

“New Kid on the Black: an immigrant woman of colour
transforming ethnic conflicts in Ireland”

by

TATIANA DOS SANTOS

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Student Number(s):	51677610				

Student Name(s):
(In the same order as student numbers above)

Tatiana dos Santos

Lecturer's Name(s):

Sharon Morrissey

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ABSTRACT

Racism, Afrophobia and ethnic conflicts are aspects of the contemporary society, affecting the so-called “minority” groups (even when those groups majority in their territories). In many contexts, those phenomenons are related to historical events such as colonization, the emergence of Capitalism and territorial invasions.

It is has been claimed that, having experienced the anti-Irish sentiment, the Irish society would be incapable to be racist. However, from Asylum Seekers deportations to questions like “where are you really from?”, the manifestations of Afrophobia do occur in a daily basis. Having experienced racism throughout life, my perception on that type of discrimination allows me, as researcher, to assess in which extent the ethnic conflicts affect Irish society.

To be able to investigate in a neutral, independent manner, the method utilized is the Autoethnography, allowing the researcher to be part of the object to be studied. Having as hypothesis that the presence of those conflicts are considerable, but undermined, this project presents, in its objectives, a Conflict Transformation session as an experiment. Besides, a second objective is evaluating the effects of racism on people of colour and black people in Ireland. Said that, the aim set is to investigate in which extent the Conflict Transformation method of Alternative Dispute Resolution is effective when it comes to raise awareness on the subject – hence attenuating the present and imminent ethnic conflicts in Ireland.

Based on primary and second data, the present work evaluates the myth that Ireland is a “racism-free” country. Nevertheless, mainly in terms of non-intended, covert racism, the principles of Conflict Transformation (such as creation of a safe, non-judgemental zone, analysis of power, non-violent communication and appreciation of diversity) proved to be an effective tool to break the taboo and raise awareness about the problem.

INTRODUCTION

Having moved to Ireland three years ago, I did not know what to expect. Clearly, the cultural exchange and the possibility of interacting with a completely new world was exciting. Being a Brazilian woman of colour, I also had my fears in regards of racism and Afrophobia: even if, in my country of origin, more than 50% of the population is black or people of colour, racism is manifested through physical and verbal violence, besides through the non-intended racist speech (also known as covert racist). Being aware of those manifestations (and being aware of my “locus of speech”) made me sensible to the subject in a sense I see myself as an able individual to recognize when something is “not ok”. It is not ok to assume a woman is promiscuous because of her skin-colour. It is not ok when a police officer approaches a man because he looks “suspicious” (and black). It is not ok to touch my hair, because the exotification of my body makes me feel “less human”. I know it very well. However, can I expect from one who does not have to face ethnic issues to acknowledge those feelings?

Based on that thought, I question if part of the manifestations of racism, mainly related to covert racism, could be a fruition of unfamiliarity with the issue and a fear to ask black people and people of colour about what should be done in order to adopt an anti-racism behaviour. Said that, I also had the perception the issue is a taboo: non-black people are afraid to raise questions. Black people and people of colour would not feel comfortable answering them (coming from a logic that “we”, black people, did not create racism, so non-black people should educate themselves).

When the possibility of investigating ethnic conflicts was raised, in the academic environment, I was invited to inquire myself: “Is Ireland really racist?”; “Isn’t it only a particular perception?”; “Are the number of ethnic offenses increasing or are people feeling more comfortable to denounce them?”.

Witnessing racism to be put on jeopardy led me, first, to frustration. Being close to the subject could, firstly, be an issue in the academic environment. However, in a predominantly white space, if it was not for me to research the issues and conflicts in regards of black people, who would?

The answer to that question was found in a research method known as Autoethnography. Arthur Bochner and Carolyn Ellis shaped the method with the intent, among other things, to provide a structure in which researches could lean on when placing themselves as an object of study. In Chapter One, I present the method of Autoethnography and its powerful role when it comes to give voice to the so-called minorities in universities. In addition, I challenge the myth of the absence of black presence in Ireland, as there evidence black people were already living here since the 18th century. The studies on that myth are related to the evidences that will follow, like the argument that the absence of black people in the country appears to be used as an excuse to racism. The authors explain that, even if the presence of black people has never been massive, globalization, immigration processes and multiculturalism are argued to play a vital role in the manner racism occurs in Ireland. Besides that, the role of representativeness cannot be ignored. The first chapter will also analyse the representativeness heuristic and the influence that cultural products have on the construction of stereotypes related to black individuals. A parallel between the manner black people have been portrayed and the effects on the lack of representation on people's lives will be presented. The importance of raising those topics is to provide evidence to prove or refute the idea that, even if not noticeable by every individual, there are structures and behaviours that contribute to the perpetuation of racism in the country.

To be able to support my perceptions on how racism can be subtle and harmful in both situations (intended or unintended), I will present some data related to the effects of racism on black community in Brazil. As part of the method of Autoethnography is to take the researcher experience on account, there is also a need to support those experiences on reliable data, researchers and theories through which the Afrophobia proves to be a real phenomenon. However, what is the relation between the

context in Brazil and in Ireland? The Theory of Conflict will be presented, in this sense, to invite the reader to compare the patterns of behaviours that might be clearly seen as manifestations of racism in Brazil, but not in Irish society. The role of the Theory of Conflict, then, will be guiding the analysis on the so-called invisible dynamics of power and domination that correspond to racism in my country of origin, and might be witnessed in Ireland.

Once those dynamics are proved right or wrong, the next step on collecting secondary data through the first chapter is to evaluate the authors' arguments on the efficiency of Conflict Transformation – whether on preventing conflict or attenuating, depending on the outcomes to be presented. The dynamics of power applied specifically to Alternative Dispute Resolution methods will be also presented in that chapter, where the importance of acknowledging racism during Conflict Resolution processes will be evaluated.

After analysing the secondary data provided, I present the Chapter 2 as an explicative session to justify the methodology utilized in the present research. The significance of the Literature Review, presented on Chapter 1, is related to the objectives set in the research. If the first major question is “Is racism in Ireland a real problem?”, the first objective set was “to evaluate in which extent racism, ethnic conflicts and Afrophobia affect Irish society (by comparing scenarios, analysing historical and sociological factors and through relative and absolute numbers)”. As secondary data provides information to refute or to prove the existence of those mentioned earlier, a primary data (to be collected through experiment and survey) collaborates for the results on the previous objective. Moreover, the role of the primary data is to evaluate (as second objective), directly among black community and non-black community, the way they feel on regards of racism and its effects.

Taking those objectives as consideration, the main aim set is: “To investigate in which extent the Conflict Transformation method of Alternative Dispute Resolution is effective when it comes to raise awareness on the subject – hence attenuating the present and imminent ethnic conflicts in Ireland”.

The second chapter will detail the Autoethnography as a method, justify the choice for a combination

strategy between qualitative and quantitative data (through a longitudinal time horizon), as well as explain the contribution of an Interpretative and Inductive approach for the results to be achieved.

Where as in the Chapter 2 the data collected is shown and categorized, in Chapter 3 the results of the data collected will be analysed, besides the limitations that emerged during the processes of collecting those data. Bearing in mind the proximity with the subject studied is challenging. However, it is also a great opportunity to exercise the neutrality required during the Conflict Transformation sessions. As qualitative data is also provided, the third chapter offers a good opportunity to practice the discourse's analysis, as well as the body language analysis. In terms of the limitations, I will take the opportunity, in the third chapter, to evaluate what could have been improved in order to obtain more consistent results: inasmuch as will be demonstrated, some expectations when it comes to the answers obtained in the qualitative research were expected to be "thicker". Nevertheless, in relation to the aims and objectives set, the results to be presented will answer the questions and will match the objectives set. If the presence and effects of racism on Irish society is to be evaluated, the expressions of its manifestations are a consistent evidence to be shown. In regards of the aim set, the survey presented will be analysed as the questions asked to test the efficiency of Conflict Transformation (to prevent or attenuate racist manifestations) evince if that efficiency is proved (through absolute numbers and percentages).

Once the data is presented, analysed and evaluated, I invite the reader to reflect on the discussion presented in Chapter 5. As anticipated, the congruence between Literature Review and the data collected and analysed, provides, in the fifth chapter, insights and room for improvements. As expected, the combination of the method and methodology correspond to the aim and objectives to be achieved. Nevertheless, from a critic point of view, the Literature Review as theoretical contribution also provides the possibility of fair comparison between what firstly supported the hypothesis to be proved, and what was achieved after the experience of conducting a Conflict Transformation session myself. As a researcher's responsibility, it is required a deep and critical

analyses on the results achieved. In this sense, I would like to recall the Autoethnography method to highlight the importance of this chosen method when it comes to reflect on my role as facilitator. Given the fact that the act of being impartial itself is inherent to the facilitator's development, by analysing and discussing this role in the Discussion I will also put the demanding self-analysis of Autoethnography into practice.

The results presented in Conclusion shed light to Racism and Afrophobia in the context of Ireland, but mainly, bring some interesting findings to the context of Conflict Transformation as a practice to be utilized with the intention of attenuate and prevent racism in the country. Again, connecting with the previous studies demonstrated in the Literature Review (and supported by primary data) with the principles of Conflict Transformation, it is interesting to analyse how the participants in the experiment demonstrated ideas and thoughts through which it was possible to draw a positive outcome. To start with, once the manifestations of racism were proved consistent in Ireland (in both sociological and individual spheres), the possibility of testing the Conflict Transformation practice was became real. Acknowledging and legitimizing black people and people of colour's feelings, the power of "healing" attributed to Conflict Transformation process was verified through the participants. Also, to find out the totality of participants consider that process as an extremely effective, very effective or somehow effective method to fight Afrophobia in Ireland, demonstrates the initiative is valuable and motivates me, as researcher, to continue the work in a practical way. However, the hesitation, fear of speaking and discomfort are pointed as hypothetical factors that prevent non-black people to open up about the subject. Despite that, those indicatives bring solutions and alternatives in order to shape a fairer, safer process -- as suggested in the Conclusion, to set pre-sessions as an "anti-racism training" is one of the works proposed.

To conclude, the Reflection offered in the end of this present work brings a personal analysis, from which thoughts also converges with the method utilised and with one of the aspects of Conflict Transformation: healing. During Reflections, I will present an honest account on the importance of

the present work in terms of showing vulnerability and sharing experiences. Recalling personal situations, about when I faced Racism and Afrophobia manifestations, not only served to the present work as a piece of data to be analysed, but also demonstrated to be a powerful mechanism of self-analysis – besides bringing the realization I am, personally, “less alone” in my purpose of fighting Afrophobia. As the Conflict Transformation process itself provides to the individual a possibility to be open about the feelings, behaviours and perceptions, it is satisfactory to conclude the present research is not only an opportunity to face the problem of racism and Afrophobia through a frank dialogue, but also a personal achievement and a satisfactory feeling of working for my community.

CHAPTER 1 – LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. The “first person” writing and the myth of blackness

She had asked me to not to be so involved in political and social discussions, as I was being drained by those arguments. In a very natural manner, I just replied it would be challenging to keep a distance from these topics, as I was born as part of a political and social issue. I am a fragment of a problem. Blackness. Blackness is a noun. A subject. A word with a vague definition. An avoided concept. Taboo. It evokes darkness and evil. “The dark side”. “Oh, wait, but you are not that dark”. As if it was a compliment not to be “that dark”. “But your nose... You have such a beautiful nose. It is not that thick like African people’s noses”. And one of the most problematic speeches someone has ever given to me: “one day you will be very successful and eventually will marry a white man”. I wish there was no need for me to go through the reasons why that was a problematic -- and tasteless -- sentence.

Having dark skin, I have been prepared for the worst reactions. It does not mean there is always an adverse reaction to my presence, though it means the black body is political itself. The so-called black body is a resistance symbol taken in context of Brazil’s historical slavery system. (Anjos, 2004, p. 111).

However, it is also a difficult task as my role here, as an Autoethnography writer, is to not to go through a journey of healing and self-awareness only, but also to confront the stigmas I was forced to believe in. The part of the world I’m in now is different and therefore I am obligated to see things from a different perspective, even if there is a natural desire to make assumptions.

“You can see the holes in the building, these are the bullets marks”, he told me while trying to fit his index finger into the small spaces. Later, I would find out that building, a post office in the heart of the city, was once a scene of war. A war many would be proud of. Who were those people I was

passing by in the streets? I would not know. Why would that be important? That was only the first week only since I had arrived, from Latin America to Ireland, and I knew there was more complexity in things than that. There always is. I mean to say that I would find out the complexity in the manner racism is address in Ireland.

When I walk on the streets, I crave to see people like me. When I turn the TV on, I like to see people like me. It makes me feel less lonely. It makes me wonder if the pain a black soul carries is an unique disturbia. I would not know without asking, without exploring. Without confrontation and conflict.

Conflict is defined as confrontation, between groups or individuals as a result of distinct understanding, processes and perceptions. It seems natural that my impression -- as a Latin-American woman of colour -- about power and its dynamics would clash with a white, European man's views on racism and prejudice. When this work was first proposed, I had to ask myself to what extent an issue such as racism could be discussed in the academic sphere, by a Latin-American woman of colour, with the distance required to obtain credibility. Here, the importance of the Autoethnography arises, as, during the 1980s, the humanities were facing a crisis of representation. The doctrine of "truth through the method" was argued as fallible. As claimed by Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner on Richard Rorty reflections, if the observer is not implicated in the product to be observed, there are no human values in any findings. Considering the studies of the humanities and social sciences, the authors found it essential to "observe the observer" (Ellis & Bochner, 2016, p. 28).

"If you are not able to talk about and research these issues, then who can be?" I was asked at the dinner table. If a lack of representation seemed to follow people of colour both domestically and overseas, should I just wait until some voice in the privileged academic environment decides to explore issues that are very pertinent to me, on my behalf? The educational environment is, visually, not the most diverse when it comes to ethnicity (Pozniak, 2019).

If there is evidence, there is also a perception of this privileged space occupied by white people in Ireland, as a result of the historical and geographical context. This perception that once was an

assumption/ theory can be compared to a similar pattern of behaviour I have been witnessed in my place of birth. Coming from this perception and taking my experience into consideration, I have making some comparisons between the manner people deal with ethnic prejudice in Brazil and in Ireland. In common, the apparent fear of talking about the subject and denial: two dangerous factors that can lead to ethnic crimes (Rodman, 2013). These dynamics may not be clear for society, but knowing they exist, perhaps they could be analysed with the intention of alerting the non-black community in Ireland that there is a possibility that people of colour in this country want to talk about it – but, as claimed by Edward Rodman, the dialogue is not always welcome when it comes to racism (Rodman, 2013).

“You have to understand sometimes it’s just curiosity”. “We haven’t been seeing many coloured people on the streets”, they say. Fair, I thought, as I was carefully listening to the arguments. The year was 2017, only a couple of months after my arrival in Ireland. They were strong arguments, and I was quite open to any conclusion. To be honest, what annoyed me the most was not the fact my interlocutor was, somehow, denying racism. What annoyed me the most was the possibility of my judgement being wrong. And it would not be the first time someone would make me think my feeling towards these topics were exaggerated, a result of an inferiority complex. It is true that being pointed of having a racist speech or action is not something one would necessarily feel like a pleasant experience. However, it appears to me that fewer are open to hear and try to understand, and many would justify the action by saying “some of my best friends are black”. (Eligon, 2019)

If my perception appeared to be repeated, in different contexts, different places, concerning different people, maybe there was something in common with the pattern I had created to identify racism. And perhaps I would be able to prove my point, not as a matter of pride, but as a matter of conviction. I was indeed convinced my point could change other’ people’s perception about acknowledging racism and prejudice, about the consequences of the racism in terms of psychological effects and identity,

about how racism could impact socialization and opportunities in regards of employment and education (IBGE - Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, n.d.).

It always has been claimed that blackness is an entirely new topic in Irish society. Nevertheless, as doctor William Hart argues, there were nearly one thousand Africans (from diverse micro-zones not identified by the author) living in Ireland in the late 18th century. The number of individuals identifying as black or mixed race increased to a figure somewhere between three thousand and ten thousand in the mid 19th century.. (Hart, 2002, pp. 19-32). Two specific situations are registered as evidence of that presence, as first Hart reports:

“About noon on Sunday 19 October 1777 there was a stir of attention in one corner of St Stephen’s Green in Dublin. As the *Freeman’s Journal* reported,

‘A female black and child... was so closely pressed by the multitude of people crowding around, and staring at her, that being much affrighted, in vain she endeavoured to retire, the child was so terrified as to burst into tears, and notwithstanding such evident signs of fear, it was with the utmost difficulty a few reasonable persons could extricate her from the crowd and get her safely out of the walks.’

It is easy to visualise the scene: the intimidating presence of the Sunday crowd building up around the pair, the frightened mother, the weeping child clinging to her. The story is told sympathetically; it is a minor incident but, one might think, revealing. It seems, on the face of it, to show that a single black woman and her child were a rare sight in eighteenth-century Dublin. Nevertheless, then the next sentence in the newspaper report turns that assumption on its head: Had she in any manner differed from others of her colour and country so common to meet with, it might have been some apology, to gratify curiosity; that not being the case, it reflects both scandal and ignorance on the company, and the more so, as the time and the place considered, much better behaviour might be expected”, (Hart, 2002, pp. 19-32).

A second episode is described by the 19th-century nationalist Irish writer Thomas D'Arcy McGee, whereas reporting an event during the period of the Inquisition:

“Drury's method of proceeding may be further inferred from the fact, that of the thirty-six executions ordered by him in the same city, ‘one was a blackamoor and two were witches, who were condemned by the law of nature, for there was no positive law against witchcraft [in Ireland] in those days’” (McGee, 1867, p. 70).

Hart is assertive when saying that “there is a mistaken notion that Ireland, unlike England, didn’t have a significant black African component in its population in earlier centuries whose genes would be present in the gene pool of people today” (The Guardian, 2019). However, there has been a significant change on the way blackness, racism and, specifically, Afrophobia is approached in Ireland -- Afrophobia being the term to define racism experienced by African people or people who belong to the African diaspora (Michael, 2015, p. 5).

In 2015, The Irish Network Against Racism published, in 2015, a significant report on racist incidents in the country, from research conducted by the doctor Lucy Michael. The correspondence of criteria (regarding the type of violence registered and the police procedures in face of hate crimes), between the report and extensive data supporting the presence of Afrophobia in Brazil (as demonstrated on page 34) is visible.

When divided into single groups that are commonly targeted when it comes to racism, African descendent (Europeans or not), and mixed-race people, lead the ranking of incidents reported to the European Network Against Racism. Covering the extension of the term “incident”, there is: physical and psychological violence, political hate speech, bullying based on ethnicity, poor access to basic institutions such as the healthcare system, harassment in the workplace, ineffective policies by gardaí and even lack of proper constitution to criminalize all of those mentioned (Michael, 2015, p. 5).

