contrast, in Ireland the Protestant Churches had published a series of booklets on the topic of 'welcoming the strangers' and on the churches' responses to migrant newcomers; furthermore, the Archbishop had also commissioned a report on migration in the churches. However, those reflections were related to a specific moment in time, the early 2000s, when migration was a novelty and an optimistic approach pervaded church publications. Since the onset of the economic crisis, new reflections have not been produced or made available to the public. For instance the Archbishop commissioned an evaluation of the

Discovery Project but the report was not meant for publication; while I was unable to access it, many of my respondents were able to read it and shared their comments informally with me. Due to the confidential nature of the report and the fact that I was not allowed access to it, I decided not to include the information I had received from my informants in this research.

In both countries public documents containing information on specific projects and their aims and objectives were very scarce: thus I had to rely on a different type of textual evidence, namely the reflections of those involved in these projects. It is important to add that the lack of written information on the projects' rationale represents, paradoxically, evidence in itself as I discuss in chapters V and VII.

The collection of archival information may seem a straightforward task; Prior for instance argues that one of the researcher's jobs is to 'remove the dust' of the documentary material and ask simple questions: 'How exactly and by whom was this documents assembled? Who was intended to read it, and for what purpose?' (2004: 380). Nonetheless throughout the process of collecting documents I was aware that I was, often unintentionally, making selective choices and this to a certain extent shaped the evidence I was trying to retrieve. The researcher's role in constructing a specific type of archive is also acknowledged by Prior: documents, in his words, 'serve as active agents in the schemes of human interaction, agents to be recruited, manipulated, scorned or hidden' (Prior, 2004: 388).

The two data chapters dealing with Ireland and Italy (chapters V and VII) include my field notes, taken at the time of data collection (and written in Italics, to differentiate them from the rest of the data). Fieldnotes, according to Gobo (2008), represent personal texts which are important for the researcher. During the participant observation I always tried to take notes of the event (church services, meetings, and conferences). If I could not take notes at the meeting itself I tried to do it immediately afterwards. When I was not able to either record the event or take fieldnotes (for instance at churchgoers' homes) I usually noted words down which helped me to revive the experience *in situ*. As already observed for the collection of documents, writing fieldnotes also implies a degree of selective choice. In other words, fieldnotes are always selective as it impossible for the ethnographer to capture everything (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) and as they

represent the ethnographer's own impressions. In addition, fieldnotes represent - sometimes unintentionally- a first elaboration and analysis of the event itself.

Transcribing, translating and analysing the data

> Thick descriptions of life are always interpretative and do not merely attempt to mirror a simple obdurate reality. They are selective and discerning but also require imagination and creativity (Back, 2007: 21).

The *modus operandi* employed after each formal and informal interview was to write it down as soon as possible, ideally within a few hours, capturing the impressions garnered from the encounter as well as the setting in which the interview took place, the atmosphere, the interaction between the researcher and the informant and the key points of the discussion. The next step was to transcribe and, when necessary, translate the interviews.

In Ireland all interviewees were conducted in English while in Italy the majority was held in Italian with the exception of four which were in English and one which started in English and ended in Italian. The interviews were transcribed and translated shortly after I conducted them. Almost all the interviewees had a satisfactory level of English. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that for most of the interviewees English was not their mother tongue; both in such cases and with interviews that I translated, some nuances were probably lost. Transcribing and translating are always acts of transformation and the imprint of the researcher is inevitable.

Initially I intended to send copies of the transcripts to the persons I interviewed but I was told by a number of respondents that it was not necessary; however, to be at peace with my own conscience, I sent them the articles I published, which were partially based on interview material, to get feedback. As I mentioned already, in general the level of English or Italian of my interviews was satisfactory and therefore at first I did not plan to edit their English; however when I started to translate the Italian interviews into English I realised some editing would be necessary in order to make them understandable and I began to question my decision to leave the transcripts untouched. De Tona (2008) who found herself in a similar situation while researching Italian migrant women in Ireland, justifies her choice of editing her interviewees' words in these terms: 'I did it also out of

intellectual honesty; I saw the whole text of the thesis as the product of a continuous (often tedious) process of editing and re-editing, I edited the women's words as I edited my own' (2008: 142). Like De Tona, I decided, when needed, to edit the transcripts of the interviews and to harmonise them.

Once the interviews were transcribed and the field notes polished, I was faced with the issue of how to 'read' and 'use' the data collected. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) highlight how the analysis goes beyond 'managing and manipulating the data' to the extent that they see the analysis of data 'as an interactive process in which ideas are used to make sense of the data, and data are used to change our ideas' (159). As discussed above, grounded theory allowed me to constantly put my data in dialogue with my theories and use this interplay to shape and refine the analysis.

I used NVivo to help classify, sort and arrange information by date and by case. The software is able to trace a field note or a specific interview quickly, while allowing researchers to always modify and/or add information and to cluster data according to specific themes, or nodes, which can be changed at any point. I found the use of NVivo very helpful especially as I conducted research in two countries over a long period of time. There is no limitation on the number of codes the researcher can create or modify and it is possible to insert a variety of documents, from interviews to field notes, to code them and to create graphics or tables. I created 16 nodes and 3 tree nodes (see Appendix 2).

There is, however, the risk of not being able to go through the whole data again once the nodes have been created. Thus, after I transcribed the last interview, I took the time to reread all the interviews and my field notes to have a clear and updated picture of the data. This was a time-consuming but important exercise which helped me develop my data chapters.

While going through the data collected I struggled with the amount of information in my possession and with the realisation that I could only use a fraction of it for my PhD. The data of course remain and could be used for further research on other themes emerging from this study.

I did not notice a huge difference between the approaches of males and females to integration during my research; one of the reasons, as I analyse below, is the small

number of female interviewed. On the contrary, an age/generation gap emerged when comparing answers by younger and older interviewees. It seemed that people in their '30s and early '40s had a more critical approach to the matter than those around '50s and above. For instance younger interviewees generally recognised the discrepancy between strategies and their implementation. In most cases younger interviewees were also undergoing intercultural training and they highlighted the difficulties of transferring their knowledge to the local level.

Furthermore, there are some considerations on the gender and the status of the majority of my interviewees. Out of the 28 interviews conducted only nine were women, four in Ireland (of whom three were lay) and five in Italy (of whom three were lay). Out of the 19 male interviewees only eight were lay while the others were all ordained. These numbers speak for themselves and highlight – in Ireland more so than in Italy – the predominance of male church leadership. Moreover, I found it difficult to find migrant women as leaders both in Italy and in Ireland; possibly because it is difficult for migrant women to access high leadership positions: neither the Anglican Church in Nigeria nor the Methodist Church in Ghana allow women to be ordained as priests or bishops.

Further considerations on research ethics and the researcher's role

My role as a researcher was always overt, and I always identified myself to the interlocutors first as a social researcher interested in analysing the impact of migration in Protestant Churches and secondly, depending on the situations, as Protestant. Oral consent was forthcoming from all my interviewees who were fully aware that the interviews would form part of my study. Following standard ethical procedures, I guaranteed anonymity to most of the participants, with the exception of public figures, in order to protect their identity. Nevertheless, as the Protestant world is small and 'everybody knows everybody' – as I was often told during these years of fieldwork - prior to the interview I always highlighted the possibility that people could identify themselves even if their name was not specifically mentioned. I encountered no objections.

During my fieldwork, it became evident that informants may at times provide routine answers or provide the responses they perceived were wanted or sought

after by the researcher. For instance, in the Italian field I noticed that when discussing the integration strategies that churches should implement an informant would give me an answer, and during public occasions, be it a church assembly or a seminar, provide a different interpretation of such strategies. Therefore I spent time triangulating information in an attempt to reconstruct the course of events and the stages of the integration projects under analysis. As mentioned above, the aim was not to reach objectivity or to distinguish between a 'true' or 'false' narrative of events but rather to make a distinction between 'mistakes of memory' and different perceptions of the same event.

Another important element in relation to the way interviewees perceived the interview and the researcher was the 'you know' effect. In almost all the interviews I conducted in both countries, but more so in the Italian field, while answering specific questions or telling their story, informants would pause, look at me, and say: 'but you know this, don't you?' or 'as you know', or even 'you know it, I don't need to explain...'. While in Italy these sentences were related either to the integration strategies or to particular situations of local congregations, in Ireland, they were related to the perceived shared view on the meaning of integration and its application in church settings.

Going through the interviews it emerged clearly that the 'you know' effect was a sign of my insiderness in both settings, and a way of establishing a connection. This was reinforced by the 'what do you think' effect. Along with 'you know what I am talking about'. Some informants concluded their interviews asking me questions or wanting to know my opinions on the policies or even expecting I would provide solutions to the challenges faced. At first I felt uneasy but upon reflection, I realised that it was a 'fair' request; it was the 'price' of being considered an insider and being granted, willingly or unwillingly, the role of 'expert'.

Finally, there was the issue of being a young, white woman who, researching integration policies and practices in Protestant Churches, entered into relations with migrants, mainly Africans (predominantly Nigerians and Ghanaians), black and male. Different power relations were generated by these 'encounters': a) the dynamic of the young woman versus an older male; b) the dynamic of the western

researcher versus an African 'object' of study; and lastly c) the dynamic between privileged migrants versus unprivileged migrants.

My position as an insider (in Italy) and an outsider-insider (in Ireland) and the composition of the sample, made up of people either involved or targeted by the integration projects, certainly affected my findings. Had the sample been composed of people not at all involved in the integration projects, the findings might have been different.

In the next chapter I analyse the position of Protestant Churches in Ireland between past and present challenges.

Chapter IV

Between past and present: the identity of Protestants and their place in Irish society

Introduction

This chapter looks at the presence of Protestant Churches in the Republic of Ireland with a specific focus on the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church. It provides a historical analysis of the peculiar position of Protestant Churches before and after Irish Independence and their complex relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. In order to better understand the integration policies designed and implemented by the Anglicans and the Methodists, it is vital to discuss Ireland's colonial past and the relations between Irishness and religion in general and Irishness and Protestantism in particular. The chapter focuses firstly on the position of Protestants in Irish society and the question of whether and how they can be considered integrated into Irish society in the first place; secondly it analyses Protestants' understanding and self-identification of being Irish and Protestant in Ireland, questioning to what extent it is possible for Protestant migrants to understand and relate to Irish Protestantism on the basis of belonging to the same denomination.

A historical overview: key elements to analysing Catholic-Protestant relations

Protestantism was introduced to the island of Ireland as an 'innovation' imposed by the British administration in the sixteenth century: 'such immigration was encouraged and in many cases organised by British governments for whom the transformation of Ireland into a Protestant country was a significant aspiration. Though such large shift of ecclesiastical allegiance never took place and was never likely, nevertheless, the religious geography of the island was transformed' (Busteed *et al.*, 2008: 4). Thus, Protestantism was associated with the ruling power

of the British and Protestants were seen as colonisers and invaders. Ireland was seen as an exception to the principle *cuius regio eius religio*.

In 'The Religious Roots of Irish Nationalism' (2011) Coakley underlines how, although Protestants were not able to convert the Irish population, they maintained privileged socio-economic positions: 'In 1861, for example, (...) Catholics (then 78 per cent of the population) accounted for only a small proportion of the more privileged classes, and a minority of the learned professions (34 per cent of lawyers and 32 per cent of doctors, for instance)' (2011: 98). A similar situation was found in relation to access to education: 'although only 16 per cent of Anglicans and 11 per cent of Presbyterians were illiterate, the corresponding figure for Catholics in 1861 was 46 per cent' (Coakley, 2011:98).

However the relation between Protestants and Catholics in the country cannot be simply summarised as a matter of privileged versus non-privileged group or with the automatic association of Protestantism with English colonial power. In reality the dynamics between the two groups and Protestants' self-identifications were more complex. For instance during the revolution of the 1790s Protestant scholars and activists took part in the formulation of a distinct Irish national identity, not premised on the religious dichotomy Catholic versus Protestant:

> During the 1790s, for example, the radical Society of United Irishmen strove for united Ireland that embraced both Catholics and Protestants and for the elimination of English control. The Belfast chapter of this society was largely Presbyterian, while the Dublin chapter was evenly split between Catholics and Protestants (Curtin, 1998). Many of the best-known nationalist leaders of the period were Protestants. Robert Emmet, whose "Let no man write my epitaph" speech shortly before his execution in 1803 would make him a nationalist icon, had been born into a well-to-do Protestant family in Dublin. Theobald Wolfe Tone, killed in the revolution of 1798, and the Irish parliamentary leader Henry Grattan (1746-1820) were also Protestants. Politics aside, Protestant scholars like George Petre (who would become central to the activities of the Ordnance Survey in the 1830s) played leading roles in the nineteenth century campaign to recover and preserve Ireland's Gaelic past so that it could be used as the basis for an Irish national identity (Doherty, 2004)' (Carroll, 2007: 6).

The development of republican ideas was fuelled by news of the social and political upheaval in France during the Revolution, as I discuss in the course of this chapter, and united Catholics and Protestants in their vision of a free Irish state. After the failure of the Society of the United Irishmen, tensions between the two religious groups remained somehow latent. Connolly (1985) stresses that among the middle-upper class the relations between Protestants and Catholics varied; however the events of the 1790s intensified religious divisions:

> The revival of anti-Catholic feeling among the Protestant upper and middle classes was reflected in the popularity of works like Sir Richard Musgrave's *Memoirs of the Different Rebellions in Ireland* (1801), which presented the rebellion of 1798 as a primarily religious movement, connived at and actively encouraged by the Catholic clergy. At the same time a considerable degree of mutual tolerance and practical cooperation continued into the first two decades of the nineteenth century. Anglican and Catholic clergy attended one another's public functions, while clergy and laity of different denominations were also willing to work together in a wide range of charitable ventures (Connolly, 1985: 24-25).

According to Connolly (1985), three 'developments' occurred after 1820 which seriously undermined the tolerance and cooperation. The first was the growth of evangelicalism, which had pervaded all Protestant denominations (Second Reformation) with the establishment of missionary societies 'directed not just at the heathen overseas but also at the Catholic population of Ireland' (1985:25). [38] The charitable work of these societies during the Great Potato Famine (1845-1852) proved to be a particularly 'emotive' and divisive issue as Protestants were charged with accusations, which according to Connolly (1985: 26), were 'not always groundless', of providing or withholding aid to convert Catholics.

The second development, related to the Second Reformation among Protestantism, was the 'new and disruptive missionary zeal of the Irish Catholicism' (Connolly, 1985: 26), which was part of a wider European trend of Catholicism 'reacting to

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[38] Connolly reports that these societies trained itinerary preachers who were fluent in Irish, distributed bibles, and established free elementary schools and colonies where converts from Catholicism could live protected from intimidation by their former co-religionists (Connolly, 1985: 25).

the challenge of an increasingly pluralistic and rationalist society by a vigorous assertion of its exclusive claims to truth and authority' (Connolly, 1985: 27). [39] In Ireland this revival of missionary zeal resulted in new regulations concerning marriages between Protestants and Catholics aiming at actively discouraging such unions, and it culminated in the *Ne Temere* decree (issued in 1907 but took effect in 1908) requiring the Protestant partner in a mixed marriage to guarantee a Catholic religious education to their children (Connolly, 1985: 27). Furthermore, Connolly highlights the major changes in attitudes towards education: while 'in the early nineteenth century many Catholic bishops and clergy were prepared to accept a system of non-denominational schooling' (Connolly: 1985: 27), the evangelical wave and proselytism of Protestants caused a change of mind among the ranks of the Catholic Church.

The third and last development, which further heightened tensions between the two religious groups, was what Connolly calls the 'style of popular politics'. 'Between 1824 and 1829 middle-class leaders, headed by Daniel O'Connell, employed a range of novel techniques of mass agitation to build up popular support behind their campaign for 'Catholic Emancipation', the removal of the principal legal restrictions still affecting Catholics. (...) the struggle for and against emancipation was also inevitably perceived, on both sides, as a religious conflict' (Connolly, 1985: 28).

'By the time of independence [1921], despite the contribution of members of other churches, the Irish Free State was seen as an embodiment of Irish nationalistic aspirations and Irish Nationalism was for many of its leaders and their supporters closely identified with Catholicism' (Mackey and McDonagh, 2003: 43).

The period that followed the Irish War of Independence (1919-1921) saw the decline in the number of Protestants especially in the south of the country.

> The southern Irish Protestant minority were experiencing a population fall from 327,179 in 1911 to 220,723 in 1926: the equivalent of almost 33 per cent of the 1911 minority population, compared with a Catholic contraction

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[39] Connolly here refers to the Syllabus of Errors (1864), the defense of the Papal states against the movement of Italian unification, as I analyse in chapter VI, and the proclamation of the Papal infallibility (1870). (Connolly, 1985: 27)

> of just 2 per cent (...). While the scale of this shock to the minority population is generally recognized by historians, the causes remain somewhat unclear. The longer than usual gap between the census years in question and the major historical events that took place in the intervening years further complicate the picture. The issue that was and remains most contentious in the historiography is the extent to which this exodus was 'forced' (Bielenberg, 2013: 199).

Peter Hart, who studied the impact of revolutionary violence on the southern minority between 1919 and 1923 and their ensuing migration, argues that what happened in Ireland in those years was 'the only example of the mass displacement of a native ethnic group within the British Isles since the seventeenth century' (Hart, 1998 in Bielenberg, 2013). Maguire (1993, 1994), whose work focuses on working-class Protestants in Dublin, contends that revolutionary violence was not the primary cause of emigration. Instead he explains the demographic decline among Protestants in the South as the result of economic factors, mixed marriages and the withdrawal of the British military.

Bielenberg points to another crucial factor shaping the relations between Protestants and Catholics, namely the control over the land, the key economic resource in Irish society. [40] He writes that 'the revolution in landownership partially contributed to the relatively higher and rising levels of emigration among Protestants from the beginning of the twentieth century, more especially after the Wyndham Land Act of 1903, which dramatically accelerated land reform and the departure of the gentry and their Protestant retainers' (2013: 204).

Even from this brief review it is quite apparent that relations between Protestants and Catholics during the pre-independence period cannot be easily categorised. The same holds true for Protestants' position vis-a-vis Republicanism and Nationalism which I explore in the next section.

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[40] For case studies of the long-term demographic history of the Protestant community, see Liam Kennedy and Kirby A. Miller, with Martin Graham, (1991) and Liam Kennedy, Kirby A. Miller and Brian Gurrin (2010).

Republicanism and Nationalism: the Irish understanding

Republicanism in Ireland is a contested term. It is commonly understood (see Honohan, 2008) as linked to separatist nationalism, as advocated by Sinn Féin [41] and the IRA. [42] However, as a Republican heritage is claimed by most political parties in the Republic of Ireland, it is particularly difficult to pinpoint what Republicanism means. It can resemble Anglophobia, [43] or it can be linked to self-government and cultural heritage. Hononan writes that 'The core elements of the classical republican tradition that evolved between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries were first, a preference for forms of 'mixed governments' (...) secondly, freedom is guaranteed by the rule of the established laws, in place of the arbitrary ruler; in Harrington's words this represents "the empire of laws and not men" under which citizens are free not "from the law but by the law"' (Honohan, 2008:4).

Republicanism in Ireland was associated, after Ireland became a Free State (1921), with the belief that all of Ireland should be a united Republic completely independent from Britain and that a political reunification of the island should be attained through military force. Nationalism, on the other hand, encompassed different approaches to political independence including accepting the partition of the island as an intermediate solution.

> Thus, to be a republican was to be a specific kind of political nationalist, more radical and less open to compromise. But nationalism – the idea that the Irish people constituted a natural community – had cultural, religious, and economic dimensions. To be a nationalist could mean being committed to a strong Irish identity, to the revival and public promotion of the Irish language and heritage, or to the establishment of an independent economy,

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[41] Sinn Fein (We Ourselves) is a left wing political party founded in 1905. It is the only party to have seats in the Parliaments of both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. It was a supporter of the Peace Process and focused on achieving the reunification of Ireland. In the past there were allegations of its link with the IRA post-1921 (Bean, 2007; O'Broin, 2009).

[42] The Irish Republican Army (IRA) was a republican revolutionary military organisation - a spin off of the Irish Volunteers after the Easter Rising 1916 – which fought against the British during the Irish War of Independence (1921-1922). The Anglo-Irish Treaty (1921) caused a split in the IRA and part of it continued the guerrilla for the complete independence of the whole Ireland until 1969 (Alonso, 2007; McKearney, 2011; S anders, 2011; Treacy, 2011; Dingley, 2012).

[43] In this regard Honohan references Sandel (1996).

which could be combined with different approaches to politics (Honohan, 2008: 12).

However, it is worthwhile mentioning that 'neither republicans nor nationalists made the freedom or participation of individual citizens in self-government a prominent part of their thinking' (Honohan, 2008: 12). The interdependence of freedom, civic virtue and participation has been at the core of different understandings of what republicanism is and what it entails. Honohan (2008) identifies two particular strands of thought in relation to how such interdependence is understood. One strand focuses on a distinctive account of freedom as non-domination, or on minimising domination – the threat of arbitrary interference by individuals, groups or the state – to ensure the common good rather than sectional interests. This strand has been articulated primarily by Philip Pettit (1997). The second strand emphasises the importance of active citizenship which can be interpreted as civic virtue or moral responsibility, or as the requirement that people actively participate in political decision-making and have some control over the conditions of their collective lives. Commenting on these two distinct interpretations of active citizenship, Honohan writes: 'While some communitarians react to contemporary problems by calling for the renewal of moral or religious purpose and community in society, the distinctive concern of republicans lies in freedom, participation in self-government and political solidarity' (Honohan, 2008: 10).

Irish republicanism, especially in its origin, was mainly based on the ideology of French republicanism. The latter was grounded in the concept of *laïcité* that Laborde (2008) analyses as the result of a set of developments that deeply transformed French society after the revolution: the privatisation and individualisation of religious life; the primacy of state laws over religious ones; the requirement that believers show full allegiance to the French state, rather than to foreign-based religious authorities.[44]

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[44] According to Laborde (2008: 74f.): 'Renouncing clericalism and accepting religious pluralism were not, however, the only concessions that French religions made to the laïque order: they also profoundly transformed their doctrine, practices and institutions, in three main ways. First was the privatisation and individualisation of religious life (…) With *laïcité*, it was relegated to the status of a private institution with no legitimacy in public debate and reduced visibility in social life. *Laïcité*

In contrast with the French model of republicanism based on the principle of *laïcité*, in Ireland the relationship between republicanism and religion, more specifically with Catholicism, has been more complicated. Honohan (2008: 7) argues that 'while the United Irishmen strove to include those of all faiths, state republicanism became closely connected with the Catholic Church in the twentieth century.' (...) 'Even if particular accommodations are necessary, republicanism is the official ideology in France and is taken seriously to justify the design of political institutions, positions and public policies in a way that has been remarkably rare in Ireland.'

As stated above, when talking about republicanism in Ireland it is necessary to analyse its links with religion. There was indeed an overlap between religious and political issues: Catholics were struggling for their own education, their land and their political liberties. Furthermore 'while the higher clergy, the bishops, opposed physical force and excommunicated at various times its proponents, the lower clergy, the priests, were often more tolerant of their own local people involved in it' (Mackey and McDonagh, 2003: 43).

The Post-Independence: Religion and the Irish State

The list of Irish Protestant names devoted to the cause of republicanism is long. Their names are used by Protestants to dispute the claim that to be truly Irish one has to be Catholic. 'Yet the claim that by definition, Protestants are somehow less Irish than others derives, presumably, from the well-attested fact that the great majority of them traditionally saw their Irishness as belonging in an imperial setting. The General Synod of the Church of Ireland made clear its position when home rule legislation appeared to be imminent in 1912' (Milne, 2003: 65). Once the Irish Free State was established (1921) the Church leaders of the Protestant Churches expressed their willingness to cooperate with the Roman Catholic Church in the best interest of their country (Milne, 2003).

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implicitly fostered a view of religious life as a discrete and personal activity, a view which notably looked with suspicion at forcible attempts at religious conversion and 'proselytism'. The second major transformation forced onto religious believers was the revision of their dogmas, chiefly to allow the primacy of state laws over religious prescriptions. (…) The third transformation was thus the 'nationalisation' of religions, their recognition that believers must show full allegiance to the French state, not to foreign-based religious authorities'.

Despite these efforts and evidence attesting to the contrary, Protestants' participation in the creation of the Irish Free State was largely silenced and almost erased from the 'official' history of Irish independence. In addition, the newly founded State pursued a stronger link with the Roman Catholic Church as made explicit in the Preamble to the 1937 Irish Constitution [45] and by the particular role given to the Roman Catholic Church in Article 44:

> 44.1.2 The State recognises the special position of the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church as the guardian of the Faith professed by the great majority of the citizens.

There is no doubt that the Roman Catholic Church was granted a special position in the Constitution; however, it did not become the only recognised state religion. Eamon the Valera, [46] Ireland's first Taoiseach (prime minister) and third president, felt the importance of also recognising other religions present in the country; thus, despite Catholic opposition, he gave 'only' a special role to the Catholic Church and, at same time, introduced subsection 1.3 on other religions (Hogan, 1987; Ó Tuama, 2011):

> 44.1.3 The State also recognises the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Religious Society of Friends in Ireland, as well as the Jewish Congregations and the other religious denominations existing in Ireland at the date of the coming into operation of this Constitution.

1937 was a period marked by Fascism and Nazism across Europe; in this context article 44 of the Irish constitution was seen as liberal. Reference to points 2 and 3

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[45] In the name of the Most Holy Trinity, from whom is all authority and to Whom, as our final end, all actions both of men and States must be referred, We, the people of Éire, Humbly acknowledge all our obligations to our Divine Lord, Jesus Christ, Who sustained our fathers through centuries of trial... Do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this Constitution (Bunreacht na hÉireann, 1937).

[46] Eamon the Valera (1882-1975) is a key figure in Irish history. He is considered the father of the Irish Constitution for his commitment and devotion to the project as head of government and also in terms of his ideological commitment to it. 'He was involved in the Easter Rising of 1916, the subsequent struggle for independence both electorally and militarily, and in the ensuing civil war on the Anti Treaty side. Following a period of political isolation caused by his policy of abstention, in 1926 he re-engaged with constitutional politics by founding a new political party, Fianna Fáil' (Ó Tuama, 2011: 54).

of article 44 were subsequently deleted following a referendum in 1972. [47] As Bowen (1983) points out, Protestants themselves wanted to remove those subsections of the article: 'it was precisely during the 1970s that they [Protestants] grew more outspoken in their demand for recognition of their rights as Protestant Irishmen (...) and this was evident in the 1972 referendum' (Bowen, 1983: 200).

The issue of Protestant identity in Ireland has been discussed by Butler and Ruane (2007) who have analysed the complex identity negotiations Protestants had to face after independence:

> Post-partition Ireland produced two minorities whose size and subsequent histories contrast sharply with each other. The Catholic minority in Northern Ireland was large, refused to accept the legitimacy of the new Northern state or the finality of partition and met with harsh treatment at the hands of the Protestant Unionist majority. The effect was chronic instability and eventual political breakdown. The other minority – the Protestants of Southern Ireland – differs from it on virtually every point. It was small to begin with and decreased in size over time; it accepted the legitimacy of the state and affirmed an Irish identity, while dissenting at important points from the version of Irish identity held by the majority (Butler and Ruane, 2007: 619-620).

To complete independence, the Irish Government intended to dismantle what remained of British rule and of the British imprint on Irish life and culture. This meant that Protestants found themselves as a powerless minority; between 1911 and 1922, the Protestant population in the south of the country had declined by one-third (Hutchinton, 1987; Ruane, 2006), 'abandoned' by the British and surrounded by 'hostile' Catholics. Though Protestants still remained a wealthy minority, they were, until recently, separated from the rest of Irish society (as demonstrated by the existence of separate schools, sport clubs, universities etc.). As a respondent highlighted 'we, as Protestants, in order to cope with the situation, put our heads down and stuck together.' From my data it clearly emerged that

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[47] See the results of the referendum at http://www.environ.ie/en/LocalGovernment/Voting/Referenda/PublicationsDocuments/FileDownLoad,1894,en.pdf (10/01/2014)

Protestants claim to be Irish as Roman Catholics, even though, at times, they still feel the need 'to prove' their Irishness. As Ruane (2006) points out, old stereotypes still circulate and old sensitivities remain:

> Some (stereotypes) are to the advantage of Protestants: Protestants as more honest than Catholics, more direct in their communications, more self-controlled and abstemious, possessing more of the work ethic, having greater moral character. But there are also hostile stereotypes: Protestants as rich, stand-offish, snobbish, as looking down on Catholics. Behind the latter stereotypes, and giving them some substance, is the historically stronger social profile of Protestants, the greater likelihood of distinguished ancestry, a longer tradition of wealth and education, a more reserved cultural style and a pride in being 'different'. For the most part these stereotypes are irritants rather than serious issues. But there is one Catholic perception that generates considerable resentment among Protestants: the notion that Protestants are less 'Irish' than Catholics, do not identify with Ireland to the same degree, and do not fully belong. (Ruane, 2006: 522-523)

In 1981, the Taoiseach Dr. Garret FitzGerald declared in an interview on RTÉ that the Irish State 'as it has evolved over the decades was not the non-sectarian state that the national movement for independence has sought to establish, one in which Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter would feel equally at home. It has rather become a state imbued with the ethos of the majority in our part of the island.' This he could not accept: 'I want to lead a crusade,' he said, 'a republican crusade to make this a genuine republic' (McDonagh, 2003: 511).

FitzGerald also talked about civic and Irish republicanism: 'I understand civic republicanism to be about a pluralistic state marked by the public engagement of its citizens in the interest of the common good' (FitzGerald, 2008: 164). He recognised that it was difficult for Irish people to relate to this concept of republicanism. As mentioned earlier, Irish republicanism was – at least in the 1790s – inspired by French republicanism. It was both secular and nationalistic. However, the anti-monarchy ideology which prevailed in Ireland downplayed the 'civic duty' element and the attendant ethics of citizens coming together to work and care for the common good.

Since the 1950s attempts have been made in the Republic of Ireland to create a more inclusive state all Irish people could feel part of. 'This has involved, for some decades past, challenging the kind of single-ethos state that my generation inherited from a troubled past – a state in which anyone who was not a Roman Catholic, and a practicing Catholic at that – or who did not share the Gaelic heritage of the majority of Irish people, was regarded as insufficiently Irish and even as not being Irish at all' (FitzGerald, 2008: 172). The way in which a government treats its own minorities is a mirror of how it faces alterity from outside: whether or not the Irish state has achieved the goal of creating a more inclusive environment in Ireland is discussed in the following section of this chapter in which I introduce the contemporary Protestant Churches and the impact of migration on their constituency.

Protestant Churches in today's Ireland

> What made Ireland exceptional throughout the twentieth century was that while the rest of Western Europe became increasing secularised, religious affiliation remained a strong social marker for the Irish. (....) [W]hat matters was not so much that Irish people were labelled as Catholic or Protestant, but that they were good Catholics and Protestants (Inglis, 2005: 59).

Inglis makes clear that this religious *habitus* was equally prominent among Catholics and Protestants; and that its function as a social marker had become even stronger after the partition of the island in 1922. Religion permeated every aspect of the social and private lives of all Irish citizens. From the health system to education, from sports clubs to pubs, social, cultural and recreational institutions were in the hands of religious organisations. Taking education as an example, the majority of schools – both public and private – were, and still predominantly are, run or managed by religious denominations (Faas and Ross, 2012; Smyth *et al.*, 2013). [48] These 'parallel' structures allowed Irish Christians to maintain their faith

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[48] An exception has been the project Educate Together, a movement which developed between the end of the 1970s and the early 1980s. It was consolidated officially in 1984 - which aims at establishing new multi-denominational schools. http://www.educatetogether.ie/ (accessed 04/03/2014)

with few contacts with members of other denominations, at least until the present, as I argue in this chapter. For Protestants, the fact of not only having their churches but also their own schools, hospitals and clubs has on the one hand guaranteed them survival, and on the other it has created even stronger bonds among members of different congregations, making it difficult for a newcomer to integrate fully into the group.

It is, however, important to stress the heterogeneity of Protestant churches since Protestantism is an umbrella under which different traditions, from the more liberal churches to the more evangelical and conservative, coexist. [49] In Ireland the term Protestant has a political as well as a religious connotation. In the Republic of Ireland historically there are three main Protestant Churches: the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church, [50] and the Methodist Church. In addition, there are also smaller churches such as the Baptist Church, the Evangelical Church, the Adventist of the Seventh Day, the Salvation Army and the Lutheran Church. This study focuses on the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church only, for the reasons highlighted in chapters III and VI. Here, I outline the structure of these two churches in order to understand the different ways in which their integration policies have been developed and implemented.

The Anglican Church

The Church of Ireland (CoI) is part of the worldwide Anglican Communion (van Beek, 2006) [51] – which has members in 164 countries – and represents the biggest Protestant denomination in the Republic. It is interesting to notice that outside Ireland it is very uncommon to refer to the Anglican Church as a Protestant Church; however for historical reasons, outlined later in this chapter, for a long time Anglicans in Ireland were not only associated with Protestants but they were also considered the largest Protestant confession in the country and to a certain extent the only Protestant Church (Bowen, 1983; Connolly, 1985). The Church of Ireland declares it is able to 'trace its roots to the earlier days of Irish Christianity'

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[49] For a more detailed analysis of the different Protestant Churches see van Beek (2006)

[50] Presbyterians in Ireland are divided in different denominations; apart from the Presbyterian Church, there is the Presbyterian Reformed Church, the Free Presbyterian Church and the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church. reference

[51] See also http://www.anglicancommunion.org/

(van Beek, 2006). However, for centuries the Church of Ireland was part of the Church of England, with all that this entailed as I discuss later in this chapter. Like other Anglican Churches, the Church of Ireland has included elements of the reformation (see for instance the distance from the papacy) and it also maintains an Episcopal structure (van Beek, 2006). There is only one Church for the whole island, divided into two provinces, Northern Ireland and the Republic, each led by an Archbishop. According to the latest census (CSO, 2011a), the Church counts 390,000 members of whom 129,039 live in the Republic.

The Church of Ireland has a representative structure: each of the twelve dioceses elects their delegates to the General Synod, considered the 'Parliament of the Church'. [52] In addition there are Diocesan Synods usually organised once a year. For this research I followed the work of the Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough. Furthermore the Church has a parochial system whereby decisions at local level are made by Select Vestries whose lay members are elected each Easter by the people of the parish. [53]

The Methodist Church

The Methodist Church is a worldwide communion of over 70 million people founded by the Wesley brothers, John and Charles, in the mid-eighteenth century. John was an ordained minister of the Church of England and initially Methodism was a movement within the Anglican Church. Only after the death of the two founders, it became an autonomous religious denomination (Streiff, 2003; van Beek, 2006). John Wesley travelled extensively around the world and visited Ireland several times.

Like the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church in Ireland is organised on an all-island basis and it has 212 congregations with a total of 53,000 members. According to its official website, '[t]he Methodist Church in Ireland extends throughout the island, and refers to itself as 'the Connexion', to remind individual

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[52] The Church of Ireland has in its General Synod a House of Bishops which has 12 members and a House of Representatives which has 216 clergy and 432 laity. See the Church of Ireland website at http://ireland.anglican.org/about/ (accessed 04/03/2014)

[53] See http://ireland.anglican.org/about/ (accessed 04/03/2014)

members and local churches of their interconnected and interdependent nature'. [54]

The Methodist Church is governed by a hierarchy of local, regional and national assemblies, each having specific responsibilities. On the local level, the church life is organised around classes or home groups, where congregants meet regularly for prayers, bible studies, etc. These groups form the local congregation, which elects a church council in charge of its administration. On the regional level, congregations within the same geographical area form a circuit, which may have one or more ministers, and is administered by a circuit executive. A group of circuits then forms a District, administered by a District Synod. In 2012, the Methodist Church in Ireland counted eight Districts. The highest decision making body is the national Annual Conference, which is the final authority in the Church in relation to a variety of issues including theology, liturgy, ethics, discipline and order. The Methodist Church in Ireland provides for equal participation at all levels of lay and ordained people, and men and women (including ordination). [55]

Since 2002 the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church have signed an agreement, known as 'The Covenant', whereby , they recognise each other's faith and practice; they encourage more cooperation and exchange between parishes and ministers and, wherever possible, even to merge the two congregations 'in a later stage' of their relationship. [56] As far as this study is concerned the commitment 'to encourage United Methodist/Church of Ireland congregations where new churches are to be planted' is particularly important, especially when a new church has to be formed in an area highly populated by migrants.

Historical Protestant Churches, including the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church, have been in decline since Independence. However, following the 'Celtic Tiger', the relaxation of the Ne Temere decree, promulgated by the Roman Catholic Church to actively discourage mixed marriages, and increased migration, this trend has now reversed. In the next section, I highlight the impact that migration has had in changing the religious landscape in the Republic of Ireland.

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[54] See http://www.irishmethodist.org/about/structures.php (accessed 04/03/2014)
[55] See http://www.irishmethodist.org/about/structures.php
[56] For the text of the Covenant see http://ireland.anglican.org/about/47

Facts and figures

In chapter I I analysed the myth of Ireland as a monocultural country and the changes that migration has brought to its ecclesial landscape (Ugba, 2007b; Macourt, 2008; Stephens, 2004, 2011). Ugba (2007a), analysing the figures of the 2006 census (CSO, 2006), states that 'the membership of many mainstream churches, which have been either stagnant or declining, has increased as many immigrants joined' (168). Thus between 1991 and 2002 the Church of Ireland counted 24,600 new members. Among Africans living in Ireland, 31 per cent belong to one of the Protestant denominations of whom 23.5 per cent belong to the Church of Ireland (CSO, 2006). Stephens (2011: 10) points out that the Methodist Church, like other mainline Protestant Churches, had been in decline since Independence (1911 Census: 16,440 Methodists; 1991 Census: 5,037 Methodists). In-migration offered the Methodist Church an opportunity to reverse the decline. Indeed, seven out of 55 Methodist congregations record more than 20 per cent non-Irish members and many congregations have been revitalised by newcomers as this chapter demonstrates. In 2003 there were 20 multi-cultural congregations and Christian fellowships, with at least 25 per cent new immigrants as members (Martin, 2003: 41). Similarly the Roman Catholic Church, which still remains the largest religious group (84 per cent of the total population), has seen its membership increase by 4.9 per cent since 2006, largely thanks to migration from Eastern European countries (CSO, 2011a). Looking at the preliminary census figures for 2011, this general trend has not been adversely affected by the economic recession that started in 2008.

Table 6: Percentage change between 2006 and 2011 Census among religious groups

Irish Census on Religion	2006	2011	Percentage Change 2006-2011
Roman Catholic	3,681,446	3,861,335	4.9
Church of Ireland	125,585	129,039	6.4
Muslim	32,539	49,204	51.2
Orthodox	20,798	45,223	117.4
Pentecostal	8,116	14,043	73.0
Buddhist	6,516	8,703	33.6
Hindu	6,082	10,688	75.5
Atheist	929	3,905	320.3
Agnostic	1,515	3,521	132.4
Lapsed RC	540	1,279	136.9
No Religion	186,318	268,811	44.8

Source: CSO, 2011a

Several observations can be made from the table above: a) even in times of crisis migrants have continued to arrive and religious diversity has been increasing; b) if one looks at the Christian denominations the biggest rise is among the Orthodox Churches whose membership has increased by 117.4 per cent since 2006, followed by the Apostolic and Pentecostal Churches with an increase of 73 per cent; c) the Church of Ireland continues to grow (6.4 per cent since 2006); d) as regards the Methodist Church, which represents the fourth largest historical confession in the country, for the first time in the census there was not a specific label 'Methodist': those belonging to this denomination had to tick the box 'Other' and specify Methodists. This change makes it difficult to count and compare the 2011 numbers with those of 2006. Patsy McGarry (2012) noticed a surprising drop of 43 per cent since 2006. Methodists, however, highlighted that the drop was not real but rather due to the changes in the wording of the census. According to their yearly statistics, in fact, their constituency had grown by 6 per cent since 2006.

A further general observation can be made in relation to the 320 per cent increase of people declaring themselves 'atheist' between 2006 and 2011. This fact demonstrates that, in Irish society there is a process of secularization, as also researched by Anderson (2010).

While the recent increase in numbers has reversed the trend of decline afflicting the historical Protestant Churches in Ireland, it has also posed challenges with regard to the vision/understanding/self-identification of being Protestant in Ireland.

The construction of collective identities, including those of minorities, is the result of social interactions among groups and, as Hall (1996) highlights, the link between history and identity plays a crucial role in the process. Having briefly discussed the history and the relations that Protestants had with Roman Catholics I now move to another level of analysis which takes into consideration a) the basis on which the division between the two religious groups was constructed and maintained until today; b) the consequences that being a powerless but still privileged religious minority has had for Protestants' identity.

Religion and Ethnicity

This chapter has discussed the influence that historical events have had in developing divisions between the two groups, on the basis of religion and to a certain extent of ethnicity (Bowen, 1983) as I argue in this section.

The partition overturned the position of Protestants in the country: from being the ruling minority, they became 'just' a religious minority, although always a privileged one. Religion can be considered the dominant boundary marker in Ireland: it provides the tools to draw boundaries between in-group and out-group individuals. As Mitchell highlights, these tools 'include religious rituals which are widely participated in and help construct a sense of community, both practically and cognitively, for many Protestants and especially Catholics' (Mitchell, 2006: 1).

Religion has been one of the dominant signifiers of community membership in Ireland and the meaning of being a Protestant or a Roman Catholic has often gone beyond religious membership to include wider social and private aspects of a person's life. Inglis argues that:

> Being Catholic or Protestant has been fundamental to what Irish people have done and said over the past two hundred years. It has been central to family life, education, health care and social welfare and has influenced the schools people attended, the friends they had and who they married. Religion had reached into areas such as the businesses, shops and pubs used by people; as well as sports played and newspapers and magazines read. In many ways, Catholics and Protestants in Ireland occupied two different, divided, social worlds necessarily overlapped in business and

> everyday life, of course, but the doctrinal division between Catholicism and Protestantism remained central to commonly held conceptions of national and individual identity (Inglis, 2005: 59).

Bowen (1983) highlights how the strong sense of separate identity among Irish Anglicans was premised on religion, class [57] and ethnicity divisions, and places particular stress on the latter. He writes: 'In using this term [ethnicity] I refer to the fact that the minority regarded itself – and was so regarded by others – as having a separate ancestry from the Gaelic and Catholic majority. In a broad sense, the minority might be considered to be an ethnic group which came to employ religion as the principal symbol of its separate "people-hood"' (Bowen, 1983: 4-5).

The question of whether religion is a manifestation and symbol of separate ethnicity remains open; however Bowen considers Protestants, especially Anglicans, as an ethnic group on the basis of their origin. In analysing whether Protestants in Ireland can be considered an ethnic group, Coakley also uncovers the links between place of origin and religious affiliation; but he goes further, demystifying the assumption that the Gaelic language is something that exclusively belongs to Irish (Catholics). According to Coakley (2011: 98), in 1834 the Protestant population, representing 19 per cent of the total population, was English-speaking and of English and Scottish origin, while 'the remainder was Catholic, still largely Irish-speaking, and mainly of Gaelic Irish background'. He adds that 'So strong were these relationships that in the Irish language the word Sasanach (which today means simply "English") was understood also to mean (Anglican) Protestant, while the word Albanach (today meaning simply "Scottish") was understood to mean also Presbyterian'. When discussing the link between religion and national identity in chapter III, I have similarly problematised the original myth that sees Roman Catholics as true descendents of the Gaels. According to Elliot (2009) the term refers indeed to the language spoken by people in Ireland and Scotland rather than to an ethnic group. This is another demonstration of the complexity of the construction of Irishness in the first place,

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[57] Bowen wants to stress that the communal division of class between Protestants and Catholics 'was never as absolute as those of religion and ethnicity, since Protestants came from a variety of class backgrounds which created internal divisions within their own community'; however, he argues 'as a whole, Protestants were much better off than Catholics' (Bowen, 1983: 200).

and of the problems inherent to understandings of ethnic groups based on place of origin and religious affiliation.

Ethnic divisions persist in Ireland to this day. An interviewee points out that 'Christianity in Ireland is still tribal, most people in the Church of Ireland are related to half of the congregation in any church where they go to, or went to school with, or played golf with or have their children going to the same school system...' (Male, ordained, Irish). Thus, it is not just a matter of religious affiliation, or membership in a specific church, but, as explained earlier, religion and religious organisations become the dominant signifiers of belonging to society as a whole. Furthermore in wishing to preserve and cultivate Protestant identity, Protestant theology did encourage – especially in the past – very few contacts with individuals outside the group.

Contacts, however, could not be avoided in the past and cannot be avoided today. Protestants' understandings of their own (multiple) identities were and remain richly nuanced and often question any linear or simple narrative of Irishness. As an interviewee put it:

> ...being Irish itself is a very complex thing. Many Irish (...) if they knew where their roots were they might get a shock... you know... my own roots are from Scotland for example (...) but I very much consider myself Irish and indeed Southern Irish, Republican Irish. Nationalist by nature, I would not have been a royalist, you know. I suppose if you went through all sorts of names you will find (...) [that] Huguenots came here (...) here was a significant Muslim community who came up from Algeria or somewhere like that for trading and some of them stayed. And of course we had the Vikings (...) the British came here, the Normans came here from France, you know. (Male, Irish, ordained)

The complexity of any definition of Irishness is obvious in this quote: the respondent strongly identifies himself as 'Irish' and 'Republican' thus troubling the dichotomy 'Roman Catholics are Republicans while Protestants are Royalists', which, as mentioned above, has never been straightforward.

Furthermore from the above passage an important element emerges that further contradicts the myth of a monocultural Ireland: the recognition that Ireland, like

many other countries, had experienced immigration long before the 'Celtic Tiger' and that its demographic composition had been influenced by it. As discussed in chapter I, the presence of those 'early' migrants, although numerically not so significant, shows that diversity has always been present in the country (Lentin and Moreo, 2012).

Finally, if we consider the impact that more recent immigration has had within the Protestant Churches in terms of increasing numbers and diversity, which I discuss in the next chapter, it is evident that the original ethnic group – if there ever was one – has undergone some changes. The extent to which these changes are perceived by Irish society is still not so clear, as a participant points out: 'Protestants are now ethnically mixed but I think not seen as such by the general population. The traditional Protestants are not regarded as so "different" as the newcomers' (Irish, male, ordained). The latter sentence 'the traditional Protestants are not regarded as so different as the newcomers' raises two important questions which I address in the next section: what is the level of integration of Protestant Churches in Ireland? And, under which circumstances can the boundaries of belonging between majority and minority community shift and change?

Majority and Minority relations

One of the most interesting and complete studies on the integration of Protestants in Ireland remains Kurt Bowen's *Protestants in a Catholic State: Ireland's Privileged Minority* (1983). In this book Bowen sheds new light on the dichotomy Protestants versus Catholics and highlights the nuances behind the perception of who the Protestants are in the Republic. Bowen focuses on the degree of assimilation or integration of Protestants in the South. He argues that, due to a number of factors including the unbalanced number of Protestants, since Independence the relations between the two communities have been 'relatively' peaceful with the exception of the violence that occurred immediately after Independence when Protestant estates were burnt by Republicans. Even though segregation still occurred at many different levels, Bowen notes that, by the end of the 1970s, 'as many as 40 per cent of southern minority may have been marrying Catholics. This dominant and growing trend might be described as either assimilation or integration. If assimilation is the more appropriate description, it

suggests that Protestants will eventually disappear by being absorbed into the larger Catholic community. Integration, on the other hand, implies that Protestants will survive as their differences with Catholics decline in social importance and become matters of personal and private choice' (Bowen, 1983: 3).

Hayes and Fahey (2008), in 'Protestants and politics in the Republic of Ireland: is integration complete?', question to what extent the disengagement that the Protestant community felt towards the new Irish State in 1920s, a consequence of the strong link between the new State and Catholicism, has disappeared; they further ask whether it is possible to talk of assimilation or integration for the Protestant communities in Ireland. For them Protestants have not been assimilated or, to use their phrasing, 'have not become identical to the majority community in the way they relate to the Irish political system, but the ways they differ are within what might be called a normal range of diversity' (Hayes and Fahey, 2008: 82). The disengagement of Protestants from the Irish State has slowly disappeared however, and the authors notice that there seems to be a different approach to what they call 'civic morality' between the two communities – Protestants and Catholics – as Protestants 'are closer to the ideal of the model citizen than are Catholics' [58] (Hayes and Fahey, 2008: 82).

Thus, Protestant communities managed to remain present and visible in the country, without assimilating to their Catholic counterparts. These studies are relevant for my research as they show how Protestants in their history in Ireland faced challenges which are, in some ways, similar to those encountered by migrants who are trying to find their place in the Protestant Churches and in Irish society. The issue of integration versus assimilation is clearly not new to Protestants. However, there remains a major difference between the integration of Irish Protestants and of migrant Protestants: while the former used to be the ruling minority who lost power but managed to maintain a privileged position in the country, migrants very often lose their social status in the new environment and are perceived as belonging to a lower class.

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[58] From the data is not clear whether Hayes and Fayes' statement that 'Protestants are closer to the ideal of the model citizen than Catholics are' is based on empirical data and evidence, or, following Ruane (2006), follows from those positive stereotypes that have been constructed around the figure of Protestant.

The arrival of Protestant migrants poses further questions: do migrants understand what being Protestant in Ireland means? Are Protestant communities more sympathetic to other minorities because of their own minority status? Looking at some of the answers given by my interviewees, it would appear that being a minority does not necessarily mean being more sympathetic to other minorities. In the following quotation, the respondent, an Irish male minister in his 50s, highlights the attitudes of some ministers:

> Some would suggest that because we are a minority we should be more sensitive towards the immigrants. I think that it is possibly true (...) I would have to say honestly that I have been disappointed with some of my colleagues and how they don't appear to have been successful [in welcoming migrants in their congregations]. (Male, Irish, ordained)

Another interviewee, a lay Irish man in his 20s, differentiates between the attitude of the Church of Ireland as an institution and the attitudes of individual congregants.

> Protestants were always the ones helping to articulate and define and create – not the only ones – but they made a greater contribution according to their numbers to pluralism in Ireland... so I think of Trinity College or the Irish Times which are essentially Protestant in origin, they all have pursued a very pluralistic agenda and that had had a positive knock on effect... and that's why I think Protestants have a really good role to play, they have been playing it for the past hundreds of years trying to make Ireland a more pluralist state. (Male, Irish, lay)

While the interviewee refers to Trinity College and the Irish Times, both funded by Protestants and for centuries only accessible to Protestants, as pursuing a very pluralistic agenda, in the imaginary of people these institutions still epitomise the Protestant elite, the privileged minority. However, as I discuss in chapter V, this attitude might result in a detachment from the lives of migrants who come from a totally different background and whose churches have been founded by the English and the Irish Anglicans. Therefore in the relations between Protestants and migrants issues of class as well as colonialism cannot be overlooked. These two elements become apparent when the informant describes the attitudes of individual congregants towards different ethnicities.

> ...one minute on religious access we might be a religious minority but if you are black then a white Protestant and a white Catholic (...) are going to treat an African in the same way. We all have multiple identities and sometimes our identity makes us minority and sometimes our identities make us majority. Like I am protestant therefore I am a minority religiously but I am settled therefore I am a majority, so (...) I am different to a Traveller [59] and I do not understand the needs of Travellers and I am also white therefore I do not understand the needs of Black people; and I am male and, maybe, I do not understand the needs of women... you know because we have many different identities we belong to different communities and... you can pick and choose when you are a majority or minority but when it comes to ethnicity we are a majority... (Male, Irish, lay)

The quote also evidences how the boundaries of belonging can be fluid and shift according to who the 'other' is and what relation exists between two or more actors. A hierarchy of belonging seemingly emerges where so called WHISC – White, Heterosexual, Irish, Settled, Catholic (Tracy, 2000) – are at the top. Migrants are placed at different levels of the hierarchy according to their closeness to the WHISC model. Therefore it does not come as a surprise that Irish Protestants would associate themselves more easily with Irish Catholics than with African Protestants, despite the fact that ethnic, religious and class differences may have kept them separate for centuries.

Despite Inglis's assertion that 'being Catholic or Protestant has been fundamental to what Irish people have done and said over the past two hundred years' (Inglis, 2005: 59), my research also shows a specific Irish religious *habitus* that, to a certain extent, goes beyond being Catholic or Protestant and pervades the lives of most Irish Christians in such a way that an Irish Protestant's encounter with a migrant Protestant reinforces his/her identification with the majority society. Of course this type of self-identification and boundary making tends to change according to the perceived cultural distance between the Irish and the migrants.

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[59] The name Travellers' or 'Pavee' refers to a nomadic Irish ethnic group, Ireland's largest ethnic group (See http://www.paveepoint.ie/ accessed 04/03/2014)

For instance, being a French, Dutch, or English Protestant has a different impact than being an Asian or an African Protestant.

What happens to the communities once migrants are here to stay? Mac Éinrí (2007b: 215) wonders whether migrants will have 'to become more Irish than the Irish themselves' or whether Irish society will be the one to open its arms to embrace diversity. He points out that the answer is not easy as 'Ireland shares the traditions of the European nation-state, often defining itself in exclusionary ways and grounded in cultural, linguistic and historical experiences'. This means that anything other than assimilation will encounter obstacles and will be difficult to implement, as the next chapter describes.

Irish Protestants versus Migrant Protestants?

Through the analysis of the present and past position of Protestant Churches in Ireland this chapter aimed at providing a historical background to the relation between Churches and migrants. Protestant Churches, especially Anglicans, have in the past occupied a dominant role in Irish society. Being associated with the British Empire gave Anglicans the status of 'colonisers' not only in Ireland but also in Africa: in Nigeria, for instance, Anglicanism was introduced by the English, and the Irish aristocracy who belonged to the Church of Ireland. [60] Thus, once in Ireland, Protestants from Africa find themselves in the churches of their 'ex-colonisers' often occupying a position which, for different reasons, may not be empowering, as I describe in the next chapter.

After Independence, in order to survive, Protestant Churches were forced to remain in their circle and to a certain extent they detached themselves from the political life of the Republic. Parallel structures based on religious belonging pervaded many aspects of Irish life and included churches, schools, sports clubs, businesses, etc. Until recently contacts with Roman Catholics were kept to a minimum. A closed community of believers where friendship, love and business were – and are? – intertwined; a closed community which in many ways resembles an ethnic group. Upon their arrival migrants often find 'resilience/resistance' on

[60] A similar relation, however, exists also with the Roman Catholic Church.

the part of Irish members of Protestant churches where they would have expected a full and unconditional acceptance and welcome on the basis of common religious affiliation. As the next chapter shows, this resistance can be overcome through specific policies, but it is a very important element to be kept in mind when analysing the integration dynamics in these churches. Migrants, especially Africans, also have difficulties in understanding the relatively small numbers of believers in their new community and the dynamics of being part of a religious minority, as the majority of them come from an Anglican/Protestant Church that, even if it is not the majority church, is very big in numbers and visibility.

Finally this chapter argued that in today's Ireland, while Protestants have a more mixed and heterogeneous constituency, they still represent a privileged minority in the popular imaginary; they are integrated in the wider society without being assimilated into it; they constitute a minority which managed to keep its beliefs and traditions alive. Protestant migrants might not understand the privileged status enjoyed by Irish Protestants partly because migrants' social class might be very different from that of the average Irish parishioners. Being a migrant influences the perception that Irish, including Protestants, have of non-Irish members of their congregations; however, these perceptions are differently nuanced and vary according to criteria, such as reasons for migration (education, work, job seeking, asylum seeking, etc.), country of origin, and class, which positions migrants at different levels in a hierarchy of belonging. For instance a PhD student from Italy would be automatically placed at a much higher level than an asylum seeker from Nigeria.

The next chapter focuses on how the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church have responded to some of the challenges brought by migration and the increased diversity within their congregations.

Chapter V

Protestant Churches in Ireland developing integration strategies

Introduction

This chapter analyses the integration strategies of Protestant Churches with a specific focus on the work of the Church of Ireland in the Dublin and Glendalough Dioceses and the Methodist Church in Dublin. The analysis is based on data collected through in-depth interviews, participant and non-participant observation, church documents, and informal conversations. As discussed in chapter III this research covers a period of time that goes from 2004 to 2012, and identifies three distinct phases: a) the first phase, from 2004 to 2008, which coincided with the peak of 'integration enthusiasm'; b) the period between 2008 and 2010, marked by the onset of the economic crisis and by the hibernation of the Irish State's integration discourses; c) the third phase, 2011-2012, marked by austerity discourses and little or no debate on integration. As regards the first two phases, both the documents available and my participants' evaluations provided rich insights in relation to the Churches' integration efforts and the shortcomings of specific projects. The third phase was more difficult to assess for a variety of reasons: firstly because there was uncertainty on how to proceed, both within the churches and on the government's side, and secondly because church strategies were undergoing changes (2012) as I was writing the research (2013).

The chapter begins by highlighting the integration strategies of different Protestant Churches, during the phase of 'intercultural optimism', and analyses them in relation to the theories of integration proposed and discussed in chapter I. Following from this, it focuses on an in-depth analysis of the Discovery project, the 'official' integration project of the Church of Ireland. This case study is paradigmatic not only of the tensions and difficulties the Church of Ireland experienced in trying to address the needs of its migrant constituencies but also of

the church's reluctance to envision more transformative possibilities. This reluctance also speaks of and to a certain extent reinforces, the stereotypical narrative of Anglicans being a privileged and upper-class minority as discussed in the previous chapter. The second case study highlights the different approach of the Methodist Church – another minority Protestant church – to promoting integration, and identifies the reasons behind its success. These two case studies not only allow me to compare the different outcomes of the two churches' projects but also raise important questions concerning the role and mission of Protestant churches in general when it comes to migration.

Management of diversity

> Diversity is healthy if it is respect rather than isolation (Male, Irish, ordained).

In line with the climate in Ireland during the 'Celtic Tiger' period, there was a vibrant debate among religious organisations about diversity, the challenges of serving multicultural congregations and the churches' responses to them. Like in Britain (Johnson, 1991), Protestant churches in Ireland played a significant role in publicly welcoming Ireland's increasing diversity (Comerford, 2007; Cristea *et al.*, 2008). Not surprisingly, perhaps, discourses used to describe new migrants joining the church referred to them as 'strangers', 'foreigners', 'newcomers', in keeping with a Christian tradition of 'welcoming the stranger' as discussed in chapter II. Along with the familiar vocabulary from the Bible, Church publications also embraced the narrative used by the Irish government, which centred on the notions of 'management of diversity' and integration. Interestingly enough, both the Churches and the Irish government claimed they wanted to avoid the mistakes made by other countries on issues related to migrants' integration in society as well as in religious life. The publication of booklets and reports during the years 2003-2008 provides the best example of the 'good will' of various churches to incorporate the Irish state's discourses of management of diversity and to adapt them to their church audience.

The 'Hard Gospel' project (Church of Ireland, 2003), [61] for instance, makes clear that ethnic diversity was to become a constant part of the life of the Church of Ireland. 95 per cent of Church of Ireland rectors and 85 per cent of lay members, interviewed for the project, agreed with the statement that 'the Church of Ireland should take steps to ensure that it is welcoming to members of ethnic minorities' (Church of Ireland, 2003: 62). However, clergy felt that they did not have the capacity or the resources to adequately deal with issues relating to migration. Another report, 'Welcoming Angels' (2005), traces the genesis of the church's 'Discovery' integration project, set up in 2004 by John Neill, Archbishop of Dublin, which is the core of this case study, as I analyse later in this chapter. As part of the Discovery project the Archbishop also appointed a clergy ministering primarily to the immigrant community.

In contrast to the centrally initiated and controlled welcoming projects, the Methodist Church did not set up regional projects but each congregation developed its own strategies according to local needs. In Dublin Central Mission, the 'Welcoming the Strangers' project was set up with the specific aim of addressing the needs of migrants in the city. Part of the project was providing English language classes and other support services to asylum seekers and refugees. [62]

Apart from denominational projects, Protestant churches actively participated in different working groups with other Christian churches on the issues of migration, integration and combating racism. A particularly interesting example is the Irish School of Ecumenics' '21st Century Faith' surveys of lay and clergy in Ireland across Christian denominations (Gladys, 2009a, 2009b) with a section on 'Immigration and Diversity'. The 'Clergy Survey Report' highlights that an emphasis on ethnic harmony, shared leadership with ethnic minorities, and the promotion of inclusive forms of worship were likely to impact positively on migrants' church attendance:

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[61] For more information about the Hard Gospel project of the Church of Ireland (2003-2008) and its work in the field of migration and interculturalism, see: http://ireland.anglican.org/archive/hardgospel/index.php?id=15 (accessed 10/11/2011).

[62] See Stephens (2004, 2011) on the Methodist Church, and Martin (2003) on the Presbyterian Churches in the whole of Ireland.

> Research from other multiethnic contexts indicates that people of different ethnic groups enjoy better relationships within congregations when the leaders of the congregation preach and teach on ethnic/racial harmony as an expression of godliness, when minorities share leadership positions with majority ethnic groups, and when a variety of languages are used in worship services……the vast majority of congregations/faith communities on the island (80 per cent) have fewer than 10 per cent of recent immigrants in their midst. 30 per cent of clergy, pastors, ministers and faith leaders report doing something to accommodate them, while 44 per cent never have. 50 per cent have preached or taught on immigration/diversity/welcoming strangers, and immigrants and ethnic minorities hold a range of positions within faith communities. But only about 15 per cent have used immigrants or ethnic minorities' native languages in religious services (Gladys, 2009a: 23).

This research was conducted in the middle of the recession crisis, at a time when it was wrongly believed that many migrants would leave (Krings *et al.*, 2009, 2011). The changing economic climate also impacted on integration discourses. It was clear, already in 2009, that the discourse of integration was starting to disappear from public debate; at the same time the integration work of the Church of Ireland – in particular – was slowing down. Two former members of the Discovery Committee Project (Church of Ireland), reflecting on the integration policy of the Government during the crisis, indicated *Migration Nation* (2008) as the only policy instrument produced at the national level, albeit an instrument which according to one of them, remained an 'empty vessel':

> The policies are still those linked/related to *Migration Nation*, published in 2008. There was a budget and a junior minister (…) Now the position has moved into the department of justice and my understanding is that the budget is gone…just to say that in Dublin City Council they have an integration unit and the head of that unit was very into migration nation and set up an interfaith committee…(…) so, apparently the policy is still policy but the government priority is gone, it is not longer…it is not a national issue…(Irish, male, lay).

> 'We do not actually have an integration policy; the only thing we have is something called 'Migration Nation' which was published...the 1st of May 2008... I was there... and we were asked to see the minister the day before... and it was like this because the minister did not want us to criticise it on the day of the publication... three difficulties we reported: there are no actions, no money, no implementation plan... so to be honest with you it is an empty vessel, it is a policy statement. (Migrant, male, lay)

While highlighting the difficulties with the Irish Government and expressing disappointment at the lack of policy implementation and follow-up, both participants recognised the work that Dublin City Council had done and was doing in the area of integration and especially its commitment to involving and consulting Migrant NGOs, churches and church related organisations.

Despite the economic crisis and the cooling down of the 'integration enthusiasm', Churches continued to hold meetings and to work towards a more integrated type of church even though this happened more on an ecumenical basis. For instance, in 2010 all the members of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting, [63] as part of the Parish-Based Integration Project, [64] endorsed the 'Irish Churches' Affirmations on Migration, Diversity and Interculturalism' which, after recognising the changes in Irish society, expresses a commitment to not only acknowledge and appreciate cultural and ethnic diversity but also to ensure that these are reflected in the life of the church. These affirmations stress the importance of empowering migrants, working towards inclusive communities, combating racism and xenophobia, advocating for the rights of all migrants, and building bridges with other migrant-led churches and chaplaincies. All churches are now bound by these affirmations and have committed to implement them at the local level. However, these affirmations have rarely been put into practice, and the Church of Ireland is not an exception; they require in fact a deep analysis of the structure of the church itself

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[63] The Irish Inter-Church Meeting (IICM) was established in 1973 as a forum comprising the Roman Catholic Church and the member churches of the Irish Council of Churches (ICC). For more information please visit the following website http://www.irishchurches.org/about/iicm (accessed 10/11/2011).

[64] A three-year integration project which started in January 2007, this ecumenical project was managed by the Inter-Church Committee on Social Issues (ICCSI), funded by the Department of Justice (Reception and Integration Agency) and based at the Irish School of Ecumenics in Trinity College Dublin (http://www.irishchurches.org/about/iccsi) (accessed 10/11/2011).

and how these may change to facilitate the intercultural journey proclaimed and promoted.

The next sections aim to articulate these concepts, first through the analysis of the Discovery Project of the Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough and second through the examination of the approach of the Methodist Church in Dublin.

The Discovery Project

The Discovery Project of the Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough is an interesting case of a grass-root initiative which was taken over by the leadership of the Church. The promoters of such an initiative, a mix of people of different ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds, were all involved in the activities of St. George and St. Thomas Church in Dublin which had been identified as the focus of the project. Once the project became 'institutionalised', the original group became part of the Discovery Committee appointed by the Archbishop. The main aims of the project can be summarised as follows: a) providing a more welcoming space for migrants in churches through the organisation of training for clergy and church members; b) including changes in devotional practices such as Discovery Services with a more 'African' style; c) the creation of an intercultural choir, the Discovery Choir; d) the appointment of a migrant minister in charge of the international community.

In the next sections I describe, firstly, the genesis and the structure of the Discovery Project and secondly, I analyse the committee members' own evaluations of the project.

Genesis and structure

The 'Welcoming Angels' booklet (2005) traces the genesis of the integration project 'Discovery'. At the end of 2004, 'the Most Rev. John Neill, Archbishop of Dublin, called together a small working group to respond to the concerns of his diocesan clergy by producing some resources to help with the situation. The working title for the group was the Archbishop's Working Group on Combating

Racism. [65] Its specific remit was twofold: a) to draw up guidelines of good practice in welcoming immigrants and refugees into our parishes; and b) to do some preliminary thinking on the formation of a diocesan project to combat racism through education' (Welcoming Angels, 2005: 15). The booklet served the purpose of providing guidelines of good practice, while the establishment of the Discovery project was intended to address the need for anti-racist education.

The hopes and aspirations articulated by 'Welcoming Angels' were very high: 'We should regard our incomers as a valuable resource with skills to share and treasures of culture and language and church tradition; we should have the warmth and largeness of heart to give them a proper welcome and to let them find real acceptance in our community. This is true Christian inclusiveness' (Welcoming Angels, 2005: 17). The reports of the Diocesan Synods of Dublin and Glendalough (2005, 2006) describe how the 'Discovery – Ministry to the International Community' was developed. Discovery centred around the holding of welcoming services and events which started in June 2004 and were held in the Church of St. George and St. Thomas in Dublin city centre. An intercultural choir was also formed performing on a number of occasions on R.T.E. television and radio. [66] A Diocesan Committee for the International Community was formally appointed in spring 2005. Since the very beginning, the Discovery Committee tried to maintain a balanced structure (i.e. male/female, lay/ordained, Irish/migrant) as stated by an interviewee:

> The model for Discovery was very good because it included clergy and lay people and it included migrants (...) So there were a number of people involved and we were listening to them for direct insights and that was good. (...) We brought people on the committee and we did things with them from the very beginning. (Irish, male, ordained)

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[65] It is worth mentioning that from the start the project did not only 'speak' of 'interculturalism' or 'integration' but more directly spoke of the need to combat racism. An element which, although important, was not so prominent in the Discovery project.

[66] The Discovery Choir, born within the framework of the Discovery Project, has since then developed independently although it has kept the ethos of being an inclusive, intercultural group. While it is still based in St. George and St. Thomas Parish it has performed all over the country and in different settings, religious and non religious .http://www.discoverygospelchoir.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=1 (accessed 30/11/2013)

A clergy ministering primarily to the immigrant community was appointed by the Archbishop: 'Fortuitously, Archbishop heard of and interviewed a Nigerian priest who was agreeable to come to Ireland' (Diocesan Synods of Dublin and Glendalough, 2005: 32). The Nigerian priest in charge of the International Community arrived at the end of October 2005. Though he was a minister in an Anglican Church he had to spend the first year doing only parish work in two congregations in order to get an idea of what it was like to be a clergyman in Ireland. In fact being an Anglican minister in Ireland is not the same thing as being an Anglican minister in Nigeria. First of all, as the minister himself pointed out during the interview, congregation sizes in Ireland are much smaller than in Nigeria:

> Well, back in Nigeria I was primarily a co-pastoral priest in charge of a parish. It would be a bigger parish (...) with about one thousand families and I preached on Sunday on a population of between 1,500 and 2,000 individuals. We ran two sessions, we had a very big church (...) and everywhere is packed. (Migrant, male, ordained)

Size was not the only difference that the newly appointed priest confronted once he arrived in Ireland. The Church he met did not resemble his experience of Nigerian churches. There were differences both in the liturgy of the service and in people's attitudes towards religion in general and their own spirituality, as I discuss later.