Denial. Denial is my trigger. It is interesting to observe that denying racism seems to be a common factor at play as globalization and migration processes are related to the increasing number of episodes (Lentin & McVeigh, 2008, p. 15). Are the number of episodes increasing? Or would it be a rise in the number of people who are reporting those cases?

The role of representation is a factor worth analysing in the Irish context of racism and Afrophobia. I have the inherent perception of the damage that can be caused when one feels like she/he has no significance in her/ his environment, in as much as even a dark-skin woman living in Brazil, where more than 50% of the population is coloured or black, faces a lack of representation on TV, magazines and in figures of power. How can a black person be seen and respected if, in the collective unconscious, the black person is non-existent or unseen on a daily basis?

It is essential to question the role of media in this process, especially, considering in Ireland, along with many other countries, consumption of media means consumption of North American media, where the stereotypes of the black community are repeatedly shown -- for instance, the manner in which blacks are portrayed as violent, mockery victims or irrational. At this early point of this present work, it is evident the role of representativeness in the construction of prejudices that lead to ethnic conflicts (Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997). The hero or princess archetype in protagonism is rarely black or coloured when considering a vast number of Hollywood productions (The New York Times, 2018). The exceptions appear when the movies' thematic is related to black ethnicity (such as *If Beale Street Could Talk*, *Black Panther*, *Queen & Slim*) (Michael, 2015, p.21).

When it comes to representation, it is crucial to mention and consider a theory that argues that every individual is judgemental. In relation to that, Psychology explains the nature of human judgement through Representativeness Heuristic. Proposed by the psychologists Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman in the 1970's, the theory evaluates to what extent the judgemental mental shortcuts in the human brain get individuals "where they need to go", creating a possible detrimental cognitive bias. The issue with those shortcuts is the possibility that people are likely to judge wrongly (the fact that

something appears to be more representative does not actually make it more likely). However, those shortcuts are not acquired by birth or genetically: they are product of the society from which the individual is part, and a construction of the representations presented in her/ his context (Khan, 2018). The Representativeness Heuristic could justify why black men 2.5 times more likely than white men to be killed by police (Merrefield, 2019), or black women are associated to the profession of housekeeping (explained on page 39). The black figure as poor, violent, non-educated appears like a dangerous shortcut.

This reflection leads me to another one: how many commercial movies, in the biggest industry of films in the world, does feature an interracial couple for instance, in an ordinary manner, as if the colour of their skins were not a complication? How many blockbusters could have more blacks in their cast, in non-complex relations, as “one more in the crowd” role?

The same can be applied to the music industry. Black culture’s widespread roll is always related to the movements of the margins in North America, specifically in the United States. It does not mean there is no black presence in the classical sphere. Black people are also there, in a reduced number compared to their white counterparts (Sandow, 2011). In essence, an institutional race-based selection develops as if, historically, blacks have been living in the margins during and after colonization, the access to the elite’s products of culture today is a reflection of past (Andrews, 2019).

Nearly ten years ago, in 2009, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) was already discussing the issue, by releasing a survey from which it was found 73% of Black Africans affirmed their feelings towards Afrophobia and that it is a widespread phenomenon. We are referring to a black population that in 2016 was formed by 57,850 people identifying as “Black or Black Irish – African” and 6,789 people who identified as “Black or Black Irish - any other Black background” (Central Statistics Office Ireland, 2017).

Lucy Michael suggests that the experiences of racism on the island are not as new as is this widespread idea of novelty. Away from justifications, even if the factor “black community occupying spaces x

white people occupying spaces” is disproportional (being that one strong argument to justify the reaction to an “uncommon” black presence as demonstrated in affirmations such as “we did not grow up seeing blacks around”), Ireland is inserted in a context of globalization anyway (Lentin & McVeigh, 2008, p. 37). The sensation of not being invisible, or portrayed with negative stereotypes, indicates the importance of considering the Representativeness Heuristic and its influences on emergence of ethnic conflicts (Khan, 2018).

Do you see me in the same way I see you? It could be practical to argue that, even if the physical presence of black people has not been frequent in the island, there are still mechanisms such as television, newspapers, books, cinema, educational tools through which one could portrait black history in a sense that it could be less distant, less strange, less ugly. And who does the obligation of spreading this aspect of global culture fall on? The government? The individual? The media?

“Nobody has been born ready”. Nobody. I cannot remember where or when I heard that sentence. Everyone, to a greater or a lesser degree, is inherently judgemental on many occasions (Zartman, 2015, p. 125). To hear “nobody has been born ready” taught me a lesson. I, myself, can be judgemental, can jump to conclusions. And if it were not for someone telling me to comprehend that every individual has a personal path, with different challenges, I would be another individual asking for respect when in other occasions I would not be giving in.

I do not intend to excuse the individual’s behaviour and her/ his responsibilities in the perpetuation of racism. As the consequences of racism are evident on those who are victims, there is no excuse for any act of violence, less so when the only motivation is a difference in skin colour..

Childhood, let me reflect on my childhood. If racism has become a fight I have been fighting throughout my existence, I also recognize my offender in proximity. One’s skin colour does not summarize the complexity of every human being.

Raised among white individuals, in a mixed-race extended family, it became, at some point, evident that the lens I was observing the aspects of life through was not the same as my relatives,' who created their own patterns, codes, impressions and conclusions.

Even the closest of my family members would have the “privilege” of having a lighter tone of skin that, sociologically explained through the concept of colourism, would grant them access to places and institutions a darker person would not have (Hamilton, et al., 2009). That concept (to be detailed on page 49), brings the idea that skin colour has different “values”, depending on the tone. Consequently, the lighter the dark skin colour, the better opportunities would emerge (and the opposite) (Dixon & Telles, 2017).

The comments in the first line of this work refer to situations of racism I have been through amid my family circle. It happened when I was proud for being accepted in an excellent college, but my grandmother, a white friendly old lady, stressed, with a sweet, natural smile on her face, I should marry a white man to be fully successful. It happened when, in an attempt to express a compliment, my interlocutor emphasised how good my face looks, because my nose, her words, is well built, different from “those blacks from Africa”. And it happened when I stood up in light of a racist comment that, while not referring to me, was expressed in my presence though. Sometimes the concept of colourism is invisibly there. I was told not to be offended as I am not even “too black” (a pure manifestation of colourism, and worse as a non-black individual feels she or he is the one to define the rules for blackness and prejudice). The ethnicity is camouflaged when possible, allowing a silent agreement to share the same space. And that space, free of a strong and pretty visible blackness, for the racist, is then safe for the Afrophobia to occur.

“Things like this do not happen in this country”, I have been told. O’Toole mentions what is considered to be a shift in the way Afrophobia started to be acknowledged in Ireland, following what is called a period of optimism to the country:

“In 2005, the Minister for Justice whose Citizenship Referendum made Irishness for the first time into an effectively racial concept, wrote powerfully about his anger at the abuse of asylum-seekers by the Department of Justice -- when he was out of office. Here he is in *The Sunday Independent* in 1998: ‘If an Irish woman marries a black man, he will be treated very differently from a white spouse. He will be routinely halted at airports. He will probably experience great difficulty in securing the right to reside here. At every level, from the treatment of black and coloured doctors by the powers that be in medicine, to queues of rain-sodden children outside the Department of Justice, the Irish State has a tradition of hard-nosed, red-necked discrimination’ (O’Toole, 2006, p. ii).

Not excusing the individual, I do intend, though, to highlight how the ones in power could excuse themselves. For the authorities, it seems not to be a convenient action to fight ethnic inequality. If the eurocentrism (Satya, 2005) is a widespread version of history, if the colonialism and consequently, the post-colonialism, is white, European and male, in who’s interest is there a solution for the ethics and ethnic conflicts? What is, consequently, the role of educational tools and actions focused on individuals, considering the supposed power’s absence regarding those conflicts and misconceptions?

As mentioned it is, known Afrophobia is not a new experience in Ireland. Historically, there are registers of men owning enslaved black people and, as highlighted by Lucy Michael, there are also registers of African descendents arriving in the shores to study and work for, at least, the last three centuries -- including occupying prominent positions during the so-called “civilization missions” (Michael, 2015, p. 37). The author mentions Irish people also lived abroad and would, eventually, return to the country as would do their partners and children of African descendent. However, the conflicts are not rare, as reported in the document launched by the Irish Network Against Racism (INAR), in 2015 (Michael, 2015). If the intolerance based on misinformation and miseducation (on the part of Irish society when it comes to black culture, black migration and its contribution to the

human formation) is to be overlooked, the pure fact those acts of intolerance and abuse impacts the victims' physical and mental health and conditions cannot be ignored.

There is here an invitation to reflect on one of the many episodes of Afrophobia registered on INAR's report called *Afrophobia in Ireland*. It illustrates an incident of aggression that occurred on the Dublin Bus, with victim and witnesses left reactionless:

"It was disgraceful, shocking and unacceptable as she was extremely and aggressively using racist words such as: 'You black bastard, are you not only a nigger, which was completely inexcusable. I am sick of you black coming into our country and taking our jobs, thinking you're better than us, it's because of people like you that I'm like this, my country is f**ked of you black bastard. My kids' future is f**ked up because of people like you, who do you think you are, sitting at the top of this bus with us? Nobody wants you here', she then said 'everyone else here on the bus is thinking the same thing like me but I am the only one with the balls to say it out and louder'. The police only arrived after about or approximately around 30 to 40 minutes after they were called, and the woman walked freely down the street with her companion cursing. I was so frightened by the behaviour of the woman toward me and I have quietly left shaken, humiliated, shocked and completely devastated. Since then, I have been dealing with days and nights headaches and now so scary to even get on the bus or sitting even close to someone else. I have been left so devastated and unable to sleep and been having panic attacks each time not truly knowing what to do which I am expecting GPs appointment to seek for help. I am completely, truly and honestly left in a shocking situation which I am lacking real words to express myself', (Michael, 2015, p. 15)

Not only the situation is shocking for the violence itself, as also for the fact the Garda mentioned the perpetrator's alcohol abuse – an argument that, as claimed on the report, left the victim even more frustrated, as the lack of law is problematic and perennial.

The lack of legislation to fight crimes related to racism and/ or Afrophobia in Ireland was one of the motivations to investigate to what extent Alternative Dispute Resolution could work as a preventive measure for those crimes (Gadlin, 2007).

As mentioned, the question that initially emerged was: ““is there an increase in the number of discriminative crimes (involving physical or verbal abuse) based on skin colour or, instead, is it a mere impression that the reporting of these crimes is increasing, whereas they have been denounced more in the past? Since 1990’s, different researches have been carried out Ireland, indicating Garda’s inefficiency when dealing with the issues and also Garda’s own manifestations of racism. Amnesty International reports from 2001 already showed a high proportion of respondents alleging ethnic harassment by the country’s police. The research was based on answers from 622 people called “ethnic minorities” [however, the expression is commonly misused, as according to the United Nations – Humans Right, “one of the main objective criteria for determining whether a group is a minority in a State is a numerical one. A minority in the territory of a State means it is not the majority. Objectively, that means that an ethnic, religious or linguistic group makes up less than half the population of a country” (United Nations, n.d.). Said that, what is considered to be minority in Brazil, for instance, does not match the UN criteria – as more than 50% of Brazilians are black people or people of colour) (IBGE - Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, n.d.)].

Back to the research, 78% of the interviewed affirmed they were victims of racism when randomly approached by Garda. 56% of them believe the Garda directs different treatment to the ethnic minorities and 61% claim Garda do not take the racist incidents seriously (Lentin & McVeigh, 2006, p.83). Lentin and McVeigh also highlight data reporting a dissatisfaction in a sense the complaints would be treated with levity and cultural insensitivity by the officers, and that the victims of hate crimes would not be informed about the progress of their cases. Officially in its website, the corporation alleges to be prepared to deal with racist incidents:

“Garda Ethnic Liaison Officers (ELO) are trained to provide specific support and advice to victims of racist incidents. If you report an incident of racism, the Gardaí will inform you of the designated Liaison Officer in your area” (An Garda Síochána, n.d.)

And then the word “perception”. Why does it seems every episode related by a person of colour never appears to be treated with the urgency those crimes demand? Is this a matter of perception? Do those crimes affect the black body exclusively? Can one stay unshaken when experiencing Afrophobia? Emphasizing one specific piece of content reported in the INAR research, it appears that manifestations of racism also impacts the witnesses, who feel hesitant to reacting, as in the episode occurred in the Dublin Bus. That shows how the absence of information and instruction contribute to the passivity when the aggressions happen:

“ ‘I would love to find out more information about approaching a racist attack. I am worried about using the wrong language or saying something which might make the situation worse. I think that might be a fear that a lot of people have and maybe there is a need for some more information.’ ”
(Michael, 2015, p.19).

The urge for more educational programs and information on the problematic exposes, exponentially, a possibility for the applications of Conflict Transformation and peacebuilding to rise as an essential tool against Afrophobia, not only to protect the integrity of the black community, but also to build a bridge along with the whole community, in a sense that an anti-racism community could be constructed (Gadlin, 2007). Considering that Conflict Transformation (demonstrated on page 55) is also a tool capable to encourage self-healing besides addressing conflict’s issues, provides me with an early – and exclusively personal -- conclusion: my issues are felt for someone else in this country.

1.2. Reflections on immigration and globalization

“Whether Ireland is racist or not” seems to be a common topic in my group of friends, as a mere sharing of perceptions, with no theoretical contribution. A pub talk: as the Irish themselves did not

colonize, but were colonized, is there a similar sense of superiority, same that would be attributed to the nations of colonizers? How is the sense of identity in the Irish community developed? Do they see themselves as oppressors, despite being oppressed? The answer to those questions would, eventually, to impact this work's outcome in a sense that, in order to discuss conflict, I need to assess the presence of that conflict.

A duality of thoughts about racism, immigration and globalization, was reflected on a resolution from October of 2005, when both houses of the Oireachtas expressed compassion with illegal immigrants, arguing a proper status for those was required, and revealing how substantial the contribution by immigrants is to society. A concern with the situation was clearly expressed, resulting in promises from the government tackle the issue of undocumented workers. Eventually, the same matter was also addressed in the US Senate, as the immigrants mentioned in the resolution were Irish people living in the United States. (O'Toole, in Lentin and McVeigh, 2006, p. ii)

However, the both sides of the case would unfold itself, whereas the deportations of asylum seekers from Ireland were still happening. Ronit Lentin and Robbie McVeigh jeopardised the idea that the experience of racism felt for the Irish people themselves, and that the absence of people of colour both restrain the potential for the society to become racist. Contrariwise, the migration flux plays a vital role in the Afrophobia manifestations in the country.

There was a time this country was poetically known as the Celtic Tiger. The Tiger, as a result of visible economic rise, started to welcome more immigrants in the mid-1990s, many of them as asylum seekers and occupying positions in the labour market that many Irish citizens would not take (Lentin & McVeigh, 2008, p. 41). They put in evidence a statement from 2003, through which the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform denied the existence of racism in the country and compromised with the promotion of equality and diversity. When I talk about a "lens to see a particular world", I

mean a concept. It appears to me that the manner used to discuss the issue in a governmental sphere has been strictly related to what is known as colour blindness (Lewis, et al., 2000). The social aspects of racism -- in which Afrophobia is included -- have been disproportionately put into light, and the political responsibilities and implications of it are, somehow, undermined by the government itself (Lentin & McVeigh, 2006). Considering migration as a process that dates from the first civilizations and that also has played a role in the annihilation of many societies (societies who have fought over power and domination), I perceive the differentiation of peoples serving the objective of oppression is not only a novelty, as it is a collective construction, which the organized society is responsible for, collectively (Haynes & Schweppe, 2017).

Having known racism and Afrophobia have both origins in the historical context of colonization (Fernandes, 2008), it appears to me they are not exclusive from one or another community (Winant, 1994). I have been proclaiming it is “everybody’s issue”, even for those who do not feel they are directly affected by discrimination. If racism and Afrophobia are, in some point, related to inequality and lack of freedom, how can a declared democratic state not to deal with them in a sense they can be discussed and put in the political agenda? How can these issues of inequality and imbalance, which affect society on an individual level, not be part of communal discussions? As argued by Harris and Lieberman, the post-racist era may be an apparently period of equality as the manifestations of discrimination are, not only but also, subtle. However, it does not mean that racism do not occur, and the issue should be treated as a governmental and welfare issue (Harris & Lieberman, 2013).

Everybody’s issue, but mainly my issue. This is the feeling I inherently carry. December last year, that sentiment moved me somehow. There was a need to confront the roles of oppressor and of oppressed. Having an idea in mind for a community Conflict Transformation session as an experiment (which will be discussed during this present work) evoked in me anger, self-healing, but also empathy. During the first Conflict Transformation planning, my initial view fell on my early and individual

perception that the non-black community appears to lack understanding of the effects of Afrophobia on the individuals who are victimized by it. As the topic is, as said, taboo in many societies, the unfamiliarity with the consequences of that kind of violence can, wrongly, give the impression this kind of abuse is a rare phenomenon, that occurs in only a few situations. As a non-black person commented during the Conflict Transformation session, that unfamiliarity can give, for some, the idea that the aggressions are mainly due to a lack of awareness (demonstrated through data on page 78).

While writing this I pause and sit on my front door-step with a coffee. A man approaches with a recognizable face. It might be a neighbour, though we had never talked before. We both nod, then he asks me where I am from. Even if I had not said a single word, he assumes I was a “foreigner”. I am not offended. To be honest, I think it is amusing as I also feel there is, most of the time, a genuine curiosity. Nevertheless, it is that situation that leads me to a thought: the nation’s sense of identity can be harmless and, in its extremes, nationalist.

As mentioned before, and verified through interviews to follow, alleged “fear of asking” and “no-recognition of racism” (factors demonstrated through data on page 83) are, not only but also, responsible for any preconceptions (Eligon, 2019). The States, though, cannot be excused for the lack of mechanisms that could repair the inequality caused by colonization and its eurocentric history (Lentin & McVeigh, 2006) -- which affected the so-called “minorities” presented in this study, in the analysis of the construction of Afrophobia in a mixed-race country such as Brazil (Martins, 2008). In the analysis of the Brazilian context mentioned (demonstrated on pages 35-45), it is clear that the reality of black communities is well known and close to all the layers of Brazilian society. However, even if the “black body” is commonly seen walking the streets (not being a “novelty” as previously claimed to be in Ireland), there is still a problematic institutional structure based on prejudice, that

prevents society to be equal -- given black and people of colour in Brazil are the majority in society, but still the less favoured (IBGE - Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, n.d.).