From the report of the Diocesan Synod (2006) it emerges that the Committee was involved in advocacy for migrants and asylum seekers in Ireland and in providing training and formation to the Diocesan clergy with the view of appointing a specific individual in each parish who would deal with Discovery matters. 'It is believed that if our clergy are better briefed and informed, this will create a heightened awareness and ability to react positively when confronted with the varied and often complex needs of immigrants' (Diocesan Synods of Dublin and Glendalough, 2006: 34).

In the fall of 2008, when I arrived in Dublin and began the fieldwork, the project was facing some challenges, as all my interviewees reported: 'The committee lost its momentum', 'we haven't been really active in the past year', 'It could be linked to the economic crisis', 'the project is undergoing an evaluation', 'problems started

with the appointment of the minister in charge to the International Community', 'clergies were not interested'. Despite these challenges, there were still hopes and the loss of momentum was perceived as a 'normal' phase, something all projects are likely to face at some point during their implementation. The scenario and attitude I was confronted with in late 2011, beginning of 2012 was of a different kind: the Discovery Project was still running, a new committee had been appointed, yet the 'lack of vision' and 'strategic planning' still persisted, as discussed later. In addition I noticed that the people involved in the project were more reluctant to discuss Discovery and its developments.

Discovery Committee and activities

Even though the Discovery Committee was officially established in spring 2005, activities aimed at raising awareness of the presence of migrants in society and in churches and at fostering a more welcoming attitude towards newcomers, especially from other cultural backgrounds, had already started in 2003-2004. From the interviews I conducted it clearly emerges that a group of people had already been active before the Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough established the Discovery Committee. This group gathered around the parish of St. George and St. Thomas, in Dublin city centre, to address the need for a more active and prominent role of the Church in relation to issues around migration and integration:

> Well about five years ago, maybe longer. It will probably be 6 years in the spring 2004... a group of us came together because we realised that there was a need for our church to reach out to the migrants who were coming to live in the Dioceses (...) it was a very loose kind of group, very ad hoc group of about 4-5 people and we went to the Archbishop and we had some sessions talking to him about what we felt were the needs of people. And wondering just exactly what we might be able to do... and out of that came the Discovery project. (Irish, female, ordained)

> We had no constitution; we were under nobody... we were just volunteers ad hoc, not accountable to anybody. Yet we had organised 4-5 discovery services. Can I get my timing right? (...) I have never told this story before. The Archbishop sent a letter to myself (and other persons); he wanted to

> form this group called the 'Archbishop working group on racism' so we all met with the Archbishop and he said 'I want booklets, guidelines I want some advice on how we do this'... so the result was 'Welcoming Angels' and that took about 9 months to produce and we launched it at the Dioceses' meeting on October 2005 and that was very positive and very well received. That committee was a separate committee with one very specific job but five of its six members were members of the Discovery Committee too. (Irish, male, lay)

As another interviewee pointed out, it all started with a group of volunteers and, even after it became the Discovery Committee, all members remained volunteers. They started with 'low key' activities as another interviewee put it, but during the course of 2005 their 'mandate' and activities increased so much that they began to think about hiring someone to coordinate the work:

> The Discovery project really began very low key. We had an exhibition, or we had a sort of a day or maybe it was two - I can't remember now - where the Church of Ireland within the Dioceses displayed its stands - if you like - of organisations that we had: mothers' union, boys' brigade, girls' brigade, all these activities and we also invited other groups to come in, groups who were working with migrants, to set up their stalls as well. So that was the first thing we did and it was as a very ad hoc group. And then we had our first Discovery service and the Discovery Gospel Choir was set for that service specifically but it grew and grew - I mean - it is still in existence very strongly. So, you know, it was really a grassroots kind of movement from people who were interested (...) Then as we talked about over the next few months: 'Maybe it might be good to have a person dedicated to this type of ministry to reach out to immigrants who were coming', and that was how he [the Nigerian minister] came to be in post because he was appointed to that job. (Irish, female, ordained)

Along with organising Discovery services, which were Sunday services that took into consideration different Anglican traditions from various parts of the world, especially Africa, and incorporated gospel music, and more singing and dancing, the Committee, or least some of its members, were also involved in training priests and parishioners on integration and diversity management as outlined in the

Dioceses' reports (2005, 2006, 2007):

> It was all very good at the beginning (…) we did clergy training days, and with a lot of energy (…) we did another training in the College of Education but we started to see that the work load was huge... so we felt there was a need for a full time worker. Now, this is where things started to get a bit complicated. (Irish, male, lay)

The Archbishop, whom I interviewed in 2010, recounted that the need to train the clergy to be able to provide support to migrants and create welcoming spaces in the church had emerged soon. In addition, he highlighted the challenges faced by migrants within the Anglican Church in Britain. When the Discovery Project was set up the leadership wanted to avoid the mistakes made by their neighbouring country and by their 'sister church', however the Archbishop admitted that similar mistakes were made:

> Our aims were to minister to those that we haven't got an idea how to minister to but we were sort of – shall we say – providing a first aid service for people (…) we were just addressing emergencies as they arose and we wanted to try and get something more established. When we asked the dioceses the responses were overwhelming to provide funding which they did. (...) we have not got sufficient experience. I have been personally quite involved as I was the president of the Council of Churches in Britain and Ireland and of course this was a very big issue but there you were up to, say, the third generation of immigration and I was very conscious of the resentment... There were many churches that they were sort of almost imitating Anglicanism because there were former Anglicans leading them but they were quite independent and they were very resentful that they haven't got the use of our churches that's why I have always been very keen that our churches should always be lent and shared. They were also very resentful of the fact that when they arrived they were ignored or not made welcomed and that's why we have been very conscious... we had an opportunity a couple of generations on to try not to make the same mistakes and we probably made them all. (Archbishop)

The passage above is particularly rich and points at a number of fundamental issues that have to be taken into consideration when developing integration

strategies: the rigidity of the mainline churches towards migrants – including the fact of not giving them space and leadership roles; migrants' decision to leave mainline churches and to build their own churches; and the possibility that migrants who feel unwelcome may not only leave but also start to feel resentment towards mainline churches and churchgoers. While the various reports and my interviewees were consistent in expressing the need to train ministers and parishioners, this type of training was not necessarily well received and attended:

> The number of clergy who came probably never exceeded a quarter and I could tell who the quarter would be before the thing was even held... you know what I mean... and a quarter is better than nothing (…) I would classify it as predictable (…) if you have a church in an area where there are six, eight thousands immigrants and you have no connection... but to do that you have to have the right leader for a start and you have to have people who are given some visions because (...) where there are no visions the people will perish. (Irish, male, ordained)

The committee, according to its chair, not only provided tools for ministers but also for school board committees, who were in the process of changing the ethos statements of Protestant schools with the view of becoming more inclusive. The establishment of a ministry to the international community fulfilled the committee's wish to have a person who would be able to act as a link between different realities and to mediate among different cultures. The designated priest, whose appointment I discuss later, described his job in these terms:

> I work with the Church of Ireland, Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough. Primarily I am the Chaplaincy for the International community, I look after members of the International Community, the immigrant community in the Dioceses and beyond. Apart from that I also assist in two local parishes – Whitechurch and Tallaght. My office happens to be in Tallaght but from here I go around in the dioceses and visit different parishes. The ministry involves attending conferences, seminars and hosting some of them and contributing in leading voice, I represent the church, working together with other stakeholders: the ministry of immigration and integration and this is primarily what I do. (Migrant, male, ordained)

He explained that the Discovery project's aim was the 'Ministry of Care for the immigrant community' and added that, during the Celtic Tiger, they worked in different places – including asylum and reception centres, prisons – to help, support, advise and advocate for migrants 'encouraging them to become part of the life of the local church and the local community'. He also wanted to make sure that his ministry was not just for Christians, Anglicans but 'for all human beings'.

According to some of the committee members, his presence was very helpful in terms of explaining the African, especially Nigerian, approach to life and faith: '[he] has been very interesting as an interpreter', and again, 'I think he now understands both sides. He knows where the Irish are coming from, he knows where the Africans are coming from'. The minister in charge of the international community explained for instance that African migrants have a different way of worshipping and expressing their spirituality.

> There are three things that an African is looking for in a worship session or in a service, those three things are quality of the prayer that is said there, because people find it difficult to pray and they want to go to a place that can help them to improve their prayer life and the church should be a transforming institution, it is a place where people come and they received help; a place where people come and are changed, where people come and they are reformed and this includes the prayer life of people. So that's what people look for. The second one people look for is a place where they can express themselves, their love for God, especially in music and in songs... and I am not just... talking about classical music as good as they will be you know... but music like Mozart (...) would not make any meaning for them because they are too classical for the common mind to understand... professional choristers can deal with that. So they are looking for very simple songs, spiritual songs that will help them worship God and of course well taking... where they can participate (...) Then, the third one is the quality of the message, the sermon, the word of God they are hearing because these are agents that (…) can change their lives... (Migrant, male, ordained)

On the one hand, the minister's emphasis on the need to acknowledge African churchgoers' style of worship, is a step ahead of the welcoming phase proposed by

the mainline churches as it implies changes in the articulation of church services; on the other hand it implicitly assumes that the type of sermons, songs and prayers which are central to the Anglican service are not 'right', without acknowledging the symbolic paradigm behind them. Another interviewee, talking from the perspective of mainline churches, stressed the importance of going beyond what he called the 'three Ds', dance, dress, dishes, when engaging in an intercultural dialogue and to concentrate on what is really important for one's identity:

> If you ask me who am I like you did before I told you I am X's husband, I have got X children, I am a Christian, I am working for this and fighting for that (...) I would tell you about my values, my principles, my deep beliefs, the things that are most importance to me. I would not tell you that I eat fruit and cornflakes in the morning, that I wear jeans and jumper and that I go to the night club on a Saturday evening or I watch X-factor... I won't tell you these things because they are not important identity badges for me. Yet many people within the social and civic sector will always try and highlight cultural diversity using tools that are not primary issues... who I am is about my soul and about my heart and about much deeper things and I don't think that the government or even the social civic sector has the language to help us deal with those... the majority of migrants are coming from countries of high religiosity, countries that are traditionally and theologically... that are theologically traditional... have a much more holistic understanding of faith, so God... and your theology is much more intertwined with your daily life and daily living... (Irish, male, ordained)

In the next section I look at the role of the chaplain to the International Community, the contention over the way he was hired, and the complex task of integrating him into the work of the Discovery Project. Following from this examination I assess the success and shortcomings of the Discovery project.

Assessment and self-assessment of the position of the Chaplain to the International Community

The appointment of the Chaplain to the International Community was one of the key moments in the development of the Discovery Project. According to the report of the Diocesan Synod, his arrival was accidental, fortuitous as I mentioned

previously. During the interview the Archbishop himself described his arrival as something extraordinary:

> [He] came to us in an extraordinary way. [His] wife was here and she was put in contact with me very concerned about her husband and all the rest and at the same time we were thinking that we needed a Nigerian priest and [he] had a visa for the UK. So we got [him] to come over and we interviewed him in Belfast and we saw immediately that he was a person of great credibility and we had all the references and we saw his abilities (Archbishop).

However, from the interviews with the Committee members, the process of this appointment was not necessarily perceived in a positive way. Without judging the person, most of the criticism converged around the decision-making process that brought the minister to Dublin and to the project in particular. As stated above, because of its workload, the Discovery Committee needed to hire a full-time person; however, a proper job description of the post had not been prepared and no consensus had been reached on whether or not the person should be ordained or lay. The job opening was not advertised and there was no proper selection process, as highlighted by different members of the committee and summarised very well by one in particular:

> There was no job description, we had no strategic plan (…) it was simply the rational... I was part of this process and I am equally critical of myself because I should have been highlighting these things and... it was simply, gosh, there was loads and loads we could do here, we need a full time person to help us with this and also recognising our failing that we don't, as Irish people… there were only two or three migrants on our committee, we did not have that kind of skills necessary to be reaching out... so it was a kind of ethnic chaplaincy we were looking for but we had no job description, no strategic plan and we still do not have a job description or strategic plan... and... it was essentially that he was given the job and there was this huge amount of work to get the visa sorted and have him over here and everything like that. The other thing is that (…) the person must be a clergy… I was actually finishing at Trinity and if it hadn't been a clergyman I would have applied for the job, I would have been very happy

> to do it... it was said that the rationale was 'oh, migrants like clergy'; no migrants said that, it was just a stereotypically presumptuous thing that the clergyman is going to do a better job… (Irish, male, lay).

Another point of contention related to the Chaplain's expertise, as he did not have any previous European (or Irish) experience. For this reason, once he arrived in Ireland he had to spend a year as curate in two parishes in South-west Dublin, as the Archbishop explained:

> We were conscious of that, and what we said to [him] was that he was to begin slowly, which he did, because there were others who were already doing some things (...) and we integrated him into an ordinary parish; now he is constrained more to Tallaght area which is more multiracial now but he was put actually under H. M. supervision in Whitechurch that with the exception of three or four families is a very normal, middle class, white parish. And he actually integrated very well there, I mean he took some of the vestry meetings (…), he chaired some of those, the rector wasn't present, he learned to sort of preach in a slightly more Western length and things like this (…) but we felt that what we needed to do and he excepted that was that we needed to acclimatised him, (...) because as an educated man there was no doubt about that, he had a masters in education and degree in theology and et cetera et cetera, he was going to learn quickly... and he did. But yes, that was probably a mistake. (Archbishop)

His arrival and his training in local parishes, although necessary and important for his understanding of the Irish Protestant landscape, created frustration among some members of the Discovery Committee and to a certain extent contributed to reduce both the members' enthusiasm and the number of activities.

> I think that that would have been a good way to do it [having someone with a European experience] but to have perhaps someone who would have worked with immigrants in Amsterdam or Brussels or Paris and brought here to work to sort of have that half way place. I think that, this is not about [him] as a person, but just in term of strategy to bring somebody from Nigeria straight into Ireland without knowing the European experience was perhaps short-sighted (…) he knows what it is to be a priest in Africa, he is learning what it is from his parish experience what it is to

be priest in Ireland but missing the connection between the two. (Irish, male, ordained)

The following quotation also raises the question of how appropriate the label 'African' is, when, even among Nigerians, belonging to a particular tribe can be seen as an obstacle to reaching out to other Nigerians and Africans in general:

> It is good for a church of Nigeria priest to be appointed in Europe, it is good for an European priest to be appointed in [places outside their own country]... so it may just be a nice little box to tick that is good in terms of the Anglican Communion... it is good that we have someone from Nigeria, he helps us with cultural things and the majority of Anglican migrants we were targeting were Nigerian anyway (...) but all Nigerians come with great strengths and great weaknesses so immediately [he] failed to reach any other non-Nigerians. He is Igbo as well which complicates things and you know... but he can't do anything about that and that's not the problem. Basically that whole process on reflection was an absolute disaster of appointment. (Irish, male, lay)

> *5th Anniversary of the Discovery Project, Christ Church, 15:30. The church was packed and the atmosphere pleasant. A great diversity of people, most of them dressed up with their traditional clothes. Very soon I realised that the majority of the attendees had an African background and the indigenous Irish were few... mainly those involved in the project, myself of course and my husband who I brought along. The service was lively and three different choirs performed: the Discovery Gospel Choir, the Korean Choir and the Redeemed Church Choir. Later on, during the tea break I was told that most of the Africans were Nigerians and belonged 'primarily' to the Redeemed Church... so, where are the indigenous and the migrant Anglicans? To my surprise there was not much dancing 'outside the benches'. Having experienced different African worship events I was prepared for the dancing queue/line towards the altar and around the church but people basically danced in their place – but using their hands and bodies. The language used was English throughout the whole service and this allowed us to participate and understand each part of it – I was used to worship held in native languages and English where without*

translation I could not understand everything. The coffee and tea afterwards was an excellent occasion to get in contact with people and get updates on the project. I was positively struck by the interest people here took in my research, although I noticed that when Michel is with me the attention then moved on the Waldensians in Italy who, apparently, are a fascinating topic. (Fieldnotes, 05/07/2009)

While various interviewees highlighted the Chaplain's charisma and talents they also pointed at the risks that a leadership based on individual charisma can cause:

> He has organised the Discovery services, they are terrific!! But, unfortunately, he has been with us for about 4 and half years (...) there would have been Irish people at the beginning going to the discovery services but now they are all Africans. (Irish, male, ordained)

> [I]t is also personal and dependent, it is all [the minister]'s show which is very powerful, he does very very good stuff, he is an excellent liturgist but when he leaves tomorrow there is no finger prints. He may have gathered, like he will have 150 people at service, they are all Nigerians, and when he leaves tomorrow nobody knows their names and houses, who he is visiting, essentially this constituency will go with him. And this is one of the things that he keeps arguing that if his position ends a lot of people are just going to leave and they are because it's depending on him... (Irish, male, lay)

From other interviews it emerged that before the Chaplain's arrival, migrants, including Africans, were already part of congregations and some ministers were arguing that their number had not increased following his arrival and that his departure would not cause a mass withdrawal of their migrants' constituency.

When I conducted the core of my interviews (2009-2010) the position of the Chaplain to the International Community was due to end soon because of lack of funds; therefore I felt it was important to hear the committee members' evaluations of the position after almost 4 years of work. Around the same time the Archbishop also commissioned a member of the Discovery Committee to conduct an evaluation of the project. Unfortunately I was not able to get access to the internal report as it did not circulate outside the Committee; therefore I had to rely on my informants' assessment of the project. One interviewee made a particularly relevant

and pertinent point in relation to the difficult task of judging a project or the quality of someone's work when no clear job guidelines or description have been laid out in the first place.

> My attitude is that you cannot say he has been a success or a disaster because you have nothing to measure him against. If he had a job description we as a committee could say whether he has achieved a, b, c and or he didn't achieve a, b, c, d but we have nothing to measure him. So, to say he is a disaster or he is a success is irrelevant because what a success and what is a failure when you do not know the starting point. (Irish, male, lay)

From the Nigerian minister's perspective, adapting to the Irish religious landscape had not been easy. I mentioned already the Minister's surprise at the difference in church size which should be understood not only in terms of bigger or smaller churches but also in terms of the church's majority or minority position within the State. The position of the Anglican Church in Nigeria is different from the one the Anglican Church holds in the Republic of Ireland. In addition to this, the minister also talked about the attitudes of indigenous churchgoers defining them as 'cold', 'reflexive', 'static':

> The Church here is quite different (...) The church back home is much more lively, (...) perhaps in this part of the world the church is more quiet, and sometimes feels cold... Who wouldn't be excited to go to church? (...) So if they were interested in going to the cinema, doing their work on the days of the week I thought on Sunday they should also observe that is the Lord's day and if they are Muslims, perhaps Fridays but I think they are not enthusiastic in this part of the world, you know, as opposed to the place where I am coming from. I was first met with that *shock* [his emphasis]. (Migrant, male, ordained)

The minister also spoke of the difficulties related to his work portfolio, elaborating on three challenging aspects in particular. First of all, the fact of being divided between two parishes did not allow him to dedicate the right energies to the Discovery Project and to his work as Chaplain to the International Community:

> I would have loved to work totally independent and not being attached to

> local parishes. Although it has its merits and demerits. Being attached to local parishes helped me as somebody from outside to learn from the life of the people, that's the way I met the ordinary people and I was able to learn their way of life, including the way of the church and the life of the church here... because it is a different one from the one I come from, but it also took my time a great deal, you know I had divided attention, you know I am nowhere, today I am here tomorrow I am there just like that and most time on the field some people ask you where can we find you... it is very difficult to track me down (…) I hardly stay in the office because the work is not done in the office, this is a fieldwork [interviewee's emphasis]... where you have to go out, go out in the seminars, in the office, go to meet people, even on the street... visit churches, visit parishes and find out what their problems are and help them, you know, the asylum centre, the reception centre, you know… (Migrant, male, ordained)

Secondly, the minister questioned the model of integration adopted by the Discovery Committee and the way of its implementation, although he made no distinction between integration and assimilation and used the terms interchangeably. Furthermore, while highlighting some of the shortcomings, he suggested trying alternative models and having a church where all 'Africans' could go to avoid losing members envisioning the creation of a separate or even 'ethnic' church – which it is at odds with the inspiration behind the Discovery Project:

> At another point I started wondering if the model of integration we adopted to balance integration to assimilate immigrants to the local life of the various parishes worked. It worked in some and it didn't work in some others. We lost a huge number of immigrants to other churches. Because immigrants found the local churches too quiet and cold and unaccommodating and they left and went to join some other houses and new generation churches which is sad to me... so you leave it to me I'll have to suggest we try another model of it (…) that model would be to create a space for those ones who would not be assimilated into the local church and get all of them there to continue... you understand what I mean... it is not really working against our model but it is creating another space... to take care of a failure creating from our model. The reason why

> they couldn't stay was that partly, because it was impossible for them to be satisfied in the local church they could not get what they were looking for there and in fact in some cases some of the local churches found them a nuisance... you know... they felt they could do without them so they don't need to be told they are not welcomed here... and [to feel] welcomed is a very powerful phenomenon, where you go you are welcomed, you feel at home, you know (…) put down your boxes, put up your hands and you can join in building the place... you understand... (…) So sadly for some of them it happened like that... and we just lost them. You know, how do you feel if you are the number one of a particular church in your home country but once you come here (...) it is a different feeling and for me sometimes it is a slap in the face. (Migrant, male, ordained)

Thirdly, the minister spoke of the lack of support he experienced from other clergy within the Church of Ireland outside those involved in the project itself. Most parishes were keen to give funds to support the project but were not interested in participating in it and in collaborating with the Chaplain to the International Community:

> Another thing was, if you like to hear it, that I had expected a massive support from the local church leadership (...) because the funding of the ministry came from various parishes putting an amount of money to support the ministry and at the end of the day there was enough funding for the ministry from the local churches. But it is not just enough to put down your money it would have been better to go a step forward by participating, being part of it because if you put down money and say my parish will give this amount at the end of day you put the money together but that money will not do the mission work, it will not do the evangelism. You understand. (....) this is not the only support we need... if you put the money, the money can just pay my salary, my stipend and at the end of the month that's not the ministry, the ministry is when I come knocking at your door, you open up and we are doing it together. (...) Sometimes when I go and knock at the doors of various parishes some of them tend to be not very very open, you understand, they sort of ask you what are you looking for? We put down the money that's what we want, you can just go and do your

> thing... it was a very disappointing experience (....) So if we had to start again from the beginning on how to get assurances on these aspects... so that when people see you they don't see you as an invader of their territories... the local church leaders are very comfortable with their territories... and everybody is defending his own territory but in mission we don't talk about territories, Jesus said go out, you have to open doors, outreach, that's the most important thing, it is not closing up and defending your ministry and your kingdom, you understand... unless you are not in the life of the church you may not understand things I am saying... (Migrant, male, ordained)

The Chaplain to the International Community expressed his disappointment with the Discovery project very clearly, as did some of the indigenous interviewees. This leads me to move now to assess the outcomes of the Discovery Project.

Assessment of the Project

Many interviewees were very negative about the outcomes of the project and all expressed some level of frustration. The chaplain to the International Community was not the only one to expect more support from the local parishes; other interviewees expressed the same disappointment. In addition some highlighted the contradiction between living in an area highly populated by migrants and having a church which does not have migrants:

> I think one of those things I would not be terribly keen on was to get more parishes more activated and to get more clergy more activated because the clergy are the neck in the bottle if they decide to block what is going through... then... it is only being partial and indeed I have been concerned from the start that certain areas, but we have tried, believe me, everything.... where we know that there are significant migrant population – we actually succeeded in getting nothing going on. (Irish, male, ordained)

Another element emerging from the data was the lack of a strategic plan, which did not only apply to the appointment of the Ministry to the International Community but affected the whole structure:

> We had two attempts as strategic plan which have led to nothing...

> ehmmm... we have organised events, [the Nigerian minister] has organised Discovery Services like... things are happening, things have been happening... to be honest, though things have been extremely quiet for six month, there was a service, there was our 5th birth service last June, I haven't seen [him] since then... I do not know what's happening and what's going on. (...) but I just spoke to the youth officer, not so long ago, and I said 'have you worked with [the Chaplain to the International Community]? Have you met him to talk about work?' And you know the two of them have been around for the past three years, they have not met to discuss the way to work together. You know tiny tiny staff, they have never gone for a coffee now (...) but the youth officer has been in place longer than [him] and he was also his responsibility to start to push avenues and work with the system... this is getting into nowhere a lot of people are judging whether the post has been successful or unsuccessful and... so.... you know... there has been lots and lots of frustrations and... your questions.. .things have been happening, yes, not very much though, and nothing that has been sustainable… (Irish, male, lay)

After five years the project officially ended in December 2010, although the minister continued to serve as curate of the two parishes until late 2011 when he was appointed rector of a parish in the city centre. In addition he continued to serve as Chaplain to the International Community for the new Discovery Committee, even though the position was not funded anymore. This shows that despite the criticism of the project, he himself wanted to remain in this post, even when he was appointed rector in St. George and St. Thomas, as I discuss later.

Along with the study of the Discovery Project, my research is based on ethnographic work carried out within the St. George and St. Thomas parish. As well as being particularly affected by migration, this church also constituted the core of the Discovery Project. Thus, I conclude this section on the Church of Ireland's integration strategies by analysing and reflecting upon the experiences of this parish.

St. George and St. Thomas Parish

> When she [the former minister] came [here] the church was dying but she revived it, she did it... the Discovery was started and we began a multicultural church... a youth church (...) the church was very inclusive... and she had a genuine interest in the church... helping them in various capacities (Female, Irish, lay)

I chose St. George and St. Thomas parish as my main ethnographic site because of its multicultural character and its unique history amongst the Anglican churches in Dublin. As I mentioned already, the church of St. George and St. Thomas became the centre of the Discovery Project at least for the first years (until 2006). The Church itself has faced a number of changes since the end of the 1990s and it is a good example of an Anglican church revitalised by the arrival of migrants, as the former minister highlighted:

> It was a very small congregation nine years ago, when I came, totally Irish, very elderly congregation and because of immigration and because I suppose of the Celtic Tiger (...) the whole face of the congregation has changed and it keeps changing (Female, Irish, ordained)

According to the church books, as of 2008, the parish had around 140 members of different nationalities (in units or households); the largest groups were Irish (35), Nigerians (13), Filipinos (5), and Indians (2). [67]

Before the arrival of the Nigerian minister in charge of the international community, all Discovery activities were held in the premises of this parish. After the minister started to work on the Project – which did not happen immediately for the reasons explained previously – the activities ceased to be held solely in St. George and St. Thomas as the minister's area of work included also St. Maelruain Parish in Tallaght (a large west Dublin suburb, and another area and church with a high percentage of migrants).

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[67] The full list of numbers and nationalities also appeared on the website of the Parish: http://georges.dublin.anglican.org/about.html (accessed 15/07/2013).

During the fieldwork, especially when I first arrived in 2008, I found a lively, welcoming community:

> *St. George and St. Thomas. Sunday morning. Following the suggestion of my key informant I went to this Anglican Church. I arrived a bit earlier and I got the chance to introduce myself to the minister who already knew I was coming. The atmosphere was very informal, some children – from different ethnic backgrounds – were running around the benches waiting for their Sunday school to start – parallel with the service. People were friendly, smiled at me, some of them came to welcome me and I felt at ease. By the time the service began the benches started to be filled. There were people from various origins: African, Asian, European: a good mixture. It was a medium-size church; that Sunday I counted around 40 people. The liturgy, however, as I expected, was not familiar to me, very structured according to the Anglican Book of Prayer and I personally struggled a bit... but I was surprised to see a band-group stepping in at some point during the worship leading and supporting the congregation singing. I was later told that they were part of the Discovery Gospel Choir, a spin off the Discovery Project I wanted to study in my research. The worship was followed by coffee and tea, another unusual thing for me, which was a perfect setting for small chats. In that occasion, I was introduced to the congregation and I had the opportunity to talk to the minister and arrange a meeting with her. It seems, however, people were more interested in the fact I was an Italian Protestant rather than a researcher who wanted to include their congregation in her study. Fieldwork officially started. (Fieldnotes, 24/10/2008)*

Parishioners of all backgrounds were eager to tell the story of their church and how migration had affected them positively. The services I attended reflected the variety of resources or gifts, as religious persons would call them, in the congregations. The minister always tried to have different people reading the scripture; the vestry meeting (the council of the church) was also multicultural and this helped shaping the activities of the church.

> The Discovery Gospel Choir is based in the church but does not really sing there, except on special occasions, but we do benefit from having [the choir leader] as a member of our congregation, so she teaches the congregation

> different songs, we try to have a little of world music, all that sort of things within the congregation... so it is a very different church to most of the Church of Ireland which you find just in terms of... the makeup of the congregation, the way we do things... I mean we do things very much by the book but we'll include other elements to reflect the diversity of the congregation (Female, Irish, ordained).

Along all these positive elements, stressed by the minister and confirmed by my fieldwork, a few critical aspects emerged. First of all the continuous turnover of migrants and automatically of church members resulted in a 'fluid' congregation, which did not allow for a proper long term planning of church activities and also risked jeopardising the future of the church itself:

> It is very much a congregation where we have people for a short time and in some cases maybe they are there for six months or a year working and then they'll move on. So it is a very fluid work, fluid congregation... and in terms of establishing then a kind of congregational base to run the church that's very difficult and I would find that the most challenging thing really where you don't have the people who are going to be there for the next 20 years learning how the system works. (Female, Irish, ordained)

Secondly, the fact that many Nigerians – who constituted the biggest group after the Irish, had left for Pentecostal Churches, challenged the role of the church; however, the minister stressed that many of the Nigerians who left continued to maintain links with the Church of Ireland when important and official events occur. Seemingly they maintain ties with the church in a strategic way for the benefits that its official and established character may bestow upon them (for instance, looking at Irish Schools' admission policy, baptism is important and having a child baptised within an established church gives, somehow, more credibility then a new migrant-led church).

> You know, for a while we had quite a number of Nigerian families but a lot of them have now gone to Pentecostal churches, to the migrant-led churches, but they still like to maintain a link... with the church. So they will come back from time to time, and they'll come back to have their

> babies baptised, to have official forms signed... so they do maintain some link. (Irish, female, ordained)

Lastly, there is the issue of leadership and ownership of the church by migrants. As the minister stressed in her interview, access to leadership may not be a problem; a more challenging issue is the different understanding of leadership and participation:

> ...within our congregation we try very hard to integrate people and to give everybody an opportunity to have a role and a position of leadership (...) There's still reluctance on the part of the newcomers to really own the church, you know, they'll take on a post of responsibility but they still, when it comes to decision making, are very reluctant to express their views or things like that. And maybe it is because of our system when we are in a committee meeting maybe they are not used to that, you know, all that type of things... so I do find that while I would love people to own the congregation it is very, very difficult to actually reach that. (Irish, female, ordained)

The issue of ownership and leadership is common to other churches both in Ireland and Italy as I discuss in the concluding chapter. The lack of enthusiasm and the difficulties faced by the Discovery Project had repercussions on this parish, further emphasising its fluidity. Furthermore in 2011, their minister was appointed to another congregation in another city and the Nigerian minister, whose contract as Chaplain to the International Community was coming to an end, was asked to replace her. This appointment created some tensions between the church and the Dioceses; some of the older Irish members of the community were fearful that their church would become an 'ethnic' church.

At the end of 2011 the Irish fieldwork was almost over; however, considering the changes that were occurring in the congregation I decided to visit the St. George and St. Thomas parish to 'grasp' the meanings of those changes and to carry out follow-up interviews. I was told by a church member that they missed their former minister and that she had the feeling that the community was crumbling away: '...now that she has gone... a little bit of the family is gone...' (Irish, female, lay). However, the parish did not become an ethnic church nor did it increase its

migrant membership. On the contrary, I witnessed a decline in church attendance by both migrants and indigenous members.

> *St. George and St. Thomas. Sunday morning. I arrived at 11.07 thinking I was late, but as a matter of fact worship started at 11.15. The church was quite empty. Three old indigenous ladies, a Filipino family, the minister's family, three persons I did not know and myself. Where is everybody? During the course of the service other people – all Africans – arrived. Despite an African minister leading the service, the perception I had was of a 'still' worship: are Anglicans in Nigeria worshipping in this way? Of course not, I knew that. Is this one-hour-service satisfactory? Again, I knew the answer. Then I felt that something was not right and I used time during the coffee and tea afterwards to settle appointments for interviews and chat with church members. I have to say that I was warmly greeted as always and invited to take part to the liturgy for a special Sunday, but I had to decline that invitation.(Fieldnotes, 20/11/2011)*

As different interviewees told me, it was somehow easy to understand the reasons why some Irish people left: on the one hand there were older parishioners who did not like the African style of leading the parish and on the other there were young adult parishioners who were not in line with the minister's leadership style:

> All of the sudden, we had this person from Nigeria, different colour, you know...(...) we have lost many people, Filipinos, young people too.... but he [the minister] has learned a lot... It has to do with the cultural thing... they are not afraid to be heard, speak up. We [the Irish] are very quiet... last week he had a very aggressive sermon against Halloween and how Christians should not celebrate it and afterwards a lot of parishioners came to me and they were very low (...) I do not particularly celebrate Halloween but it is a remembrance of those who have passed on... (...) he said that we are worshipping the devil by doing this... (...) I do not believe that the world has been created in 7 days, I believe that it is a metaphor...(...) but he would believe that (Irish, female, lay).

The above quotation speaks of the different theological and cultural approaches that being a minister in an Irish or Nigerian context may entail and it also indicates a degree of racism. Similar comments emerged from various interviews in relation

to the suitability of the minister to act as a cultural mediator between migrants and indigenous churchgoers. This is another issue which finds parallels in the Italian context, as discussed in the conclusion. In addition, the example of this parish shows that having a migrant priest in a leadership position, in this specific case someone moving from coordinating a project and working in/with different parishes, to being in charge of one parish, is not a guarantee of success and it does not necessarily foster the integration process. Finally, there is the difficult position of an African minister who has to operate within an alien framework, the Irish religious *habitus*, and ends up not being recognised by indigenous as well as by migrant churchgoers.

In the next section I analyse the integration strategies of the Methodist Church in Ireland by focusing on two congregations in Dublin which I use as case studies to compare and contrast the approaches of two Protestant churches within the same socio-economic context.

A window on other Protestants: the work of the Methodist Church in Dublin

> It would be interesting for me to know whether there is a difference in style and flexibility in worship among Methodists which the Church of Ireland is very close to that we could learn from. (Irish, male, ordained)

The need to look at the integration approaches of the Methodist Church arose in *medias res* as I was conducting the fieldwork and in this sense led to a choice that is methodologically in line with the grounded theory approach I employ in this research. Different as regards its historical specificities, and the size of its constituency, the Methodist Church also has a different structure and management as described in chapter IV. However, the two Churches signed a Covenant in 2002 which demonstrates their will to cooperate on a number of issues. Migration, as analysed in chapter IV, has also affected Methodist churches, but at the time of this research there was no sign of any national or regional project on integration: all the initiatives in this area were left to each congregation and were developed according to their local needs.

My ethnographic observation focused on two congregations in Dublin which are

linked to each other as one is the result of the 'missionary' work of the other. First of all, I looked at Dublin Central Mission (DCM), a historical congregation in the city centre, whose membership changed significantly, before and during the economic crisis, following migration. The second congregation is a new church, established in 2008 as an 'offspring of DCM, in an area highly populated by migrants, as I describe below.

Dublin Central Mission

Dublin Central Mission (DCM) – Methodist Church [68] has changed enormously since the mid-1990s – not only in terms of its size but also in relation to the countries of origin of its new members – as outlined by Stephens (2004, 2011) in his studies of Methodism in the Republic of Ireland. Today DCM represents a lively congregation, described by its pastor as 'multi-ethnic', which has been revitalised by the arrival of congregants from other parts of the world.

> *Dublin Central Mission. This Sunday I decided to go and visit a church from my own denomination or the one closest to it and I chose the Methodist Church downtown, which I was told is also a multicultural church. As a migrant it is not easy to choose the right congregation: should I go to the church in my neighbourhood? Should I follow my friends? Should I go to a church of my own denomination? At the end I opted for the latter. In any case visiting different church denominations helped my research too. There is a man at the church entrance greeting newcomers, including myself. The atmosphere is nice and welcoming, and I am impressed by the diversity present in the place; the church is full of people from Asia, Africa, America and Europe. I was trying to experience the worship not only as a migrant believer but also as a researcher, though it was difficult to draw the line between the two. Expectations were high; while waiting for the service to start I looked at the songbook to see if I recognized any of the songs. The liturgy was different from what I was used*

[68] The Methodist church of Abbey has existed since the beginning of the 18th century while the Dublin Central Mission since the 19th century. Dublin Central Mission was founded to minister to the social and spiritual needs of the city's Protestant poor. Both the Church and the Mission experienced highs and lows during this period and in the 1990s there was a merger between the two (Stephens, 2004).

to in Italy, more dynamic, with elements of various cultural traditions and with different people leading part of the liturgy. At first I felt disorientated and the worship gave me the feeling of fragmentation. Later, however, I realized that these feelings were dictated by the novelty of the experience and by the fact that I did not fully recognize the service. I looked around and at the back of the church the wall was covered with pictures of churchgoers with their names and their position in the church. I noticed immediately that the church council was composed of members from various ethnic groups. The church hosts meetings of different organizations including migrant-led ones and it is actively involved in many outreach activities. (Fieldnotes, 09/11/2008)

Changes within the congregation did not happen by accident as the DCM minister highlights; on the contrary, they were the result of the hard work of different stakeholders. He stresses that most migrants need to feel welcomed and to create as soon as possible a network of friends; thus, the DCM put a lot of emphasis on welcoming migrants – and newcomers in general – and on hospitality:

> ...multi-ethnic churches happen when the location is right and the congregation is right and the minister too (...) It can happen [by accident] in a small way but if you want to see it flourish and develop you have to really work hard and I can say I can go to another church and (....) either the location is wrong, the congregation is not opened and...I might be enthusiastic but people have to make friends, they have to feel welcomed... the welcoming that I offer is part of it but (...) the other key is the role of my wife who has the gift of hospitality, so very quickly not only people come and feel welcomed in the church but we brought them to our home after church on Sunday and they share a meal and I felt that that was very significant because Irish people are very friendly but not necessarily always hospitable, and if I differentiate between the two, it is that they will be friendly to you (...) but they are not so good in bringing you to their homes and giving you food (...). Maybe you could say it is a bonding experience (...), I think that if you look at the Scriptures [the Bible] you will see significance in eating together; it is not just about food, there is a spiritual and social dimension to that for Christians. (Irish, male, ordained)

A multi-ethnic church, however, is not necessarily nor automatically an intercultural church. To create intercultural congregations various stakeholders, such as the pastor, the congregation and the newcomers need to be involved and willing to undergo changes in their own ways of thinking and perceiving the Church. For instance, Stephens describes how in DCM they decided to change the regulation relating to becoming a full member of the community, shortening the required time, so that migrants – and newcomers in general – could have the right to vote and be voted in assembly without having to wait two years, which had been the standard procedure prior to the change. This decision was taken to ensure that the congregation would have a council and a leadership truly representative of the constituency of the church, and to give new members the possibility to take part in the life of the community and to be part of the changes.

However, being a welcoming congregation is not sufficient to enable migrants to establish meaningful ties with the church and/or to feel at home and part of the community. As Stephens highlights, there needs to be an adequate follow-up process to assess and increase newcomers' inclusion: 'This is one area we are seeking to address through the "Welcoming the Stranger" project. If follow-up and pastoral contact can be established at an early stage, then stronger links will be built with the church' (Stephens, 2004: 40). According to Stephens, proper follow-up was still a challenge for DCM.

Regarding liturgical issues, Methodist worship and liturgy are less structured/fixed than the Anglican ones and for this reason they are, at least theoretically, more flexible and open to changes. However, having a flexible liturgy is not a guarantee that changes can be brought in easily. The minister himself admitted that at the beginning, some of the historical churchgoers, once they realised that migrants 'were here to stay', had some difficulties in accommodating their needs. He gave the example of the type of music played during services: churchgoers were used to hear playing the piano or the organ, not drums and electric guitars. This issue was overcome, thanks to the joint efforts of the minister and migrant leaders; when I attended the worships music had a prominent role and all instruments were part of the liturgy: drums and organ coexisted harmoniously together.

As mentioned above the church has a long history of community outreach. Just to name a few activities: the homeless ministry is made up by volunteers who

go out to give food and clothes to the homeless and the 'open door' project, when once a week the church premises are opened to everyone to come in, have a cup of tea, relax and be listened to, if wanted. [69] This attention to the 'other', to the neighbour and the neighbourhood is at the core of the Methodist teaching; the decision to 'plant' – a church term to describe the formation of a new church – a new congregation in the west Dublin suburb of Blanchardstown (Dublin 15) can be read along the same lines. The next section looks at the peculiarities of Blanchardstown Methodist Church and sheds light on the similarities and differences between the integration strategies of different Protestant Churches in Ireland.

Blanchardstown Methodist Church

The second congregation under analysis is Blanchardstown Methodist Church. This church was planted in the fall of 2008, at the beginning of the economic crisis, by some families of DCM with the help of two Church Development co-Workers. Since 2000, churches situated in the city centre, Methodist and of other denominations as the example of St. George and St. Thomas demonstrates, have been affected enormously by immigration: 'from the point of near closure, to the point of new overflow' (Irish, male, development co-Worker). The establishment of this church can be considered an example of the social theology and outreach commitment of the Methodist Church:

> Blanchardstown Methodist Church started in November 2008, as a Church plant of Abbey Street, Dublin Central Mission. Since 2000, largely due to migration, the historic city centre church started a dramatic increase in membership, from the point of near closure, to the point of new overflow. With changing housing patterns, a number of members were moving to the western suburbs, particularly the Celtic Tiger developments in Blanchardstown. [70] There was therefore a logical decision in planting a

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[69] See also the social outreach of DCM at http://www.abbeystreetchurch.ie/social-outreach/ (accessed 17/07/2013).

[70] 'The Blanchardstown area - situated 10km northwest of Dublin city centre - constitutes one of the fastest changing parts of the country from a demographic point of view. In the preliminary results of the 2006 census, County Fingal, where Blanchardstown is located, is recorded as the fastest

> church, but also a historical one, as there was a Methodist church plant for five years in the same area, in the 1980s. The 2006 census confirmed that there were 500 Methodists living in the Dublin 15 area, and as a church with a strong mission and social witness tradition, a plant made perfect sense (Irish, male, lay).

At the time of my fieldwork, the congregation met every Sunday in the premises of an Educate Together school in the area, although they were looking for a more permanent site. The community was composed of thirty to forty members, mainly families from different countries, African and Asian nationalities being the most represented. The main aim of the church at this stage was to build a sense of community and to make it a stable church, visible in the area. A lot of attention was given to the reception and the welcoming before the beginning of the worship and afterwards with tea and coffee. To my surprise the liturgy was more 'classical' than I expected; the hymns belonged to the Methodist tradition; there were not many instruments, just a keyboard. The reason might have been that, being in its first phase, the church did not have money or resources to invest in this area. However, I was told by an African member that not all African migrants liked concerts during the worship: he himself preferred a peaceful space to pray and reflect. Furthermore, one of the co-workers stressed that as the community was made up of different nationalities, the worship should be a reflection of various sensitivities.

As mentioned above, the church took off with the help of few families, members of DCM, who agreed to invest their time and energies in the Blanchardstown area. Strategically, two lay church development workers were appointed, after being short-listed and interviewed for the position. Their job is not permanent, as their goal is to make the church self-sufficient and to build up a sustainable leadership:

> As Church Development Workers, we are primarily in charge of pastoral care, developing small groups, community outreach and supporting worship. I therefore lead the music in church and run the after-worship healer prayer group. We also run the Sunday School and Teenage

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growing area in the country, while the Blanchardstown-Blakestown Electoral District (ED) experienced the largest population growth nationwide (CSO 2006: 13-14)' (Ni Chonaill, 2007: 72).

> Discussion Group. Ultimately our role is to train up new leaders and make the church self-sufficient without us (Irish, male, lay).

The interviewee, who belongs to the Church of Ireland, but works for the Methodist Church, argued that the Dublin District of the Irish Methodist Church 'although possibly 1/10 the population size of the Anglican Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough, had been impacted far more dramatically by immigration than its Anglican counterpart', and in his view was 'much more successful also'. He went on outlining the main reasons behind its success which he explained as linked to the ministers' cultural competence, the historical position of the Methodist Church, and its social theology.

> Appointments: The key intercultural areas of West, North and Central Dublin, have been served, in the past ten years, by Methodist ministers with significant overseas, missionary experience. This has meant they are culturally competent, which has made their congregations and leadership styles very welcoming. This has not been the case in the same areas within the Church of Ireland.
>
> History: The Church of Ireland, as a disestablished [71] church, with an ascendency past, has inherited many old and historic buildings. To utilise these buildings, an emphasis has been placed on education, in the retention of schools and the arts, particularly music in such beautiful historic buildings. This has also led to a distinctive culture, which is not flexible. The Methodist church, by being smaller and more congregational, has been able to adapt more efficiently and effectively therefore.
>
> Social Theology: The Methodist Church in Ireland has a much higher social and missional theology than the Church of Ireland. Therefore in Dublin, unlike its Anglican counterpart, it runs for example a very

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[71] The Church of Ireland used to be the established Church linked to the Church of England: '[T]he church moved towards disestablishment, which took place on 1 January 1871, and ended both state support for the Church of Ireland and parliamentary authority over it. The Church of Ireland therefore became responsible for its own governance, led by the General Synod, with its financial management carried out by a Representative Church Body. With disestablishment, the last remnant of tithes were abolished and the church's representation in the House of Lords at Westminster also ceased'
http://dublin.anglican.org/dioceses/a_brief_history_disestablishment_1871__modern_times.php

> successful homeless ministry. There are probably many social, cultural, historical, political and ecclesiological reasons for this, but without being able to do social ministry well, intercultural ministry remains very challenging. If the culture of an organisation fails to comprehend intercultural theology, then it is difficult for local models to flourish (Irish, male, lay).

These reflections lead me to continue the analysis of the integration strategies of Protestant Churches highlighting some of the contradictions embedded in their policies and the gaps in the transposition of such policies into practices.

Between and beyond policies

The first point to consider relates to the contradictions embedded in the integration policies of the Church of Ireland. In chapter II I described the rhetoric behind the Irish discourse of integration as a two way process which resembles more a 'laissez-faire strategy' (Maguire and Titley, 2010: 7) and lays the emphasis on migrants' duty to integrate. Similarly from my research, it emerges that the emphasis of the Church of Ireland is primarily on welcoming migrants, which despite being vital, alone does not ensure a two way process of integration. The extract below highlights what, since the beginning of the Discovery Project, has been missing from Church policies:

> I think the focus was wrong as we were focusing on the outside. I think what we should have done and maybe that's why even the Discovery Committee felt, as we did not look inside. What I mean is that you want people to come in, but you want them to come in and you want to keep them (so) you have to ask yourself when they come in 'does the institution need to change for those people to feel at home?' So it was about them, we did not go into the us. So if it was the us, you were looking at Church of Ireland plus... we did not look at the plus. We wanted people to come in and, in terms of migration, is assimilation rather than integration.... (...) People come but they go... and if you want people to come and stay, maybe then you have to revise and see what can you offer to people to feel at home? Is it friendship, the service? .... we could have added a long list (...)

> Furthermore, probably people wanted to see the Church up there advocating on their behalf saying what they would like to hear them say, it providing the leadership... and if it is not then... that's why I am saying the change was from without and we have to synchronise the two: people come in and you also change and you become something different from what you were before. You either swim or sink. (Migrant, male, lay)

The informant stressed that the Church of Ireland had failed to interrogate and reflect upon the Irish, us, as opposed to them, the migrants. To recall Bauman (2001), community, in this case the church, should be a place where members 'are never stranger to each other', therefore an initial phase of welcoming is the *conditio sine qua non* to engage in a conversation with the strangers, to make them less 'strange' and more 'familiar'. However, as described in chapter II, a community does not automatically integrate newcomers, but it rather aggregates them (Cohen, 1985). Aggregation is somehow easier when you share the same symbolic paradigm in terms of faith and culture. Churches have been traditionally open to receive newcomers; the Church of Ireland has had French and British congregants, but they have been assimilated rather than integrated to the extent that they are not – and possibly never were – considered migrants or strangers.

A different discourse applies to migrants coming from Africa whose cultural and religious backgrounds are different from the indigenous ones. While church leaders have made attempts to foster some level of cultural competence – through booklets, guidelines, trainings –more profound and lasting changes in attitude and practice have not occurred. Likewise most migrants, once they have become familiar with the diverse approach to faith and life of the Church of Ireland and its congregants, and experienced their attempts – be it deliberate or not – to assimilate them, prefer to look for another worship place rather than being part of the Church of Ireland. As I mentioned earlier and in chapter II, belonging, especially after migration, acquires an even more important role for people and churches often serve as places where uncertainty, sadness, and pain are forgotten or relieved. Therefore when these needs are not met or understood, people look for fulfillment somewhere else, as I discuss in more detail in chapter VIII. Thus, a reflection on the possible changes churches may need to undergo to become truly inclusive of migrants has not been really undertaken. A new way of dealing with the stranger

(Levi-Strauss, 1961; Bauman, 1995) – which is neither assimilation nor exclusion – has not been envisaged. According to a key informant, the reason behind this failure lies in the history of the Church of Ireland and its position:

> One important aspect to take into consideration is the history – it might help to understand today's situation. Church of Ireland was an established state church, who abused power, abused (...) state and there are still people who think and feel more important than other people. There is still an establishment, a privileged artificial minority, linked to the British empire (...) most Anglicans do not have a strong Christian tradition like the Methodists do. There are hundreds of parishes and none have dedicated church activities on drug addicts or homeless but they do have lunch time concerts, like around the corner... (...) The social theology are things like environment but it is quite a middle class issue... you know. Interfaith, liberal things... middle class does not really catch what I want to say.... however [a minister and teacher] said that Church of Ireland is not middle class, and he showed me a number of working class parishes... fine, but the predominant thinking is (...) Perhaps there is something missing in the DNA of the Church, perhaps it is becoming an ethnocentric in-looking minority whose contribution to social minorities is low and does not come naturally to it. So, that's kind of missing link... (Irish, male, lay)

In chapter IV I analysed the privileged position occupied by the Church of Ireland among Protestant Churches and how it remained a closed community, sharing many characteristics with ethnic groups (Bowen, 1983). In addition, the majority of its members were, traditionally, considered middle-class and well-educated (Bowen, 1983). While this has changed and many parishes are in working-class areas and have working-class parishioners, the establishment's mindset seems to have remained a middle-class one. Being a minority does not necessarily make Church of Ireland members more open to other minorities in their own congregations, especially when they are so different, physically, culturally and sometimes economically.

The notion of who is a migrant and who can be classified as such in the eyes of average parishioners often depends on the country of origin of the newcomer. For

instance despite being a migrant myself, I was rarely seen as such but rather as an Italian researcher. This attitude shares some similarities with the Irish government policy on integration which, according to Maguire and Titley (2010), aims 'to cultivate and mediate tolerable forms of diversity'. The same authors also stress how this policy tends to 'stratify and divide migrants in a layer-cake model that runs from full exclusion to full citizenship' (2010: 7).

A slightly different discourse can be identified for the Methodist Church in Ireland. Methodists also form a Protestant minority who, after independence, had to struggle to maintain their identity and to survive. The main differences between the two Churches lie in the structure, theology, and spiritual mission of the Church. The Methodist Church is less hierarchical and local congregations have more power over the way they want to develop and carry out their work. In addition to this, the 'social theology' of the Methodist Church, its attention to the poor and the marginalised, make it more inclined and open towards the 'other' as the examples of DCM and Blanchardstown have shown.

Conclusion

The chapter highlighted how different Protestant churches attempted to develop inclusive and integrated places within their congregations. Interestingly, the first initiatives came not from the top but rather from the grassroots level, from local churches, in both the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church, albeit with important differences. While the Discovery Project was institutionalised and became a diocesan project soon after its establishment, the activities of the Dublin Central Mission were developed within the framework of the congregation, paying particular attention to their impact on the city centre where the church is situated.

The Discovery project demonstrated the Church of Ireland's will to develop an integration strategy to support migrants in their integration process within the church and wider society, and to encourage Irish congregants not to be afraid of diversity and change. However, my discussion showed that the welcoming phase, though important, does not necessarily lead to integration, or to migrants being able to assume leadership positions. My data also indicated a decline of enthusiasm in the Church of Ireland in relation to welcoming the strangers and

building an integrated church, resulting in many migrants opting for warmer and safer migrant-led churches where they can worship in more familiar settings.

The Methodist Church's approach to migrants' inclusion largely allowed each congregation to develop its own methodology. At Dublin Central Mission the congregation made major revisions: it shortened the statutory time needed to acquire membership and developed a multi-cultural leadership and a local project 'Welcoming the Strangers'. The project of becoming a multi-cultural congregation appears to have been successful; however, as the size of the congregation grew, and continues to do so, there are difficulties in following up with newcomers. In addition, it appears that the Methodist multicultural churches are successful in reaching out to migrants but less so to indigenous Irish members.

In both the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church there is still lack of proper training for ministers, despite the Anglicans' attempts to address this by organising training programmes for ministers and leaders, though attendance has been low. Second generation migrants, especially from Africa, have not yet signed up to train as ministers in Protestant Churches. The Methodist Church is still heavily relying on ministers' experience abroad, though having lived and worked abroad does not automatically make them experts in intercultural mediation. The same is valid for the Church of Ireland as evidenced by the choice of appointing an African minister in charge of the international community who did not have previous experience working in Europe. These issues, while not necessarily jeopardizing the integration projects, foreground major challenges.

As regards integration policies and practices, a parallel emerges between the general attitude of the Irish government and the responses of the Church of Ireland's ministers and parishioners. Deep and thorough self-reflection and analysis have been lacking and thus churches have struggled to formulate a new vision of their mission and to identify the changes necessary to achieve it.

In the next chapter I present and analyse the position of Protestant Churches in Italy, their minoritarian status and the challenges faced due to migration.

Chapter VI

Between past and present: the identity of Protestants and their place in Italian society

Introduction

This chapter analyses the position of Protestant Churches in Italy, their role in the making of Italy and their relation with the state and with the Roman Catholic Church; it sheds light on the meanings of Italianness and on the role played by religion in shaping it. To do this, I start with a historical overview, articulated around three different periods, which characterised the building of the nation and of Italianness: a) Risorgimento, the revolution (1820 – 1871) culminating in the unification of the country; b) Fascism and nationalism; c) Republicanism and democracy. The chapter then highlights the tenuous status of Italian national identity in the context of a country whose creation was never fully complete and in which Roman Catholicism seems to have been the only element which kept together the country's identity. Against this background I analyse how Italian Protestants perceive and articulate their identity as both Italians and Protestants. I then move on to look at the composition of Protestant Churches in contemporary Italy, with specific focus on the Waldensian and Methodist Churches and the demographic changes brought about by migration. The chapter concludes by arguing that migrants joining Protestant Churches have a different approach in relation to the place occupied by religion in society; furthermore, they are often not aware of the history and identity of Protestant Churches in Italy and their minoritarian position.

A historical overview

Any analysis of the place of Protestants in Italian society and their relationship with Roman Catholics in the creation of Italian identity needs to bear in mind that speaking about Italy before 1861 – when Italy was actually created and unified

under the Kingdom of Piedmont – is incorrect. Before 1861 in fact, and to a certain extent even afterwards, especially considering the division between North and South and the secessionist xenophobic party Lega Nord, Italy was composed of a number of states and many cities, each having its own dialect or language, which had been rivals for centuries (Grillo and Pratt, 2002). Soon after the unification, D'Azeglio, one of the key figures of the Italian Risorgimento, famously commented 'Having made Italy we have to make Italians'.

Many states in central Italy, called Papal states, belonged to the Vatican which owned almost a third of the country. Roman Catholicism was the religion professed by the majority of monarchs, dukes and princes. Roman Catholicism can be considered the glue – or one of the glues – that unified people in the country despite the fact that the Vatican was hostile to the creation of both the Kingdom of Italy and the Republic of Italy as this would have meant the end of its power over many lands in the country (Grillo, 2002; Tourn et al., 1989). There was, however, a Roman Catholic *habitus*, more concerned with traditions and praxis than with theological studies and reflections (Tourn, 2011:192), which deeply permeated Italian culture, smoothing out the differences among Italians living in the various separate states, as discussed later in this chapter. The making of Italy was seen by Italian Protestants and by Protestant missionaries from the UK and USA as an opportunity for finally putting in place the reformation that had not yet taken place in the country, though it soon became clear that the revolution could not happen. Italian Protestants and Jews played an important, though mostly unknown, part during the Risorgimento, and many who fought for Italy – primarily Garibaldi and Mazzini – were influenced by Protestant ideas (Tourn, 2011; Kertzer, 2004).

The presence of Protestants in Italy, or rather in what is now considered the North-West of the country, goes back to the 12th century with the 'Poor of Lyon', later named Waldensians, who, as described later, started as a movement within the Roman Catholic Church. Waldensians advocated voluntary poverty and the need to preach the gospel in the vernacular language, translating the bible from Latin into French. It is interesting to note that, from the very beginning, Valdesius's followers included women among their preachers, a shocking fact for the Roman Catholic Church (Tourn *et al.*, 1989). Two other elements need to be highlighted in order to understand the position of the Waldensian Church during the historical periods

under consideration. Firstly, the Waldensians preached without wishing to be ordained, remaining 'a body of laymen and laywomen'; secondly, they wished to be part of society; thus they did not practice monastic life or become hermits:

> They did not set up a religious order, enter a monastery, or name one of their number as leader who would act as 'guarantor' for them before the authorities. Jesus, they said is our leader. (...) It was not by chance that the Waldensians in Lombardy used a commercial term to define their movement – *societas*, a society (...) not an order, but a free association of people who, like merchants setting up a trade organisation, have ideas and interests in common. (...) they wish to be part and parcel of the life of the city. They were not hermits seeking the solitude in the desert. Their calling was to be present in the churches, public squares and homes where the message could be heard (Tourn et alia, 1989: 16).

These two elements form the basis of the modern concept of *laïcité* as it is understood and practiced by the Waldensians and by the historical Protestant Churches, as I discuss in this chapter.

Before Independence and the arrival of Methodist and Baptist missionaries from the UK and the USA, the presence of Protestant confessions was geographically limited. In addition to the Waldensian Church, which was a minority confined to a ghetto in the Alps, there was the Protestant Free Church, located in a few cities in the Centre-North of Italy (i.e. Bologna, Milan, Florence), which would merge with the Methodist Church in 1905.

The next section analyses the different roles played by Protestant Churches and the Roman Catholic Church during the Risorgimento, the historical period during which the modern concept of Italianness was shaped.

The Risorgimento and the making of Italy

The Risorgimento, which translates as resurgence, revival or revolution, began around 1820 with the first revolutionary waves and wars of independence. Two dates mark the beginning of the Italian state: 1861 and 1871. 1861 was the year when the whole country, with the exception of the Papacy, was unified under the crown of the Monarchy of Piedmont. The second date refers to the conquest of

Rome, and the Papal state, by the Italian military. This event signalled the end of foreign domination and the Pope's power over the Italian peninsula. In those years, as Chiarini (1989) highlights, there were huge hopes among Protestants for a religious reform of the country. For some, this reform was intended as an evangelical awakening within Catholicism while others saw it as the demise of the Roman Church. Those hopes were also shared by religious minorities, Protestants and Jews, who took active part in the process of making Italy (Chiarini, 1989; Tourn, 1996). Indeed, Protestant leaders of various Churches such as Gavazzi, Guicciardini, Mazzarella, and Geymonat – to name just a few – actively contributed to the unification of Italy (Chiarini, 1989; Tourn, 1996; Maselli, 1999, 2011).

During the years prior to the unification, the Protestantism Awakening [72] around the world as well as Italian Protestants thought that, once Italy would become free from the invaders [73] and the power of the Roman Catholic Church, it would be evangelised and that Protestantism would finally triumph (Spini, 1989). This conviction was also shared by the Catholic world, albeit with concern and fears rather than hopes and expectations. After 1848, Protestant worship places started to appear first in Piedmont, and then in the rest of the country. Garibaldi, a central figure in the Italian Risorgimento, who commanded and fought in many military campaigns, was accompanied by people close to Protestant ideas such as Gavazzi to whom he left the pulpits of the churches in Palermo and Naples with the order to speak against the papacy (Maselli, 1974).

According to Spini (1989), after 1861 the face of Protestantism in the newly unified Italy appeared to be homogeneous and diverse at the same time. It was homogeneous in view of its theological link with the 'Awakening', its democratic consciousness, and its anticlericalism. Yet it was also diverse because there were different Protestant denominations, each having its own position regarding the understanding of the Church and of specific theological issues. It also soon became

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[72] A movement of 'evangelical awakening' born within some Protestant Churches seeking a closer adherence to the Gospel (Introvigne and Maselli, 2007).
[73] The word 'invaders' refers to Ferdinand II who was king of the 'Two Sicily' – the Southern part of Italy including Sicily.

clear that Protestant ideas did not attract the lower class; those who converted to Protestantism were mainly middle-class people, many of whom belonged to the Freemasonry. [74] However, it was not only Protestantism that struggled to find its way into people's hearts, but also the political ideas of Mazzini and Garibaldi seemed to hold little appeal among the population (Maselli, 1999: 327 - 328). The reasons, as I discuss in this chapter, may lie in a peculiar Italian *habitus* that Catholicism has been able to intercept and to re-elaborate through a syncretic [75] operation.

Spini (1989: 385) writes about the disillusion among Protestants following the failure of the reformation in the post-unification Italian religious landscape. However, though the expected religious reformation did not happen, Protestants were able to practice their religion freely, and build churches and schools open to the working and lower classes who, until then, did not have access to education. In this regard it is particularly relevant to note a passage from *Alle porte d'Italia* (At the gates of Italy), a book by Italian writer Edmondo De Amicis, where the author expressed the admiration of the liberal middle class for what the Waldensians stood for in public life:

> After walking for half an hour in silence we reached a rock, where there was a new church built in a mixture of gothic and arabesque styles (...). And all around there was neither noise nor human voice. Only a girl of 12 or 13, a little cowherd, barefooted, dressed in rags, sitting on the ground in front of the church, reading a book. I glanced at the title; it was a Histoire of the Waldensian Church, a large and elegant volume, published in Paris. I made a note of that scene in my diary, joyfully, for she was the first country girl in Italy I had ever seen reading... (De Amicis, 1884, cited in Tourn *et al.*, 1989: 190).

The Risorgimento came to a close with the capture of Rome in 1870; the country was then confronted with the difficult task of building a nation, a process which

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[74] The relation between Freemasonry and Protestantism in Italy has been studied by Comba (2000).
[75] Syncretism is the combining of different, and sometimes opposite, creeds and beliefs. I used the term syncretism here to refer to religious matter. In Italy, especially in the Southern part of the country, Roman Catholicism had incorporated pagan beliefs and festivities transforming them into Christian ones under the 'supervision' of a saint (De Martino, 1987).

encountered much opposition. Tourn writes that the country was divided into two camps: the Liberals and the Catholics.

> The liberals were bent on creating a modern European lay state; opposing them there were the Roman Catholic forces, which had already fiercely resisted the Risorgimento on the grounds that it meant the end of papal power and traditional Catholic culture. Each had its own organisations, newspapers and banks; each was up against the other with no holds barred. (...) The liberals and the Masons were passionately anti-Catholic. On one occasion, with the death of Pope Pius IX, they even went so far as to disrupt the funeral procession, attempting to dump the casket into the Tiber river. In their eyes, religion was authoritarian, anachronistic, superstitious, given to magic and deserving of being replaced by modern science. (Tourn *et al.*, 1989: 181)

The funeral incident and the fact that the death of Pope Pius IX had prompted all the anti-Catholic forces to form a coalition illustrate how high the tensions were. The unification of Italy meant that the Vatican lost its large Papal states in Central Italy. The Vatican perceived the making of Italy as an occupation of its lands, therefore it was hostile to the whole project. Thus from 1871 until 1921 the Catholic Church considered itself hostage of the Italian state refusing to accept the monarchy and its rules. The Pope never left the Vatican and imposed the *non expedit* rule on Catholic believers, which urged them to protest the seizure of Vatican lands by not voting, thus effectively preventing devout Catholics from taking active part in the new political life of Italy (Kertzer, 2004). [76]

Fascism, Religion and State

> The fascist mentally harbored a perception that would have been unthinkable 50 years before: an Italian is by definition a good Catholic; a Protestant, likewise, is by definition a foreigner, virtually a traitor to the national cause. (Tourn *et al.*, 1989: 197)

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[76] In 1919 Pope Benedict XV created a Catholic political party: the Italian Popular Party. While the IPP was led by a priest it was not directly under the Vatican supervision. In the same year the Pope lifted the *non expedit* and the OPP ran in the November 1919 elections achieving 21 per cent of the vote (Kertzer, 2004: 291).

This situation changed drastically in 1922 with the special Concordat between Mussolini and the Vatican (Lateran Pacts). Catholicism became officially the state religion and it was considered an important component of the construction of national identity, which implied using religious symbols in public buildings and the teaching of Roman Catholicism in schools, a trend that continued with the defeat of Fascism and the advent of the Republic (Tourn, 1989; Rochat, 1990; Guerri, 1992; Kertzer, 2004). Furthermore, the government gave the Pope a large compensation for the loss of the Papal states and the Vatican was granted the rights of a sovereign state, becoming Vatican City. As Tourn (1989) stresses, with the Concordat Fascism repudiated the Risorgimento and its commitment to the creation of a free state. The 20th of September national holiday, marking the anniversary of Italy's unification, was abolished, in deference to the Vatican, whose sovereignty had been allegedly usurped on that date (Kertzer, 2004).

Protestant Churches were 'allowed' to exist but under strict control: 'After 1848, the Waldensians had been 'tolerated' but to be 'tolerated' by the liberal governments of the nineteenth century meant a good deal more than to be 'permitted' under the fascists' (Tourn et al, 1989: 196). Protestants were considered dangerous by the fascist regime because of their many contacts with churches abroad and 'their innate penchant for liberty and their autonomy' (Tourn et al, 1989: 197) to the extent that the regime had to approve the assignment of ministers to churches. While the Waldensians were admitted, the Pentecostal Churches and the Salvation Army were not recognised by the regime and were not allowed to hold their worship.

The two passages below are illustrative of the changing climate during fascism: the first highlights the interconnection between religion and national identity, which was not an explicit part of the Risorgimento, and mentions Roman Catholicism for the first time as a key element in the construction of Italian national identity; the seconds shows the ill-disposed and wary attitude of the Government towards Protestants who are accused of being hostile to Fascism and therefore to the entire country:

> ...Italy has the privilege of being a nation with a most distinct individuality geographically. She (sic) has the most complete homogeneity from ethnic, linguistic and moral points of view. Her (sic) religious unity is a great

> strength of her (sic) people. To compromise it or even to allow the slightest fissure in it is to commit a crime against its national greatness. (Benito Mussolini, address to the Opera House in Rome, March 18, 1934, cited in Tourn et al, 1989: 198)
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> ...Finally, it is necessary to underscore the point already made on the basis of investigations conducted by our staff: these Protestants in general, though they do not admit it, harbour a deep-seated hostility towards Fascism, one which stems from their fundamental religious principles. It is necessary, therefore, to pay the most vigilant attention to their activities .(Circular from the Ministry of Interior to local functionaries, n. 441/02977, March 13, 1940, cited in Tourn *et al.*, 1989: 197)

Officially the Protestant Churches tried to engage in a dialogue with the government wishing to avoid an open conflict with the regime. Rochat (1990) describes how various degrees of acceptance of the fascist state were not due necessarily to political choice or to complacency with the fascist philosophy but, rather, reflected the Churches' inability to understand the Fascist danger. It cannot be denied that some Italian Protestants were fascists, however Protestant Churches and particularly the Methodist and Baptist churches, in view of their close relations with their 'mother churches' in Britain and the USA, were considered more subversive and anti-nationalistic than the Waldensian Church. Nonetheless, at the national level, the Waldensian Valleys became well-known for the support they provided to the Resistance movement and to partisans in that area: many Protestants were partisans themselves during World War II (Tourn *et al.*, 1989; Maselli, 1999, 2011).

The Synod of 1943 is particularly relevant as it clearly states how state and religion should not interfere with one another:

1. The Christian church must rule its own affairs on an absolutely independent basis, according to its own principles.
2. The Christian church must not look to the state for advantages.

3. This Christian church advances complete freedom of conscience, of worship and of witness [77] for all.

4. This Christian church reaffirms that any state interference or restriction of its activity, or development of its life in reliance upon privilege vis- à-vis the state, would undermine its autonomy, distort its nature, and compromise the integrity of its ministry.

5. The Waldensian Church considers that independence from the state and complete civil liberty are indispensable for fulfilment of its mandate from God (Acts from the Waldensian Synod, Italy, 1943, n.13, cited in Tourn et al, 1989: 199).