These structures are, on different occasions, rooted in the episodes of human History, in previous epochs, that now appear to justify the inequalities. The biopower of Foucault illustrates a new dynamic where the welfare is an essential part of every government. For instance, if in the medieval times there was freedom to kill the unknown and badly liked peoples, the modern biopower means the societies should be protected insofar as the state should care for the welfare, health, education and lifestyle of its population. Therefore, the philosopher concludes the country will find mechanisms to shield itself from interferences, such as the “threat” of immigration, to protect its sovereignty, -- creating what is known as the Racial State, the beginning of racialization. Consequently, it is hard to dissociate society from racism -- that, in this case, is seen as a tool of normalization. (Lentin & McVeigh, 2008, p. 13).

It is contradictory to believe the “colourblind” policy is still in fashion, and to find some mechanisms such as quotas for universities are seen as racially discriminatory (Winant, 1994, p.23). There is a strong argument to defend that the so-called positive discrimination is necessary, whereas given a hypothetical scenario, where there is no racism, and applying proportions based on specific populations, minorities are expressive in absolute numbers, but not in privileged positions:

“If racism did not exist we would expect 13 per cent of US Presidents to have been African American; only 1 per cent of deaths in custody in Australia to be Aboriginal people; 10 per cent of the members of the British Parliament to be from minority ethnic backgrounds; New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina to be relieved in the same way as New York was after September 11th 2001; over one per cent of students in Irish universities to be Travellers, and so on and on across the myriad of significant differences we find across racialized interfaces around the world.” (Lentin & McVeigh, 2008, p. 9)

Not by chance, the traveller community is seen as an example of Naturalism applied in its greater power in Ireland. The concept of Naturalism is, in short, the idea of a superior race, based in the 18th century. According to that theory, the named “native population” is considered pre-modern and not capable enough to progress. The french Naturalist George Louis Leclerc brought the concept of degeneration, that was broadly used to discuss miscegenation (in Brazil especially) throughout an idea of two different species: “the black man would stand for the donkey as the white man would stand for the horse”. Or, if we were to consider the white man as human, the black man would not be. Aside, “the black man would, then, be an animal, such as a monkey”. (Conceição, 2014)

The concept of historicism is also connected to the gears of modern racism, as in that theory, the power of Europeans over primitive people is considered a necessary and triumphant result of progress. Lentin and McVeigh present a text from Giraldus Cambrensis, which shows how these fundamentals were applied to justify the oppression of native Irish people by the English:

“ ‘They live on beasts only and live like beasts. They have not progressed from the habits of pastoral living. Backwardness, beggary and nomadism were portrayed as general Irish traits, compounded by superstition, anarchy and a penchant for violence. Imagining the Irish as homogeneously wild and classless, English racialization erased linguistic, religious, class and urban/rural heterogeneities; and Irish history was written in the English language in the service of English policy, by the English Ascendancy, in the belief that the natives are a lesser breed and that anything that is theirs is of little value’ ” (Lentin and McVeigh, 2006, p. 11).

So History teaches me, in some extent, “putting myself in someone else’s shoes” goes beyond a personal and individual relationship. If empathy is a crucial any problem-solving situation, it also invites us to look at any conflict from the other’s perspective. Empathy does not mean agreement. Empathy does mean, at least, an attempt to understand (Brown, 2019).

I encourage myself to empathise by analyzing the postmodern context in Ireland and how biopower appeared as a tool to protect the then-newly emerging economy. There was a time when emigrating was the “El Dorado”: the best prospects of success lay in leaving the country, mainly for the chance of a new story in The United States (Goek, 2015). Before the 1990s, the economy was limited. The precarity in some systems as communications, for instance, restrained the investments in Ireland, by the big world companies. However, from that decade on, the economic growth started to be noticed. The Republic of Ireland became an example to be followed, a globalized economy after centuries of subjugation, not to mention the Great Famine and the Civil War (Lentin & McVeigh, 2008, p. 30).

Nevertheless, it appears that during the economic boom Ireland did not improve its records in regards of quality of life, keeping high levels of poverty, which suggests that the right numbers in the economy did not reflect people’s budget (Lentin & McVeigh, 2008, p. 30).

Those pieces of information find room in my early comparisons between what it was named as “Irish Colonization” by England and the colonization by Portugal in Brazil. If the differences between the two moments in history are considerable, it is clear Ireland plays a role of the oppressed during the 17th and 18th century, differing from many countries in Europe that had taken part in the great navigations -- and consequently, started colonization overseas and the tragic episode of slavery (also justified through Naturalism) (Fernandes, 2008).

During the great navigations, it would be natural that the process of colonization would be widespread, as it inevitably was. Consequently, it is correct to affirm that, in some sense, globalization has its roots in the modern era, challenging the idea that it originated in the contemporaneity. As a result, racism is indeed global, despite the presence of the black body as identity or not. To understand it is a global phenomenon can be extremely positive in the scope of Conflict Resolution as there is no individual blame. Racism is not a result of one or two individual actions only, and by spreading that

macro reality, there is the removal of the individualities from a place of denial. As an observer, I tend to understand there is a tendency of non-acceptance of racism, mainly when the individual is to be blamed. When mechanisms behind racism are to be blamed, there are tendencies to try to understand these dynamics and hence to reflect on them to produce the anti-racism behaviour (Lawrence & Keleher, 2004).

The “racism denial” is not anti-racism. When the Irish State preaches diversity, but restricts immigration, it engenders the “Racism without racism” (Lentin & McVeigh, 2008, p. 42). One crucial factor that corroborates for that dynamic is the support shown, by the United States and Britain, towards the invasion of Iraq. What could be naively seen as a totally independent event had a substantial influence on the Irish popular opinion in a sense that this state would be “subservient” (words of the authors) to the power formed by the USA, European Union and Britain. That influence leads to the conclusion that, along with globalization, the Irish state also absorbed the inherent racism of it (Lentin & McVeigh, 2006, p. 31). Insofar as the absence of the black, political body is useful to excuse the presence of racism, the war propaganda is not harmless when it comes to diffuse the uncountable preconceptions in which the wars themselves are sustained upon. On those aspects, I reflect: would it not be useful to become aware of the impacts those structures have on the perpetuation of racism and Afrophobia? In which extent the problem’s denial has been happening, mainly, because of a collective shame non-black individual unconsciously carry?

The responsibility on perpetuating racism and Afrophobia appears not to be taken for the powers. For instance, the demonstration of compassion for undocumented workers, expressed by both houses of the Oireachtas, shows a duality. What is in the public interest to be exposed about the asylum seekers’s condition in the country, for instance? From lack of freedom to cooking their meals, lack of any access to culture and entertainment to bedrooms full of bunk beds or the extreme prohibition to work, the non-racist state is selective (Loyal & Quilley, 2016, p.78).

“Again, empathy is an attempt to understand, not an agreement”, I say to myself. My first thought on the issue regarding Asylum Seeker in Ireland -- in my attempt to see the matter from another perspective -- was the fact the Republic of Ireland is relatively new in comparison to other countries in which the system of direct provision is in operation (such as England and France). Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil were both established after 1932, indicating the rise of a nationalist political context by that point (Budge, 2008). That perspective was contradicted, however.

In that quiet room, during that first Conflict Transformation session, one question arose: “do you think Ireland is doing well regarding the situation of Asylum Seekers in the country compared to England and France?”. Playing the role of the facilitator in the room, I invited the participants to reflect on the issue. The answers came quickly this time. One argued it would be unfair to compare the Irish government’s modus operandi to that of the British or French on this issue -- as, the woman in the room highlighted, the two countries mentioned were, also, two big powers that fomented slavery and racialization worldwide. My interlocutor suggested the perpetuation of racism is due to the pursuance of a colonialist and imperialist mindset -- which reinforces Lentin’s and McVeigh’s idea of the influence of the powers mentioned (European Union, Britain and the United States) on Irish policies.

If racism in an individual sphere is difficult to assess, the Institutional racism manifests itself in the referendum of 2004 known as Ireland Citizenship Law. In the 1990s a new phenomenon appeared in Irish politics with the establishment of the Immigration Control Platform -- for the first time, Ireland witnessed an organized and resourced anti-immigration lobby. However, the rise of economy would be worth trying the “new beginning” Ireland was to promise during that decade, to study, to work, to live.

In this context, the concept of migrant workers appears, mainly referring to those who migrate while the workforce demand is more embracing in the developed countries -- at the expense of the conditions in the developing and underdeveloped countries. However, it does include people who migrate not necessarily due to economic reason, but also in pursuit of progress in education or safer environment, contributing to the Irish economy. For instance, English students immigrants contributed €330 million to the Irish economy in 2018 (McGuire, 2015).

“Eles deveriam nos agradecer”. That means “They should thank us”. It does not sound pleasant, as it reverberates as a response to the tensions regarding immigration and the claimed “right to come and go”. Not only is the Afrophobia an issue in Ireland, as the prejudice towards nationalities appears as well to be increasing (Fox, 2019). As a Brazilian citizen, my particular perception of how discrimination affects the Brazilian community living in Ireland (a group that bolster the statistics on migrant workers in the country), tends to be biased. However, a deeper examination of this particular conflict exposes the dynamics of prejudice that the Irish, specially the Traveller Community, itself is also a victim of.

Although overseas students who work are excluded from this definition of a migrant worker, in the Irish context, these students are often a core part of the migrant worker population. According to the Census of 2016, in April that year, 13,640 Brazilians were living in Ireland, 43% of them working formally (Central Statistics Office, 2016).

On the other hand, it seems the violence towards that community reverts as a manifestation of prejudice against, mainly, the traveller community -- from which stereotypes is now spread through the Brazilian population in Ireland, aggravating the conflicts between these two groups. While a group of Brazilian individuals has been violently targeted, mainly classified as delivery workers for companies such as “Deliveroo” and “Just Eat” (Falvey, 2019), the level of prejudice involved is

reflected in Facebook groups -- where Brazilian citizens refer to their aggressors as “knackers”, based on physical descriptions and stereotypes. The act of discrimination appears to come from a complete lack of integration and engrains concepts about two groups already subjugated (Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997).

Considering that dynamic of conflict, it is not wrong to affirm that manifestations of prejudice are, somehow, used as a defense mechanism -- where both groups utilize depreciation as an implement to change their roles in a society that oppress any and every group that does not corresponds to the ideal model of established dominance (Lentin & McVeigh, 2008, p. 184).

1.3. Ethnic conflicts in a mixed-race context

“Moro,

Num país tropical,

Abençoado por Deus,

E bonito por natureza”

(Ben, 1969)

“I live in a tropical country, blessed by God and naturally beautiful”. The song is an anthem, played every February and it is indeed a metalanguage, as in some point it praises the Brazilian Carnival, a pagan party commonly celebrated in the second month of the year.

It is warm in South America. It is Carnival in Brazil, and this is what the song evokes. If we are to talk about assumptions and the unknown, yes there are invisible, effusive expectations when a person born in that country is asked about her or his origin. The media plays an essential part on what has been shown for decades, and the fact that Brazil is a mixed-race country suggests, that people in that country live in a peaceful environment regarding ethnic conflicts. If only this was the reality. Nevertheless, data shows it is quite the opposite: the majority of people are self-declared as black or a person of colour (*pardo*, in Portuguese), whereas the national media, the advertising industry and labour market explicit invisible apartheid.

As this part of the present work aims to highlight the manner covert racism (Czopp, 2017) is manifested, even in one of the most mixed countries in the world (Telles, n.d.) it is also valuable in order to draw parallels with the same manifestations occurred in Ireland. As identifying is a vital point to confront any issue (Green, 2019), I intend to draw the attention to how threatening the lack of information and to hushing ethnic issues can be -- affecting (subtly or violently) the society in the long term.

Historically, there is a commonly applied term that is controversial, to begin with. To say a territory was “found” implicates that the history before the eurocentric version of facts was to be erased. To compensate what is authentically believed to be a historical debt, it is necessary, at first, to clear the blurred message. The invasions during the 16th century were simply that: invasions. A red tint, from a much-valued tree, which happened to be in abundance. A vast extension of soil, adequate for the plantation system, was yet untouchable.

“They were coloured, naked. (...) Their manners are similar to the redskins, good profiles, well-built, fine noses. They walk naked, nothing to cover them. They do not make efforts to cover or to show their intimacies; there is so much innocence in showing their bodies and faces. Both had pierced lips,

with real white bones between them. There was no possibility to develop any speech, nor useful understanding” (Ministério da Cultura - Fundação Biblioteca Nacional - Departamento Nacional do Livro, 2015). Pero Vaz de Caminha, the official scrivener, depicted the first indigenous people inland, the potential workers for the plantation system, gentle enough to be tamed, fragile enough to succumb in the face of diseases brought in the ships (Fonseca, n.d.). From the owners to the subdued, reduced from 2 million to 300,000 in 4 centuries, the indigenous people were culled. An alternative to the labour force needed to be found, as the indigenous population was dying due to the exhaustive work they were forced to do (IBGE - Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, n.d.).

The chapter of the slave trade is now announced as an unforgotten tragedy. It is proved through the documentation at least 4,8 African people were brought from different countries in the continent to work under slavers regime in Brazil, besides the 300,000 who died during the maritime route (França, 2015).

Despite the valuable tree from which one could have the red tint, diamond, emerald and gold were certain motives to pursue the new land. The more the news of a prosperous Portugal circulated, the more ships would cross the Atlantic, and the more self-declared owners would establish their share in the new land. And as a result, more blacks would die of exhaustion and more blacks would be sent as replacements.

Here, it is not productive to go through the journey from a colony to an empire, and then a new republic. The manumission, eventually, came, and it was not as good as some people think. The abolitionist campaign at the end of the 19th century indeed mobilized diverse sectors of the Brazilian society. However, an established reform did not consider the blacks to be part of the society and its new project, its new structure in which a stipendiary regime would be firmed. The land property, as expected, was not in discussion. “Useless”. “Lazy”. “Unlucky”. If slavery was no longer current,

where might the *negroes* go? I, a Latin-American, black woman, has been in a place from where I am more likely to figure this out.

No orientation, no alternative, no compassion. As the sociologist Florestan Fernandes says,

“The disintegration of slavery regime took place, in Brazil, with no assistance or guarantees that could protect the agents of slavery work during the transition to a free work system. The landholders were exempt of responsibility for the maintenance and security of the freemen and State, Church or any other institution accepted special charges, to prepare the freemen to the new regime of life and work organization. (...) These facets of the situation (...) printed on Abolition a character of an extreme and cruel spoliation (Fernandes, 2008, p.15).

The incontestable supremacy of the British Empire and the international economy in expansion had, as a consequence, increasing demand for raw material by the countries contextualized in the Second Industrial Revolution. As highlighted by the historian Eric Hobsbawm, for the peripheral countries were directed an extensive amount of investments due to the capitalist model in construction. It is believed 200,000 immigrants from Europe moved to both Argentina and Brazil during the decade of 1880 -- also occupying the positions in the new system of free work (Hobsbawm, 2010, p. 26).

Given the new scenario, with no possibility for the full exercise of their citizenry, no basic premises and opportunities, to the negroes population in Brazilian territory were reserved the peripheral areas, precarious accommodation, also known as favelas and cortiços, and a lack of educational and healthy assistance that is perpetuated nowadays as a result of a meritocracy ideology, where privileged white society delays in recognizing the impact of history in a current social formation. (Santos, 1993, p. 28).

It is understandable that the discrepancies are not visible to every eye in the face of years of ideological indoctrination, as the history has erased a black version of the facts, focused in a eurocentric white version of the facts. The historical context in Brazil was materially built by black hands, and wrote by white minds. It is paradoxical.

There is evidence of the paradoxical relationship in Brazilian society in regards to colour and ethnicity. In the year of 2012, two years after the last census was conducted in Brazil, 46.6% of the population was declared as white, while 52.7% was declared as black/ people of colour. Continuous research completed three years later shows white people made 45.5% of the population, while black people and people of colour were 53.8%, and in 2018 the figures were 43.1 comprised white people and 55.8 comprised black people and people of colour. Each new consensus confirms that the country's majority is made of an ethnic composition formed by people of colour. To a greater or lesser degree opportunities, such as education and employment, were to be made available in equal measure. (IBGE - Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, n.d.).

“What do you do for a living? Are you a housekeeper?”. By being offended when that question is asked, I do not mean to diminish any form of work or profession. What bothers me is not the possibility of being a houseworker but the assumptions surrounding the profession and my ethnicity. Assumptions are a trigger for the conflict, and they are frequently made. Who can blame the inquirer instead of blaming social construction? It is a fact that the concept of freedom after the abolitionism was not clear enough for the negroes. If once they were ravished and butchered, when the free work was a possibility, it was hard to establish the relation of master and subordinate, as the limits and subtleties were not yet clear, especially for men. As well as the role of black enslaved women during the enslaver regime was related to housework, and so it was easier for those to be absorbed as free workers into the job market, perpetuating their craft due to a lack of opportunity in the academic sphere.

When it comes to wages, the same research (IBGE - Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, n.d.) released data about employment and how opportunities can differ based on colour and ethnicity. According to the official governmental institute of research IBGE (an acronym for Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), a white worker received, in 2018, 72.5% higher payment than blacks and people of colour.

The extension of the structural racism faced by black community in Brazil is felt in the income distribution according to IBGE. The continuous research from 2015 reveals 75% of blacks and people of colour were also the 10% poorest in the country. When the situation is inverted, only 17.8% of black people are among the 1% richest in the territory. The rates of illiteracy correspond to 4.2% among the white population, as the number nearly doubles among black people: 9.9%.

Another indicative of structural racism in the same context is access to education, mainly to secondary school and university, when the individuals are over 16 and are legally able to work. The reality of many is to drop out of school to work and supplement the home income. For instance, 25-year-old and older white adults represent 22.9% from a total of 32.2% of the population with an undergraduate diploma -- while 9.3% of them are black or coloured. Also, when in the last year of secondary school, the same research analysed the dropouts by colour and concluded that among the white students, 16,6% could not finish their courses and graduate compared to 25.5% of the black community.

The statistics are never in favour of these so-called “minorities”, even if they represent the majority of the population. The cruellest portrait given by the same institution is related to the rates of violence, that are generally high in Brazil. Between 2012 and 2017, IBGE analysed homicide rates in the country and revealed the number of murders where the victims were black or coloured increased from 37.2 to 43.4 per 100,000 residents. The latest data, from 2017, reveals that among population of those between the ages of 15 and 29, the rate comprised 34 white homicide victims to every 100,000 people.

In regards to black and coloured communities, the rate comprised of 98,5 murders to every 100,000 inhabitants (Exame, 2019).

There is also the factor of the “prison population”. According to Justice Ministry research from 2018, 61.7% of the population is made of black and coloured individuals. This data inspires a debate as part of society argues the system is fair insofar as those same individuals, hypothetically, perpetrate more crimes (Sistema Carcerário Brasileiro: Negros e Pobres na Prisão, 2018).

“It is evident that the blacks (sic) die more. I had the pleasure and the displeasure of working in military operations in all the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. There are more negroes with guns, perpetrating crimes, confronting the police so that more negroes die. If negroes form the majority of the prison population is because more negroes perpetrate crimes. And then they say one more time ‘I did not have the opportunity in society. I did not want to study. I preferred to rob’. Do not come to assign the deaths to the Military Police of Rio de Janeiro State, because a little black robber has to be forgiven. And I am talking about a white person too. If he (sic) commits a crime, shall he be ‘neutralized’ if he has to be? (People) will sell a discourse that we can not kill? Of course, we can”. The above speech is from an elected federal congressperson, delivered in November of 2019 (Ohana, 2019).

Not jumping to conclusions, I consider it appropriate to highlight data from the Brazilian Justice Court. In 2012, it was concluded that the military police from three distinct states, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Distrito Federal, had a standard in the procedures when approaching the so-called suspects publicly. It was revealed, in the three cases, a particular type of clothes (the term “hip hop” was mentioned to refer to them), the usage of caps and “baggy trousers” matches the factor “compatibility”: the combination of factors influences the decision of approaching an individual, or not. According to the research, there is a consensus in regards to class discrimination, despite the term “racism” being taboo. The group of researchers compared the numbers related to homicides occurred

during military interventions in the state of Rio de Janeiro – the registered state with the highest rates of murders of so-called suspects by the police officers.(247) From 2008 to 2012, 69% of those killed during the military approach were black people or people of colour. In the same period, 17% of the victims in the same type of occasion were white, and 13.2% were not registered (Sinhoretto, et al., n.d.).

Besides the unfavourable statistics, the black community during the Brazil postcolonial could not count on manumission as an advantage: without jobs and excluded, many of them would be punished under the so current criminal code, for the crime of vagrancy (Araújo, 2019).

Regarding self esteem: I, myself, recall being seated in front of the TV, asking myself why I could not see a person like me on the screen. Apart, of course, from the roles of a housekeeper. Later on, I would read an interview with a famous Brazilian actress, dark skin and white teeth, reporting the high number of black actresses in mainstream TV strenuously competing for the one role available to them: the housekeeper.

The beauty standard in Brazil, as a result of European colonization, also followed European patterns that do not correspond to the profile of the population's. However, the so-called “black money” emerged to change the scenario.

For instance, the first black woman to become a millionaire in the United States built her empire on hair products to afro hair. In Brazil, it is believed that a small movement created by an also small company (founded by five black sisters) was the first step for a change in the representation of black and people of colour and, mainly, of black and women of colour (Martins, 2008). In 1996, the first product designed especially for curly and afro hair became popular in the country. Also for the first time, the big corporations felt threatened: with no further researches on target to find out a probable new market niche, they were left behind by consumers from black communities -- who, in the early

'90s, had the opportunity to know and acquire that new line of products created exclusively for their type of hair (Sales, 2019).

“In a country where about 51% of the population is female, 53% are black and people of colour, 23% are people with some disability, and a non-official number of many is part of the LGBTQ+ community, it appears to be wrong that advertising in Brazil is often white, male and heteronormative” (Sales, 2019). That statement portrays a distorted reality faced by black people in the latin country, where the denial of racism vehemently occurs -- even if the effects of the slavery system are still proven after five centuries. From my perspective, the evidence that a black individual's experience is accompanied of negative stereotypes (that in fact, affects their opportunities), it is reasonable to provide the black body sensibility to identify imminent manifestations of racism -- even in a called “racism-free” environments, as some part of the Irish society claims to belong to (Lynch, 2010).

1.4. Conflict in theory

If the sense of subjugation is real as demonstrated in the previous chapters (taking in consideration the Brazilian context and its covert racism, and the structural racism proven to be palpable in Ireland), it is crucial to assess the role of the domination's dynamics present in society since the 17th century.

The definition of conflict is broad and can be approached from different perspectives. In this case, I would like to recall Karl Marx's Theory of Conflict. In his theses, Marx argues that society, divided the way it is, creates conflicts by its nature. That theory is a reflection of the capitalist world, which is connected with the global context analysed previously in this work. With the control of production in the hands of the bourgeoisie, the working class is therefore oppressed.

Marx's point about the bourgeoisie being the holder of the power is well known. It can be observed - and also used as an argument against capitalism's defenders -- in a sense that the ones who do not belong to that fragment of society would have to work continuously to guarantee their sustenance. Besides the most popular Marx's ideas, lays his Theory of Conflict -- that, according to the philosopher, proposes that the two classes, bourgeoisie and proletariat, coexist in harmony to avoid criminality. Consequently, the dominant class would be responsible for creating legislation to keep the working class under control and as well maintain their general well-being.

It is interesting to notice how the theory explores aspects related to factors that led black populations to being in the disadvantaged situations that persist today (Ree, 2019).

The Theory of Conflict shows that the Primitive Communism represented what was considered an equal period in primitives societies, due to the absence of slavery, for instance (Ree, 2019). The principles of Karl Marx Theory of Conflict are Incompatibility, Threat and Solidarity Among Minorities. The principle of Incompatibility is related to the differing interests in one same group, and the concept of Threat is defined by the identification, from one group, of actions that bring discontent. Consequently, there is a mobilization against this group.

I would like to focus on the principle of Solidarity Among Minorities. From my perspective, it is precisely this concept that makes me evaluate the Impact of Alternative Dispute Resolution on solving conflicts regarding ethnicity and skin colour. According to Marx, there is a trend to establish unity among the oppressed against the oppressor "in common". So, an idea of a threat from one group towards another creates solidarity among the first group. From this union, a force to work against the oppressed would emerge (Ree, 2019).

If Marx talks specifically about one group "against" another, the processes of Alternative Dispute Resolution eliminates "one side" versus "the other".

Being a black woman growing up among white cousins, uncles, aunties and grandparents, would it be contradictory to place me in “one side” of an ideological battle, considering my “equals” as opponents? We did have different skin tones, different challenges ahead and the world would see “me” and “them” in diverse positions, from various angles.

During this work, as the ethnography itself allows, I have been finding space for self-reflection. I have been observing the process of trying to understand the other’s perceptions of blackness is, after all, mechanism of protection. Inserted in a predominantly white environment, having had opportunities my black peers would not have had and, in many occasions, being the only person of colour in privileged situations, my “strategy to navigate society” would be to mingle with (what some would consider) my “oppressors” (Martins, 2008).

It does not mean there were no omissions during this journey. The perpetuation of racism in Brazil is manifested in very subtle ways. Differently from the United States, when a segregation process blatantly displayed the hate against African people and descendants from the African Diaspora (BBC, 2018), there is a mistaken idea of the Brazilian population as being very tolerant and concordant due to miscegenation (and the co-existence of white and black people). The racism in Brazilian society occurs in the denial of the racism, depriving the oppressed of self-defence, as, in many cases, the black person can be perceived as “ultrasensitive”, a person who does not have “sense of humour” or likes to “stir up trouble”.

1.5. A seat at the table

The justification of racism has been, for a long time, one of the factors through which its perpetuation keeps occurring. The lack of specific legislation in many countries ends up facilitating the perpetrators of hate crime to go unpunished, creating a sensation that racism is not an issue which with the powers are genuinely concerned. The Irish Immigrant Support Centre promoted a conference in which its

consensus stated that there was a lack of legislation in Ireland, and the country had fallen behind -- even if Ireland was at one point an example of excellence in the European Union and had been following the requirements of the EU in this area (Nasc - The Irish Immigrant Support Centre; Centre for Criminal Justice and Human Rights, 2013).

Subjectively, I agree to a great extent that punitive measures are not, in comparison to preventive measures, the most effective way to tackle any kind of violence. It does not mean the coercive methods are unnecessary in its totality, as the remnants of hundreds of years of exploitation and dehumanization are still manifested in the lack of representation, in the rates of unemployment and the black (un)presence in third-level education institutions.

As presented, the majority of the Brazilian population is black. Even so, the first time in history black Brazilians populated the majority in private universities (which are also the most difficult ones to get access to) was in 2019 (Jornal Nacional, 2019). In Ireland, a sense of identity seems to concern black and people of colour born in the country, as the questions such as “where are you really from” or “how do you like it here” are often asked. That seems to challenge the sense of identity in those people, especially the younger generation:

“Like mixed-race Irish young people, they exist instead as a kind of invisible presence, at the margins of society who must live out their ‘difference’ silently, almost as stateless citizens” (O’Malley, 2019).

“How can I refer to a person of colour? Can I just called them black?”. The genuine question was asked of me, in private, after my experimental Conflict Transformation session. It was not a coincidence that, back in Brazil, I used to hear people referring to dark-skin individuals as “little

brunette”. Even the term “person of colour” is old fashioned, when translated to Portuguese -- as every person has a colour, the expression does not celebrate the differences among people, only highlighting them.

In the Irish context, the absence of the mixed-race identity has no name, as there is the search “for terms that would give expression to their in-between positioning. They referred to themselves as “Hispanic”, “Spanish”, “whitey brown” and “tanned” as opposed to Irish or for that matter, mixed-race Irish” (O’Malley, 2019).

In this context, the anti-racist work is of extreme relevance. As seen, representation plays a significant role in the collective perception of the general audience of black people and people of colour. The description of Jesus, for instance, has always been of a blue-eyed, light skin man (even having been born in the Middle East, improving the possibilities he skin was dark). That is an excellent example of how the identity of black people has also been erased, hidden, seen as non-beautiful, or “exotic” (Wilson, 2004).

Edward D. Rodman defends every piece of anti-racism works starts in the identification of sources with the appreciation of diversity. That would also be, in congruence with Marx’s theory, done through the identification of sources of power, its dynamics and how these structures are in fashion, resulting in the maintenance of a determined status quo -- and the preservation of white privilege (Rodman, 2013).

The concept of “colonial body” needs to be seen in the postcolonial context as a political body. If from a colonial perspective, the black body is a synonym of regression, the appreciation of the black body would not only allow black individuals to recognize comfort in their figures, as it would elevate the black character from a place of infantilization and hypersexualization. (Fanon in López, 2015, p. 302).

Taking my experience as a black individual, inserted into a “white privilege” reality, I started to reflect on my attitude when facing racism: on many occasions paralyzed, in some circumstances aggressive, but never was it constructive. I still remember the first talk I had about racism with a person of colour, a woman, like me. And it only happened after 20 years of my existence.

I recall the aggression in her speech and its presence in this dialogue confused me. But there was also coexistence with the non-black community that, in my view, was not coherent with the uptight conversations we would have in private..

“She is Coco”, I used to think. The number of media productions with themes broadening ethnic issues is now higher than during the 70s and 80s. *“Dear White People”*, (Dear White People, 2017-2019), firstly exhibited by the streaming service Netflix, would display the American aesthetic in terms of cinematography, costume and ambience, except for its cast. Predominantly black, the actresses and actors portray a black community in a mostly white American college. One of the main characters, Samantha, has a show on the university radio station where she sarcastically criticizes the non-obvious manifestations of racism that currently occurs in the campus. Nevertheless, Samantha herself has a “secret”, a white boyfriend she visibly avoids in public.

Samantha’s narrative has a point. Not solely being about the black individual dealing with the persistent manifestation of racism, there are also aspects debated inside the black community about “how” and “how not” to face relations with non-black individuals.

The “lighter” and the “darker skin” appears to be a determining factor in the acceptance of this or that black individual -- the lighter skin being a sort of a “privilege” as seen in the TV show in question. The desire for lighter skin is driven by an association between light skin and a “better life” reproduced by the media. So this idea, named colourism, shows skin colour as social capital (the lighter being the

most accepted, the most likely to be promoted in a particular career, the most beautiful) (Dixon & Telles, 2017).

The colourism is also related to the concept of “lonely black woman”. I would not feel comfortable enough talking about this specific topic some years ago, as the shame of feeling rejected was enough to prevent me from speaking up. However, verbalization and study of these ethnic issues’ aspects in a larger scale, encourage me with the idea that the pain of rejection is real for many like me.

I would like to direct the attention to the follow research, conducted in Ohio State University: 329 young black women were interviewed. From those, 137 were dark-skinned (42%), 139 were medium skinned (42%), and 53 were light-skinned (16%). Results show that 55% of the respondents who were or had been married were part of the group classified as light-skinned. In opposition, dark-skinned black women were only 23% among those who had the same civil status, even if they were the majority in the sample (Hamilton, et al., 2009). The same does not apply to men, as it is claimed the scarcity of “high-status” husbands gives the black man an advantage. The feeling of rejection is widely shared: “I feel like dark-skinned women were just the women that men had behind closed doors. They weren’t trophy wives enough for you to show to the world. Somebody wouldn’t want to show me off but, next thing you know, they’ve got somebody lighter, and they’re showing *them* off ... It made me feel like I would never be wanted” (McClinton, 2019).

Dear White People manifests colourism through the relationship of two black women who, aside from their skin tones, share a great deal in common. Also, the different treatment they experience impacts their participation in the black community and the relations with non-black people in distinctive ways.

Samantha feels “guilty” because she is the voice of anti-racism in an environment where “being anti-racist” can be often be mistaken as being “anti-white”. Samantha is angry, and her rage contradicts her when showing affection for a non-black individual.

In antagonism to Samantha, there is Coco. Coco can be persuaded as omissive and is always surrounded by her white friends, sometimes giving the audience the impression she opposes to every militancy her black peers would pratice. At some point, Coco reveals the importance of being accepted by her “white circle” of friends, a quality in the show that, inevitably, places Coco in conflict with Samantha.

TV shows aside, *Dear White People* sheds light on some aspects of racism not easily decipherable even to the black community: every black person, with every familial background, different achievements and failures, will inevitably view these issues through their own prism, depending on their personal narrative.

My particular story has a significant contribution to my approximation to Alternative Dispute Resolution approaches when it comes to fighting racism and Afrophobia. I have seen, heard and lived the ambiguities and similarities of extremely opposite experience when it comes to prejudice: the white context and the black context. And, throughout a natural process, I have realized the importance of empathy, non-violent communication and of the peacebuilding process to achieve communal well-being.

However, There were conversations where my act of highlighting racism would be undermined. There were uncountable times I would be told my English was quite good for a Brazilian. Furthermore, I was more interested in investigating to what extent my perception of racism on the island was based in reality. It was particularly important to investigate this matter because, after being diminished on so many occasions, there was the potential that these observations were the fruits of self-victimization.

Back to December, 2019: having taken part in different activist initiatives, I asked myself what was black community's level of participation in said initiatives? As, for instance, the environmental movement has been accused of being white and privileged when it was supposed to be a communal space of all, regardless of race. And so what is the role of the black individuals when it comes to occupying said spaces where their voices need to be heard? In this case, it is also well known that the impact of climate change would relapse on the most impoverished countries; consequently, where the black population makes up the majority. Without diving into this issue it is but one example of a space the black community, for diverse reasons, cannot occupy or, do not feel welcome enough to fill (Toomey, 2018).

I would like to reflect on anger and the feeling of being uninvited. Subjectively, those are the types of feelings that tend to appear with some frequency, mainly in the circumstances told above. In a country such as Brazil, where numbers show a lack of opportunities for people of colour as one of the consequences of colonization and slavery, the reflection of the forged selection is visual. Whereas the presence of black people is massive in the most deprived areas, the same occurrence is insignificant in relation to third-level education, rates of employment and primary conditions of life, such as having basic sanitation. In São Paulo City, the largest city in Brazil, 32% of the population identify as black or people of colour. However, in one of the most deprived areas, such as Jardim Angela, the number of black inhabitants is 60%. In opposition, in the neighbourhood of Moema (one of the wealthiest areas), only 5.82% of the residents are black (Sobrinho, 2019). In 2014, a photo went viral (363) representing the valley separating black and white people regarding opportunities: above side, a majority of white students about to graduate as doctors. Below side, a group of waste collectors (demonstrated on page 117). The point in this discussion is not to diminish one or another profession, but to emphasize that, based on the arguments exposed through this work, the white

individual has privileges asserting himself or herself into competitive spaces and work positions (Iconografia da História, 2017).

Nevertheless, it would not be fair to make conclusions about preconceptions from a judgemental place. Recalling my background as a black woman raised in a white environment, I am aware of my particular disposition to occupy spaces in society, even if I do not see my black peers in those space. In this sense, the concept of a black body as a political body becomes evident (Jackson, 2006, p. 13). Making up or believing in dangerous stereotypes about a people is not a perspective based on the knowledge of said people (Green, 2019).

It is crucial to highlight that diverse backgrounds, different stories involving superation, or success, or tragedies, will have an impact on the way one behaves and interacts with the external world. The black individual has the right to be angry when facing situations of racism. The acknowledgement of or to feel anger is not exclusive to this or that ethnicity, as every so-called “minority” faces different situations where prejudice against them manifests, leading to appropriate anger (Bodenhause & V., 2003).

I am aware that much of the anger from individuals is related to the divergence of ideas. The work to be done through Alternative Dispute Resolution applied to ethnic matters is to bring the realization that listening to conflicting opinions -- and, many times, to hurtful statements -- does not mean to agree with them. More than that, acknowledging the racist speech is not the same as respecting it or accepting it. However, it is suggested that any form of acknowledgement towards the person reproducing the speech is “game-changing” in the context of Conflict Transformation. That leads to an intention to comprehend where the individual owning the racist rhetoric is coming from. (Green, 2019).

Acknowledging feelings and developing emotional intelligence (two core steps in the process of Conflict Transformation), my challenge is to recognize the moment when anger can be not suppressed, but instead converted in empathy. As pointed by Max Klau, when one allows the cruelty and hate of the system to have an angry, hateful influence in her or his attitude when facing racism, “then we begin calling forth through our way of being the very same darkness we aspire to transform” (Klau, 2017).

Who are those taking part, effectively, in black movements? Who are those going to the meetings, creating awareness, spending hours in favour of militancy? There is a concept in some spaces of activism, not necessarily in the so-called black “spaces”, where the concept of a “locus of speech” that is minimally known (Johnston, 2017, p. 175). Could a meeting, a session, a circle discussing ethnic issues be an inviting environment for the white community to join? Would that occasion be a safe space, a non-judgemental zone, as an ideal scenario for Conflict Transformation? Could the places of “oppressor” and “oppressed” be dissolved to focus on a standard solution for parties willing to compromise with this proposition?