As Maselli (1999) highlights, the participation of Protestants in the Resistance and the Synod of the 1943 laid the basis for the future debate on *laïcité* which is still relevant today, as I discuss in the next section.

The Republic and the place of religion

The fall of Fascism and the end of the monarchy signposted a new era for Italy, the era of the Republic. In 1948 a Constitution was adopted based on the ideals of the Resistance declaring Fascism, both the ideology and the party, unconstitutional. Everything connected with Fascism was condemned, including the strong nationalism attached to it; therefore there was the need to reconstruct a new sense of Italianness, unlike the one adopted by the Fascist regime. For many years, the flag and the national anthem were disregarded by the wider population as the symbols of the right wing party/fascist period. However, one element remained: the religious component of Italianness was kept alive and reinforced. Despite the close links between the Vatican and Fascism, being Italian during the Republican era still meant being Catholic, and the influence of the Vatican remained central to the political life of the country.

Many Protestants hoped to see the government led by social democrats, those with liberal and risorgimental ideals (Tourn *et al.*, 1989). However, the government was

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[77] The term 'witness' refers to the testimony of faith that each believer gives through the way he/she lives their life in accordance with their religious teaching.

composed of two big coalitions: the Christian Democrats and the Communists. The first party was strongly pro-Catholic to the extent that instead of stopping the persecution of religious minorities, such as Pentecostal, the Free Church, and the Salvation Army, it was clearly against them. The Communist party, on the other hand, was against religion *tout court;* therefore there was not much space for Protestants in either of the two parties (Tourn *et al.*, 1989; Maselli, 1999). This however does not actually represent the complexity of the Italian situation: many Communists were Catholics themselves and were pushing forward issues of interest of the Vatican. In relation to religious matters the 1948 Constitution passed Article 7 which retained the Concordat that Mussolini had signed with the Vatican in 1929:

> Art. 7 State and [Roman] Catholic Church are, each within their own reign, independent and sovereign. Their relationship is regulated by the Lateran Pacts. [78]

Article 8 of the Constitution refers to the relationship with other religious confessions, declaring that they are all equal before the law and that the state will establish bilateral agreements with each one of them:

> Art. 8 All religious confessions are equally free before the law. Non-Catholic religious confessions have the right to organise themselves according to their own constitutions, insofar as they do not contradict Italian law. Their relations with the State are regulated by law on the basis of an accord between the respective representatives (Tourn *et al.*, 1989: 275). [79]

However, despite the reference to the equality of all religious organisations and despite Article 3, which clearly states that all individuals are equal without distinctions of sex, race, language and religion, [80] the special status of the Concordat with the Roman Catholic Church, compared to the *Intese* [81] with other religious confessions, put Catholicism on a higher level. Furthermore, Protestants

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[78] See http://www.governo.it/Governo/Costituzione/principi.html (accessed 20/07/2013).
[79] See http://www.governo.it/Governo/Costituzione/principi.html (accessed 20/07/2013).
[80] See http://www.governo.it/Governo/Costituzione/principi.html (accessed 20/07/2013).
[81] The *Intese* are bi-lateral agreements between the Italian state and religious confessions.

had to wait many years before the Intese were actually signed. The first *Intesa* with the Waldesian Church was signed only in 1984 [82] followed by the one with the Seventh Day Adventists in 1988, the Jews in 1989 and the Pentecostals, the Orthodox, the Mormons and the Italian Buddhist Union in 2012 (Naso, 2013). [83]

As mentioned above, Protestants continued to advocate for religious freedom, and for separation of religious and state affairs. Emblematic examples were the referendums on the laws on divorce (1974) and abortion (1981). The position of historical Protestant Churches was in favour of the laws, [84] not without discussions and personal doubts, especially regarding the referendum on abortion. As Tourn (1996) highlights, the position has to be read in light of the value given to individual freedom: clearly not all Protestants were in favour of abortion, yet they wanted the state to guarantee freedom of choice to each individual.

Another element peculiar to the relationship between the Italian State and the Waldensian Church is the latter's approach to the incomes of the 'otto per mille' (eight per thousand), a law under which all taxpayers can choose to whom devolve a compulsory 0,8 per cent from their annual income tax return. The amount can be devolved either to an organised religion recognised by the State, or to a social assistance scheme run by the state. [85] The Waldensian church is so far the only organised religion investing the whole otto per mille income in cultural and social activities and in development initiatives in Italy and abroad, through a call for

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[82] The issue of places of worship still exists. It remains very difficult for a religious confession which does not have an *Intesa* with the state to buy and/or rent a place to be used for worship purposes. There are restrictions in relation to mosques in Italy and these restrictions have a negative impact not only on Muslims but also on other religious groups (Naso, 2012b).

[83] This latest *Intesa* took many years, as the Northern League was against it; however with the Monti government in 2012 and with the NL in opposition it was possible to sign it. However the Jehovah's Witnesses remained out of this package and are still waiting to have their own *Intesa* (Naso, 2013: 102).

[84] 'If we consider how many conservatives value the role of the traditional family, there was a real risk that the Waldensian Church would be split, too. Instead, something different happened. In the months leading up to the referendum, all the churches, without specific direction or counsel from the Synod, started to discuss the problem in house and Bible studies groups. The results were spectacular; at Bobbio Pellice, which is 95% Waldensian, votes in favour of the legalisation ofdivorce reached 96 per cent (the highest in Italy); in fact, throughout the Waldensian Valley, the vote was massively in favour, not of divorce per se, but of the *freedom of choice*' (Tourn, 1996:297).

[85] Where people do not declare a recipient, the undeclared amount is distributed among the usual recipients in proportion to what they have already received from explicit declarations.

projects open to any organization. [86] It is interesting to note that the number of devolutions to the Waldensian Church is far bigger than the Waldensian population, around ten times bigger in 2009 according to the National Tax Agency (Naso, 2013), showing how many Italians belonging to other confessions [87] or none appreciate the way the Church administers this money. Each year for instance, the Waldensian Church publishes a report declaring how it spent the money it received: until now it is the only religious confession to do this.

This approach to sensitive issues and financial transparency has created an image of the Waldensian Church (Union of Waldensian and Methodist Churches) as progressive and lay-oriented; at the same time, it has supported the idea of the Waldensian church as a secular church at risk of distancing itself from the 'true way' and of becoming extinct soon. This preoccupation is often voiced by migrants who join the historical Protestant Churches in Italy and who may struggle to understand and accept those positions, as I discuss later.

Having analysed the relationship between the state and the churches and the place occupied by religion in the public sphere in Italy, I move on to analyse how this relation has shaped the concept of Italianness and how this concept is understood and articulated by Protestants.

Italianness

There is an Italian paradox (Ferrarotti, 1998) according to which Italy is a very ancient society, with a very strong socio-cultural identity that has resisted invasions and foreign rulers, yet at the same time does not have a coherent political unity. The national identity of this ancient society seems to have been shaped by the fact of belonging to the Roman Catholic tradition although, as I discuss below, this self-representation is not without problems. In chapter II I have pointed out how the role of religion in shaping national identity can be controversial. In chapter IV I have described how religion played a key role in defying, shaping and

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[86] The money is not used for church worship-related activities or for church administration expenses.

[87] Naso reports an Eurisko research (2010) related to the *Otto per mille* contributors according to which 25 per cent defined themselves as Catholics; 31 per cent as non-believers; 25 per cent as agnostics (Naso, 2012b: 107).

articulating Irish identity for both Catholics and Protestants. In Italy the discourse is different both in relation to the creation of a collective identity and in terms of the relationship between Protestants and Italianness. First of all religion was not considered one of the key elements in the making of Italy as it was for Ireland. As discussed above, strong anti-clericalism united different streams of Italy's diverse society in the first half of the nineteenth century, however, from 1861 onwards, religion, and in particular Roman Catholicism, gradually became more and more associated with Italians' identity. [88]

In the representation of Italian identity there is no space for a religion other than Roman Catholicism. Tourn (1997) highlights the double ambiguity of the discourse around Italianness: firstly, the assumption that being Christian means being Catholic; secondly, the definite overlap between Italian culture and Catholic culture. This double ambiguity has urged Protestants to distance themselves from the concept of Italianness and what it stands for as I discuss below.

The Catholic *habitus*

Today Italian society continues to portray itself as relatively homogenous in religious terms. According to Pace, Italians 'think that their national identity finds a strong point of reference in a generic sense of affiliation with the 'religion' represented by the Catholic Church, working with interest and love to ensure that there are no traumatic renderings of that collective memory' (Pace, 2007: 90). He continues by stating that Italian Catholicism, as well as Polish and Irish Catholicism, is a way of believing in one's collective identity, even though I argue that there are many differences in the way that collective identity has been shaped and different ways of being Catholic and belonging to the Catholic Church in Italy (Pace, 2007; Garelli, 2007a, 2007b).

Indeed, Pace argues that there is a plurality of religious forms and to a certain extent a relative independence of 'a number of areas of social and individual life with respect to a system of belief in which, apparently, people identify themselves'

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[88] In practice civic religion was overturned by private religion, as it is evidenced by the cancellation of the bank holiday related to the unification, the 20th of September, as it represented the defeat of the Pope and the end of the Vatican's temporal power.

(Pace, 2007: 88). In addition, the majority of those who consider themselves Catholic do not practice their religion and do not follow the Church teachings on morality and sexuality (Turina, 2013). In this regard Pace writes that 'The Italians no longer subscribe en masse to the institutional objectives and the religious observance of their 'mother church' (Pace, 2007: 90). The referendums on the divorce (1978) and abortion laws (1981) mentioned above are a case in point: even though over 70 per cent of the population voted in favour of retaining the law that allowed for divorce and 68 per cent voted against prohibiting abortion, this was not followed by a decline of Church power and church membership, and of the influence of the Vatican over Italian politics and society (Cipriani, 2003). Thus, Italian Catholicism is more like cultural Catholicism, although with the arrival of the other, migrants bringing different religions, Italian Catholics have re-discovered their Catholicism (Garelli, 2007a; Pace, 2007).

The foundation of the Italian religious *habitus* may be traced back to the ancient Roman attitude towards religion (De Martino, 1958). The *pietas*, understood as equal devotional behaviour towards the deity, the family and the state, kept people together as part of the same gens (enlarged family). Superstitious beliefs pervading the Italic gens were not destroyed by Christianity; on the contrary, through syncretism, the pre-Christian divinities were replaced by Saints. De Martino (1958) and Lombardi-Satriani (1971, 1982), who analysed the cultural and religious traditions of Southern Italy, found a society imbued with superstition, which saw the relationship with religion and especially the Saints as an exchange between favours and devotion. In addition, due to the weakening of state power and authority, Italian society continues to be based on the enlarged family which remains the cornerstone of society. This religious *habitus* is one of the main reasons why the Reform as well as the Risorgimental ideas did not develop in Italy.

Italianness and Protestantism

Protestants in Italy consider themselves Italians as evidenced by the numerous initiatives and publications organised in 2011 for the 150th anniversary of the unification, which celebrated Protestants' contribution to the making of Italy.

Among those who grew up as Protestants, there is a strong sense of being Italian, as one of my respondents attests:

> At least for the Waldensians, it is very important to be recognised as Italians and not been seen as strangers… taking into consideration that we have been in Piedmont for centuries and were actively involved in the creation of Italy (Male, Italian, Ordained).

However, Protestants need to build their identity in opposition to Catholics, as described in chapter II. Following Bauman (1996), Gilroy (1997), Hall (1996) and Jenkins (2004), I argue that the process of collective identification of Protestant Churches is constructed within a dichotomy between us/them, identity/alterity, Protestants/Catholics. Thus, it is not unusual that when defining themselves, Protestants begin by highlighting what they are not with negative affirmations such as: 'We do not believe in the intercession of priests between individuals and God, but in a personal relation with God'. I return to this point later in the chapter; here it suffices to say that despite stating their Italianness, Protestants are generally uneasy with the concept of Italianness, as one of my interviewees says:

> What does Italianness mean? It has never been truly defined. Moreover I have problems with the concept of nation-state and I think that for good or bad, it has never been accomplished… Italy is the land of a 'thousand bell towers'. (Female, Italian, Lay)

This respondent points out the lack of definition around the concept of Italianness and the regional divisions within the country, which obscure any clear idea of the values and characteristics of Italianness. It is however true that she does not take into consideration the Catholic religion as it is not an element that unifies all people in Italy. Trying to identify values and characteristics of a hypothetical Italianness, another interviewee stresses that such values do exist but they are not upheld or, more importantly, they are not known:

> Italian values could be those of the Risorgimento and the 1948 Constitution. However, none of them have been successful. The cultural revolution envisaged during the Risorgimento has never happened, and the Constitution is unknown by the population and not necessarily followed or applied by politicians. (Male, Italian, Lay)

Thus my data illustrate a split between what Italianness could represent and what it actually stands for. Considering the nexus between Italianness and Protestantism, many interviewees stress that for them there is a way to be Italian as Protestant: this can be summarised in the 'battle' for *laïcité*, in the observance of the law and in the fight against 'amoral familism' (Banfield, 1958), which has compromised Italian society at many levels. This Italian way of being Protestant results from the peculiar position of the historical Protestant Churches in Italy and it is often at the basis of the misunderstandings between Italian and migrant Protestants, as argued in chapter VII – as well as between Protestant churches in Italy.

According to my interviewees, their European identity seems to be stronger than their national identity , even though one informant suggests that 'when engaging in dialogue and work with other European countries it is important to know who you are and what you can bring to the big table for the common good' (Male, Italian, lay). Nowadays, 'The Italians continue to believe that the Catholic religion makes it possible to perceive unity in a situation that, in point of fact, has become increasingly differentiated, both in religious and ethical and moral terms. The presence of the other, identified as the Muslim, and in more general terms, immigrants, bringers of a different culture, has contributed – at least in part of the Italian population – to a reinforced sense of the existence of shared cultural roots, in the form of Catholicism' (Pace, 2007: 88 - 89).

Frisina (2011), in an interesting study of the concept of Italianness among young migrants, follows Fabietti's (1995) argument that the 'ethnicisation of Italianness' has been reinforced by the creation of an oppositional identity: 'Among a part of the Italian population at least, the political arguments of the right-wing government – which includes the xenophobic Northern League – have helped to reinforce the sense of shared cultural roots in the shape of Catholicism by using anti-Islam rhetoric (Guolo, 2003). As Frisina argues, the best way to build "US versus THEM" is to use Catholic rhetoric and to represent Islam as a dangerous outsider, a threat to the shared values defended by the Catholic Church' (Frisina, 2011: 279).

This debate around Italianness is important for a number of reasons: firstly, it raises the question of how 'new Italians' who are not Catholic or do not have ancestors in Italy can identify with and subscribe to the current concept of Italianness; and secondly, it helps us understand some of the differences between

Italian and immigrant Protestants which I discuss later in this chapter. In order to further contextualise these differences, I now move on to analysing the landscape of Protestant Churches in today's Italy, and the influence of migration on their constituencies.

Protestant Churches in today's Italy

The landscape of Protestant Churches in Italy is heterogeneous and has several components: the first one includes the Churches directly born from the Reformation, namely the Waldensian and the Lutheran Churches; [89] the second refers to the 'Great Awakening' which gave birth mostly to the Methodist and Baptist Churches but also to the Free Church and the Salvation Army; the third is related to the 'Second Great Awakening' which gave birth to the Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches (Chiarini, 1997, 1999; Maselli, 2003; Benecchi, 2011; Naso, 2011, 2013). The terms historical and/or mainline Protestant Churches in Italy describe the Churches belonging to the first and second branches whose members worked closely for the unification of Italy and tried to come together and build alliances vis-à-vis the state throughout the twentieth century. The formation of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy (hereafter FCEI), which includes different historical churches (i.e. Waldensians and Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans, Salvation Army), needs to be read in this light. The federation, established in 1965, aims 'to monitor the situation of religious freedom, provide information about Protestant culture and religious minorities, promote Christian education and training, and assist migrants and refugees'. [90] In addition to the FCEI, since the 1970s the three main Protestant Churches, Waldensians, Methodists and Baptists (BMV), have a close collaboration which includes the training of their ministers in the same theological faculty (The Waldensian Theological Faculty of Rome); territorial collaboration; specific commissions; and regular meetings between their executives. Furthermore, as I describe below, the Waldensian and Methodist Churches achieved a full ecclesiological merger in 1975. The next two sections outline the histories of the Waldensian and Methodist churches in more detail.

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[89] See http://www.chiesaluterana.it/celi/storia-della-celi/
[90] Article 2 of the FCEI bylaws, see http://www.fedevangelica.it/en/index.php

The Waldensian Church

The Waldensian Church is a 12th century pre-Reformation Church that joined the Protestant Reform in 1534. The movement has its origin in Lyon where a rich Merchant, Valdes or Valdeius, decided to give all his belongings to the poor and to preach the gospel to the lower classes. Valdes' intention was not to create a separate church but to find recognition for his group's existence and work. At first the Pope 'expressed approval for Valdes' vow of voluntary poverty but he and his companions were forbidden to preach except by invitation of the clergy' (van Beek, 2006). As Valdes and his companions refused to obey, they were excommunicated by the Council of Verona (1184). The excommunication did not stop them from proceeding with their mission and the Waldensians rapidly spread to Southern France, Piedmont, Lombardy (two regions of Northern Italy) and Germany. Especially in Piedmont, at first at least, they enjoyed relative freedom of movement; however in 1685, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in France, many Waldensians were forced to flee; those who moved found refuge in Switzerland whereas those who remained in Piedmont were forced to live in a ghetto in the Cottian Alps for 150 years (van Beek, 2006). The situation changed only on 17 February 1848, when the Waldensians, along with the Jews, were granted civil rights, and religious and political freedom by the King of Piedmont. The Waldensians took an active part in the creation and unification of Italy in 1861 and 1871 as I discuss later in this chapter.

Today Waldendians are present in the whole country, especially in the biggest cities; however they remain mainly concentrated in the Cottian Alps, near Turin, an area informally called the Waldensian Valley, where they had formerly been ghettoised. There are around 40,000 Waldensians in Italy, with 129 congregations and 94 ministers. Waldensians belong to the Reform Church family and their churches are organised according to the Presbyterian-synodal system: 'The word Presbyterian is used because the governing of the church community is not entrusted to a bishop but to a council of elders (New Testament term); synodal

because the Synod is the governing assembly of every part of the life of the church as a whole: doctrinal, disciplinary, administrative'. [91]

The Church is governed by assemblies at local, regional and national level. Each church has its own assembly that elects a council which implements the decisions taken by the assembly. 'The churches of a region form a regional assembly called Circuit; these are divided into Districts, which has an assembly called the District Conference'. [92] Currently there are twenty three Circuits and four Districts. At national level there is the Synod, mentioned above, the highest decision making body in the Church, formed by representatives of local churches, circuits and districted. Ministers cannot exceed fifty per cent of the members. At the end of each Synod, its assembly elects the Tavola, the executive and administrative body of the Church led by a Moderator. The mandate of each member of the Tavola cannot exceed seven years 'to avoid the danger of the centralization of authority or/and personalisms'. [93]

Since 1979 the Waldensian Church has a Patto d'Integrazione (Integration agreement) with the Methodist Church, whose history and structure I outline briefly below.

The Methodist Church

The Methodist Church in Italy was established in the second half of the 19th century by Italian returnees and by English and American missionaries who wanted to start a political revolution after the 1861 unification (van Beek, 2006; Naso, 2012a). The Wesleyan Methodists from Britain established their mission in 1861, and the Methodists Episcopal Church (from the USA) was established few years later, in 1872. There were cordial relations between the two branches, but each maintained its own space and mission until 1942 when they merged. In 1905 the Methodists merged with the Free Church, an independent Italian Protestant Church that had been very active in the process of unification during the Risogimento. Cordial relations and collaboration were also established with the

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[91] See http://www.chiesavaldese.org/eng/pages/activities/organization.php (accessed 20/07/2013).
[92] See http://www.chiesavaldese.org/eng/pages/activities/organization.php
[93] See http://www.chiesavaldese.org/eng/pages/activities/organization.php

Waldensian Church: in 1975 the Methodist and Waldensias Churches entered a covenant resulting in the aforementioned *Patto d'Integrazione* (1979).

Today the Methodist Church is present in many cities across the country with a major concentration in Northern Italy. There are around 5,000 Methodists with 50 congregations and 23 ministers. Since the beginning of its mission in Italy the Methodist Church was characterised by a commitment to the poor and the marginalised through the creation of schools and orphanages. However, when the economic situation changed, many of those structures closed down or were sold and today only few of them are still in place (Chiarini, 1997, 1999).

After the Patto d'Integrazione Methodists became part of the Waldensian Church which changed its name to the Waldensian Church – Union of Waldensian and Methodist Churches since Methodists would continue to have representatives in the executive body, the Tavola. However, individual churches kept their own names linked to their denominations. In addition, every year, a few months before the Synod, the Methodists have a consultation, called Consulta Metodista, during which they discuss issues related to the life and properties of the congregations and they nominate the candidates to be elected at the Synod. The Synod also elects the OPCEMI (Trust of the Methodist Church in Italy). Both the Waldensians and the Methodists have lay preachers and allow women ministers. At the time of this research (2011) for the first time two women are leading the Church: the Moderator is Minister Maria Bonafede and the president of OPCEMI is Deacon Alessandra Trotta. Today the Waldensian Church – Union of the Waldensian and Methodist Churches counts 45,000 members.

In the next section I analyse the composition of the Church using the information presented in chapter I regarding the socio-cultural situation in Italy and the immigration factor.

Facts and figures

Immigration is increasing religious plurality in Italy but statistics are controversial as already discussed in chapter I. The majority of Christian migrants belong to the Orthodox confession, the second largest religion after Islam (Giordan, 2013); there have been few studies of Orthodox migrants in Italy with few exceptions related to local and traditional context (e.g. Morozzo della Rocca, 1997; Pacini, 2000;

Introvigne and Zoccatelli, 2006). The work of Giordan (2013) represents the first attempt to fill this gap.

According to Allievi (2009), there are 363,000 Protestants in Italy of whom 60,000 belonging to historical Churches and 250,000 belonging to Pentecostal Churches.[94] Protestant African migrants number about 29,342 people (Naso, 2009). In addition we also need to take into consideration the presence of irregular migrants who do not appear in the official statistics. Numbers proposed by Caritas present some challenges as they are obtained *simply* applying to the total number of immigrants the percentage of the different confessions in their country of origin, without taking into account the different pull and push factors behind migration – which may, for instance, cause Christians to escape a Muslim area (or vice versa).

According to research undertaken by the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy (FCEI), migrant members of Protestant Churches number around 30 per cent (Jackson and Passarelli, 2008; Naso, 2009; Naso *et al.,* 2014). The presence of migrants in the Waldensian and Methodist churches is around 21 per cent. In the II District [95] the number reaches 46 per cent, while in the North-East of Italy, an area highly populated by immigrants, and the focus of this study, the percentage reaches almost 70 per cent. Since 2002 six new churches have been established in that area[96] : these are mainly formed and attended by Ghanaians speaking the *twi* language (Passarelli, 2012). Among the nationalities present in the Waldensian and Methodist Churches, 50 per cent is of migrants from Africa: Ghanaians constitute the majority (45 per cent), followed by Cameroonians and Nigerians.

The arrival of migrants has definitely rejuvenated many of the historical Protestant Churches whose numbers, like in Ireland, were in decline. While many Protestant Churches in Ireland, especially Anglicans, had to close down as a result of low attendance, this did not happen in Italy, at least not on the same scale. However the considerable presence of migrants represents both a gift and a challenge. The gift brought by migrants – new energies and different sensibilities – has become so

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[94] According to an estimation of Caritas/Migrantes (2012) 4.4 per cent of immigrants were Protestants.

[95] The II District, as I describe in Chapter V, is one of areas in which the Italian territory is divided for the Waldensian and Methodist Church. The II District corresponds to the North-East of Italy.

[96] Churches or more correctly churches in formation or diaspora groups according to the bylaws of the Waldensian Church – Union of the Waldensian and Methodist Church.

important that the national project of 'being church together', of building inclusive and integrated churches, has entered into the narrative of the 'new identity' of Italian Protestantism, a new identity that Italian Protestants have also brought abroad (Jackson and Passarelli, 2008; Passarelli, 2010; Peschke and Bertelli, 2010). The challenges, on the other hand, are related to the theological aspects of the doctrine and to the position taken by historical Protestant Churches towards the relation between state and religion as I analyse below.

Italian Protestantism versus Migrant Protestantism?

Having surveyed the history of Italian Protestantism and of the Waldensian and the Methodist churches, and having discussed the advent of migrants in Italy's Protestant churches, I now focus on the challenges faced by Protestant churches in relation to the inclusion of migrants who are not often aware of the complexities of being a religious minority in Italy. At the same time, I question whether Protestant churches are aware of the challenge of defining themselves through the process of including migrant others.

According to my data, migrants do not necessarily recognise being a religious minority as a value, but rather believe strongly that churches need to grow 'if they are under God's wing'. In addition, as in the Irish case study, migrants often come from countries where their religion is not a minority like in Italy and where churches are numerous. A young man highlights how the children's service every Sunday in his home country has more attendees than an average Sunday service in a Protestant Church in Italy. Very often the fact of being small religious communities is seen by migrants as one of the signs of the secularisation of European Churches and this includes Italian Protestant churches. One informant for instance stressed the need to rediscover evangelisation 'to fill the empty benches of the churches'. This attitude is similar to the concept of 'reverse mission' described in chapter II: both refer to the fact that migrants see their presence in Europe as a mission of re-evangelising the old Continent that has lost the true way (Adogambe, 2000, 2003, 2010).

A second 'divisive' factor is the 'anti-Catholicism' that is often deeply rooted in the narratives of Italian Protestantism and is not necessarily shared by migrant

Protestants. I have already highlighted how very often Protestantism in African countries, even if it is not the majority religion, still has a large following. In Ghana, for instance, the rivalry among Christian denominations is not historically rooted as it is in Europe. My data illustrate that the histories of the Italian Catholic and Protestant churches, and the differences between them, are often unknown to many of the newcomers. Consequently it is understandable that the struggle for survival and visibility experienced by Italian Protestant Churches and the construction of their identity based on the binary identity us/them, Protestants/Catholics, is often not comprehended by migrants. Furthermore, the lack of knowledge among first generation migrants of who Martin Luther was and how Protestantism came into being demonstrates how many things are taken for granted on the basis of belonging to the same denomination. If newcomers do not know how Protestantism came into being and why there was a rupture with the Roman Catholic Church followed by the Counter-Reformation, the communication with Italian Protestants risks being compromised from the very beginning without the two parties realising it.

Thirdly, migrants' lack of knowledge of the history and position of Protestant Churches in Italy is coupled by their lack of understanding of the campaign for laïcité which has been central to the history of Protestants in Italy. Advocating for a lay state includes giving freedom to individuals to make choices concerning ethical issues without the Roman Catholic Church or any other religion dictating their wishes onto the state. The Protestant churches' campaign for divorce, abortion and for end-of life legislation is seen negatively by migrants who consider the Church's duty and role to give its followers clear rules of conduct. [97] This is linked to differences between migrants and Italians in relation to the reading of the Bible as I analyse in chapter VII. Furthermore, migrants often believe that advocating for freedom of religion and freedom of choice in ethical matters is equal, for instance, to promoting abortion. At the same time there are different views on the place religion should occupy in the public sphere: while Italian

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[97] Introvigne's study *Fundamentalism* (2004b) sheds a light on the reasons for the increase of fundamentalism around the world, and argues that individualism, fragmentation, lack of reference points and a yearning for belonging lead people to adhere to religious organisations which feel this gap and are able to give followers clear directions and answers.

Protestants do not want to see religion influencing political choices, migrants feel otherwise, and in this regard their position is not dissimilar to the one taken by the Roman Catholic Church. [98]

Lastly, as described above, historically Italian Protestants had to struggle to defend their existence and to find ways to be visible in Italian society. In doing so, they have developed close relations among various Protestant denominations – from the work of the FCEI to the collaboration between Baptists, Methodists and Waldensians, to the merger between the Methodists and Waldensians. This trend has been challenged by migrants who, once in a new environment, put a new and stronger emphasis on denominational identity and affiliation. Belonging in the new environment seems to need clear boundaries: 'if you are Methodist, you want to do things in a Methodist way' – although I argue that the Methodist way, as well as the Reformed or the Baptist way, is also the result of the socio-cultural setting in which the church is situated. To remain with the example of the Methodist, during my research a respondent highlighted that: 'a youth organisation [the informant referred to the FGEI [99]] working with different denominations is not seen positively because at the end of the day the young might be confused not knowing the 'right' doctrine and they may leave the church as many Italians do'. The parochialism collides, on the one hand, with the denominational shift operated by migrants once in the new country (there are many Methodists and Presbyterians in Pentecostal Churches); on the other hand, it collides with the fact that migrants, as a result of their migration journey, put greater emphasis on their religious affiliation than they used to in their own country.

In this chapter I touched on the challenges faced by Protestant churches in Italy as a result of the inclusion of migrants who are not always aware of the specificities of and challenges faced by Italian Protestantism. The next chapter analyses the integration policies and practices of Protestant Churches in Italy and asks to what extent they are able to address such challenges.

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[98] This also happens in Ghana where Protestant Churches influence the political sphere: the non-abolition of the 'crime' of homosexuality is one of the examples.
See http://www.africareview.com/News/Ghana-churches-caution-politicians-over-homosexuality/-/979180/1203504/-/q9m81kz/-/index.html (06/05/2012)

[99] Italian Protestant Youth Federation (FGEI) is an interdenominational organisation established in 1967 uniting Protestant young people from different denominations and it is the first ecumenical organisation established in the country. See www.fgei.org (accessed 20/07/2013).

Chapter VII

Protestant Churches in Italy developing integration strategies

Introduction

In chapter V I highlighted the similarities between the Irish government's integration strategies, based on a laissez-faire approach poorly disguised as a two-way process, and the Protestant churches' attitude towards migrants' inclusion characterised by the goodwill and efforts of some clergy and lay members yet also reluctant – with the exception of the Methodist Church's more flexible approach – to envision deeper changes. The situation for Protestant Churches in Italy is different. In chapters I and VI I argued that firstly, unlike Ireland, Italy did not experience an economic boom in the mid-1990s; nonetheless this did not prevent migrants from choosing Italy as a destination country; secondly, until the end of 2011 the Italian government did not set up any policy specifically aimed at integration; furthermore some MPs publicly expressed anti-immigration views which contributed to foment hatred and racism. Against this backdrop of economic stagnation and racist tensions, Protestant Churches in Italy opted for a different approach in the way they addressed issues of migration and integration. Finding themselves with a considerable number of newcomers, especially from Africa, and wishing to avoid the experiences of other churches in Europe, more specifically the development of separate churches for migrants, Italian Protestant Churches opted for integrated churches under the slogan 'Being Church Together, Uniting in Diversity'. Because of the hostile socio-political climate the work of the Protestant Churches also became a strategy of resistance against national immigration policies while providing a 'home away from home' for migrants' religious and spiritual needs. As Protestant Churches in Italy began the 'journey towards integration', to use the words of some research participants, they foresaw that congregations would engage in a process of transformation, and that this process would result in a 'new' church-community encompassing elements and traits of different cultures and spiritual traditions. This journey, the chapter argues, has not

been without challenges and the tension between being integrated or separated churches remains.

This chapter analyses the integration strategies of Protestant Churches in Italy with a specific focus on the work of the Waldensian and Methodist Church in the North-East of Italy, particularly in Bologna and Modena. The data and analysis presented here are based on participant observation, in-depth interviews, informal conversations, and church documents. The chapter surveys the period of time between 2004 and 2012; it begins by highlighting the approaches to diversity management adopted by Protestant Churches in Italy, focusing in particular on the strategies and training programmes developed by the Federation of Protestant Churches and by the Waldensian and Methodist Church. Following from this, the chapter presents an in-depth analysis of the integration project 'Mezzano': this case study demonstrates how the 'goodwill' behind the project was not sufficient to produce the desired outcomes, and how the lack of clear aims and objectives led the project to envisage alternatives not fully in line with the notion of 'being church together' such as the creation of ethnic minority churches and ethnic minority organisations within the Church structure. The chapter continues by discussing the initiatives set up by Ghanaian churchgoers arguing that these functioned as 'parallel' structures within the Church. The analysis is further broadened by taking into consideration the experiences of the local congregations of Bologna and Modena, which present two different integration patterns, and by emphasising the impact of national policies on the life and work of these congregations. In the conclusion, as well as highlighting the gaps between policies and practices, I look at the integration challenges faced by the churches.

Approaches to diversity management

Unlike Ireland, Italy did not engage in a vibrant debate around the increasing diversity of its society. In chapter I and VII I highlighted the cultural and social reasons for this; here I look at how migration has changed the ecclesial landscape of mainline protestant Churches in Italy and the Churches' concrete responses to addressing migrant newcomers' needs. Changes began in the 1980s in a few local congregations who were faced with the challenges of including migrant worshippers, mostly from Africa, as well as addressing their specific needs. The

establishment of Being Church Together – Uniting in diversity (ECI), first as a working group and then as a commission within the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy (FCEI) [100] represented the first joint attempt by Protestant Churches to reflect and act on the consequences of migration. The Mezzano project of the Waldensian and Methodist Church, which started in 2002, was one denomination's response to the new situation and its challenges. In the next section I detail both the vision behind the 'Being Church Together' approach and the steps taken to realise it; I then assess the specific impact of the diversity training programmes which the Church established to prepare leaders and members for the task of creating integrated churches.

Setting the context

Since 1990s three informal patterns of interaction between migrants and Protestant churches have emerged: a) migrants who worship together with the indigenous population; b) migrants who have their own place of worship, constituting a local congregation which is member of the national church; and c) migrants who use the church building as a worship place but are not linked to mainline Protestant Churches (thus forming either an independent congregation, or a congregation under the jurisdiction of a national church in the country of origin) (Passarelli, 2011). These three patterns are common among different Protestant churches. The first pattern, migrants worshipping with the indigenous congregation, is arguably more conducive to the creation of integrated churches (Passarelli, 2011). The situation is more complex in relation to pattern b). Until 2007, only congregational churches, such as the Baptists, recognised ethnic minority churches as part of their union, while the Waldensian and Methodist Church tried to avoid recognising them because it did not wish to encourage the development of separate churches. However, due to the size of particular ethnic/national groups, in recent years the Waldensian and Methodist Church began to acknowledge membership of some ethnic minority churches, as discussed in this chapter. Pattern c) is a growing phenomenon, but it is not discussed in this thesis as it does not impact on mainline Protestant Churches.