To what extent is it possible to listen and respectfully acknowledge any issue, from both sides, to be able to distinguish a non-judgemental posture from an agreement or disagreement? Paula Green agrees that changes are gradual, and in her words “it’s not possible for people to wake up and change their minds suddenly”. The researcher defends that there is no shifting without any listening, referring to an existent antagonism to Conflict Transformation and peacebuilding processes, that often can be confused with passivity or illegitimate respect from one or another party. In my interpretation, Green tries to prove the difference between “respecting the verbalization of different opinions” and “agreeing with those different opinions”. (Green, 2019).

In a governmental level, there is no initiative of Conflict Transformation and peacebuilding in regards to ethnic conflicts established in Ireland, nor Brazil. Nevertheless, the action appears to be useful in the context of the United States. This country has a similar history in regards to slavery and its establishment in the American country -- though the segregation has accentuated and escalated the rates of hate crime against the black community when compared to the situation in Brazil. (BBC, 2018).

Paula Green argues that the ideal scenario is to implement Conflict Resolution's processes before the conflict develops itself. In the context of Afrophobia, the battle is inherent to the operation of colonization dated from the 17th century. Green recalls the principle of communication as one of the pillars of the conflict resolution process, especially in Conflict Transformation as it opens an opportunity for personal relations to be discussed. I would like to highlight that, despite the critical role of dialogue, it appears to be an expectation that this dialogue, and consequently, the process of Conflict Transformation, is the solution itself.

As Paula Green explains, the Conflict Transformation session applied to solve ethnic conflicts to some extent is one step towards social change, in a sense that the individuals involved would develop more sensitivity to deal with the issues the dialogue brings. Moreover, the taboo is an aspect of racism also related to the feeling of impotence, in a sense that "the rules of the game" are not clear. Without a frank conversation about feelings involved in any manifestation of racism, the recognition of these feelings for all turns out to be blurry. Those feelings are put in check ("aren't you playing the victim?"; "aren't these cases - of racism - mere exceptions"?).

"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced". This quote by the black activist James Baldwin expresses the importance of confrontation in focusing on solutions instead of problems or placing blame (or, at least, to meet the interests of the parties, and I believe living in a peaceful community is a common interest for all) (Stokoe & Sikveland, 2016).

Knowing that Alternative Dispute Resolution is an extensive area, it is also essential to mention the term “Conflict Transformation” in regards to how it is used in the ethnic context of conflicts in the US. The country is considered to be the pioneer when it comes to solving (or transforming) ethnic conflicts through community Conflict Transformation meetings (Kriesberg & Dayton, 2016). The concept of Conflict Transformation is explained as a process that “focuses on resolving conflicts and tensions, as well as on improving communication, addressing misconceptions, and building relationships and common ground among individuals, communities, groups and nations. In some instances, Conflict Transformation also includes efforts to redress inequities, including ethnic inequities that have come about as a result of conflict among individuals, groups and nations, through restorative justice and reparations” (Racial Equity Tools, s.d.).

The term “Conflict Transformation” emerged in a replacement for “Conflict Resolution”, meaning that some conflicts will not have a resolution in a short term – as they are related to structures in society, dynamics of power, political, sociological and historical factors, unrelated to the individual in a more personal perspective (Paffenholz, 2009). It is right to affirm that, in line with the Conflict Resolution School, Conflict Transformation also focus on rebuilding relationships, with focus on reconciliation in a “society level” (not only between one party or another). Paffenholz provides a highlight on the concept (that converges with the aim and objectives presented on chapter 2):

“The largest contribution of the Conflict Transformation school is its shift in focus from international to local actors. It therefore puts even more emphasis on civil society and ordinary people than the resolution school. (...) The biggest contribution of this emerging Alternative Discourse School of peacebuilding is its focus on ordinary people, oppressed voices, the critical analysis of power structures and an assessment based on realities instead of normative assumptions” (Paffenholz, 2009).

It is interesting to observe how the definition provided by Paffenholz is align to the influence of power's structures on racism and Afrophobia defended by Lentin and McVeigh. Also, the factor that Paffenholz mentions that Conflict Transformation focus on what the author call "oppressed voices", indicates a possibility of adopting the method not only to deal with the conflict, but also to empower communities. In the US, Conflict Transformation is considered to be a new framework for the methods being used to approach the work in regards to ethnic equity. I would like to highlight the possibility of addressing misconceptions and improving communication during the Conflict Transformation process. That means, not only the process has been used as a tool to solve conflicts in the country, as it could be applied for the aim and objectives proposed in the present work (demonstrated on page 69) – as my purpose is utilize Conflict Transformation to raise awareness on Racism and Afrophobia and to serve as an educational tool on the subject.

Having the Conflict Transformation process as the object in this research, as it was also the process used during the experimental session last December, it is essential to discuss how facilitators and institutions have already worked with the technique hitherto.

A hypothetical neutrality in face of ethnic conflicts from non-black facilitators has already been discussed in the mediation environment (this case will be applied in the context of Conflict Transformation in further analysis):

"White mediators tend to believe that, as mediators, they are impartial and empathetic, and that they are delivering a process that is balanced and empowering. So naturally, they believe their management of issues of race in mediation is going to be fair and appropriate" (Graham, 2016).

To begin with, the author defends the importance of recognizing the structural racism in society as vital (when it comes to developing a neutral role during the mediation process). Notably, the most challenging aspect for me, as a black woman and facilitator, is to manage the opposite.

Based on feedback, the possibility of achieving a fairer process for both parties increases through self-awareness on the mediator's part, when it comes to recognizing the structures responsible for imbalanced powers. Katherine Graham explored a situation where there were complaints between two female workers, a white HR manager and a black employee. However, the matter was treated as personal and Graham highlights the lack of recognition regarding ethnic structures in the workspace that cause imbalanced dynamics during these processes. As Worker A (the black woman who made the complaint) was aware of these structures and showed assertiveness during the meeting, it was concluded that the mediators offered more power to Worker B (the white woman), claiming to be visibly defenceless and consequently the less powerful (Graham, 2016). In the end, the complaint was not targeting the Worker B, but B's position as a manager (and also targeting the structural racism manifested in the institution that both were working in). The perception of discomfort from the white woman when racism was addressed is pointed out as interference when it comes to building the balance of power.

The possibility for growth is available when an ethnic issue is on the table. From my perspective, black people feel the need to have their feelings towards racism acknowledged. The legitimisation of these feelings does not necessarily mean to blame this or that individual personally, but mainly to legitimise racism as a global phenomenon and to be aware that, therefore, it will have some impact on people's behaviour -- to lesser or greater degree (Lawrence, et al., 2004).

Graham recognizes that defensiveness and discomfort can prevent people from opening up to learn. It appears to be difficult for one to admit the act of being racist, via the feedback provided in the

scenario mentioned, reveals the likely unconscious strategy of “being off the hook” through the mechanism the author names as “playing dumb” (Graham, 2016).

The reflection that follows is regarding (the role of the facilitator and her or his impartiality. I would like to mention that one of the parties in the given scenario felt that the issue of racism should have been addressed in the mediation session, arguing that the conflict was a result of discrimination based on skin colour, more than a personal matter. Exploring further, how neutral a facilitator should be when the subject is related to discrimination (which, in countries such as Brazil and the US, is criminalized by law)? (Martins, 2008).

Viola Lloyd asks the same question regarding the criminalization of racism (which, from my point of view is imperative in this context). However, to what extent can the Conflict Transformation process be a useful tool to tackle racism and Afrophobia, in terms of creating awareness and a safe space where the questions on the issue can be raised and answered? If learning is a vital element to overcome or even attempt to overcome this type of discrimination, having black people and non-black people in a room under the precepts of Conflict Transformation, allowing themselves the right to vulnerability, could bring positive results.

Lloyd classifies the manifestation of racism into two groups. The first one is the “intentional, malicious” racism, when one individual has the clear intention of offending while depreciating another, based on her or his race. Then, there is the subtle racism, that the author classifies as based on ignorance and poor judgement (Lloyd, 2019).

Although Lloyd refers to Conflict Transformation in discrimination cases as a procedure to be used when an offence is committed, the intention in this work is to analyse the impact of Conflict Transformation processes as educational actions. The importance of these dynamics is to make the

victims of Afrophobia feel that their feelings matter, but also, to break the stigma of having open discussions that are perceived as uncomfortable conversations (Lloyd, 2015).

As Viola Lloyd reinforces, “we tiptoe around issues of race. That makes people nervous. When they see people who appear to be different, they feel they can’t acknowledge those differences in a direct way. There has been an almost complete suspension of dialogue around this difficult issue. Conflict Transformation allows those issues to be debated in a safe environment. It changes a vicious cycle of misunderstanding and resentment into a virtuous circle of communication and empathy as people learn what is going on for others around them. Often in Conflict Transformation, we hear people say, ‘This is a silly question, but...’ and then ask what was meant by a small comment or action that happened months ago. It is the small stuff that people were too scared to ask in the first place that builds up as misunderstandings and conflict” (Lloyd, 2019).

The American multiculturalism differs from multiculturalism in Ireland, due to reasons previously presented. Whereas the American country has been submitted to years of slavery and racial segregation (BBC, 2018), it is agreed that Conflict Transformation sessions in the field of ethnic conflicts do not necessarily have to work towards a specific personal conflict in progress. As Lentin and McVeigh confirm, being part of a globalized market and culture, Ireland inherently carries traces of colonial eurocentrism and African culture depreciation that leads, consciously or unconsciously, to manifestations of Afrophobia.

However, even in the US, the notions of justice and equality in regards to racism are considered to be slow (Rodman, 2013). It is not a quick change, but as exemplified by Rodman when drawing a parallel with the shift in society in regards of smoking, there is a need to transform the structures, the public opinion, the media representation and the manner one communicates when it comes to racism (Rodman, 2013).

Based on this idea, the author has developed five steps to be followed in Conflict Transformation process. The first step, defined as Deconstruction, works along with the concept that prejudice is based on misinformation and parts of speech that aims, through generations, to justify discrimination. Rodman builds his argument on the preparations of war some groups have done through history. The process of dehumanization is what these groups have in stock to justify themselves, and the same has been done in the racism field (Klau, 2017). I would like to highlight the role of communication in the Conflict Transformation session, especially related to the expression of feelings. Once the individual finds her or his voice to communicate what makes her or him to feel hurt or offended, she or he also realises that their feelings matter. They are, in the end, as human as any other individual in the room (Rodman, 2013).

Step two, called Behaviour Analysis, appears to be related to my usage of Black Culture as an instrument capable of generating more familiarity with that culture and the subjects that culture brings. Stereotyping is a substantial factor in the whole composition of racism and Afrophobia. The “don’t touch my hair” movement, for instance, is commented and well disclosed through movies, music, TV shows made for black people. Intentionally or not, the audience is majority black. I ask myself about the effects of education and how the stereotypes could be broken through the consumption of these pieces of culture. However, it is not that these cultural products are not accessible, but there is the false impression there is nothing to be learnt from them -- except if you are black.

For instance, the black individual does not expect to be looked at with surprise, as if their features, their afro hair, their braids were less human than any other human characteristic (Cuff, 2019). In this example, the processes of dehumanization and exoticification are merged, converging with Rodman theory on diversity appreciation (Rodman, 2013).

The next step revolving around Rodman's theory is related to Power Analysis and Visioning, where the author reinforces the role of the power structures when it comes to perpetuating racism. "Social power is simply the aggregate of legal, and statutory powers coupled with traditions, morals and values that come together to maintain a system that advantages one group and disadvantages another" (Rodman, 2013). In parallel to the given concept of social power, it is vital to encourage reflection (mainly among the attendees of community Conflict Transformation sessions) on the responsibility of these powers in regards of the maintenance of the status quo. Rodman suggests a dynamic where the attendees are invited to visualize a world without racism. What hypothetical scenarios, situations and changes would emerge? What would be different in regards to media, job positions, chairs in universities?

Eventually, it could be challenging to visualize those potential changes. Nevertheless, the efforts to acknowledge the white privilege shows how rooted structural racism is in society. On the other hand, for black people, it is crucial to have the opportunity to externalize their feelings about being oppressed.

The final stage, called Reconstruction, concerns taking action or organizing plans to be taken into practice to reduce aggressions and microaggressions regarding racism. In his work, Rodman makes sure the individuals involved in the Conflict Transformation process will maintain their level of interaction so that the Conflict Transformation community sessions are a continuous program.

That would be crucial in gathering feedback and assuring the group is committed to putting the plans into practice -- so that, more than providing critical discussions, the Conflict Transformation sessions could play a fundamental role when encouraging people to engage outside of the "room".

In conclusion, Rodman is emphatic when reinforcing the outcomes of the community Conflict Transformation process in regards to ethnic issues:

“Knowing the difference between race, ethnicity, and culture; that culture is more than race and ethnicity; getting in touch with his or her issues of prejudice and stereotypes; challenging the myth of colour blindness, and being aware of the reality of colour consciousness; understanding that race, gender, class, religion, and other factors are organizing principles for good or ill in everything they do; recognizing that there are multiple centres of truth, whose legitimacy is often determined by the amount of power any given perspective may have in a particular context” (Rodman, 2013).

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

When this work was first presented as a project it was met with some disbelief. The initial concern was related to the possibility that I was too close to the subject. Being a black woman from Brazil, I understand the study of racism and Afrophobia would require extra care in regards to the theoretical contribution and data. It would be imperative to stay committed to the data available in regards to the Irish scenario on Afrophobia and racism so that I would be able to not only rely my hypotheses upon my life experience. As Holloway explains, people, as researchers, can interpret and make sense of their experiences to understand the social reality of individuals, groups and cultures (Holloway, 1997).

When combined, qualitative, quantitative and interpretative methods of approach (as for instance this presentation, the interpretation of the phenomenon can associate this or that phenomenon with the meaning people bring to them -- not being that combination last significant or nor academic (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

My intention when highlighting that initial concern is to clarify that I am aware of the different manners racism and Afrophobia can be manifested. I am also aware those diverse manifestations depend on context, country and culture -- although racism is a global phenomenon that occurs in every place, in different manners, towards different “targets” (Valk, 2003).

Having discussed those issues previously, I would like to present a reflection on the educational environment. The academic field has been often criticised in the Western world as being “elitist, male, white and european”. In countries such as Brazil, the eurocentric model is appellat, as the institution “University” appears in the Americas after the process of colonisation (Souza, et al., 2019). It appears to be a common opinion that this eurocentric issue starts in school, as History as a subject taught is predominantly a fruition of a white narrative. Thus, it means lecturers and educational institutions are

also biased. Due to the non-black majority in these institutions black individuals or people of colour often appear, when studying subjects that are of their interest, as the biased ones in a system that proves to be historically against them (Pozniak, 2019).

With the lack of black researchers (not to mention other groups that do not feel themselves represented in educational institutions), the method of Autoethnography emerges as an alternative for fairer research (Agyeman, 2008).

From these discussions, the Autoethnography as a method gives the researcher an honest and academic-oriented possibility of being part of her or his own observation. Autoethnography has been celebrated in the academic world, mainly for giving the called minorities a chance to study the subjects relevant to their groups and contexts (Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p. 159).

It is evident that there is a vicious cycle in the academic environment, where the perpetuation of white privilege takes place when the inclusion of black people in universities is limited, for diverse reasons. Hence it is crucial that themes involving blackness, racism, Afrophobia and prejudice are discussed to change the dynamics of these phenomena, especially in the area of Social Science. (Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p. 3). Nevertheless, if the majority of individuals occupying academic chairs is white, is it an ethic process to expect white individuals to study blackness issues? Or, on the other hand, is it fair for black students to be put in doubt in terms of neutrality and ethics if they are to study the issues that surround their existence?

The method of Autoethnography allows the researchers to examine, from an impartial perspective, the matters that concern them. It is, indeed, necessary to be aware of the level of bias when taking one's own experience as an object of study. However, it is also satisfactory to have the opportunity to work on an issue that probably would not be explored by my white academic peers (over the risk of mis-use of power and misrepresentation (Agyeman, 2008, p. 79). The author complements:

“A number of black academic writers and researchers have expressed dissatisfaction with white dominant discourses of black pupils, e.g. in relation to educational underachievement. The ‘deficit model’ of Western thinking in relation to black and other ethnic minority groups and their children is also highlighted by Owusu-Bempah and Howitt (2000) who argue that this has found legitimisation in disciplines such as Psychology, Psychiatry and Social Work. The authors argue that simplistic and Eurocentric paradigms have been applied to other ethnic groups without taking into account social and cultural factors” (Agyeman, 2008, p. 78).

Protagonism: here is the concept that justifies the choice of this subject, even if at first it had been met with disbelief in the academic sphere, protagonism is a commonly explored concept in Brazil, but apparently not commonly discussed in Ireland yet. The notion of black protagonism refers to the idea of a black body telling her or his own history and aspects of her or his universe, at the expense of a colonial thought that has been dictating the black history throughout history (Cruz, 2018).

Being aware of my role as researcher, but still as a black woman who has the locus of speech when it comes to Black History, I recognized ethnic conflicts are an emerging issue in Ireland. Considering to what extent were those conflicts a) a collective experience in a country; or b) isolated episodes? From that consideration the aims and objectives of this thesis were set.

Seeking to verify in which extent the process of Conflict Transformation could be applied as a method to transform, restore and attenuate ethnic issues in Ireland, I start from the lack of specific legislation to rely on in cases that hate crimes are based on skin colour and ethnicity in the country. As Haynes and Schweppe affirm,

“There was a lack of consistency in criminal justice professionals’ definitions and understandings of hate crime as a construct, although the majority of criminal justice professionals interviewed were of the view that if a hate element is established in a case, it should aggravate the penalty imposed. While

barristers and solicitors sometimes defined hate crime quite narrowly, Gardaí tended to take a broader understanding of the concept from a general policing perspective” (Haynes & Schweppe, 2017, p. 20).

I have wondered if that lack of law implies some state negligence or some evidence that these types of crime are insignificant in numbers. From a particular perspective, racism and Afrophobia are manifested from subtle to more explicit forms in Ireland (from questions to “where are you really from” to the institutionalised racism in structures such as housing and universities) (O'Malley, 2019). Nevertheless, the first realisation I had in the early stages of this work was that I should be able to prove that racism is an issue in this country – so I opted to begin by justifying that racism is an issue, in order to remove any assumption of bias. Taking a hypothetical situation, a researcher investigating the effectiveness of ADR when it comes to solving “Flights Companies vs. Customers conflict” would not have to prove that those conflicts exist. In that scenario, it would not be an issue to assume the conflict is real. In regards of the conflict presented in this work, the initial point is precisely to evaluate the conflict in question.

The objectives of this research were set in stages, as follow:

- With Autoethnography as its method investigate, through sociological, historical and political analysis, to what extent are conflicts engendered as a result of racism and Afrophobia present in Irish society -- considering the roles of immigration, globalisation, structure of powers and representation as possible triggers;
- to design a community Conflict Transformation session to discuss racism and Afrophobia in a multi-ethnic environment in Dublin, by assessing the precepts of Conflict Transformation (such as empathy, non-violent communication, creation of safe space and recognition of feelings through emotional intelligence).

Given the objectives, the main aim set for the present work is:

- to critically assess to what extent racism and Afrophobia aggressions and microaggressions could be prevented and understated through Conflict Transformation processes and its principles -- in a sense that the presented Conflict Transformation sessions would be an educational apparatus to disseminate information and awareness on the subject. Hence, I intend to analyse in which extent those meetings with educational character could impact the participants involved (by softening possible triggers related to ethnic conflicts, as seen in the objectives).

The strategies to achieve the aim set is a combination of reflections on ethnography and action research. Given that ethnography is the study of people's cultures, habits, language, religion and activities, those strategies become fundamental to the present research, as so is racism fruition of a social and historical phenomenon. That strategy is the foundation to observation, gathering, analysis and interpretation of racism as a phenomenon where it occurs.

In addition, culture, context and "the everyday" have been pointed out as of major importance in the field of conflict resolution and peace research (Millar, 2018). It is valuable to highlight that the author is incisive by commenting that conducting rigorous ethnographic research must involve permanent awareness related to the power balance and both everyday peace and everyday conflict interactions (Millar, 2018). This balance is vital not only when it comes to proving this or that hypothesis, but mainly to keep the neutrality expected of the researcher, which is also demanding in any conflict resolution process.

The ethnography contributes to a full comprehension of the organisational and political processes related to the studied context, supplying information for the questions to be answered, and arguments to support the called triggers that lead to one or another situation. In this research, specifically, the hypothesis to be confirmed or refuted are related to:

- the previous supposed homogeneity of Irish society, in terms of ethnicity;
- the changes regarding the above, hypothetically started in the 18th century and accentuated from the result of globalisation and multiculturalism;
- documented conflicts (Gardaí occurrences, denunciations on newspapers articles, anti-racist organizations reports) and the increasing numbers of hate crimes through the decades;
- evidence of how authorities and communities have been dealing with the issue so far (in the face of conflicts that are confirmed to be increasing in severity);
- the increasing number of news related to deportation and the critics towards the system of Direct Provision, for instance (which, once verified, serves this research as a strong argument to prove institutional racism).

When it comes to the collection of data, ethnography serves this research in an effort to evaluate what kind of behaviour, cultural manifestations, physical features, language interferences, economic factors and others might influence the hypothetical arise/ increase of prejudice and the occurrence of its consequential conflicts.

So that is feasible to assess the pros and cons of a Conflict Transformation session with the objective of mitigating ethnic conflicts, the action research part of the core of this work. Walters and Hoyle had already rebounded the role of those meetings to solve problems related to ethnic hate crimes -- mainly by renewing that the imbalance against the so-called minorities damages communities. The appreciation of the cultural differences related to the context where the disputes emerge is also a

coefficient responsible to soften the given conflict (so is the recognition those conflicts are not a one-off incident), hence improving the community's well-being (Walters & Hoyle, 2012, p.12).

Executing the Conflict Transformation session as part of the action research aims to raise awareness among those involved (considering the study has been done along with communities engaged with the issues at hand) and to work based on more palpable and close-to-context data. By proposing educational/preventive Conflict Transformation sessions, the action research guides the practice and clarifies the context where those practices are to be applied. Initially, full collaboration between the ones involved in the research is required, nevertheless, it is crucial to keep in mind the necessary researcher's autonomy to make sure the aims and objectives are being minded.

At this present stage, I would like to explain the initial introductory information session I shaped as an independent initiative (meaning by that the information session was established as a model for the present work). The structure used in the first session (named here as "pilot", executed in December 2019), can be seen as follows:

- individuals from different backgrounds were gathered in a semi-circle, a group that included Irish, Brazilian, South-African, and North-American citizens. Information regarding nationality was collected through observation (as some participants expressed their nationalities through speech or later, through the survey presented (see chapter 3). The initial invite was an open call on social media, on an event page called A Seat at the Table (demonstrated on page 118).

- the introduction the session was as follows: 1) introducing myself, as the facilitator, 2) presentation of one racial issue (by a member of Brazilian Left Front -- a political group based in Dublin dealing with immigration and other issues related to the Brazilian community -- presenting the topic "Issues of being a Brazilian person of colour in Ireland"), presenter 2 (introducing the subject "Growing up as an Irish person of colour");

- the facilitator presented the session guidelines through a series of slides. The topic was introduced to the circle as well as some concepts to be reviewed during the meeting – concepts included empathy, non-violent communication, non-judgemental zone and the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI). Secondly, guests presented their personal stories of conflict, also bringing visual/ audio material to link their experiences to structural racism. Afterwards, the participants in the room were invited to present their positions in the “case” – always being reminded about the ground rules, mainly the use of respectful language, empathy and freedom of speech in a non-judgemental zone.

The “pilot” session also developed in a sense that some characteristics of the Tuckman’s stages of group development could be observed. Tuckman’s model is commonly applied in the workplace, and it is task-oriented, but also stems from the principle that the individuals involved have a common goal: to develop a resolution (Stanley, Watson and Watson, 2018, p. 93).

The sample group, formed by 36 individuals, began by acknowledging their points of view and understanding of the conflict in question (corresponding to the norming stage). Then the disagreements and confrontation emerged (corresponding to the storming stage of TKI). Here, I was required to practice my role as facilitator, as the topic is sensitive and there were a large number of people in the room. Hence, I had to be able to evaluate when my intervention, as facilitator, was necessary. Afterwards, the group tried to find practical actions to be exercised outside the room in order to fight racism in a multicultural environment. The solution being the main goal of this session, it is not incorrect to compare this stage with the “norming” stage of Tuckman’s model, where individuals realise that accepting other points of view can be the key to getting the “job” done. Hence, the first pilot session is a reference for the academic work here to be developed and enhances the action research to follow, along with the case study.

The fact that the pilot session was performed in December 2019 – with the second in April 2020 opened up the possibility to longitudinal-oriented research. That step is placed beside the chronological analysis throughout the secondary data -- as the work starts from focused research on racism and Afrophobia, and indications of black people's presence in early Ireland (the 18th century to be precise) going through the economic recession, then globalisation, and examining the actual scenario of multiculturalism in Ireland.

Analysing the historical context in Ireland chronologically is essential to approach the racial and ethnic elements of the research -- as the racism itself is related to the historical construction of society the way it is seen today. With this work in particular the possibility of assessing personal journeys is inherently connected with the nature of the longitudinal observation. Also, the longitudinal time horizon set offers a clearer result whereas Jose suggests cross-sectional studies, in comparison, do not offer the same precision in the final analysis. (Jose, 2016, p. 332).

During the period between the first Conflict Transformation session (December 2019) and the second Conflict Transformation session (May 2020), the group was invited, through email to answer the survey presented (page 74).

After the two sessions, the group was also invited to reflect on explanatory material, with the intention of clarifying the concepts of Afrophobia and racial conflicts. Still after both sessions, the group was encouraged to reflect on their feelings, mainly focused on after the second session, as the first meeting was more preoccupied with the analysis of the conflict itself).

As a combination of qualitative and quantitative data (primary and secondary), the qualitative method of this investigation allows me to focus on the particularities and personal experiences shared during the second session. There is also data available from the aforementioned survey, taken by the participants after the Conflict Transformation session (from where it will be possible to gather

quantitative data, but also qualitative as the respondents will be encouraged to comment on a variety of questions).

The main point for me is to be able to comprehend and analyse a particular behaviour from a specific group, and reflect on how Conflict Transformation sessions can or cannot help to resolve the negative aspects of this or that behaviour. In this context, qualitative data is useful in a sense that personal experiences and the narratives related to conflicts provide a wide explanation related to the “why’s” and “how’s”, from more individual and unique perspectives (Maier & Burrell, 2018, p. 5).

However, there is a quantitative collection of data to enable me, as a researcher, to find patterns in the evidence that can refute or confirm my hypothesis. The role of the quantitative data in the present work is to establish a relationship between the variables of the conflict studied (such as “level of awareness on the subject”, “how comfortable I feel talking about it”, “if the lack of information contributes to the escalation of the conflict”, so on and so forth). Here, the cause-effect relationship of the conflict can be analysed, as advised by Burrell and Maier (Maier & Burrell, 2018, p. 5)

The secondary data provided shows indications of racism and discrimination in Ireland, as well as contributing to the qualitative method applied. Furthermore, quantitative data is vital to analyse if the manifestations of racisms in Ireland are of considerable significance in terms of numbers (absolute and relative ones). Having said that, the combination of both methods of data collection is legitimate (Bouma & Atkinson 1995, p 208).

This research follows an inductive approach so that, as explained by Bryman and Bell (2015), the work conducted goes from certain observations towards theories and generalizations (Bryman & Bell, 2015). According to Locke, from a philosophical point of view, the starting point of interpretative research is to develop a work that is of the researcher’s interest, and then to investigate if the issue is a real phenomenon, if the problem is experienced by other individuals. The philosopher stated that “very little of our knowledge of substance is certain” (Osler, 1970, p. 12) and that “some ideas appear in our mind involuntarily” (Osler, 1970, p. 14).

Having said that, the most significant interest in this present work is to analyse, in detail, a specific situation rather than having pretensions regarding the creation of universal rules. Along with the qualitative method and the strategies proposed above, the philosophy of this research helps me to focus attentively on implicit realities, sometimes hidden in daily social actions, which can be barely perceptible. As an inductive research, there are no pre-conceived ideas in the present research, but indeed the reader will find concepts, ideas and patterns in descriptive character and reflection on meanings that individuals attached to the main objective (Reneker, 1993, p. 499).

CHAPTER 3 – PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

The first Conflict Transformation session, set in December 2019, took place as a sampling plan. My primary goal was to observe the potential of establishing these meetings to shed light on the subject of racism in Ireland -- since I had experienced situations where the subject was treated as taboo. However, the fact that the first session had a surprisingly considerable number of attendees as well as positive feedback about the initiatives made me consider that my idea regarding prejudice could be correct. So the pilot I developed was adapted and transformed into a second meeting following the requirements of this research.

The second session was set at the 1st of May, 2020 (Friday), at 7 pm (Dublin), via the app “Zoom”. The first step was to send the invitations via email addresses from those who attended the pilot meeting, the call was sent online (demonstrated on page 124) and from the 25 e-mail addresses on the list, 16 individuals were interested in participating in the second meeting. After the second session, all the attendees were invited to answer a survey that will be presented in this chapter.

The profile of the participants are, as follow:

- 1 - Brazilian, self-identified as a black person or person of colour
- 2 - Nationality and ethnicity not disclosed
- 3 - Brazilian, NOT self-identified as a black person NOR person of colour
- 4 - North American, NOT self-identified as a black person NOR person of colour
- 5 - Irish, NOT self-identified as a black person NOR person of colour
- 6 - Brazilian, NOT self-identified as a black person NOR person of colour

7 - Brazilian, self-identified as a black person or person of colour

8 - Brazilian, self-identified as a black person or person of colour

9 - Irish, NOT self-identified as a black person NOR person of colour

10 - Brazilian, NOT self-identified as a black person NOR person of colour

11 - Brazilian, self-identified as a black person or person of colour

12 - Irish/ French, NOT self-identified as a black person NOR person of colour

13 - Brazilian, self-identified as a black person or person of colour

14 - Brazilian, NOT self-identified as a black person NOR person of colour

15 - South African, self-identified as a black person or person of colour

16 - Irish, NOT self-identified as a black person NOR person of colour

In terms of relative numbers, the percentages are:

- 56.25% of the participants declared as Brazilian citizens;
- 25% of the participants declared as Irish citizens;
- 6.25% of the participants declared as South African citizens;
- 6.25% of the participants declared as North American citizens;
- 6.25% of the participants preferred not to answer.

Regarding ethnicity, the percentages are:

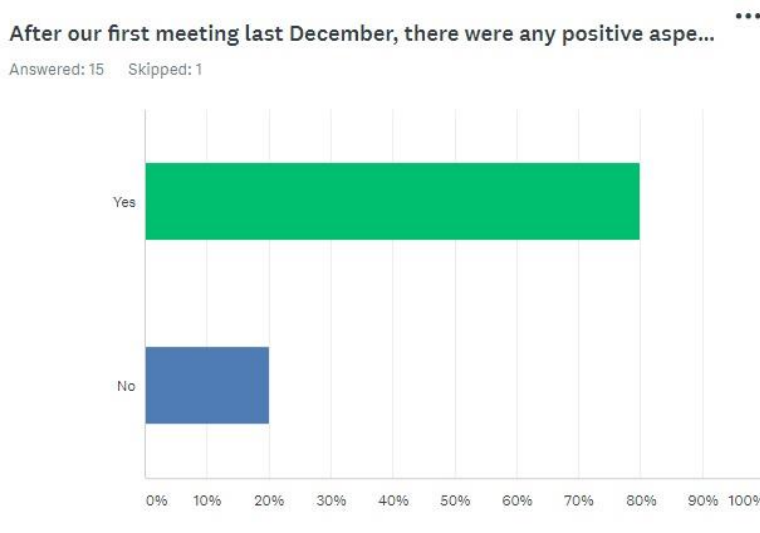
- 56.25% of the participants declared to be a non-black person/ non-person of colour. Among these, 25% were Brazilian citizens, 25% were Irish citizens, and 6.25% were North American citizens;

Hence, 37.50% of the participants declared as a black person or a person of colour, of those only 6.25% were not Brazilian – identifying as South African.

The questions asked in the survey are shown bellow, with the presented results:

Question 1 - After our first meeting last December, there were any positive aspects of our talk that you, eventually, shared with friends who could not attend the event? If Yes, please, specify:

- 80% of the respondents said they have talked to friends about the Conflict Transformation session, and 20% said they have not spoken to friends about it (among them, three Brazilian citizens, two non-identified ethnicities, one black person). One participant did not answer the question (nationality non-identified, ethnicity non-identified), not being counted on the statistics.



Those that answered yes discussed the following with friends are (in the respondents' words):

1. the view of Irish people related to prejudice (mentioned by a Brazilian person of colour);
2. hearing perspectives from people of colour in Ireland allowed me, as an American immigrant, to understand racism in an Irish context and adapt my activism to avoid contributing to it (mentioned by a North American non-identified as a person of coloured/ black person);
3. hypersexualisation (mentioned by an Irish non-identified as a person of colour/ black person);
4. talk about experiencing racism among people interested to listening to it, to learn about it was good. Also listening the Colombian guy justifying racism in the Irish “code” traditions was another example I share with people sometimes to exemplify how traditions sometimes are obsolete and full of bullshit (mentioned by a Brazilian identified as a person of colour/ black person);
5. I talked to a friend about the necessity of having a safe space to discuss ethnic issues. I have never seen things on the table like that way, with space for everyone’s colloquations. Having people who have intellectual knowledge about the issues on the table (mentioned by a Brazilian black person/ person of colour);
6. I believe that the meeting helped me to understand better, how serious racism and Afrophobia are around the world, and how that impacts our society and the way we behave (mentioned by a Brazilian black person/ person of colour);
7. being able to tell friends that were communities forming and bringing these discussions to the foreground (indicated by a South African black person/ person of colour);
8. I felt it was an honest discussion in which people who disagreed with the speakers felt comfortable to say what they thought (mentioned by an Irish non-identified as a person of colour/ black person).

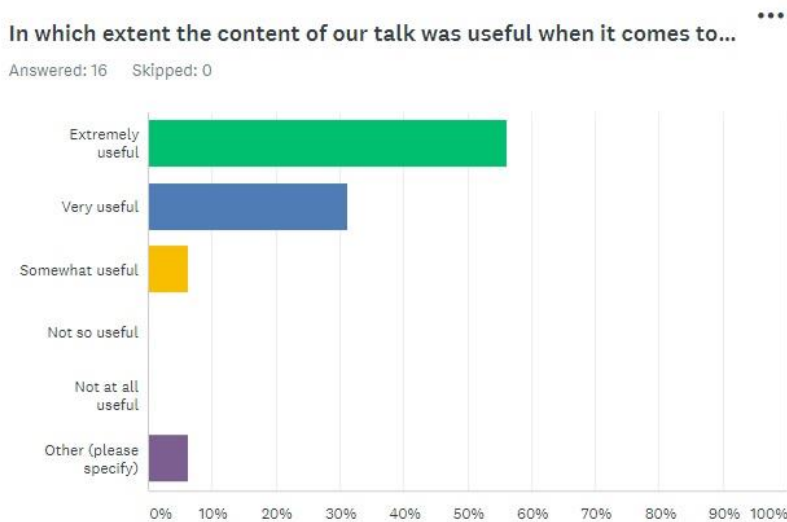
Question 2 - In which extent the content of our talk was useful when it comes to raising personal awareness (so that you feel more prepared to stand up when facing or tackling racism/ aggressions/ microaggressions)?

Extremely useful: 56.25%

Very useful: 31.25%

Somewhat Useful: 6.25%

Other: 6.25% (skipped answer)



Question 3 - In your opinion, how important is to have a safe space to talk about racism, in a sense non-black community and black community can be open about their experiences on the issue?

Extremely important: 68.75%

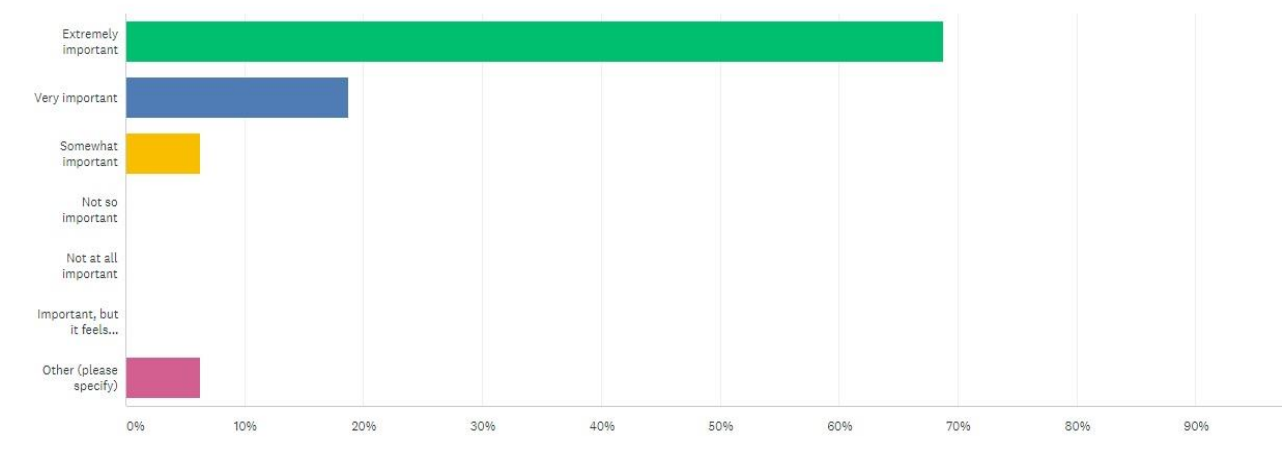
Very important: 18.75%

Somewhat important: 6.25%

Other: 6.25% (the respondent has written: “For the purpose of addressing personal experiences and distresses, such spaces are necessary, and inevitably the content of such conversations will have social implications. However, there do seem to be risks involved with formally subdividing people based on aspects of their identity if the goal is to generate more inclusive solutions”)

In your opinion, how important is to have a safe space to talk about racism, in a sense non-black community and black community can be open abo...