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[100] See Jackson and Passarelli (2008) and Naso (2009) and see the website http://www.fedevangelica.it/comm/eci01.php (accessed 20/07/2013).

Strategies

While interviewees agreed on the long term goal of 'Being Church Together', namely the creation of integrated churches encompassing elements and traits of various church members' backgrounds, they also had different opinions as to what measures needed to be implemented in the short term to achieve the long term goal. According to Paolo Naso, the coordinator of the ECI Commission, 'ECI's mission is to monitor these [integration] processes and give churches and church leadership the opportunity to understand what is happening in churches and equip them with tools to deal with this phenomenon'. The activities undertaken by the ECI group included the collection of data on the number of migrants in Protestant Churches, their country of origin, gender and age. The ECI's study also took into consideration the history of some of the local communities; how migration had impacted on them; and the challenges faced by the churches. The challenges identified were of strategic importance. For instance: 'If you come from Nigeria and you are Methodist, does it mean that, once in Italy, you automatically look for a Methodist Church? Or do you look for a Nigerian church even if it is not Methodist? And, if you look for a Methodist Church, which is Italian and integrated, why is it so?' (ECI coordinator)

The president of OPCEMI (Italian Methodist Churches' Trust Permanent Committee), Alessandra Trotta, pointed to the importance of having a clear strategy: 'right now there are different integration models in our churches … the model I prefer is [having integrated congregations] and I would like to see our churches walking on that path strategically, adopting this model …' For Trotta, this strategy can take a long time and, at the beginning, may result in separatism – migrants and indigenous worshipping in different places or at different times – but the will to build bridges and maintain links between the congregations, she argued, should be stressed as a long-term strategy towards an integrated church.

Maria Bonafede, Moderator of the Waldensian Church – Union of Waldensian and Methodist Churches (2005-2012), also highlighted the different models adopted by different churches and the need to maintain a flexible attitude to being church together. For her, 'integration happens when each person feels completely at home in the church... neither a guest nor someone who feels disturbed by the presence of a stranger... and when people are able to live their faith in dialogue with others'.

The slogan 'Being Church Together' has not only been used since the late 1990s to refer to the work of the ECI Commission and its mission to build integrated churches but, during the years, it also became the byword to describe all kinds of projects and activities involving migrants even if their aims may not necessarily be in line with the original one, as this chapter shows.

Among the churches' various strategic approaches to integration I examine here are the cooperation between the Union of Waldensian and Methodist Churches in Italy and the Presbyterian and Methodist churches in Ghana, exemplified by the 'Mezzano' project and the setting up of training programmes, analysed in the following sections.

Training programmes

The FCEI's project 'Being Church Together: Uniting in Diversity' aimed to avoid the development of separate churches which had occurred in other European Countries and in the USA (Jackson and Passarelli, 2008). In order to find ways to be church together with people from different parts of the world, without asking them to put aside their identities but rather share them with the whole community, FCEI organised a series of national seminars and study weekends, in 1990, 1994, 1998, 2002, and 2004. [101] 'Being Church Together' became a FCEI Commission in 2000 and its work became more structured leading to partnerships with other organisations such as the CCME, the CEC and the WCC. [102] The period 2008-2010 saw the ECI Commission's involvement in a European Project called 'MIRACLE', funded by a European Commission Integration Grant. 'MIRACLE' focused on training church leaders working in multicultural churches to become actors of integration in their local communities. [103] This section describes the training programmes organised by the church to assist church leaders and other members with the implementation of programmes and activities towards the goal of 'being church together'.

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[101] The 2004 seminar was organised in cooperation with the European NGO Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), and members from various European Churches shared their experiences and praxis.
[102] See http://www.fedevangelica.it/comm/eci01.php (accessed 08/08/2012).
[103] See www.cec-ccme.be (accessed 08/08/2012).

Parallel to the work of the ECI Commission, each single denomination worked independently to develop its own integration practices, which sometimes took a different path from the one promoted by ECI. In some cases there was some confusion as to how the integration process was to be understood, as this chapter shows. Looking at the Waldensian and Methodist Church on the one hand there was the 'Mezzano' Project of the Second District (2002 -), analysed below, and on the other the PFIPL (Itinerary of Intercultural Training for Lay Preachers), a two year training programme for local preachers with intercultural competences (2009-2011), sponsored by the Waldensian Theological Faculty, organised by the Second District and attended by all ministers with multicultural congregations and migrants wishing to become local preachers. As one of the organisers, a female migrant minister, highlighted, the inspiration behind this training was rooted in the needs of the local communities:

> This was a bottom-up activity from the needs of local communities, especially from migrants within them. There have been migrants in the churches coming from Methodist and Presbyterian Churches mainly from Africa but also from the Philippines who already had experience as leaders... which, however, was not officially recognised by the Church. (...) Therefore, the idea of this diploma course recognised and gave visibility to something that was already happening. (Migrant, female, ordained)

This programme was followed by another training course which targeted all Protestant denominations and was run by FCEI in cooperation with the Waldensian Theological Faculty. As well as including participants from various denominations, the second course aimed to train not only local preachers but also church leaders wishing to acquire intercultural competences to use in their local communities. This course, called LINFA (Workshop for Intercultural Training and Welcoming), started in 2012 and is due to last until 2015; it consists of two national seminars per year and regular meetings at regional and local level.

From the first sporadic seminars organised by FCEI which provided opportunities for encounter, debate and reflection, to the more structured training programmes undertaken by the Waldensian and Methodist Church, PFIPL, and recently by FCEI with LINFA, the role of informal education was central to the Churches'

training philosophy. The various courses understood integration as a process involving not only migrants but also indigenous churchgoers. The training programmes aimed to provide intercultural tools to deal with a multicultural community: looking at different ways of reading and interpreting the Bible, understanding where the approaches came from; analysing and disentangling the influence of culture over religion; reflecting on the key elements for building up inclusive and integrated churches. One of the main challenges faced by the PFIPL and LINFA training courses – at least until the end of 2012 – was the low participation of indigenous churchgoers with the exception, at least in PFIPL, of the ministers who were also acting as tutors. According to my informants, it was always the same people who participated in all the events with little or no snowball effect. Despite the quality of the training, students' newly acquired skills had little impact on local communities. To further illustrate the approaches to diversity within the Waldensian and Methodist Church, the next sections discuss two specific examples: the Synod's deliberations and the Mezzano Project.

The Synod: Churches together facing and discussing issues relating to immigration and migrant integration

> *Sunday, August 2009. First Synod as observer for the PhD. The Synod starts with its usual 'parade' from the aula sinodale (Synod room) to the Temple (Church). The parade is headed by the minister who preaches at the opening worship, followed by two candidates for ministry who will be ordained during the worship; ministers of the Church (all the pastors of each local congregation); delegates from churches, districts and circuits; representatives from sister churches around Europe and USA. There are three ministers from Africa; two from Ghana; one from Togo; and few delegates with a migrant background. I am one among hundreds of observers who stand along the way to watch the parade, greet people from all around the country one only sees at this time of the year and catch up with church issues...discussions which are going to last for the whole Synod.* (Fieldnotes, 25/08/2012)

Since 2001 I have been a regular attendee at the Synod of the Waldensian and Methodist Church [104] without an official role. Before beginning the PhD I attended out of personal interest, as the Synod is not only a space for evaluating the work of the Church and taking part in decisions affecting the congregations around the country, but also a space for debating issues of public interest such as the role of religion in public spaces, bioethics and immigration policies. After starting this research personal interest became coupled with the professional need to observe the dynamics of the highest decision making body of the Church. This section traces the shift I witnessed in the church: from the enthusiasm of 'being church together', with all the attendant challenges and complexities, of the first period (mid 1990s to 2009), to the perplexity and skepticism of more recent years (2009-2012). This skepticism was more evident in the everyday life of the local congregations than in the Synod, as I discuss later in this chapter. According to my observations, the turning point occurred in 2009-2010. While in 2009 Synod members were all 'united in diversity' and determined to raise their voices against the government's immigration laws, in 2010 the possibility that the Waldensian and Methodist Church may bless same sex marriage risked a split between the African and Italian components of the Church.

In order to better illustrate this shift I highlight first the Synod's position in relation to migration and integration in various years (2002, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011) and then I look at the experience of the local congregation of Mezzano.

The debate on migration and integration did not start in 2009 but was already present in different forms and at various levels since the late 1990s. However, as discussed in chapter I, 2002 marked a critical moment in the history of immigration in Italy when a particularly punitive law (Bossi-Fini) was passed at the end of July, forcing migrants without *permesso di soggiorno* (regular permission to stay) to choose between returning to their countries of origin or being incarcerated in Centres for Temporary Custody (CPT). The 2002 Synod made a clear statement against the Bossi-Fini law stating that, in view of the process of 'Being Church Together' and migrants' experiences of integration in their churches, the law damages human rights, creates a closed society that

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[104] With the exception of 2004 and 2008.

considers immigration a problem of public order, and promotes migrants' illegality (clandestinità) and black and criminal markets. The Bossi-Fini also prompted churches to study immigration law to find ways to use that knowledge in their work to support and help migrants and to take informed steps against the state's immigration regime. [105] In relation to the process of 'Being Church Together' the Synod welcomed the beginning of the 'missionary' project of the II District 'Mezzano', in collaboration with the international organisation CEVAA, which is discussed in the next section.

During the 2004 Synod, even though 'Being Church Together' was not one of the main discussion themes, delegates and ministers considered it important to find a space to debate the meaning of 'being together' in church. The outcomes of this debate were summarised and formalised in a lengthy Act. [106] The Act spells out the steps necessary to become a welcoming church and, in line with the Gospels' teaching, it recommends that local churches work together on a regional level; include diversity in the church council, the decision making body of each church; apply the approach of being church together in their work with children and young people; and collaborate with the FCEI's programme Being Church Together. An article published after the Synod in the weekly church magazine *Riforma* [107] reported that the arrival of migrants questioned the way the church represented itself, its self-understanding and identity, and stressed the importance of creating a new way of being together with newcomers.

The 2006 Synod dedicated time to evaluate the Mezzano project which was then in its fourth year and renewed the minister from Ghana for another two years. However, the report published in *Riforma* [108] highlighted the challenges faced by the Ghanaian minister –discussed later in this chapter – and the need to nominate a new group to assist the minister and redefine his work in the II District. In a post-election speech, the moderator of the Waldensian and Methodist Church reflected

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[105] See http://www.chiesavaldese.org/pages/sinodo/sinodo2002/atti_si02.php (accessed 08/08/2012)
[106] See http://www.chiesavaldese.org/pages/sinodo/sinodo2004/atti_si04.php (accessed 08/08/2012)
[107] De Angelis (2010) available at http://www.chiesavaldese.org/pages/sinodo/sinodo2004/ess_chiesa_insieme.php (accessed 10/08/2013).
[108] Tagliero (2006) available at http://www.chiesavaldese.org/pages/sinodo/sinodo2006/cevaa.php (accessed 10/08/2013).

on the need to enlarge 'our tent' as a result of the arrival of believers from different parts of the world whose presence meant enrichment for the church; she stated that the new citizens 'have to be included in society (...) giving them full rights of citizenship in our churches while they are still waiting for full political citizenship'. [109]

The 2007 Synod reflected on the meaning of 'together' in relation to the project of 'being one church' with brothers and sisters from other countries. The first honeymoon stage was over and the congregations were facing new challenges in the journey towards the creation of a truly integrated church, in which integration is visible not only on the surface but permeates every aspect of the community's life. A reporter argued in *Riforma* [110] that it was easier to pursue separate developments. Charting the challenges, in terms of training leaders in the communities, people working with children, young people; in terms of intercultural mediation and greater participation of migrants in decision making processes, the article asked whether migrants wanted 'to be church with us' and partake in this type of journey. The answer given in the article echoed the words of the moderator: 'without them, there is no us'.

Between 2007 and 2008 the issue of being church together was on the agenda of local churches but was no longer a prominent Synod discussion theme. In 2009, in view of the increasing severity of immigration legislation, and especially the introduction of the reato di clandestinità, which criminalised 'irregular' migrants, the Synod decided to organise a day of fasting in opposition to the law and in solidarity with migrants affected by it. [111] Considering that fasting is unusual among Protestants in Italy, this was a symbolic yet very powerful act. Lunch was replaced by two moments: first readings of migrants' stories in the aula sinodale followed by worship with bible readings, prayers and songs in the church. The two places were packed with not only members of the Synod or churchgoers but also

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[109] *NEV* 30/08/2006 available at http://www.chiesavaldese.org/pages/sinodo/sinodo2006/sinodo2006.php (accessed 10/08/2013).
[110] Ribet (2007) available at http://www.chiesavaldese.org/pages/sinodo/sinodo2007/chiesa_ins.php (accessed 10/08/2013).
[111] http://www.chiesavaldese.org/pages/sinodo/sinodo2010/sinodo2010.php, Naso (2009) available at http://www.chiesavaldese.org/pages/sinodo/sinodo2009/digiuno.php and the ODG available at http://www.chiesavaldese.org/pages/sinodo/sinodo2009/odg_digiuno.pdf (accessed 10/08/2013).

individuals who wanted to show their support for the church's action, journalists, and people curious to see what was going on. Passages from the Bible were read throughout the day (and echoed during the week). Two texts were particularly relevant: 'You are to have the same law for the alien and the native-born' (Leviticus, 24:22); and 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians, 3:28). Some interviewees with a migrant background referred to that occasion as a sign of unity: positiveness was in the air, indigenous and migrants were working together from a common basis: the Bible. Interviewees called it 'a special moment', 'an occasion of unity', 'a concrete act to show that we truly care for migrants, in our church as well as our society'.

In 2010 there was a public evening on 'Churches modified by immigration' during which the new realities of the churches and the projects in place were described and discussed to the accompaniment of songs and testimonies from migrants themselves. [112] The report based on the discussion emphasised the need to provide the adequate training to local communities, and to assist them in dealing with diversity and in building integrated churches. [113] Indeed in 2009, the Synod voted in favour of running a two-year training course, 'PFIPL' (Intercultural Training for Local Preachers), in the II District.

2010, however, marked a change in attitude towards the process of 'Being Church Together'. As mentioned above, around the same time the Synod was debating the possibility of blessing homosexual couples belonging to the church. This was not well received by the Ghanaian members of the Church and had a negative echo among the local congregations; thus all integration programmes at various levels focused on addressing this issue, both theologically and culturally, which in turn generated a sense of frustration and skepticism among different stakeholders. There was a concrete risk that many Ghanaians would leave the Waldensian and Methodist Church; therefore the Church organised an ad hoc meeting to encourage an open discussion about homosexuality based on readings from the bible, an examination of homophobia in Europe and Italy, and the actual analysis of the

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[112] Pons (2010) available at http://www.chiesavaldese.org/pages/sinodo/sinodo2010/eci.php (accessed 10/08/2013).
[113] Pons (2010) available at http://www.chiesavaldese.org/pages/sinodo/sinodo2010/eci.php

Synod act. The moderator of the Waldensian and Methodist Church, the President of the Waldensian Faculty of Theology, the director of the Commission of Being Church Together of the FCEI and members of the Lay Movement Council set up by Ghanaians all took part in the meeting. Furthermore, in autumn 2010 the Presiding Bishop of Ghana visited the Waldensian and Methodist Church and met Ghanaians around the country; during his visit he stressed the importance of being together with the Italians without leaving the sister Church; yet he also made clear that although the Synod's decisions had to be respected, Ghanaian ministers must not celebrate blessing ceremonies for same sex couples.

The 2011 Synod debate highlighted two sets of challenges: 'separate' migrant leadership that risked undermining the pastor's position; the second generation of migrants whose parents considered in danger of succumbing to Italian culture and habits, as discussed later. [114] In relation to the second generation, the 2012 Synod organised a public evening on 'Italians of tomorrow' during which first and second generation migrants spoke of their experiences, challenges and expectations. Andrea Riccardi, the first Minister for International Cooperation and Integration in the history of the Italian Republic, was also present.

In outlining the role of the Synod, one needs to remember that while churches were trying to be welcoming and inclusive, the Italian government and Italian society were not. Until the end of 2011, media discourses criminalised immigration and did not mention integration, or understood it in the terms of 'immigrants have to integrate' meaning that they have to become like 'us'. This demonstrates that, unlike Ireland, where church and state approaches arguably developed in parallel, Protestant churches in Italy were swimming against the tide when it came to their integration approaches.

I identified two phases in relation to the integration discourses of the Churches, pre and post 2009, enthusiasm versus skepticism. Skepticism manifested itself in the tensions between Italian and Ghanaian ministers around issues such as homosexuality, leadership within the church, churches' governance and how to address the challenges faced by second generation migrants. Furthermore, the

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[114] Terino (2011) available at http://www.chiesavaldese.org/pages/sinodo/sinodo2011/chiesa_insieme.php (accessed 10/08/2013).

emergence of Ghanaian self-organised structures challenged the ecclesiology of the Church itself, as I discuss later.

To demonstrate how integration strategies worked in practice, I analyse one of the concrete initiatives undertaken by the Synod in relation to managing diversity: the Mezzano Project of the II District. The next section outlines the project's origin and structure and assesses the impact it had on the life of local congregations.

The Mezzano Project of the II District

> The project has started, alas, as providing a Ghanaian minister for the Ghanaians, a few people had something different in mind. From the CEVAA's [115] point of view, less for the executives of the churches, the project was inspired by the ethos of being church together: encouraging dialogue between the various components towards an intercultural church. (Italian, male, ordained)

Genesis, structure and aims

As discussed in chapter I and VI, the North-East of Italy is an area highly populated by migrants, Ghanaians in particular, who arrived during the late 1990s when it was easy for them to find jobs in factories. As a result the number of migrants in the II District of the Waldensian and Methodist Church increased dramatically over a few years, leading the Tavola to set up the Mezzano project in 2002. Although the aims of the Mezzano project were not very clear as I discuss later, the project decided to appoint a minister from Ghana to provide pastoral care for Ghanaians in the churches of the II District, and to reach out to other Ghanaian and African migrants in the region. The project was based in Mezzano, a small village near Parma, where the Methodist church had a diaspora community, and basic accommodation centre where many Ghanaians found shelter, thus giving the congregation a new lease of life.

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[115] The CEVAA is a community of Protestant Churches in Mission funded in 1991 in Paris. It comprises 35 Protestant Churches across the globe, mainly in Africa but also in Latin America, in Europe and in the Indian and Pacific Ocean. See http://www.cevaa.org/cevaa (accessed 10/08/2013)

The Mezzano project was not the first such project in the II District. It was preceded by the 'Palermo-Mezzano' project established in the mid-1990s, which linked the North-East of Italy with Sicily, the first port of arrival for most migrants. As an interviewee highlighted: 'in the mid-90s there were around 50 people from Africa in the Church in Palermo [La Noce], mostly Ghanaians but not only…and we were church together. The minister, together with members of the church council suggested sending some of us, who got papers to stay, to the North-East with the clear mandate of helping the churches and reaching out to immigrants in that area' (Migrant, male, lay). Thus, some Africans were sent to Mezzano, while others were sent to Bologna, Udine, and Bergamo. The project seemed to be fruitful: many of these churches were experiencing a decrease in membership and were rejuvenated by the presence of migrants. Their presence, however, was not without problems as I discuss later.

The Mezzano project borrowed its inspiration from the Palermo-Mezzano project, and went a step further with the appointment of a minister from Ghana to provide Ghanaians in the North-East with ad hoc pastoral care. As one of the research participants explained: 'without the 1990s project, the 2002 project [in the II District with the CEVAA] would not have happened. It was the group who asked for a Ghanaian minister'. Thus, the appointment of a minister from Ghana was the result of a need which had developed organically within the congregation; the church envisaged that the minister would 'look after' the big community of Ghanaians in the area and prevent them from leaving mainline churches for one of the Pentecostal, and/or Free Churches in the area.

The Mezzano project was managed by the Waldensian and Methodist Church, in partnership with the CEVAA, who had contacts with the Protestant Churches in Ghana and the Methodist Church in the UK who had contributed funds to the project. Like the Synod, the Mezzano project can also be divided into two main periods, the first from 2002 to 2008, and the second from 2009 to 2013, a division which corresponds to the tenures of the two ministers appointed by the project. The two ministers' duties included: to minister to the Ghanaians within the churches, reach out to other African migrants in the country, and act as mediators between Africans and Italians – be they ministers, churchgoers or church leaders – although this responsibility was not clearly specified in any official paper. All the

projects under the CEVAA were expected to appoint a working group with the task of assisting the minister and managing the overall project. However, in the case of the Mezzano project, as I explain below, the working group was not formed before the arrival of the first minister in 2002 and did not function properly until 2006; this delay was crucial in setting the tone of the project.

The first minister (2002-2008) basically worked alone from 2002 until 2006, although the plan was that he would work closely with his Italian colleague from the Parma church. However, this proved to be almost impossible as the Ghanaian minister did not speak Italian and the Italian priest had no English. Only in 2006 was a structure ensuring the working group's aims and objectives put in place, and is still functioning today. In 2006 the working group started to hold meetings every three months during which the minister in charge of the project presented a report of his work. Informants identified three main areas of work covered by the working group: a) support the Ghanaian minister, and take care of the practical aspects of the minister's job as well as shape the direction of the project; b) liaise with the non-Ghanaian component of the churches; c) redefine the project according to the needs and the changes occurring in the churches. According to the president of the working group, the emphasis shifted with the two ministers. For instance when the first minister arrived, the working group had yet to be established therefore it was difficult to redefine the project; furthermore the minister did not speak Italian, thus 'the link with the non-Ghanaian component of the churches was a priority with the first minister while, with the second, things have improved even if it still remains one of the key points of the project' (DB, Male, ordained). The second minister (2009 –) started his work with a functioning working group and a clear set of aims and objectives. However, as I demonstrate in the next sections, even in this case challenges emerged which are relevant to the debate on integration in churches.

In order to provide a more in-depth account of the structure of the Mezzano project, I now analyse the role and position of the Ghanaian ministers.

The Ghanaian ministers

The first Ghanaian minister who arrived in Mezzano in 2002 did not speak Italian. Paradoxically the Italian pastor with whom he had to work did not speak English.

Thus, without a clear job description and with little possibility to communicate with his Italian colleague to ask for advice and clarifications, he did his job according to his own skills and competences. Interviewees highlighted how he managed to gather a large number of Protestant Ghanaians in the North-East (under the umbrella of the Waldensian and Methodist Church).

> So he arrived without a clear idea of what people here expected from him, and without the right conditions to learn the language properly…and though he was located in Mezzano to minister to the Ghanaian Methodists… he gradually enlarged his job enormously … as he was called by Ghanaians all over Italy (Italian, male, ordained).

The Ghanaian minister himself described his work as 'to be mostly with the Africans': 'So all of the sudden the Church realised that they have a chunk of Africa community where culturally they were not able to reach them and therefore, to realistically continue the situation [their presence within and around the church], they made an appeal, a request to the Methodist Conference of the Methodist Church in Ghana that an African minister would be preferable to minister to the Africans and that was the reason why I have been brought here; and so I have been working principally among the African community' (Migrant, male, ordained).

The Ghanaian minister worked for the project from 2002 until 2008. By the end an evaluation was carried out, new directions were taken and the minister was asked to remain and to work with the Waldensian and Methodist Church in Pordenone, a city in the North-East, the first official ethnic church in Italy. This appointment, further analysed in the following sections, created several problems: firstly, it broke the rules of the CEVAA missionary project, according to which the minister was expected to go back to Ghana once the term of his office was over; and secondly, it legitimised the creation of ethnic churches – hitherto not acceptable in the framework of the wider project of Being Church Together.

Between 2008 and 2009, while waiting for the arrival of the second minister (a Presbyterian), the working group decided to clarify the project by establishing an intercultural team formed by two ministers, one from Italy and one from Ghana, working hand in hand. This decision was in line with the ethos of Being Church Together, more so than 'simply' providing pastoral care for migrants. An interviewee described the second minister in these terms: 'He is a Presbyterian,

does not speak twi, [116] he arrived with a working group already in place, he is studying Italian, he has a clear idea of what he has to do… therefore there are good chances that the work will be better centred on the 'being church together' philosophy' (Italian, male, ordained).

Despite the good intentions, the intercultural team never took off. The person chosen by the Tavola to work in tandem with the Minister from Ghana had studied in Africa and was fluent in English but he turned out not to be the right person, and declined the offer to be part of the project. An attempt was made to have an Italian minister to work with the Ghanaian minister, and the president of the CEVAA Italian committee and member of the accompanying group was recommended for this position, but the Tavola decided otherwise for unclear reasons. As time went by a replacement was never found and the Ghanaian minister had already established his way of working. Unlike his predecessor, the second Ghanaian minister planned to visit all Waldensian and Methodist Churches in the North-East, not only ethnic minority churches, and tried to organise thematic meetings with church members to discuss issues related to being church together.

This change in attitude was reflected in the way the minister described his work: 'I am a pastor (…) from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ghana. I have my masters in (…) the bible, globalisation and New Testament. (...) Right now I am the pastor in charge of the immigrants (....) in Italy and I am working with the Waldensian and Methodist church (....) between the faith of the Italians and the Ghanaians.' Despite working mainly with Ghanaians, he stressed the importance of collaborating with all the sections of the Church. In addition he saw himself as a 'mediator' between Italian and Ghanaian culture, though the fact of not being able to speak twi became a problem. Additionally, to become a successful mediator he would need to understand the position of the Protestant Churches in Italy which may take years.

In the next section I assess the outcomes of the project and analyse its more recent developments.

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[116] The principal native language of Ghana.

Assessment and self-assessment of the project

Project and Structure

Since the beginning of this research it became obvious that the aims and objectives of the Mezzano project were not clear. The project was referred to interchangeably as 'Project Mezzano', 'Project of the II District', 'Project of Being Church Together', and each label represented a different understanding. As the coordinator of the accompanying group highlighted:

> This project does not have a name that everybody uses and this shows ambiguity. Officially, or according to the CEVAA, this is the Waldensian Church's missionary project (...) According to some of the people involved in this project, including myself, the ethos, the methods and the object of the project correspond to what is called the process of 'Being Church Together' carried out by the Federation of Protestant Churches'... but this is ambiguous, as many people refer to this project as 'Being Church Together'... this generates confusion as in Italy Being Church Together is the project of the FCEI, and even if our project was totally in line with theirs, it remains a project initiated by one of the FCEI member churches but it is not the project of FCEI... In addition each organisation runs its own conferences and training programmes but the people involved are always the same... so when you ask someone to come to a meeting you get the answer 'but you could have coordinated better, I've just returned from a meeting with the same theme organised by the others last week!' And this is Protestantism in Italy, joy and pain to be few and all related to each other in some ways... (Italian, male, ordained)

The aims of the project were seemingly neither written down nor explicitly explained to the people directly involved. The same interviewee suggested that this was the main deficiency of the project. 'Well, nobody said it or wrote it down (...) it is not that people haven't discussed it, but it was not clear how to do it'. The main question was who was going to be the target group of the project: the Ghanaians in Mezzano or the churches in the area, as he explained:

> (...) either this project consisted in recruiting a minister from Ghana who is in charge of the Ghanaian Methodists in and around Mezzano or it's a

> project of the whole Church in the area where there is a presence of Africans, not only Ghanaians, which, in line with the Being Church Together ethos, tries to transform our church into something different where both indigenous and migrants feel that this is their church… with the inevitable mediations and compromises of course… there is no answer to this question or rather the answer changes, according to the person you are talking to… (Italian, male, ordained)

In 2013 the project of the II District of the Waldensian and Methodist Church was still ongoing. The second minister, who arrived in 2009, was re-confirmed in autumn 2012 until August 2015. To measure the project's success proved to be difficult due to the lack of clarity about aims and objectives, as highlighted by one of my informants:

> …the intentions were surely better and higher but there was insufficient clarity. I do not blame anybody of bad intentions but I blame everybody without exceptions for the lack of clarity (…) the stakeholders involved did not explain well their intentions and this is not the way you do a project (…) you discuss, then you write it down and everybody reads and makes comments/suggests changes (…) this has not been done… The project Mezzano is alright, but it remains local, the Ghanaians of Mezzano feel it's their project… (Italian, male, ordained)

As discussed above, upon his arrival the minister did not know exactly what to do and how to do it. The first working group provided logistic support but few directions. Despite being left alone, the minister worked constantly to gather and mentor as many Ghanaians as he could. The working group began its activities only in 2006, four years after the project started, and, as some informants pointed out, redefining the work of the minister, at that stage, required more energy than it would have if aims and objectives had been set up at the beginning. Moreover, this delayed start set the basis for the creation of ethnic minority churches within the Waldensian and Methodist Church. This is not negative in itself though it depends, as I demonstrate later, on the churches' role and on their relations with Italian Protestant Churches. In 2006 the working group outlined the structure of the project but had to wait until the new minister arrived before fine-tuning and finalising its goals and objectives, and specify the Minister's job.

While the arrival of the first minister from Ghana in 2002 was generally well received by Ghanaians as it fulfilled their wish to have a pastor from Africa, problems arose between him and 'first wave' Ghanaians who had arrived in Italy at the end of 1990s, especially those who had become actively involved in the mainline Protestant Churches, often as local preachers. An interviewee identified two main problems: one relating to the minister's approach and the other to the way he had chosen his collaborators.

> It created and it is still creating problems though less so now. With the arrival of the ministers, there was already a very strong and cohesive group of people who were working as local preachers... when the minister came he chose the persons with whom he wanted to work, unaware who the people who were working before his arrival were and who wanted him here... so many people who felt they were being pushed aside left for Pentecostal churches. This attitude has been corrected and it has changed now... we invited ministers thinking that with their arrival everything would go well but we saw that it did not - we saw that their methodology is totally different from what we experienced in our years here and it did not bear fruit for those here… but now it is not like this. (Migrant, male, lay)

However, while this represents the feelings of some Ghanaian leaders, both the first and second Ghanaian ministers shed a different light on the needs of Ghanaian believers; they also emphasised that their guidance was sought after from all over Italy, and valued because of their 'African approach to life' especially in relation to cultural and religious matters:

> I must say that sometimes some Africans from other parts of Italy hear of my presence, as an African, working among Africans, and sometimes they do travel distances upon distances to come to meet me (…) then sometimes there are cultural things, you know, cultural concerns, in relation to issues like marriage, funeral, even dreams (…) Sometimes when they come to me with cultural problems, knowing very well that they also have Italian pastors, I try as much as possible to encourage them to deal directly with their immediate Italian pastors, but some of them will tell me 'Pastor, I understand what you are trying to do, but pastor, you know the [gravity] and weight of my problems and I think that my Italian pastor may not be

> able to understand me culturally speaking, and therefore they might not be helpful culturally speaking. (…) That is not to say that they did not find the Italian pastors helpful, not at all. But to say that a certain level of a worldview it is like they want to see a fellow African. (Migrant, male, ordained)

Beyond cultural issues, the methodology used and the theological approach of the Ghanaian ministers merit specific mention as they are central to the challenges Protestant Churches face in the implementation of their integration policies. The data demonstrate that the presence of the Ghanaian ministers in Italy caused controversy among members of the church. An interviewee who, when I first interviewed him in 2010 had supported the idea of inviting a Pastor from Ghana, made a different argument when I interviewed him for the second time in 2013:

> What I would like to see is not having someone from Africa to do this project but someone who is already integrated... for instance X, if he becomes a pastor soon it would be great, he is integrated, he knows the language, he has been here for thirty years, he knows things; but you cannot bring someone from Africa who does not know what integration is... it is difficult for him, for the churches, for the pastors... (Migrant, male, lay)

This interviewee stressed that bringing different ministers from Africa who may stay in Italy for a few years and then move back was not going to benefit the project, as the person had to adjust to Italian society, learn the language, be trained in relation to the aims of the project, and once all of this was accomplished it was time to start all over again: 'I think that a person like him [the second minister] whose contract ends in 2015, cannot be sent back home, now is the time to work... as the person has to have the right tools.' (Migrant, male, lay)

The language issue cannot be underestimated. As I pointed out, the first minister worked mostly on his own initiative and language played a role in creating misunderstandings. The minister was the first to admit that his lack of Italian did not help in reaching out to the Italian component of the Church. He also said he had 'very few contacts with Italians apart from the Synod', demonstrating both the 'loneliness' of his job and the short-sighted approach of the church executive who thought that placing him side by side with an Italian minister would be enough to

enable him to learn the language and the tradition of Protestant Churches in Italy.

Despite the difficulties, however, interviewees agreed that the project was progressing well, albeit at a slow pace. According to the president of the working group, the most urgent challenge to address was churchgoers' preference for culturally homogeneous churches, corresponding to separate ethnic groups. Paradoxically, as an interviewee argued, 'the actual policy of the church allows separate development while constantly working towards creating more and more space for encounter between migrants and indigenous churchgoers. A key role is played by young people and some important steps need to be made towards intercultural collaboration without too many obstacles posed by adults... it is impossible to set a timeline, but it is clear that the project will go on for many years' (Italian, male, ordained).

Hitherto, my discussion of the structure and challenges of the Mezzano project concentrated on top down initiatives by the church itself. To complete the picture, I now analyse some of the unexpected outcomes of the project: namely the emergence of bottom-up initiatives by Ghanaian churchgoers themselves, which had repercussions on both the church and the integration process.

Ghanaian initiatives and self-organisation

Representing 45 per cent of the migrants within the Waldensian and Methodist Church, Ghanaians constitute a large component of the community and have organised themselves, setting up religious gatherings which bring together Ghanaians from different churches, mostly in the North-East, and reinforce cultural, social and familiar bonds. For many years these gatherings were held secretly with little publicity. Further examples of Ghanaians' self-organising were the Ghanaian Conventions (held on special occasions such as Christmas and Easter), the establishment of the Ghanaian Lay Movement Council, and the National Youth Council, which are discussed in more detail below.

The Conventions

The conventions are one day long worship events held twice a year in different places in the North of Italy. They started as bottom up activities responding to migrants' need to keep in contact with family and friends displaced in various

cities and to worship God in their own ways. The conventions were established at the beginning of 2000, and for years the Church was not aware of their existence. However, since beginning my research (2008), I have noticed an increasing tendency to make them more open and visible by, for instance, inviting Italian church leaders and pastors and by encouraging some Italian church members to attend. I personally attended four conventions, three at Easter and one at Christmas: with the exception of the latter, Italians' participation was rare.