Answered: 16 Skipped: 0



Question 4 - In which extent do you believe implementing peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation meetings (in schools and communities centres, for instance) could be effective to reduce the rate of hate crimes and microaggressions?

Extremely effective: 56.25%

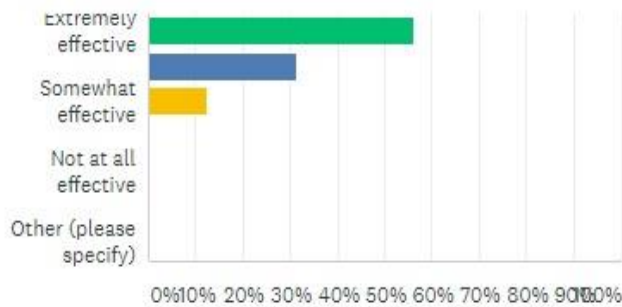
Very effective: 31.25%

Somewhat effective: 12.50%

In which extent do you believe impleme...

...

Answered: 16 Skipped: 0



Question 5 - “Racism and Afrophobia are reflections of the lack of awareness and information about the problem”. In which extent do you agree with that statement?

Strongly agree: 43.75%

Agree: 31.25%

Neither agree nor disagree: 6.25%

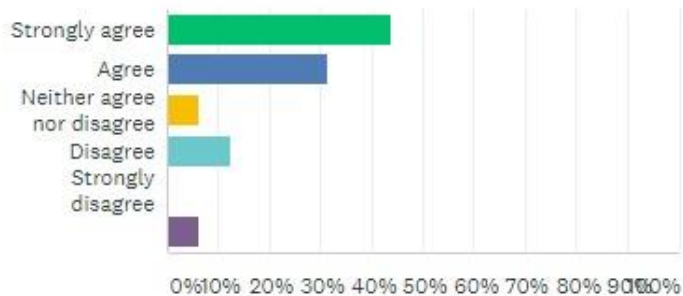
Disagree: 12.50%

Other: 6.25% (the respondent has written: “think social invalidation of the perspectives from PoCs contribute to racism more than the unacknowledged presence of it, though both exist)

"Racism and Afrophobia are reflections ..."

...

Answered: 16 Skipped: 0



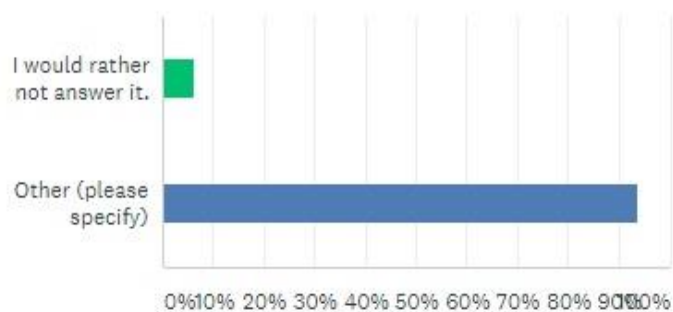
Question 6 - What's your nationality?

- 56.25% of the participants declared as be Brazilian citizens;
- 25% of the participants declared as Irish citizens;
- 6.25% of the participants declared as South African citizens;
- 6.25% of the participants declared as North American
- 6.25% of the participants preferred not to answer

What's your nationality?

...

Answered: 16 Skipped: 0



Question 7 - What do you believe to be the level of awareness and consciousness on blackness and its issues by non-black Irish society? Please mention which topics need to be covered in our next discussion (demonstrated on page 88).

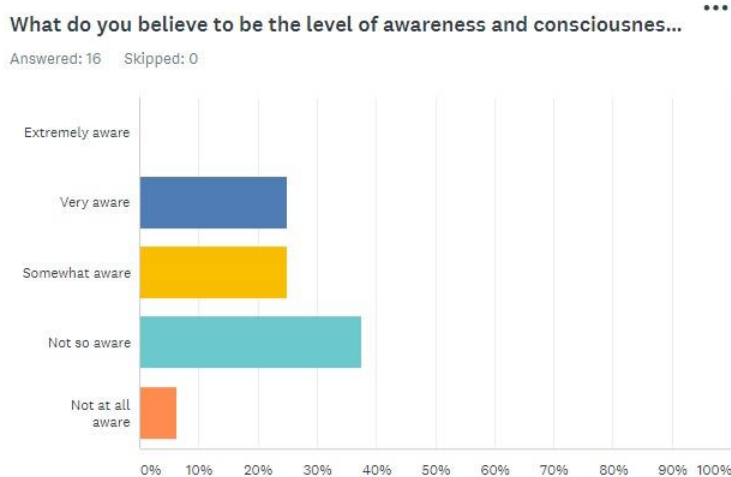
Very aware: 25%

Somewhat aware: 25%

Not so aware: 37.50%

Not at all aware: 6.25%

Other: 6.25% (skipped question)

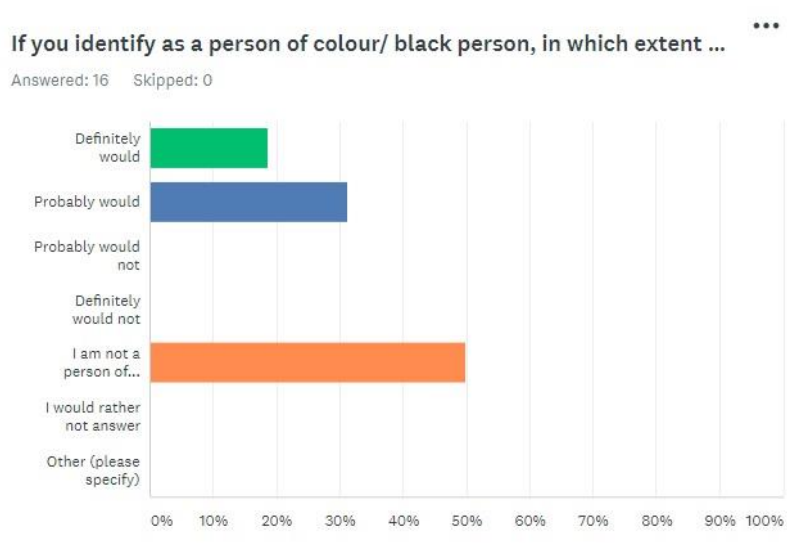


Question 8 - If you identify as a person of colour/ black person, in which extent do you believe sharing experiences of Afrophobia with other people of colour would help you to deal with the traumas these situations might have caused?

Definitely would: 18.75%

Probably would: 31.25%

I don't identify as a person of coloured/ black person: 50%



Question 9 - If you identify as a person of colour/ black, how comfortable would you feel when talking openly, in a multicultural environment, about your own experiences on racism and Afrophobia? Let us know how you feel (detailed on page XX).

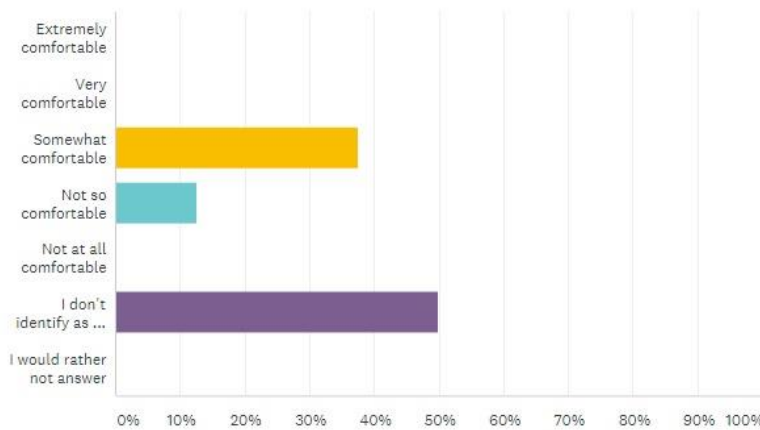
Somewhat comfortable: 37.50%

Not so comfortable: 12.50%

I don't identify as a person of coloured/ black person: 50%

If you identify as a person of colour/ black, how comfortable would...

Answered: 16 Skipped: 0



Question 10 - If you don't identify as a person of colour/ black, how comfortable* are you when listening to people of colour/ black sharing their experiences on racism and Afrophobia? Let us know how you feel.*Comfortable here is related to the act of "listening" itself, not with the feeling the experience of racism can bring (demonstrated on page 89).

Extremely comfortable: 6.67%

Very comfortable: 26.67%

Somewhat comfortable: 20%

Not so comfortable: 6.67%

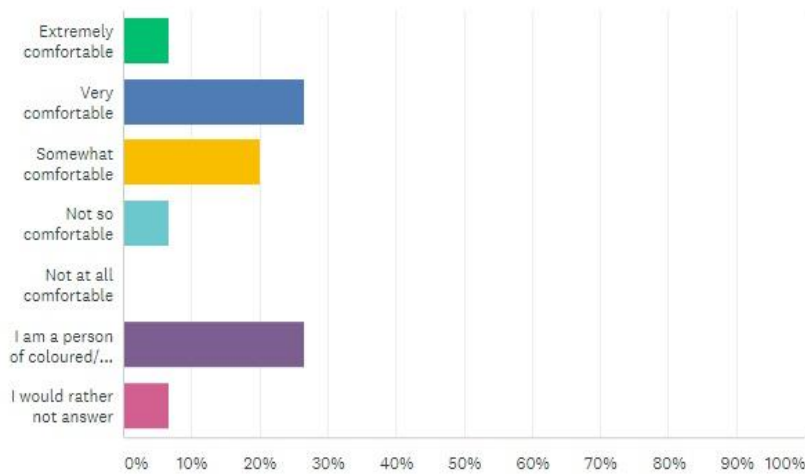
I am a person of colour/ black person: 26.67%

I would rather not answer: 6.67%

Other: 6.65% (skipped answer)

If you don't identify as a person of colour/ black, how comfortable*... ***

Answered: 15 Skipped: 1



Having some quantitative data, the work throughout the second session and the comments made through the survey serves this research as data to be analysed as part of the qualitative research. As a facilitator, I allowed the participants to freely raise their questions and feelings during the session (as the group was not navigating around any specific personal conflict but ethnic conflicts in general, specifically in Dublin).

When encouraged to raise questions through the survey (as they were allowed and were invited to comment), the participants put forward the following (their writing):

- “Is it ok to ask about where people are from or should you just talk to coloured people like they are caucasian and not make reference to their ethnic background? “
- “It is important to know what the meanings for the nomenclature are, how black people feel when they hear them, how you people would like to be called. For me, every topic is extremely important” (my translation from Portuguese) –
- “Race/class relationship in Ireland”

- “The loneliness of the black woman” –
- “People not privileged in the world and reasons”
- “The experience of internalised Racism in Ireland maybe, Direct Provision”
- “Cultural appropriation x appreciation/ difference between Negro & Black/ institutionalised racism”
- “How to take part in a trivial conversation with black people”
- “Just expressions of solidarity, community-building skills, effects of the pandemic crisis on racism in Ireland”
- “Immigration”

Apart from the statistics presented through the survey, some participants submitted their views on the subject, depending on the question asked. The first comment is related to the level of awareness from Irish people on issues involving racism and Afrophobia:

- “I believe that in general, the Irish Community is slightly ahead than other countries, in terms of awareness on this subject.”

A non-black participant demonstrated to fear asking questions about racism and Afrophobia:

- “I feel I would like to listen even more because I do not feel brave enough about asking. It is very hard to learn how to approach the subject, without hurting the others. That is why I believe this initiative is extremely necessary to create a safe space for people to feel more comfortable about asking and answering, even if it takes time. “

About the situations of racism, acknowledging feelings and evaluating the initiative of Conflict Transformation Sessions, participants raised the following comments (not through survey, recorded through Zoom instead – transcription on page 125):

- I was to move to my new house in Dublin, and I was with my friend, who is European, blonde, blue eyes. The neighbour looked at her and said “hi” to her, asked, “oh, nice, you are moving in (sic)?” Then I reply, saying I was the one moving in. I could see his expression changing for the worst (sic). (L. black person or person of colour.)

- In my experience, it was hurtful to find out racism was inside of me. I always try to share this with other people who also do not identify themselves as people of colour or black people, the fact that realisation hurt me. I know this pain is way more painful for my black brothers and sisters, and I feel I have to expose the lesson I learned, even if they make me feel ashamed -- because, to accept that I have learnt and that I am learning can encourage someone to be open to learning as well (sic). (A, not identified as black person or person of colour.)

- I’ve been in Ireland for 14 years now, and I came with my ex-husband who’s polish. I have seen he has be treated with discrimination, I don’t know if it’s because he has a thicker accent than me, but I’ve never experienced that kind of discrimination. Even though I’m obviously not Irish, I don’t sound Irish, but I think because I have the American accent, they view me as English-ish whatever. I just do not have the experience of discrimination that he did. In the work place, people would say “go back to your country”, and he’s polish, he’s a white man. Because he didn’t sound like them. Although funny enough, I don’t sound like them either, but it’s just weird (sic). (C. not identified as black person or person of colour.)

- I think we all have to learn. One day I told my dad, he didn’t want to give me the money to go to the hairdresser. I told him: you have to give me the money because you are the reason I’m like that. Or the first time I came back home with braids, my mum was like, “what’s that, L., you’re looking

like you're coming from Africa!". It's not like oh "white people have to be educated". We all have to talk about because we don't talk about it (sic)! (L. black person or person of colour)

- About the bridges, what you doing here is definitely very helpful, on day to day situation, we have to say something even if it is uncomfortable. From my perspective, I believe black people have to speak up when something doesn't look or seem right. Even if they didn't meant it. Because sometime the person don't want to say something bad, but if you point it our they will understand (sic). (L. black person or person of colour.)

- And I think we have to also recognize that we are wrong. Sometimes you realize on your own, but sometimes requires confrontation. It takes time (sic). (N. not identified as black person or person of colour.)

Keeping in mind the interpretive and inductive approaches of this research, the data provided, initially, corresponds to the hypothesis I had when I first started the present work. Recalling the role of Autoethnography, it is not incorrect to affirm the journey through the data and findings lead me, personally, to a path of self-healing (Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p. 163). That means that, in a lower or greater degree, exposing my feelings of non-belonging in an environment that is welcoming of such thing also provides me with the opposite: a sensation of not being fanciful and alone.

4 – DATA ANALYSIS/ FINDINGS

The fact that the non-black community (including Irish, representing 52% of the participants in the research) showed interest in the discussions gives a personal satisfaction too, as I have realised that racism and Afrophobia are issues to be treated as everybody's problem (especially because, in the words of one participant, "black people did not created racism"). Given the level of satisfaction achieved as a researcher (in related to the level of interested people demonstrated on the project), I go one step further by affirming that the discussion which follows this work appears to bring not only an academic result, but also pitches a tangible project I truly believe the society in Ireland could benefit from.

Starting from the analysis of the survey presented, the quantitative data applied in combination with the qualitative data, it is shown that 56.25% of the participants found the meeting extremely useful, while 31.25% agreed it was very useful, and 6.25% considered the meeting somewhat useful. No participants found the session "not at all useful". I critically assess those results as a positive response to the work proposed, yet given the fact that the participants in the meeting conducted in April had previously participated in the first meeting (pilot) in December, 2019. That shows that, more than curiosity, it appears that the attendees were driven by a genuine desire to take part in something that could be somewhat significant. When one of the participants expressed that the meeting was a way to build bridges, it also expresses a correlation with the aims and objectives set when it comes to analyse the effectiveness of the method to attenuate the racial conflicts in the Irish context. Also, I would like to mention the fact that one of identified "person of colour/ black" participant expressed that, in her opinion, black people also have to learn about racism (mentioning that black people reproduce racist behaviours too).

It is crucial also to comment on the view of one of the respondents (identified as non-black), who has written “for the purpose of addressing personal experiences and distresses, such spaces are necessary, and inevitably the content of such conversations will have social implications. However, there do seem to be risks involved with formally subdividing people based on aspects of their identity if the goal is to generate more inclusive solutions”. I recall the phenomenon “All lives matter”, who was used as form of criticism to the movement “Black lives matter”, in 2017. When differentiating black and whites, in the sociological and political context, the objective is not to reinforce those difference, but to be able to repair the historical damage caused by slavery/ colonization (hence, affecting black people). To agree with the thought that the subdivisions are not necessary would be the equivalent to agree that the universities quotas, for instance, should not exist. They do open room for differentiation, but some compensatory mechanisms are only made through that (Martins, 2008).

When it comes to the importance of creating a safe space to discuss racism in Ireland, I would like to highlight that 56.25% of the participants declared as non-black/ person of colour. That is an important factor, from my perspective, as it was expected that more black people would be interested in discussing the issue, than non-black people. The erroneous notion that the issue (of racism and Afrophobia) lies exclusively with black people falls apart, showing (as demonstrated by Max Klau) a near-future of a practical change insofar as non-black participants demonstrated the willingness to be involved in a problem that is real.