> *This is the setting: a large capacity hall full of Ghanaians, a podium where ministers, church leaders and guests sit, like in a conference room. Basically all whites are on the podium with the exception of a family from Verona and me. The majority of whites are women – including the Moderator of the Waldensian and Methodist Church and the President of OPCEMI.* (Fieldnotes, Easter Convention, 2009)

A Convention is a worship practice lasting four to five hours, usually from 10:00 until 16:00, without a break. Most of the time the structure of the liturgy follows the traditional Methodist/Presbyterian liturgy, but the emphasis given to the various parts is different. For instance the worship begins with a 'Call to Worship' that instead of consisting of a prayer and a song, lasts for more than twenty minutes and features five to six hundred Ghanaians dancing across the hall: different male and female groups, such as the women fellowship, the youth, the men fellowship, the choir, usually take turns to dance. The meetings are attended by 500-700 Ghanaians and a handful of 'whites', as Ghanaians call indigenous churchgoers, mostly church leaders and ministers. The reasons for 'whites" low attendance are the length and the style of the worship and the language used.

> *We start by praying and dancing. If an indigenous Italian or a regular churchgoer entered the hall they would not understand we are in the middle of worship. It feels like being at a party to which I have not been invited, as I do not know the rules of conduct. I look around and with the exception of a few church leaders, an Italian family and myself are the only other non-Ghanaians in the hall. Despite not understanding the songs and prayers as they are mainly in twi, I join in the dancing in front of my chair trying to behave naturally. However, time seems never ending and the feeling of being out of place enters my mind. Not knowing what comes next makes me*

feel uncomfortable, especially in worship, where the certainty about the steps to be taken allows me to let my defences down and to live every moment as I am used to. (Fieldnotes, Easter Convention 2009)

There are two elements that make these worships hard to attend for an Italian: the length of the worship and the required fasting during lunchtime. I already mentioned that in recent years attempts were made to incorporate these worships within a mainstream setting. Thus the 2011 Christmas Convention was broadcasted on national television and the programme *Protestantesimo* dedicated an episode to the event, which was entitled 'Black Christmas'. As well as broadcasting the 'call to worship' the programme showed migrants travelling by bus to the convention and featured interviews with Italian and Ghanaian attendees on the process of being church together. However, to a certain extent the words used did not match the reality of the convention. The audience at the convention was almost exclusively made up by black Ghanaians with very few whites; in terms of timing and style it was an 'African type' of worship. Nonetheless the event was presented by the programme as an example of being church together: the presence of the Moderator and other Italian ministers seemingly attesting to this. It is clear that the goals of these conventions go beyond nurturing spiritual needs but rather reflect and address the need to reinforce cultural ties and maintain bonding relations with family and friends. The conventions raise several questions: do they occur as a result of a lack of acknowledgment by the local churches? Does it make sense to think of them as being church together? The Christmas and Easter conventions I attended had the clear function of providing migrants with spaces to reaffirm their ethnic identity and cultural values; furthermore, unlike *Protestantesimo*'s unproblematic portrayal, it is difficult to assess to what extent and in what ways they may become part of the process of being church together.

The Lay Movement Council

The Lay Movement Council officially started in 2010 during a critical time for the Waldensian and Methodist Church when there was a serious risk that the Italian and Ghanaian components of the church would split as a result of the debate on the possibility of blessing same sex couples, as I discussed previously. The president of the Lay Movement Council stressed that this group was established to act as mediator between the Church and the Ghanaian members. According to him,

mediation was needed because many Ghanaians did not express their opinion on certain matters in front of the 'whites':

> It begun in 2010, when the whole issue of blessing same sex couples arose... they wanted to leave the church... so I called everybody, because we wanted to help the churches and their big challenges. Once within the churches there were many rifts on banal things… as there were different cultures and traditions… The idea was to help the church and help those brothers who wanted to leave the church, who were confused [about some decisions and position of the Church] and to help pastors in churches to form the service teams (…). Since its establishment, we managed to solve all problems..(…) Many times Ghanaians are suspicious, they do not talk, you can do everything (and) they say yes, yes, but then they don't say a thing. LMC is an intermediate to help churches... unfortunately many people think that LMC wants to establish its own church but it is not true (…) they want to be together and not to split the church. (Migrant, male, lay)

Though the Lay Movement officially started in 2010, an 'informal' group composed of Ghanaian leaders, lay persons, and members of the Waldensian and Methodist Church, was already in place at least since 2000. The group, whose unofficial role was to monitor the Ghanaians in the Italian Churches and provide rules of conduct, remained secret until 2008-9 when the possibility of a parallel leadership within the church arose. By 'parallel leadership' I mean the existence of a parallel church council next to the official one, which dealt with all the matters related to Ghanaians, thus de facto undermining the official structure and the role of the minister. The president of the Lay Movement Council highlighted on various occasions the importance of the LMC's visibility and its useful role for the whole church.

The LMC is interesting in several ways. Firstly, it is a self-proclaimed group which asserts itself as the only mediation structure between Ghanaians and Italians despite not being acknowledged as such by the Waldensian and Methodist church. Secondly, Lay Movement Councils already exist in the Methodist tradition, although in this case the LMC is formed only by Ghanaians and thus it risks acting like the Tavola of the Ghanaians rather than offering mediation tools to the whole

Church. The Lay Movement Council president was the first to admit that Lay Movement Councils existed in other countries. However, when asked about the risk of becoming a tool for separation rather than mediation, he stressed the need to find the most suitable person for this job to avoid that risk and support the Church at best.

The National Youth Forum

The LMC was among the promoters of the setting up of the National Youth Forum, an organisation for Ghanaian youngsters. The idea was born out of Ghanaian parents' fear of seeing their children compromised by the attitudes and secularisation of young Italian people. According to some of them, Italian parents have lost control over their children and are not able to inspire and keep them in the church. Another reason was the desire to keep and transmit Ghanaian cultural and spiritual traditions to the young generation. The establishment of the National Youth Forum represented another challenge to mainline Protestant Churches as they already had an organisation for young people, FGEI (Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy), which had been working actively within the framework of being church together. The setting up of the Ghanaian youth council was seen as hindering the integration process especially because young people were encouraged to attend only the National Youth Forum and not the FGEI. As I was writing this research, attempts were made to solve this issue and find ways to bridge the two organisations by intensifying meetings and encounters and sharing strategies. As some interviewees stressed, 'the work with the young people is vital in terms of seeing what the church will be and what type of integration process they will put into practice'.

My review of the Synod's position on 'being church together', and my analysis of the main regional integration project, and its unintended outcomes, highlight the conflict between establishing an integrated church where Italians and migrants share equal spaces on the one hand, and migrants' preference for separate churches more 'tailored' to answer their worshipping, cultural and social needs on the other. To further illustrate the workings of the integration projects developed on a national level, I now look at the specific realities of two congregations – Bologna and Modena.

The experience of the churches of Bologna and Modena

> The Bologna church is one of the richest churches, in terms of resources, of gifts in Italy but also in Europe (...) It is also very difficult to manage...(...) but what I like is that this is a church which questions itself... it's a church where members, even if with difficulties, love their church .(Migrant, male, lay)

The Methodist Church in Bologna is considered a positive example of how an integrated church should be; however, as I argue in this section, during my fieldwork I noticed some discrepancies between this perception and the reality on the ground. As regards the composition of the church, in 2011 it had 175 members; if one also counts the number of people who are affiliated to the church or involved in its activities on a sporadic basis, the number rises to 290 persons. The average number of people attending Sunday services is about 70-90. Roughly twenty different nationalities are represented among the congregation, with the major migrant groups being the Ghanaians and the Cameroonians. These two groups have very different profiles: while the former is composed mainly of workers or jobseekers, the latter consists mostly of university students. Over the years both groups have experienced high turnover, as people moved to other places for work or study or went back to their countries of origin. The Methodist Church in Bologna, historically a middle-class mainline Protestant Church, has been challenged, and to a certain extent modified, by the arrival of migrants in the last fifteen years. Unlike other churches in the North-East, such as Brescia and Verona, it had not experienced a fast decrease in membership before the arrival of migrants; on the contrary, within the mainline Protestant landscape it had always been a lively community with a number of international members as highlighted by their former minister:

> Already at the end of the 1800s there were many members who were not Italians; we are talking about a class of people like merchants and diplomats belonging to the Protestant tradition who came to Bologna for work. Along the years those presences were consolidated by the fact that Bologna hosts a university well known in Europe, therefore many Protestants who came here joined our church (...) and this is evident even

> looking at the surnames of our members (…) Obviously when twenty years ago there was the arrival of people from other continents – Africa, Asia and Latin America – it was not any more about the familiar strangers that we used to know…both in terms of social status and language…who were able to speak Italian and belonged to the middle – high class. (Italian, male, ordained)

The minister stressed the slow but consistent changes he witnessed during his mandate [2005-2010]: 'the church has not been turned upside down', but it has become a home for migrants coming from different traditions and one can see them mixing. According to the pastor, the positive experience of the church in Bologna owed both to its long history of 'welcoming diversity' and to the gradual pace of the integration process. In his opinion difficulties were more likely to arise when a strong indigenous group sits next to a migrant one, whose members come from the same area, and share the same language and culture – as it is the case for a number of churches in the North-East (Verona, Brescia, Parma): 'I think it is more difficult to find compromises or possibilities of getting to know each other better….but if there are more groups it's better and everybody becomes a small part of the community'. (Italian, male, ordained)

However, the scenario has changed since the interview with the minister (in year 2008). First of all a new and younger minister was appointed; secondly in autumn 2011 the Tavola decided to pair the minister with a colleague from Ghana: the two were expected to form an intercultural team and to work with the Churches of Bologna and Modena. However, at the time of writing (2013), the team was not functioning as planned. In addition, during my observation I noticed an increase in activities with non-Italian characteristics and an invisible division between the Ghanaian component of the community and everybody else. This tendency was already evident in the summer of 2011, but was consolidated with the arrival of the Ghanaian minister.

Among the activities organised by the church there are several bible studies, a Sunday school for children, confirmation classes for teenagers and adults, a youth group; there are also activities organised in association with other Christian denominations such as study groups and conferences and other activities involving lay groups. Although these activities are open to anyone who may wish to attend,

as advertised each Sunday during the worship, there seems to be a tacit understanding that some activities are for Ghanaians and others for the rest of the community. The example of the bible study is emblematic in this regard. The minister usually organises three bible studies, two in members' houses and one in church. One of these was in English and attended mainly by Ghanaians: more recently this study group started to use twi – de facto cutting out those not speaking this language.

> Soon after I arrived I noticed that, despite the intentions, the majority of the activities seemed to bear an invisible label: some of them were attended by Africans, and some by Italians and other migrants; then you had some positive "cross-border" attendants, people purposefully ignoring these invisible labels. It was clear that we had to work in the direction of supporting and increasing this group of people, while at the same time creating "new" activities which did not bear any ethnic label. However, since the establishment of the "intercultural team" the "cross-bordering" has stopped completely: Italians and other migrants cannot take part in activities conducted in twi, while Ghanaians seem to have lost any interest in whatever activity not tailored exclusively for them. And whatever new activity you can come up with, it will be disregarded if it doesn't arise from the Ghanaian pastor. They are becoming a more and more independent church within our church. (Italian, male, ordained)

Sunday worship remains the only weekly moment shared by all church members. However, the morning worship is not as linear as one may think. Before the common service there is a space called the 'Prayer Tower' (Bernardini, 2013) which lasts just over an hour: during this time Ghanaians recite loud, and long prayers, people attending prayer dance and walk using all the church space without an apparent scheme. The main service lasts one hour, extending to one hour and a half on special occasions, and has a classical Italian liturgy. In this regard I was surprised and to a certain extent disappointed when I first attended the worship in Bologna: my expectations were high as Bologna is known for being one of the best examples of being church together. The Church was multicultural but the service remained very Italian as there was no space for different liturgical sensibilities, with the only – small – exceptions of the bible readings also done in English, and

the international choir during the offertory. Since I moved to Bologna and started the observation the liturgy has changed, trying to incorporate elements from various backgrounds. As the minister highlighted: 'We are trying to make the service more participatory and lively… not only the choir that sings for five minutes during the offertory… we have twenty nationalities in our church, and therefore at least twenty liturgical traditions: it is not clear why we worship exclusively according to only one of them'. After the regular service and a short moment for informal greetings, the Africans, mainly Ghanaians, continue their worship and praise through songs, prayers and an English summary of the sermon. This part of the worship is held in English.

The multiculturality of the church is reflected also in the composition of the church council. In 2012 the council included two members from Ghana, one of whom was the vice-president, one from Cameroon, one from the USA, one from Madagascar and another from Croatia.

Despite being a multicultural church, very rich in terms of gifts and resources and 'always ready to question itself', as an interviewee highlighted, members also reflected on the difficulties they faced because of what was perceived as the 'coldness' and close-knit character of the community:

> This church can be very cold and difficult to get in, I have been coming to church for the past 6-9 years and until recently people still ask me whether I was new. (Migrant, female, lay)
>
> I remember an episode with one person - who is not here anymore - that if you sat next to her she would move somewhere else. It was a very closed church... but with my character, my way of doing, people loved me, and then I was young, alone... people considered me like their son... when we wanted to introduce the singing with drums we had to do a church assembly but what I like is that this is a church which questions itself... (…) [people] love their church... think that it was the coldest church I knew... always silence... for me the church has changed a lot. (Migrant, male, lay)
>
> Regarding my experience here in Bologna…before it was difficult, it was difficult even to greet and be greeted, there were people who did not come near me and when you greeted them they pretended not to see you…With

> the pastor it was different, he noticed all these things… his home was welcoming and he hosted us. (…) There are members who are more open but when migrants, I think of Nigerians, who came, saw the atmosphere, the attitude of some people, then the difficulties with the language, if you cannot express yourself in Italian and you do not understand the language…thus many left… (Migrant, female, lay)
>
> I remember when one time we take communion with one cup, the bread we distribute and the last coming talked to the man... that we were going to bring some illness to the church... that was very painful. So they decided to buy the little cups... but now I thank god that everything is ok, it's fine. Changes are coming, are coming... (Migrant, female, lay)

These quotes make it evident that often the first impression sets the tone for the way migrants see and interact with the church, and this is an experience common to many migrant believers in different European countries (Jackson and Passarelli, 2008; Passarelli, 2010). The fact that the community was perceived as cold and close-knit contributed to distance many migrants who did not feel welcomed and thus opted for other churches. On a more positive note, almost all the interviewees stressed that, despite a more or less difficult start, they had witnessed a change in the church and that it had become more welcoming and inclusive.

If Bologna provides the example of a traditionally 'close-knit' church which undertook a process of change and 'opened its heart' to migrant worshippers, the church in Modena represents another way of being church together. Taken together, these case studies perfectly exemplify the conflicts and tensions inherent to the Church's integration strategies.

A window on Modena

According to the bylaws of the Waldensian Church, the church in Modena is considered a diaspora group under the Bologna church, and for this reason it shares the same minister. If Bologna represents an example of a multicultural church where migrants have enriched the already varied profile of churchgoers, Modena is an example of a very small community that, all of a sudden, witnessed the arrival of between thirty to forty Ghanaian members. Until 2008 the community was composed of ten to fifteen members who met four times a year for

their Sunday worship only.

It is interesting to notice that although the Modena church already had some people with migrant backgrounds, for instance from Madagascar, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Canada, Cameroon, the arrival at once of a sizeable and ethnically homogeneous group of newcomers was perceived as a challenge. In addition, the place of worship, a garage which was well maintained but offered limited space, was no longer suitable for the newly enlarged group; the garage had no dedicated room for children to play or attend Sunday school. After staying for one year, in 2009 the Ghanaians decided to look for a place on their own and rented a factory in the suburbs and since then the Methodist community in Modena has two places of worship. In this regard the minister highlighted that this situation had repercussions on the life of the churches of Bologna and Modena and on the whole process of being church together:

> As soon as it was clear that the group was with us to stay, the Bologna church started to look for a more appropriate place of worship; however, in different cultures there is a different understanding of what an "appropriate" space would be, and in the church's understanding there was a long list of criteria (not shared by the Ghanaian group) which made the search long and difficult. When the group saw that the search did not produce a quick result, they simply decided to rent their own space, without informing either the local or the national church (which is responsible for the administration of buildings). This bore a long list of negative consequences on many levels. (Italian, male, ordained)

Among the negative consequences the minister underlined that the building chosen did not have the necessary legal requirements to be a place for worship and therefore the national church refused to take charge of the 'very high rent' for the building. The group is now paying the rent, and thus is not able to contribute financially to the life of the church, which, according to the minister, 'is an important part in an integration process, as it promotes ownership of the church'. Furthermore, the building is an industrial warehouse, very difficult to reach, where the group feels perfectly comfortable, but where other members of the church find it very difficult to worship:

> The separation saved the two groups from the fatigue of compromising in

> order to live and worship together: now one worships happily in Italian, the other worships happily in *twi*, and it is very difficult for both to explain why they should have (every now and then) common moments of worship and church life, and to create them: you cannot ask the Ghanaians to visit the Italians because the place is too small, and when you ask the Italians to visit the Ghanaians you know you are asking them to go and worship for three hours in a very far, uncomfortable and noisy place in a language they don't understand a word of.
>
> Some positive steps have been taken, and we have developed a common liturgy which positively compromises the different liturgical traditions and languages; however, the ironic situation is that one group asks 'why should we use it if they don't come?', and the other asks 'why should we go if they don't use it?' (Italian, male, ordained)

The new Ghanaian church grew in number and in 2012 counted around 80 adult members, despite the fact that, with the economic crisis, many people moved elsewhere in Italy or Europe or went back to Ghana. The worship is held mainly in twi with some parts in English; Italian is not used, with the only exception of the pastor preaching in Italian (with translation) when he is there; if there are Italians attending, the youngsters are asked to sit next to them and translate. The service starts officially at 10:30 but the real worship begins at 11:00 or even 11:30 and it lasts three to four hours. When I entered the church for the first time I hardly saw any familiar element in the set-up of the space and in the structure of the liturgy. Having attended various conventions, I had some rough idea of the order for the liturgy, but the sections dedicated to songs and dances seemed not to follow any precise scheme. I could not stop wondering whether this was a Methodist or a Pentecostal service; whether this was the way Methodist worships are held in Ghana and how Ghanaians must feel entering and attending an Italian service.

The arrival of a young minister in summer 2010 became the subject of discussions and potential obstacles not only because of his young age, but because of his long hair, his earring, the fact he smoked and, last but not least, held 'Western' views on ethical subjects such as sexuality, marriage, blessings, etc. The young Minister himself explained that he was indeed questioned on many of these subjects, yet, he added, they also became an opportunity for intercultural dialogue and for

deepening the understanding of each other's views and spirituality:

> I think it was and is important for them to see my readiness to compromise on some aspects in order to respond to their cultural needs – even though I had and still have to keep balancing that, in order not to give the idea that I am ready to renounce to my own culture, as this leads easily to their conclusion that "their culture is the right one".

Together with this, 'my efforts to be present in the life of the group played a very important role', the minister stressed. His predecessor was close to retirement; he simply did not have the energy to take care of the group, and would go there only every now and then to preach. 'So, when they saw that the new pastor was much more present, and spent time and energies to work and plan together with them for the future, the growth of the group and its integration in the life of the wider church, this meant a lot to them and was stronger than any possible cultural difference'.

Since the establishment of the 'intercultural team', however, the minister felt that to a certain extent he had lost some of that recognition: 'my colleague does not have the language tools, neither is he interested in serving the Italian speaking part of the church, which is the bigger one. The result is that he can only be of use in this group, and consequently I have to take care of all the rest and leave this group to him. Many brothers and sisters have complained about my absence lately, telling me 'thank you for sending us a Ghanaian pastor, but we came to you because we wanted to be church with the Italians. It is quite clear that my presence was the only concrete symbol of a possible future integrated church, and now that symbol has been taken away from them'.

In the next section I move on to analyse how the integration policies of the Waldensian and Methodist Church at the national level were implemented locally by the churches in Bologna and Modena.

The impact of national policies within the churches

As described above, the Church – on a national level – set up tools to enable the construction of integrated churches through the Mezzano project and the intercultural training courses PFIPL and LINFA. In which way have these been

useful for Bologna and Modena? To start with, the Mezzano project, at least during its first phase (corresponding to the first minister's tenure) had little impact on the church as a whole, apart from the participation of the Ghanaian component of the church in the Ghanaian conventions, which cannot be seen as a step towards integrated churches. The situation changed slightly with the second minister, who came to Bologna and Modena on different occasions: for instance in Bologna he organised, in cooperation with the local minister, an afternoon seminar on being church together, that was well attended by both migrant and indigenous churchgoers; in Modena he and his Italian colleague ran a training course for leaders on leadership and church structure – training especially needed as in Modena there were several leaders who were not active church-members in their country of origin and therefore they sometimes had a different understanding of leadership and church structure. It is important to point out that on both occasions the Ghanaian minister stressed the importance of being church together without losing one's identity and traditions and warned against the danger of following in the footsteps of secularised Europeans. The ministers' attitude is at times ambivalent: it shows a willingness to engage in the integration process, although it is not possible to state if this comes from sharing the project's aim or out of a sense of duty; and at the same time it is impossible not to sense a sort of slight condemnation for the religious lassitude of their Italian counterparts. Such ambivalence has also emerged in the Irish case.

When asked about the impact of these training courses, the Italian minister highlighted the ongoing challenges while stressing their importance at the local and national levels; interestingly, he was also critical of the Ghanaian minister's approach:

> Concerning trainings, many people from here participated, but they almost never came home with the will or even the conscience that they are expected to disseminate what they have learned at the local level. Concerning the pastor of the Mezzano project, his only contribution to our church was the training course for leaders on leadership and church structure; unfortunately, he tended very much to train people on the Ghanaian understanding of leadership and church structure! That's quite odd from someone whose ministry is to promote integration. So yes, these

> top-down tools have had very little valuable impact on our local level. But I want to be clear: I think the ideas were and are good, but there are often failures in the implementation, transforming these good ideas in the very thing they want to avoid. (Italian, male ordained)

Since the beginning of 2000 the Bologna church has had a local 'being church together' committee whose role is organising different activities aimed at improving the inclusiveness of the church. Many members remembered in particular the community day on the theme of prayers, healing and miracles during which everyone was able to share their visions and understandings on very intimate topics. The committee, however, lost momentum and stopped its meetings in 2010:

> I think the church in Bologna had its golden age of integration, when its reputation as a 'model of integration' was born, when the initiatives came from the grassroots level, especially with its ECI local committee: when you had committed and dedicated church members proposing and putting into practice experiences of integration. There's a big difference between that time when those people wanted to attend the national ECI seminars in order to get tools to improve local work already going on, and today's trainings where we receive a phone call from above telling us 'you have to send someone'. (Italian, male ordained)

The other national policy that had a significant impact on the life of the Bologna and Modena churches was the decision to set up the intercultural team and to place a Ghanaian minister besides an Italian one – the third arrived in 2009 in Rome. The project which started in January 2012 and was still ongoing when I finished this research, envisaged, among other things, that the Italian and the Ghanaian ministers would work together with a common vision of an integrated church rather than separately, each serving 'his own' community . However, as analysed above, the project did not evolve as expected.

Some of these problems were pointed out by the various actors involved, first and foremost the Italian minister. The language barrier was one of the problems. It was clear that the level of Italian possessed by the Ghanaian pastor was not sufficient to enable him to serve the whole church. Trying to respond to the church's concerns the national board sent him to work for some months in a region with very few

migrants, trusting that this would force him to learn Italian. When he arrived in Bologna, however, his Italian had not improved. Thus, the church provided him with private tuition, but still there was no visible improvement. According to the Italian minister, this indicated a lack of will; the Ghanaian minister probably did not see learning Italian as a priority for his ministry. Beside the language barrier there were difficulties in relation to how best transpose into practice the aim of developing integrated congregations. In this regard the Italian minister stressed that the uncertain behaviour of his Ghanaian colleague jeopardised the integration process in the Bologna and Modena churches:

> Then we said 'Ok, you will have to focus on the parts of the ministry that can be done in English, but you can still work in English towards integration'. However, after countless meetings, reports and so on, it became evident that, besides adhering to the abstract concept of 'being church together' there was no will whatsoever to try and be an active agent of the concrete implementation of that concept. Therefore we ended up precisely in the situation we and the whole project wanted to avoid: having an Italian pastor for the Italians and the other migrants, pushing in the direction of an integrated church, and a Ghanaian one for the Ghanaians, de facto pulling in the opposite direction through passivity. (Italian, male ordained)

Similar tensions arose between 2011 and summer 2012 among the youth who appeared to be divided: the Ghanaians all on one side and the indigenous, including other migrants, on the other. This division mirrored the challenges faced by the youth at the national level where the setting up of the National Youth Council jeopardised the participation of young people in the activities of the Federation of Protestant Youth in Italy (FGEI). Young Ghanaians were encouraged to participate in the activities of the NYC, made up exclusively of Ghanaians, and their activities were monitored and to a certain extent controlled by the Lay Movement Council and by the Ghanaians ministers.

Between and beyond policies

The experiences of the minister in Bologna and Modena reflect the tiredness and frustration experienced by many Italian ministers involved in multicultural and ethnic congregations, an issue which emerged also during recent debates in the Synod (2010, 2011, 2012) and other church meetings. An important tool of analysis in this regard is the issue of *Protestantismo* (2011), the magazine of the Waldensian Theological Faculty, dedicated to 'Growing together to be church: the challenges of intercultural churches'.

Reservations and doubts are expressed not only by ministers, but also by church members; as I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter the honeymoon is over and churches are facing the everyday reality of the intercultural encounter. Issues related to models of leadership, decision making processes, ethics, and theology are at the core of the debates at local, regional and national levels. One interviewee (Italian, male ordained) highlighted that, in his view, Italians were not really ready to engage with the process of transformation required to realise integrated churches. He added that the majority of the Italians were happy with the situation as it was, and they sometimes saw the emphasis and importance of being church together as an exaggeration from above: 'Perhaps what the Italian [churchgoers] want is clear...at most multicultural churches, not intercultural ones'. He was, however, not so negative about the future and thought that the church was in the middle of a long journey and there was still much work to be done to realise the objective of intercultural integrated churches.

Italian ministers were not the only one to express feelings of frustration and tiredness in relation to the process of being church together; migrants I spoke to, especially Ghanaians, very often felt the same though for different reasons. The majority of Ghanaians, who arrived with the first waves during the late 1990s and early 2000, stayed within the framework of mainline Protestant Churches; they found jobs, regularised their situations, and often with the help of the church, learned the language. In general first wave migrants promoted and supported the being church together project. However, the situation is different for people who arrived later: they do not speak Italian, many of them are looking for jobs and for permanent residency papers. When it comes to participation in churches, recent

migrants have either set up separate groups within the church or have established 'ethnic' minority congregations. In addition, as analysed in chapters II and V, belonging to the same confession does not mean sharing the same religious paradigm or spiritual needs; indeed the role that the church plays in the lives of migrants and Italians can be very different.

During the migration journey religion can function as a bridge that links the old and the new home (e.g., Jenkins, 2002; Ugba, 2007a; Warner, 2008; Levitt, 2009) and the data demonstrate that migrants look for a church as soon as the arrive in Italy and, if they do not find it, they establish one. An interviewee stressed that for him finding the Waldensian Church was equal to finding a new family who welcomed him and supported him in finding his feet and starting his new life in Italy. [117] Furthermore, for many migrants, especially those who arrive as young adults, religion acquires major importance after migration (see Hirschman 2007 on the USA) and, in some cases, they become active in church even if they did not always have connections with historical Protestant Churches in the country of origin (Passarelli, 2011, 2013).

The pattern of forming ethnic minority churches within the Protestant Churches in Italy is strong among Ghanaian migrants. Many of them left Ghana while still young and, when in Italy, they try to reproduce the church pattern they were used to in their own country. However while churches in Ghana underwent changes during the past twenty years, migrants tend to reproduce a type of church that no longer exists in Ghana, but is rather the result of their needs; the notion of an 'ideal church' is at times at odds with the Italian church.

This research shows that churches are committed to supporting migrants spiritually and materially, but sometimes miss their target as migrants themselves have needs not met by the way churches design integration projects. The church in Bologna tries to respond to the migrants' practical needs by helping them to regularise their legal status, find jobs and houses. By contrast, the church in Modena, especially the newly formed ethnic minority church, focuses on responding to the religious

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[117] However, there is a difference between those migrants who arrived with the very first waves, who did not have ethnic ties in the country, and those arrived recently who, upon arrival, already had a big 'ethnic' community within and outside the church.

needs of its members by valuing their mother tongue, songs and worship style. However neither of the two seems able to provide both bonding and bridging ties to all their churchgoers.

An informant (Italian, male, lay) stressed that when working towards the creation of intercultural and integrated churches people have to face and somehow overcome human nature: 'If we follow our instincts we will only choose to be with similar people like us… however the beauty of the church and Christ's teaching lies in the fact that we are asked to go against the ties, against nature and to cross the borders to meet, welcome and befriend the other'. This discourse holds true also if one considers the make-up of the congregations in Italy which gather people from different backgrounds, not only in relation to their countries of origin but also in relation to their social status. As described in chapter VI, in the majority of Protestant Churches in Italy working class people sit next to the bourgeoisie in the assembly as well as in the decision making body of the church.

Finally, different cultural and spiritual sensitivities are not the only factors to impact on the integration process. The social status and class of migrants is equally important. Migrants themselves describe the new waves of newcomers as not very educated, resulting in major difficulties in learning Italian and in understanding the long and complicated sermons by the Italian ministers. These are the people who are more likely to favour the creation of ethnic congregations and wish to reproduce the church they left behind in their country.

Conclusion

In this chapter I analysed the integration approach of mainline Protestant Churches, and the specific strategies and projects put in place by the Waldensian and Methodist Church, assessing their impact at the local level. In terms of policies, at the national level, especially through the work of the ECI Commission, the direction was to work towards integrated rather than separate churches. However, each single denomination developed its own projects which were not always in line with that approach. While the Baptist Church was open from the beginning to the possibility that migrant groups would establish their own Baptist churches and that these would become part of the Union of the Baptist Churches in

Italy (UCEBI), the Waldensian and Methodist Church tried as long as it could to avoid the creation of ethnic minority congregations. Having said that, the Waldensian and Methodist Church, through the Mezzano project and the appointment of Ghanaian ministers, inadvertently set the basis for the creation of Ghanaian churches. Indeed, seven Ghanaian ethnic minority churches have become or are in the process of becoming official churches within the Waldensian and Methodist Church thanks to the work of the Ghanaian pastors in the North-East.

As I pointed out in chapter II and V, belonging to a cultural/ethnic group does not automatically makes a person an expert on cultural mediation issues that may affect his/her own group: being a Ghanaian minister does not mean that a person will be able to act as a bridge builder between Italians and Ghanaians. Coming to Italy without having any prior experience of the country and without being familiar with the history of Protestantism in Italy, especially the position of minority churches in the Italian context, meant that these pastors were unable to understand the choices of the church in matters concerning ethical issues, relations with the State, and secularism in school. The church's stance on these issues was interpreted by the Ghanaian ministers as a sign of secularisation and as a departure from true Christianity, a point I elaborate further in the conclusion.

At the regional level, the Mezzano project started as a bottom-up initiative of the Palermo and Mezzano communities, and later became institutionalised and enlarged by the national Church. However, as I emphasised, the lack of proper planning created misunderstandings between the Italian and the Ghanaian ministers. The presence of Ghanaian ministers also posed challenges to the project as they did not necessarily understand or agree with the model of integration proposed by the Church.

The Mezzano project evolved from the local community's need to provide Ghanaians with culturally sensitive models of pastoral care, a need which the church intercepted and sought to address. However, the church's goodwill was not sufficient to guarantee the desired outcomes: misunderstandings and bad planning jeopardised the project and resulted in unintended consequences. It is important to highlight, however, that the Ghanaian ministers cannot be blamed for the project's shortcomings. As my data show, the Mezzano project did not define its aims and

objectives clearly, which on the one hand left the Ghanaian ministers no alternative but to work on their own and, on the other, reinforced the confusion between the Mezzano project and the one led by the FCEI under the title of Being Church Together. The lack of clarity was not only a matter of confusing labels, but also attested to different approaches to integration as discussed throughout the chapter.

The next chapter concludes the thesis by comparing the integration projects of Protestant churches in Ireland and Italy. It highlights the similarities and differences in their integration approaches and how these impacted on the way challenges were addressed. The conclusion also draws the implications of the study and points to avenues of further research.

Chapter VIII

Conclusion: Going beyond welcoming the strangers

Introduction

I began this thesis with two quotes from the Bible as they represent the theological narrative of 'welcoming the stranger' adopted by Protestant churches. Very early on I made the distinction between 'welcoming the stranger' in society – which may apply to all migrants regardless of their religious background – and 'welcoming the stranger' in churches – which refers more specifically to migrant churchgoers. The latter discourse provides the background to understanding the integration strategies developed by Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy, the object of this study.

While analysing integration policies and practices in Protestant Churches, I problematised the figure of the stranger highlighting the ambiguities underlying the adoption of this trope both in society and in churches. Furthermore, drawing on theories of identity, belonging and community construction, I outlined the complexity of the relationship between Irishness/Italianness and Protestantism and consequently between Irish/Italian and migrant Protestants.

In this concluding chapter I discuss the challenges that emerged from the two case studies, reviewing the original research questions that drove this study and suggesting avenues for further research. This chapter also analyses similarities and differences between integration strategies in Ireland and Italy, discussed in chapters V and VII, and summarises the findings, suggesting a typology of churches -monocultural, multi-cultural, intercultural, 'ethnic'- to describe the congregations encountered during the fieldwork. I conclude by identifying the limitations of this study and point to avenues of further research.

Between and beyond policies

The four main research questions that have driven this study are: How does religious belonging change in a new setting? What type of changes does migrants' inclusion bring to churches? Are these changes instances of 'successful' integration practices? What type of ties (social and religious) can churches offer to newcomers?

These questions helped me to analyse integration policies and practices in Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy while taking into consideration migrants' responses to such policies and practices. Despite the fact that the integration projects I studied were defined in cooperation and/or consultation with migrant leaders in the churches, some of the gaps between policies and practices, which were already emerging at the start of my research, such as the difficulties within the Discovery Project in Ireland and the increased number of 'ethnic-minority' churches among the Waldensian and Methodist churches, suggested the need to look in more depth at issues affecting migrants' participation in churches. In addition to the four main original research questions, other relevant themes, such as the issue of leadership and participation in churches, theology and ethics, power relations between migrant and indigenous churchgoers, emerged during the research and these additional themes provided the background for my analysis, even though they were not explicitly analysed.

How does religious belonging change in the new setting?

Based on the findings of the Irish and Italian case studies it can be argued that religious belonging changes in the new setting and that it is not unusual for migrants to become more religious and/or more active after the migratory journey and to shift religious affiliations once in the new settings.

According to Levitt and Schiller (2007: 206), 'transnational migrants often use religion to create alternative geographies that may fall within national boundaries, transcend but coexist with them, or create new spaces that, for some individuals, are more meaningful and inspire stronger loyalties than politically-defined terrains'. Furthermore, it is not unusual for religious beliefs to become stronger after immigration as described by Hirschman (2007), and discussed in chapter II.

In Italy the Ghanaians who became active members or leaders in their congregations did not always have connections with historical churches in their country of origin (Passarelli, 2011, 2013). [118] Ugba argues that for some migrants being active, playing a role in church often 'compensates for the lack of recognition or the diminished social status that they experience in the larger society' (2007a: 178). He further adds that 'the acceptance and recognition members find in these churches help to restore the sense of self-worth they had experienced in their home countries' (Ugba, 2007a: 178).

The denominational shift enacted by migrants in the new settings has been at the centre of recent sociological research (e.g., Levitt, 2007; Ugba, 2009; Lucà-Trombetta, 2011; Passarelli, 2010, 2013; Naso, 2013). This shift has been observed in both case studies. In Ireland it was more evident as many of the Nigerian families who attended St. George and St. Thomas were members of Pentecostal Churches and returned to the mainline church for special and official occasions. Hence, they maintained a link with both churches, as discussed below. There is evidence of denominational shift also in Italy: research on African Pentecostal churches shows that most of their members attended a mainline Protestant Church before emigrating (Ugba, 2009; Di Sanzio and Maggio, 2010; Lucà-Trombetta, 2011). Shifts in denominational preference are due to a number of reasons, including disappointment and disillusion with practices found in churches in Europe; and the need to reinforce identitarian ties among people of the same ethnic or national group. These two points are further clarified in the next section where I discuss the second research question.

What type of change does migrants' inclusion bring to churches?

Measuring changes was not an easy task: in fact I realised very soon both the challenges brought up by this question and the impossibility of addressing them fully. However, I was able to observe a number of changes that emerged during my fieldwork. The most obvious change in both countries was in the composition of

[118] This situation, however, raises a number of issues in relation to their understanding of church structure, leadership and participation. The fact that some of the leaders are not familiar with these issues creates difficult relations with Italian Protestant churches. Very often these migrants became leaders without an election and they see their role as lasting as long as they want to (Passarelli, 2011).

the congregations, evidenced by migrants' presence at Sunday service and by their participation in the worship, although, as I discussed in chapters V and VII, this varied according to the churches and changed over time.

Another evident change I observed was in the liturgy. The plurality of languages used in the Italian churches I studied during services is a case in point; however it also raises some questions: how many languages should be used? If in one congregation there are ten nationalities, how to choose which languages to include in the service? (Passarelli, 2011, 2013). In some congregations, migrants have brought changes into the 'welcome and praise' liturgical moment, inserting singing and dancing. In European Protestant liturgical culture physicality and body language are not given much space and dancing is not seen as appropriate during the service. By contrast from an African perspective dancing is an important component of praising and giving thanks to the Lord. The stillness of the Italian and Irish members is often perceived by migrants, at least at first, as coldness and lack of spirituality. As already pointed out, however, the amount of time devoted to singing and dancing varies enormously from congregation to congregation.

Even though analysing the African Christian Diaspora in Europe was beyond the scope of this thesis, my data demonstrates that the 'austerity' of many Protestant denominations in Europe differs from and tends to clash with the vivacity and the 'choreutic and musical symbolism' (De Martino, 1987) of the African Protestant experience. Interestingly I found many common points between the expressive manifestations of African Christianity and syncretic forms of Catholicism in Southern Italy (De Martino, 1958) as I mentioned in chapter VI.

Some other aspects of migrants' participation did not bring about change, but rather challenged the way of being church for Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy. For instance, African ministers in both countries questioned the secularisation of Protestant Churches in Europe without considering the historical contexts in which the Churches' position *vis-à-vis* the state developed, as analysed in chapter IV and VI. On the other hand, Protestant Churches often assume that by belonging to the same denomination migrants automatically share their symbolic religious paradigm, an assumption that the data presented in this thesis largely refutes.

Are these changes considered as instances of 'successful' integration practices?

Answering this question requires a deeper analysis of the question itself. First of all according to whom should these changes be considered successful or not? Should they be assessed by migrants, indigenous churchgoers, or those stakeholders involved in developing integration strategies? During the research it became clear to me that in order to address this question I had to approach it from two perspectives: the first provided by the data emerging from the fieldwork and interviews, and the second provided by the theories of community and belonging employed and analysed in chapter II.

Based on the changes I observed and the data that emerged from the interviews it is possible to state that Churches have taken positive steps towards the inclusion of migrants through promoting activities such as the Discovery services of the Church of Ireland or the intercultural training for local preachers of the Waldensian Church. However, to borrow the expression used by one of my interviewees, 'we need to go beyond the '3Ds – Dance, Dress and Dish'. Creating integrated churches involves a much deeper, transformative and reflective process which calls into questions taken for granted assumptions about, among other things, what constitutes a community, or how sameness and diversity are constructed. It is precisely in relation to these questions that theories of identity, community, and belonging can provide important insights. Once analysed through this theoretical prism, the visions, practices and outcomes of the subjects of the two case studies show that churches as communities tend to aggregate rather than integrate (Cohen, 1985) as discussed throughout this thesis; churches also tend to share the same symbolic paradigm (Jenkins, 2004) and the same 'sense of things' which I define as religious *habitus*.

What type of ties (social and religious) can churches offer to newcomers?

The services offered to migrants by churches or church-related agencies, from providing primary needs such as food, clothes and shelter, to supporting migrants in regularising their status, finding employment and establishing a network of friends and acquaintances, are vital for their integration process and for re-starting life in the new country as analysed in chapter II, V and VII.

However, the possibility of availing of such services may not be a sufficient reason for migrants to remain in an established congregation and become active within it. Many migrants who join established churches often become disillusioned. According to Gerloff, 'many black Christians who were members of the historic churches in their homelands, stayed away from their original denominations and joined independent congregations who provided them precisely with that kind of identity, spiritual belonging and opportunity for sharing which is crucial for a people's sense of dignity' (1980: 9).

The main dilemma when it comes to migrants' church attendance is choosing between black- and migrant-led churches and historical churches. Migrant-led churches, and in particular Pentecostal churches, according to Ugba (2007a), offer African migrants unique opportunities in a situation of exile to maintain regular and frequent contacts with their native languages; furthermore African-led Pentecostal churches have developed into institutions that enable these migrants to retain, revive and rehearse aspects of their native cultures and ways of life. These churches also provide other opportunities for the re-enactment of cultural or 'ethnic' signifiers and for the inter-generational transmission of cultural practices, such as dress, music, dancing, etc. Some cultural and ethnic signifiers, especially music and dancing practices, pose particular challenges to establish Protestant churches (Passarelli, 2012).

However, historical churches may also create bonding ties for migrants when they truly commit to be an inclusive church that cherishes and nourishes cultural diversity within the framework of a community which is seen as an extended family. As many migrants very often leave members of their families in another country, the church and its members often take their place: 'home away from home' was a recurring phrase used by respondents to describe what the church represented for them. Thus, for example, when people leave the Dublin Central Mission congregation, 'the church gives them a plaque from the congregation so that wherever they are, a part of the congregation will be with them' (Irish, male, ordained). My data suggest that, in order to be inclusive, churches have to consider that migrants need to find a space where elements of their religious and cultural traditions can be reiterated. Migrants themselves stress that their choice of church depends on more than being welcomed: some need separate groups to worship in

their own language, with their own type of liturgy, as an ethnic community; others require greater sensitivity to their cultural and religious background and the will to include elements of different traditions in the service.

More importantly, however, Europeans and Africans have different approaches to Sunday. In Ireland and Italy the worship usually lasts only one hour. In Ireland in some churches coffee and tea are provided to allow time for interaction, but after that everybody goes home to a nuclear family meal. It is not surprising then, that those 'finding the time spent together with fellow local members too short, also attend services of worship in migrant churches from the same cultural and linguistic group' (Martin, 2003: 46).

Integrated churches may be able to offer both bonding and bridging ties for migrants in particular and churchgoers in general. However, in order to establish integrated churches, all stakeholders need to have the same vision of the church, the same understanding of what a church is and, lastly, a shared ownership of the church. From the findings, it emerged that '*There's still reluctance on the part of the newcomers to really own the church'* to use the words of one of my interviewee (Irish, female, ordained), who also highlighted the challenges posed by migrants' active participation within the congregation (see chapter V). Similar outcomes emerged from the fieldwork in Italy where only a tiny minority of migrants is in leadership positions. Further studies may look at the concepts of church democracy and governance and tackle the ethical issues involved in creating integrated churches. In addition, future research may also examine factors fostering or hindering migrants' participation in churches, as I now discuss.

Considerations for further research

Social protection and gender roles

As I mentioned in the previous section churches may satisfy a variety of practical needs, among which, the need for social protection. This is an area which requires further analysis. In countries lacking comprehensive immigration and integration policies, like Ireland and Italy, churches often act as social welfare providers, offering protection and assistance to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and advocating for migrants' rights even when these may go against the 'law'.

Churches provide for the practical needs of migrants regardless of their religious beliefs. However, when they offer material support to migrants who are also members of the same church, a complex and ambiguous relation may ensue. It is possible to identify two main risks: the establishment of a relation based on migrants' dependency and/or a relation which puts indigenous and migrant churchgoers on two different levels (helper/helped) somehow reiterating the colonial pattern.

Another area that merits further analysis refers to the gender power dynamics and imbalances among migrant churchgoers and between female and male leaders, especially when it comes to migrants. As I highlighted in chapter III, at the national level the leadership is mostly male – with the exception of the Waldensian and Methodist church which, at the time of this research, had a female Moderator. The paucity of leadership roles for migrant women is even more pronounced as shown by the difficulties I experienced when looking for female migrant leaders to include in this research.

Intentionality and strategies

As mentioned in the introduction and in chapter III, the intention behind choosing Ireland and Italy as case studies was not to provide a comparative analysis but rather to gain insights into the ways different Protestant churches reacted to similar phenomena. In this regard the research methodology proved to be valid as I was able to analyse the integration strategies of Protestant Churches, provide answers to my research questions, and generate other questions which could be developed through further research.

One case study can help shed light on similar issues and challenges arising in another setting and offer a different and fresh perspective from which to address them. I am referring for instance to the issue of language, more specifically to how language barriers may prevent people from worshipping together, hence possibly hindering the integration process. The Italian fieldwork showed that Ghanaian members often feel the need to worship and hold other activities in other languages due to the difficulties encountered with the Italian language. The evidence from the Irish field demonstrated instead that speaking the same language, English, is

not a guarantee of understanding each other, as language is more than words, it implies understanding the communication, expressive and cultural codes which are attached to it.

Furthermore, the findings from this study show that there are some similarities in the way Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy have dealt with the strangers in their midst. In both places the churches opted for the development of integrated churches rather than separate developments which was the experience of other Protestant Churches, mostly – though not exclusively –in countries with a longer immigration history. Churches in Italy and Ireland tried to include migrants' voices and contributions during the development and implementation of the integration projects analysed in this thesis (The Discovery and the Mezzano – Second District Projects). However, in both settings a lack of clarity in relation to the aims and objectives to be achieved became obvious soon, and almost jeopardised the projects' success.

Both projects involved migrant ministers specifically recruited from Africa for this purpose. This decision, coupled in Ireland with tensions and lack of clarity surrounding the Minister's appointment, resulted in the project being challenged by the different symbolic paradigm of the African ministers. The findings in both countries revealed that the appointment of a minister from another continent, who does not know the history and position of the Protestant Churches in the receiving country, and who is called to act, openly or not, as a cultural mediator between the indigenous and the migrant component of the Church, can endanger the whole project.

From both case studies it emerged that belonging to the same religious denomination is not a guarantee that migrant and indigenous churchgoers share the same religious *habitus*. This was not taken into account when developing the projects. If there is, however, an Irish religious *habitus* which is common to Irish Catholics and Protestants, the same is not valid for Italian Catholics and Protestants.

In Italy the appointment of three Ghanaian ministers led to the reinforcement of 'ethnic-minority' communities within churches and to the multiplication of activities organised on an ethnic basis which, however, maintained, at least formally, an attitude of openness towards the wider church and towards the

possibility of taking part in the integration process. Nevertheless, the setting up of such 'ethnic-minority' structures created tensions among the various components of the Church and questioned the essence of the ethos of being church together.

In Ireland, by the end of my research (2013) neither the Church of Ireland nor the Methodist Church counted among their congregations 'ethnic-minority' communities. The reasons for this difference include the fact that while the Ghanaian ministers were called to minister primarily to the Ghanaians in the North-East of Italy, in Ireland the Nigerian pastor was in charge of the international community and was serving in two Anglican congregations. Therefore in this latter case, it was very difficult for him to create an 'ethnic-minority' church or to attract people on an ethnic basis, although at some point there were debates among the clergy on the possibility of pursuing that path. However, interestingly enough, when the minister was appointed rector of St. George and St. Thomas, the church did not become a predominately migrant or 'ethnic-minority' church. This was possibly due to the minister being perceived as neither a 'proper' Irish minister – able to provide the institutional ties needed and sought by many Africans – nor a 'proper' African minister, as he was leading a multicultural congregation with too many non-African elements. The minister, therefore, found himself caught in a limbo where he could not provide enough bonding or bridging ties to the African members of his congregation.

The attitudes of Churches in Ireland and Italy can be further illustrated by examining the intentionality behind the notion of establishing integrated churches and the results of the projects developed to this purpose. By intentionality I refer to the 'good will' of developing integrated rather than 'segregated' churches, as expressed by the written reflections of the Protestant Churches in Ireland in the early 2000s and by the setting up of the Being Church Together project of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy in 2000. However, the analysis of the development of the integration projects in individual Churches showed that, from the beginning, there was confusion about the way to achieve the desired goals; to a certain extent the decisions taken by the Churches in both countries could be interpreted as denoting a lack of strategic planning or a different understanding of what integration entails.

This thesis demonstrated that there are examples of good practice, especially in local congregations, as the experience of St. George and St. Thomas in the mid-2000 and of Bologna in the same years show. On the one hand these positive experiences were related to a specific point in time: in fact, as I described in the data chapters, during my fieldwork the perceptions of many involved in those two projects had already changed and their assessments were less optimistic. On the other hand the experiences of these congregations were not the result of the implementation of integration strategies adopted at national level but were rather the outcome of work undertaken at local level. This led me to theorise that at national level there is a gap between intentionality and strategy: if the national Church declares a goal (integration), then targeted strategies should be put in place in order to achieve this goal; in reality, national Churches tended to take notice of local developments *a posteriori*, rather than proactively steer the process towards the declared goal.

From welcoming strangers to integrated churches: models of churches

I began this thesis by highlighting the theological narrative of 'welcoming the strangers' adopted by churches. Then, in chapter II, I further elaborated on the figure of the stranger in society following Simmel (1976) who defines him/her as someone who comes today and stays tomorrow and who carries with him/her a certain degree of objectivity towards society. However, in line with Bauman (2005), I also reflected on the ambiguity surrounding the stranger as s/he is neither a friend nor a foe.

In chapters V and VII I analysed how this ambiguity was reflected in the relations between indigenous and migrant churchgoers and how it affected community construction and development and the implementation of the integration projects of Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy. After discussing the need of developing integration strategies that imply a third way which is neither annihilation nor assimilation of the stranger (Bauman, 2005; Levi-Strauss, 1961), and testing it against the data, I was able to identify different models adopted by churches to deal with migrants/strangers. Table 7 below shows two church types: those who existed already, prior to the arrival of migrants, which I call indigenous/historical churches; and those who were formed as a consequence of migration (Passarelli,

2011; Naso, *et al.*, 2014). I subdivided these two categories into monocultural, multicultural, intercultural and 'ethnic' churches according to the interplay of the following elements – composition, language used and worship style. In addition, I compared them with Remotti's framework on the articulation of otherness through the binary identity/alterity (chapter II).

Table 7: Models of 'integration' in churches

Church typology		**Composition**	**Language used**	**Worship style**	**Parallel with Remotti's framework of identity/ alterity**
Indigenous – historical churches	Mono-cultural churches	Mainly indigenous	Mainly indigenous language	Traditional	Identity recognises alterity but tends to marginalise it and consider it unwelcome
	Multicultural churches	Migrants and Indigenous	Mix of languages where the indigenous language is prevalent	Traditional with adjustments and input from other cultures	Identity recognises alterity as an inevitable part of society but still tends to marginalise it
	Intercultural churches	Migrants and indigenous	Mix of languages	Integrated	Identity not only recognises alterity, and considers it part of society but also acknowledges that otherness is part of the very essence of identity itself
	'Ethnic' churches	Migrants belonging to the same 'ethnic' churches.	'Ethnic' languages	Traditional	Identity recognises alterity but tends to marginalise it and consider it unwelcome
New churches	'Ethnic' churches	Migrants belonging to the same 'ethnic' churches.	'Ethnic' languages	Traditional	Identity recognises alterity but tends to marginalise it and consider it unwelcome
	Multicultural churches	Mainly migrants	European language spoken by migrants from different countries: i.e. English, French, Spanish.	Traditional with adjustments and input from other cultures	Identity recognises alterity as an inevitable part of society but still tends to marginalise it

The distinction between multicultural and intercultural churches goes beyond the congregations' composition – they might look the same from the outside – it refers to the structure of the congregation and its self-representation. Multicultural churches are churches that, following Remotti's paradigm, recognise their changes in terms of the composition of their members; therefore they recognise alterity, but their structure and activities are based mainly on the dominant, indigenous ethnic group. Intercultural churches are congregations that have found their third way, between assimilation and exclusion of strangers, becoming integrated churches, rethinking their worship style and their being church to serve the needs of all members. Ethnic churches, whether linked to the historical Protestant Churches or independent, share with mono-cultural churches the same attitude in their identity/alterity paradigm: they tend to resist change, considering them unwelcome and, at times, dangerous for group cohesion. Among the new churches, the multicultural congregations differ from the ethnic churches as they are heterogeneous in their composition but the structure of the church and its activities mainly follow one tradition. In addition, even though they recognise alterity (in this case indigenous churches and indigenous people), they tend to marginalise it and rarely make contact with it.

I want to stress here that the definitions presented in this typology provide a snapshot of the situation of the churches under study at a specific point in time. In many cases, as my data demonstrated, churches have gone through several of these stages. Furthermore, even though this classification is by no means prescriptive, it is useful to highlight discrepancies between churches' self-representation and aims and the reality of their congregations. If churches declare their aim to pursue integrated churches they should be expected to move towards the development of intercultural congregations. By the same token, when churches see themselves as 'multiethnic' or 'multicultural', they should have interwoven relations and activities with other churches at local and national levels.

Contribution to knowledge and considerations for church policy makers: the importance of *symbolic paradigm* for integration

For Protestant Churches the encounter with the 'other' often entails a profound renegotiation of important aspects of their religious identity. A religious identity which has formed, throughout the centuries, a *chain of memory* (Hervieu-Léger, 2000) which has been kept alive despite the general trend of religious decline in both Italy and Ireland. Drawing from Jenkins (2004) and Cohen (1985), churches, as communities, are constructed on the basis of a) symbols that generate a shared sense of belonging; b) a symbolic construct upon which people refer to, their religious *habitus*; c) sharing with other members a similar sense of things, a similar *symbolic paradigm*. In the encounter with the *other,* with the stranger who is here to stay and who, apparently, shares with *us* the same religious denomination, the indigenous chain of memory together with the symbolic paradigm is questioned. Although the symbolic paradigm, which encompasses the Irish and the Italian religious *habitus*, has been modified – as any kind of identity is subject to a certain degree of transformation –, the shock of the encounter with *alterity* and the speed of the change requested by such an encounter have resulted in a growing fear of losing one's identity. A minoritarian identity, which the communities had tried to preserve. Thus, this thesis demonstrates that the symbolic paradigm is stronger than the religious denomination. A finding which had implications on the failing of the integration policies, as I discuss in this chapter.

In looking at churches as communities it also emerged that they tend to aggregate people rather than integrate them. In building up a cohesive religious community, an integrated community, as suggested and hoped by some of the policies of the churches on the basis of their theological understanding of what a Christian community should be (as described in the Introduction), the issue of double loyalty on the one hand, and the increasingly new phenomenon of fluid congregations on the other are challenges threatening the cohesion of the church, their sense of belonging and consequently their integration process. The tension between remaining an open and welcoming space and protecting/safeguarding the cohesion of the community should remain present to avoid the church becoming a closed community too intent to look inwards and concerned with its security (Bauman,

2001) rather than be faithful to its ideal of what a community of believers should be. However, if the community, by reinforcing and renegotiating the chain of memory, by building a new common narrative of the community's identity, provides its members with that spiritual and religious capital (Baker and Skinner, 2003), strengthening the loyalty between its members, it can reduce the anxiety regarding the newcomers' double loyalty.

Integration as a 'two-way process' has been largely discussed and problematised in this thesis in terms of both national and church policies. Interculturalism, as the way to understand and pursue integration within the churches, has also proved to be challenging if not failing. However, some of the examples described in this thesis demonstrate that under certain conditions and in specific points in time churches were able to create integrated churches. This was possible because all stakeholders were willing to negotiate – to a certain extent – their symbolic paradigm and their religious *habitus,* and not take for granted that religious denomination or being a member of the church would *per sè* create the conditions for integration. Integration requires intentionality and willingness to work together towards a common goal; this allows all parts of the community to analyse their symbolic paradigm and to separate cultural and religious elements, differentiating between the negotiable and non-negotiable elements. 'Knowing one's self' is the *conditio sine qua non* to any dialogue or negotiation, and this is valid for church communities as well in order to be able to establish congregations that reflect a process of transformation.

Further reflections on methodology and researcher position

Having arrived at the end my journey, it is necessary to see if and how I succeeded in my research and whether my methodology – a combination of grounded theory and ethnography, and methods – case study – proved to be appropriate for this thesis. The grounded theory approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1997) was a particularly useful methodology as I was constantly able to refine the analysis through the interplay of theories and data. This allowed me to 'dig' into the integration policies and practices and also to look at other factors behind the success or failure of those policies, such as the religious *habitus* and the role of churches. The multi-sited ethnographic model (Marcus, 1995; Robben and Sluka,

2007) allowed me to broaden the boundaries of the fieldwork that, as a consequence, was not confined to specific churches but encompassed churchgoers' houses, steering committees and international seminars. I tried as much as possible to maintain a balance between the fieldwork in Ireland and Italy and, at least in terms of time spent in the two countries, I can say I succeeded. However, when it comes to the actual ethnographic work in the two sites the balance shifted in favour of Italy as a result of my own positionality, as a member of the ECI Commission and as a minister's wife, which *de facto* exposed me to deeper levels of involvement. When my husband was appointed as minister of the Bologna and Modena churches, the nature of my Italian fieldwork changed from an ethnography where the researcher comes and goes to the 'old school' ethnography where the researcher lives within the community she studies. Furthermore, I was not simply a participant observant but, being the minister's wife, there were expectations from the community, especially from migrant churchgoers, that I would take active part in the life of the church. I reflected extensively on my own position in Ireland and Italy in chapter III; however, I would like to stress here that if in Italy as a result of my insiderness I felt at times overwhelmed, in Ireland being an outsider (insider) allowed me to maintain the necessarily distance from the field to avoid such feelings. I have already described in this chapter how the Italian and Irish case studies were helpful in shedding light on common challenges and how interpretations developed in one could help make sense of findings emerging in the other (see the example of the language barrier). Similarly my different degrees of insiderness in Ireland and Italy proved to be mutually beneficial: being in Ireland helped me to remain focused and detached from the field in Italy, while my privileged insider status in Italy provided insights which were transferable and allowed me to go deeper into some of the issues emerging from the Irish site.

Unexpected outcomes, limitations and concluding remarks

Despite the reality of changes brought about by migration in the churches (chapter IV and VI), and the presence of an integration narrative, at least since 2000, I did not expect to find such widespread skepticism in relation to the integration process among both migrant and indigenous churchgoers.

It was foreseeable that I would find a minority in each church hostile to the changes and the integration project. However, especially in Italy I found myself more than once questioning whether Ghanaians truly wanted to be church with the indigenous churchgoers. What emerged was a clear discrepancy between those Ghanaian leaders who had been in Italy for more than twenty years, and who had been part of the integration projects since the beginning, and those who arrived after 2005 and especially after 2008 (with the economic crisis) who are mainly in 'ethnic' churches. The aims and objectives of the project were not and still are not shared by all. Further proof of this was provided by the fact that migrant leaders of the first generation were often seen by the new generation of leaders as 'assimilated' into the Italian culture and therefore discredited.

In Ireland, as I explained earlier in this chapter, I did not expect the development of the Anglican church in St. George and St. Thomas as I assumed that, with the Nigerian minister, the church would become an African Church if not a Nigerian one.

As described in chapter III, a number of limitations emerged while carrying out this qualitative research. Along with the above mentioned skepticism, issues of gender and the position of my interviewees – mainly white, male and ordained arose. This, however, was an important element of reflection leaving space for further analysis. In addition, my different levels of insiderness in Ireland and Italy might also have been seen as a limitation. However, as it also stressed in this chapter, these issues constituted an added value for the thesis as they helped me to see the Irish and the Italian fields through different lenses.

'One major limitation that is shared by most attempts to use ethnography to study processes of social change within a doctoral thesis is the length of fieldwork observations' (Rigon, 2013: 293). I could add that even though the fieldwork was rather extensive for a PhD, as analysed in some detail in chapter III, this thesis has only examined one phase of the integration projects of Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy. These projects are still ongoing and as I am writing this conclusion in February 2014, many things may have changed and some of the challenges I highlighted may have already been dealt with while new ones might have emerged.

Despite of the limitations, which are intrinsic to any qualitative study, this thesis offers a new contribution to the integration debates in churches and beyond. It is the first research in Europe that analyses integration projects of mainline Protestant Churches in different countries. By looking at churches as social entities, this thesis also discussed dynamics between identity and alterity, articulated as indigenous versus migrants, which happen in the larger society as well (e.g. schools, associations). Protestant Churches' policies of developing integrated churches, able to provide bonding and bridging ties to their members, are an interesting area of study which merits further research; the application of similar strategies by other actors in different societal settings also constitutes an important avenue for future study. Furthermore, the recognition of the importance of the symbolic paradigm when developing and implementing integration policies goes beyond churches and can be applied to any integration policy. While beyond the scope of this research, it leaves room for further investigations.

Appendix 1: List of Interviewees

Ireland

Pilot Interview

Gender/age	Country of origin	Status	Involvement	Interview Date
Female, 50s	Nigeria	Lay	None/ churchgoer/ masters student	December 2008

Semi-structured interviews

Gender/age	Country of origin	Status	Involvement	Interview Date
Female, 50s	Ireland	Ordained	Minister and Discovery Committee member	03/11/2009
Male, 30s	Ireland	Lay	Discovery Committee member. Church Development Worker at Blanchardstown Methodist Church. Ecumenical Officer at the Irish Interchurch Committee	04/11/2009
Female, 40s	Nigeria	Lay	Church member and Discovery Committee member	20/11/2009
Male , 60s	Ireland	Ordained	Minister and Discovery Committee member	22/11/09
Male, 40s	Nigeria	Ordained	Discovery Committee member and Chaplain to the International Communities. Since 2011 he is the rector of St. George and St. Thomas congregation	23/11/2009
Male, 60s	Ireland	Ordained	Archbishop	15/01/2010
Male, 50s	Ireland	Ordained	Minister and Discovery Committee member	22/01/2010

Male, 50s	Ireland	Ordained	Minister and Discovery Committee member	08/02/2010
Female, 30s	Ireland	Lay	Member of St. George and St. Thomas church	18/11/2011
Female, 40s	Ireland	Lay	Member of St. George and St. Thomas church	22/11/2011

Informal interviews/conversations

Gender/age	Country of origin	Status
Male, 50s	Ireland	Lay
Male, 70s	Ireland	Ordained
Male, 50s	Jamaica	Ordained

Follow up interviews carried out at the beginning of May 2012

Gender/age	Country of origin	Status	Involvement	Interview Date
Male, 30s	Ireland	Lay	Discovery Committee member	03/05/2012
Male, 50s	Rwanda	Lay	Church member and former Discovery Committee member	04/05/2012

Summary

Interview	Number	Female	Male	Ordained	Lay	'Irish'	'African'	Other
Pilot	1	1			1		1	
Semi-structured	12	4	8	6	6	9	3	
Informal	3	0	3	2	1	2		1

Italy

Semi-structured interviews

Gender/age	Country of origin	Status	Involvement	Interview Date
Male, 50s	Ghana	Lay	Local preacher	26/08/2009

Male, 50	Ghana	Ordained	First Ghanaian pastor who came with the project ECI in charge of the Ghanaians and Africans in the North-East of the country. Now in charge of the ethnic Methodist congregation in Pordenone	27/08/2009
Male, 40	Italy	Ordained	President of the working group of the Mezzano-Second District Project	01/01/2010
Male, 50s	Italy	Lay	Coordinator of the commission ECI of FCEI	10/06/2010
Female, 30s	Ghana	Lay	Member of Bologna congregation	26/07/2010
Male, 40s	Ghana	Lay	Member of Bologna congregation - President of the LMC and member of the OPCEMI Committee	28/07/2010
Male, 60	Italy	Ordained	Pastor in Bologna - Former president of the commission 'Being Church Together of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy	31/07/2010
Male, 30s	Ghana	Lay	Member of Bologna congregation	02/08/2010
Female, 50s	Italy	Ordained	President of the Waldensian Church - Union of Waldensian and Methodist Churches	17/08/2010
Male, 50s	Ghana	Ordained	Second pastor who came with the Mezzano – Second District Project. He works with Ghanaians in the North-East of Italy and liaises with intercultural congregation around the territory.	25/08/2010
Female, 40s	Italy	Lay	President of Methodists (OPCEMI)	26/08/2010
Female, 40s	France	Ordained	Coordinator of the training for intercultural local preachers	26/08/2010

Male, 50s	Ghana	Ordained	Third Ghanaian pastor who came through a project – Until 2012 in charge of reaching out to English speaking Africans in Rome's area. Since 2012 part of the intercultural pastoral team in Bologna	27/08/2010
Female, 50s	Ghana	Lay	Leader in her congregation in Modena – ethnic church	21/05/2011

Informal interviews/conversations

Gender/age	**Country of origin**	**Status**
Male, 30s	Italy	Ordained
Female, 30s	Italy	Ordained
Male, 30s	Italy	Ordained
Female, 40s	USA	Lay/local preacher
Male, 60s	Switzerland	Ordained

Follow up interviews

Gender/age	**Country of origin**	**Status**	**Involvement**	**Interview Date**
Male, 50s	Ghana	Lay	Member of Bologna congregation - President of the LMC and member of the OPCEMI Committee	16/02/2013
Male, 30s	Italy	Ordained	Minister of Bologna and Modena congregations since 2010	20/02/2013

Summary

Interview	Number	Female	Male	Ordained	Lay	'Italian'	'African'	Other
Semi-structured	16	5	11	8	8	6	9	1
Informal	5	2	3	4	1	3	0	2

Appendix 2: NVivo Code

Single Nodes

Nodes
African Anglicans
Challenges faced by migrants
Describing integration
Ecclesiology and Liturgy
First encounter
Integration
Irishness
Leadership
Methodists
Migration stories
Migration discourses
Racism
Role of Churches (Italy)
Role of the church (Ireland)
Solidarity
Theology and Ethics

Tree Nodes

Main Node	Sub-node
Discovery Project	History
	Aims and Objectives
	Activities
	Role of Committee Members
	Role of Minister to the international Community
	Assessment of Discovery Project
Being Church Together/ FCEI	ECI Commission
	ECI Trainings
	Contacts with European Organisations
Mezzano Project	History
	Aims and Objectives
	First Minister
	Second Minister
	Assessment of Discovery Project

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Beyond welcoming the strangers: Integration policies and practises in Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy

By Alessia Passarelli

Abstract

This thesis investigates integration approaches and strategies developed by Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy following the arrival of an increasing number of migrants within their congregations, especially from Africa. Grounded theory, applied to a multi-sited ethnography, is the methodological framework employed in this thesis. The use of case study as a research design is applied to the integration projects of the Anglican Church in Ireland (the Discovery Project) and of the Waldensian and Methodist Church in Italy (the Mezzano – Second District Project), which represent the main case studies of this qualitative research. Data were collected through a triangulation of methods - participant observation, semi-structured interviews and archival research. In both countries churches developed integration strategies to promote migrants' inclusion, to try to go beyond the 'welcoming the stranger' phase, envisaging the creation of integrated churches, avoiding either the assimilation of migrants within the mainstream structure or the segregation of migrants in 'ethnic' churches. This thesis aims at exploring and deconstructing the notion of 'integrated church' not only to show the different meanings this definition may take according to different people but also to highlight the complex and fluid negotiations of power relations which make up integration processes.

The findings from this study show that there are some similarities in the way Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy have dealt with the strangers in their midst. This thesis reveals that in both places churches opted for the development of integrated churches rather than separate developments. This research demonstrates that churches have tried to include migrants' voices and contributions during the development and implementation of the integration projects analysed in this thesis. However, in both settings a lack of clarity in relation to the aims and objectives to be achieved soon became obvious, and nearly jeopardised the projects' success.

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By Alessia Passarelli

Abstract

This thesis investigates integration approaches and strategies developed by Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy following the arrival of an increasing number of migrants within their congregations, especially from Africa. Grounded theory, applied to a multi-sited ethnography, is the methodological framework employed in this thesis. The use of case study as a research design is applied to the integration projects of the Anglican Church in Ireland (the Discovery Project) and of the Waldensian and Methodist Church in Italy (the Mezzano – Second District Project), which represent the main case studies of this qualitative research. Data were collected through a triangulation of methods - participant observation, semi-structured interviews and archival research. In both countries churches developed integration strategies to promote migrants' inclusion, to try to go beyond the 'welcoming the stranger' phase, envisaging the creation of integrated churches, avoiding either the assimilation of migrants within the mainstream structure or the segregation of migrants in 'ethnic' churches. This thesis aims at exploring and deconstructing the notion of 'integrated church' not only to show the different meanings this definition may take according to different people but also to highlight the complex and fluid negotiations of power relations which make up integration processes.

The findings from this study show that there are some similarities in the way Protestant Churches in Ireland and Italy have dealt with the strangers in their midst. This thesis reveals that in both places churches opted for the development of integrated churches rather than separate developments. This research demonstrates that churches have tried to include migrants' voices and contributions during the development and implementation of the integration projects analysed in this thesis. However, in both settings a lack of clarity in relation to the aims and objectives to be achieved soon became obvious, and nearly jeopardised the projects' success.