When divided by “nationality”, the numbers of non-black participants shows 25% as Brazilian citizens, 25% as Irish, and 6.25% as North American citizens. However, in regards of the participants who identified themselves as black people or people of colour, to find that there was no presence of black people from Ireland or Irish person of colour in the last meeting is a negative outcome, in my opinion. Considering the initial, though not sole, purpose of the present work was to involve

the black Irish population on the conversations that are supposedly in their interest (as my own experience along with the data provided could be proven useful to tackle racism in the country), some hypothesis for that lack of participation emerge. They are:

- There is a lack of interest in taking part in the session, for hypothetical reasons, although one of those reasons could be the lack of representation. If the majority of black people attending the last meeting were Brazilian, there is a possibility that black people from other nationalities, including Irish, recognize that the issues racism bring are variable. As exemplified by Graham in the literature review, black people and people of colour tend to be more aware of the issues as they affect the black population directly. Having said that, it could be the case that black people and people of colour from other nationalities could come from the assumption that the topics covered in the meeting were not in their interest;
- there was a failure on the method used to advertise the session, as it was not an open session, but an invitation for those who took part in the “pilot” session. The possibility of comparing the two sessions through a longitudinal method limited the amount of participants that could take part in the last meeting. If, on one hand, the longitudinal approach allows the researcher to commit to a more consistent result, I strongly believe the participation of black people from other nationalities, including Irish, could bring challenges to the “table” strictly related to some points discussed in the literature review. For instance, when O’Malley rises the discussion about the lack of identity claimed by young mixed-generation in Ireland, she refers to an issue that could easily be approached during the meeting. That observation leads to the

conclusion that the Conflict Transformation session was guided by the issues raised by the participants, instead of being based on a pre-made agenda;

- there was a failure in the methodology used to advertise the session, as it was not an open session, but an invitation for those who took part in the “pilot” session. The possibility of comparing the two sessions through a longitudinal method limited the amount of participants that could take part in the last meeting. If, on one hand, the longitudinal approach allows the researcher to commit to a more consistent result, I strongly believe the participation of black people from other nationalities, including Irish, could bring challenges to the table, strictly related to some points discussed in the literature review. For instance, when O’Malley raises the discussion about the lack of identity claimed by young mixed-generation in Ireland, she refers to an issue that could easily be approached during the meeting. That observation leads to the conclusion that the Conflict Transformation session was guided by the issues raised by the participants, instead of being based on a pre-made agenda;
- there was a lack of empathy and self-recognition from black people from other nationalities towards the group formed. Also, that hypothesis leads to the also hypothetical ideas that: 1) the forthcoming and present conflicts – proven to exist mainly by Lentin & McVeigh and Michael – are not yet acknowledged by or do not massively affect the Irish black population (as language and cultural context contributes to their interaction in society, as pointed by one of the participants); or 2) the method of discussing and confronting the inherent aspects of ethnic conflict in the country is not legitimized as positive or effective.

In terms of applicability, it is interesting to point out that 56.25% of the participants affirmed to believe that Conflict Transformation sessions could be an extremely effective educational tool to tackle Afrophobia. Also, 31.25% of them believe the process would be very effective, and 12.50% responded it could be somewhat effective, with no adverse outcomes related to the question. As the survey was 100% confidential, the effectiveness of the initiative proved to be high, especially taking into consideration that the group was mixed in terms of self-declaration of colour and ethnicity – so there is evidence that the work proposed was positive for both.

In regards of the “level of awareness and information on racism and Afrophobia in Ireland”, the outcomes appear to contradict the literature mentioned in this work. Whereas especially Lentin&McVeigh argue that the presence of black people in the country is not novelty, that does not appear to be a strong argument to challenge the supposed lack of awareness from Irish community on the issue. If there is a theoretical evidence that does not support the “claimed absence of black people in Ireland as an excuse to the covert racism”, that idea does not correspond to the data collected. When asked to what extent would they agree that racism and Afrophobia are reflections of the lack of awareness and information about the problem, the 43.75% of the attendees strongly agreed with the statement, while 31.25% also agreed with the statement (totalizing 75% of the responses). In other words, I conclude the attendees recognize that the information given about the subject is not enough (for non-specified reasons). On the other hand, those numbers confirm there is room for Conflict Transformation processes to serve as a tool of education – as discussed previously, the discussions in a non-judgemental zone can be the ideal scenario for the named “silly questions” to be raised -- questions that sometimes are not asked due to fear or self-judgement.

Moreover, it appears that, as the globalisation and the multicultural situation is relatively new in Ireland (given the fact those phenomenons’ emergence dates from the ’90s) (Lentin & McVeigh, 2006), the “presence of black people” factor can be seen as a recent element to be analysed.

Converging with the discussed theory that the immigration population are the most affected when it comes to race and Afrophobia, the data presented shows that the majority of people attending the event are composed by non-Irish citizens, being them:

- 56.25% Brazilian citizens;
- 6.25% South African citizens;
- 6.25% North American citizens.

As pointed out previously (by a participant), the fact that black people in Ireland have language and cultural context as an “advantage” (so white and black Irish citizens share, between them, aspects that immigrants inherently do not share) can be analysed as characteristics able to de-escalate conflicts. Along the same path of that analysis, the majority of the participants believe Irish citizens are not so aware of the issues related to racism and Afrophobia in Ireland (37.50% of the respondents affirmed Irish society is “not so aware” of this matter). Nevertheless, 25% of the respondents believe Irish citizens are very aware of the issue, and the other 25% believe the same group is somewhat aware of the problem. Only 6.25% of the respondents (corresponding to one participant) believe the Irish population are not at all aware -- meaning that (as demonstrated by the sample) the presence of racism have been somewhat acknowledged. Crossing data, both Lloyd and Michael believe the lack of information is one of the factors to contribute to Afrophobia. Reflecting on this aspect, I find the absence of information itself is not the element to muddle the public’s opinion on the matter, in Dublin. On the other hand, it appears that the communication about Afrophobia and racism are, perhaps, not delivered in a sense that the historical context and individual experiences should be shared. As demonstrated by the outcomes of this research, the act of sharing experiences converge with the humanization mentioned by Rodman previously: once black people’s feelings are acknowledged, they become more palpable to everyone, including the non-black listeners.

Taking into consideration the process of Conflict Transformation as being seen as a powerful tool to provide self-healing, the outcomes of the research converges with the hypothesis presented in the aims and objectives. The question asked to analyse the factor self-healing was: “If you identify as a person of colour/ black person, to what extent do you believe sharing experiences of Afrophobia with other people of colour would help you to deal with the traumas these situations might have caused?”. The data collected shows 51% of the respondents consider the designed session as a potential instrument to encourage the process of self-healing (by sharing experiences and showing vulnerability). The other 49% percent of the respondents marked the option “I don’t identify as a black person/ person of colour”. That is an extremely positive outcome as one of the pillars of Conflict Transformation is being able to share experiences, even if they evoke uncomfortable feelings. Besides that, it was demonstrated in the literature that Conflict Transformation is positive not only in a sense that peacebuilding processes can be more effective collectively, but also can heal the wounds on the level of the individual.

In regards to the question related to how comfortable black people would feel when sharing their experiences of racism, there are no relevant numbers to the options “extremely comfortable”, and “very comfortable”. Whereas 50% of the respondents do not consider themselves as a black person/ person of colour, the ones who identify themselves as black are definitely not comfortable with the act of opening up about their experiences regarding racism and Afrophobia in Ireland (representing the other half of the respondents). In a first moment, the data appeared to be contradictory once it was shown that the same group consider it positive and healing to open up about the issue. However, after an examination of the quantitative data and the statements given during the meeting (qualitative data), it is clear that the black participants challenged themselves and shared their experiences (even if they considered to be an uncomfortable action). That shows the importance of the safe space and the

essential role of the facilitator as the one who needs to ensure the circle maintains its non-judgemental essence.

When questioned about how comfortable it is to listen to racism and Afrophobia experiences, 33.34% of the respondents not self-identified as a black person or a person of colour felt “extremely comfortable” and “very comfortable”. Only 6.67% of them do not feel comfortable with the act of listening to experiences of racism and Afrophobia, and 20% of them mentioned to feel “somewhat comfortable” with that. In conclusion to that aspect, even if the respondents answered they feel a high level of comfort when addressing the issue, I observed a certain discomfort was demonstrated during the session. It was found that, when encouraged to ask questions about the subject or to show feelings related to testimonials of racism, the non-black participants demonstrated a high level of insecurity and hesitation. Those findings led to the “locus of speech” prerogative – from which the definition is that a non-black person does not have the argumentation to define racism, as she or he is not directly affected by the problem and cannot take part in a fair discussed based only on assumptions.

Nevertheless (and my hypothesis on this is that the concept of “locus of speech” is mistaken in some instance), non-black people hesitated in expressing their thoughts in comparison to the time black participants spent expressing themselves in the meeting. The findings on this issue are that there is still an unbalance of power (also demonstrated in the literature) that privileges the black individuals (in the discussion itself) in a sense they demonstrate to be more aware of the matter, and hence they tend to dominate the speech. That domination was clearly expressed by a non-black participant who affirmed: “I feel I would like to listen even more because I do not feel brave enough about asking”.

As O'Malley supported, questions like “How do you like in here” or “Where are you really from” were also mentioned during the meeting as a form of subtle racism experienced in Ireland, as the

discomfort when hearing those statements was expressed by one of the participants during the Conflict Transformation session.

Continuing with my data analysis in regards of Conflict Transformation sessions as an educational process, it was found the non-black participants have assimilated some concepts presented in the first session, in December 2019. The topics brought again to the debate were “the loneliness of the black woman” “cultural appropriation x appreciation/ difference between Negro & Black/institutionalised racism” and “exotification”. It is interesting to note how specific terminology was used by non-black participants, even if the concepts of these terms remain unknown (as the group and I did not have the chance to explore those topics yet).

In term of analysis of qualitative data, I would light to highlight some links between the theories presented and the reports. When a neighbour assumed that blonde woman is about to become a neighbour, instead of the participant in the session, who is a black woman (presented in the data as L.), it’s possible to recognize the principles of the Theory of Representativeness . However, it is interesting to analyse how, as pointed by one of the participants, the communication, accents, mannerism play a role in the prejudicial behaviour:

“I’ve been in Ireland for 14 years now, and I came with my ex-husband who’s polish. I have seen he has be treated with discrimination, I don’t if because he has a thicker accent than me, but I’ve never experienced that kind of discrimination. Even though I’m obviously not Irish, I don’t sound Irish, but I think because I have the American accent, the view me as English-ish whatever I just do not have the experience of discrimination that he did. In the work place, people would say “go back to your country”, and he’s polish, he’s a white man. Because he didn’t sound like them. Although funny enough, I don’t sound like them either, but it’s just weird (sic). (C. not identified as black person or person of colour.)”.

Here, I suggest that the issues related to Afrophobia must be analysed, also, along other characteristics that could, somewhat, have influence on the way the individual is seen by the society (and the elements that contribute to the her or his “rise” in society).

In simpler words, the findings show Conflict Transformation community sessions discussing racism are opportunities where non-black individuals can recognise that they have much to learn about racism and Afrophobia. It is an opportunity for the black community to take the lead on the manner of how blackness is approached. Given the data, I evaluate the outcomes as favourable. However, there is room for improvement, especially if the project is to be continued -- which is my intention, besides this academic work. And, as in any process of teaching and learning, it requires balance, untangling conversations, honesty, patience and the willingness to step forward.

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

It is interesting to reflect on how a trivial conversations can change the course of things. As mentioned in the very beginning of this work, perhaps it would not be realized if it was not for a friend insisting I should require the right to write about a subject who ultimately affects me. As the lack of representation of black students was proven to affect the academic environment (Pozniak, 2019), the subjects related to blackness, Afrophobia and racism are often approached, in the Western world, from a white perspective. Taking those aspects in consideration, the method of Autoethnography reveals to be not only an innovative path in the academic environment, but also a possibility for many, like me, to start to write their own History, from what I consider to be a fairer perception.

Nevertheless, the challenges related to the method are still present. The proximity with the subject does provides valuable insights, as if the object of study was to be analysed from inside, to outside. That inherent characteristic of Autoethnography also provides pros and cons, as any other method. In this present work, the efforts to maintain the neutrality when analysing the object were, however, positive considering the ethnic conflict studied. As the nature of the Conflict Transformation process researched does require a neutral posture for the role of facilitator, it would not be incorrect to affirm the present dissertation has been encouraging me to train the impartiality required in the profession of Conflict Transformation facilitator.

As analysed by Graham (Graham, 2016), the unbalance of power created during conflicts involving ethnic issues will, somewhat, be evident if the professional responsible to facilitate the resolution of those conflicts is not aware of the structures responsible for perpetuating racism in society. In this case particularly, as I am the one aware of those dynamics, the need to be cognizant of the imminent unbalance of power is evident – in my individual case, the power could easily lean towards the black individuals in the Conflict Transformation circle. In this sense, the present work has also been the

first real practice in my path towards a Conflict Transformation career, not only theoretically but also practically.

Insofar as (in order to analyse the possibility of shaping a Transformation Conflict meeting), I was required to analyse in which extent the presented ethnic conflict really affects Irish society, many aspects of the issue were unfold.

Even if my initial perception about racism and Afrophobia in Ireland was based in the assumption that the lack of information was a consistent factor to contribute to the proven increasing numbers of hate crimes in the land, it is vital to highlight that the presented problem is being addressed in the academic environment for decades. That means, from my perspective, the academic environment is indeed a step ahead when it comes to discuss racism in Ireland. However, as also found in the present work -- being the mentioned environment in Ireland predominantly white -- an issue in regards of the procedures utilized in the studies' approach emerges. It appears the matter of racism and Afrophobia has been broadly discussed in the country, not only in universities, but also along with non-governmental organizations, such as ENAR (European Network Against Racism) and MRCI (Migrant Rights Centre Ireland). Nevertheless, in which extent the researches can be brought from a theoretical sphere to a practical context?

Inherently, the work related to Alternative Dispute Resolution can be, as seen in this study, a guide to an improving practice, as a genuine (like the name itself describe) alternative procedure in pursuing an equal and peaceful society. In this case, practice and theory are combined, starting from the research project, including the elaboration of methods, strategies and approaches that could provide the possibility of a practical execution of this work.

When it comes to theoretical apparatus utilized, it is interesting to observe how historical and sociological factors are strictly related to the proved increasing number of hate crimes denounces in

Ireland. It appears, to the general opinion, racism is a novelty in the country, whereas the processes of immigration and globalization have influenced the popular opinion – in regards of the way black people are perceived in Irish society. It is evident that, even if the presence of black people is claimed to be sparse in the island (which was also contradicted), racism and Afrophobia were, inevitably, a “heritage” left by the way black people are represented in the US and by the attitude of the EU (and mainly the UK) towards the black community and the called “minorities”. Meanwhile, denying the problem appears to be a pattern in the way the problem is issued in Ireland.

I acknowledge that my early thoughts on the subtle racism (that I had witnessed in the country), since the first days after moving), led me to the perception of standard racist behaviours present both in Brazil and in Ireland. My personal background, in this sense, was the key to the previous identification of those patterns, such as: assumptions regarding profession, exoticification and hypersexualization of the black body, cultural appropriation and misunderstanding of these dynamics mentioned, so on and so forth. Why does that previous identification of patterns matter, though?

If the present or the imminent conflict is not, hypothetically, a circumstance that concerns the Irish society in its totality, I had the realization that people like me, light black-skinned, dark black-skinned, (immigrants and citizens), have been concerned with the problem in many different dimensions. If the pain is real for me, individually, does it hurt my black peers in the same ways? As there is a lack on specific legislation as a disciplinary measure, victims of racism experiment frustration when subjected to hate crimes.

Having known the Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding processes have been efficiently applied in the US, as a tool to engender awareness on the subject (through deconstruction, appreciation, building of a non-judgemental and safe space, power analysis and behaviour analysis, as suggested by Rodman), the present research suggested the method could be useful to prevent hate

crime and Afrophobia from escalating – once they were proved by the group sample to be harmful to the black individual in the Irish society.

While, for many, the issue is not a broad phenomenon and can be perceived as isolated occurrences in Ireland, a deep analysis on the manner racism is manifested into the society's structures can clarify that racism and Afrophobia are, inevitably, characteristics of the Western world – including Irish society.

As Karl Marx proposed in his Theory of Conflict, those dynamics are not fruition of one or two individual actions, but have been created since the establishment of a hierarchical society, where the classes are divided and we witness the emergence of bourgeoisie and proletariat. Not only that structure is related to power and class, as it is related to ethnicity – taking into consideration the doctrine known as Naturalism. Having the protection of a superior race as justification, and seen as a mechanism to provide the maintenance of power by a dominant class, the doctrine have in its core the dehumanization, mainly of the native populations. Thus, the exploitation of “inferior” peoples could be justified by the spread idea they were “less human”.

As that process persisted for, at least, two centuries, it is sociologically accepted that division of groups and of called sub-groups in the 17th century would still reflect in society in the 21st century. The Theory of Representativeness demonstrates consistently those reflections, seen in cultural products and positions of power.

I recognize those structures of power and subjugation are not clear for every individual. And, as a Conflict Transformation facilitator, I do have to be able to recognize and understand where the racist speech is coming from. As mentioned throughout this work, not necessarily the racist manifestation will emerge as violence, and if the Conflict Transformation is indeed a tool to educate the non-black population on the subject, a comprehension of their logic (mostly fruition of the Eurocentric, white,

male discourse that have been dominating the humanity narrative) is urgent. However difficult it may seem for me, as a black woman, to put myself in their shoes, it is imperative to do it in my role of facilitator.

I understand, though, that every individual, apart from skin colour and ethnicity, has a personal path. I recognize my tolerance in face of racism is different from A, B or C. Having been raised in a predominantly white environment, I used to feel, somehow, I was part of a white society, taking advantage of its privileges. Violence, poverty, lack of education was never an issue in my personal path and the coexistence with the white body gave me, for many years, the impression I was not “that black”. However, the damage the called subtle racism brings is real and, if affected me in so many aspects, in which extent the same manifestation of racism could be damaging my black peers? It is evident – and as demonstrated in the present work – that racism can exclude, imprison and kill. It is also proven that racism and Afrophobia can affects black individuals and people of colour in some other levels – such as demonstrated by the research in regards of the lonely black woman mentioned in this dissertation (Hamilton, et al., 2009), or through the exclusion created among black individuals due to colourism. Are those issues less hurtful due the fact they do not involve physical or verbal violence?

The Transformation Conflict process becomes then a fundamental tool from which black individuals and people of colour can benefit in order to share their experiences and heal their wounds. Considering that even among black individuals some topics are of extreme sensitivity (as demonstrated in the data analysis, the fact black people are aware of the structures of racism can be encouraging in terms of talking about the subject, but does not mean it is a comfortable position), the possibility of having a safe space to manifest fears and desires is of extreme significance in an individual level.

On the other hand, the lack of information is classified as one of the factors that prevents the non-black community to adopt an anti-racism position – highlighting that there is a register in practical experiment in the present work, where a non-black person manifests hesitation as a manner to avoid being disrespectful:

- “I feel I would like to listen even more because I do not feel brave enough about asking. It is very hard to learn how to approach the subject, without hurting the others. That is why I believe this initiative is extremely necessary to create a safe space for people to feel more comfortable about asking and answering, even if it takes time. “

The creation of the non-judgemental space opens the possibility to a frank, honest conversation from which the expectation is not to justify or to blame one or another. Instead, the Conflict Transformation circle is configured as a place for learning, where both parties accept to be vulnerable in order to achieve a common aim: to de-escalate the perpetuation of racism to achieve the common welfare.

Thought and theories

The work proposed would not have the same outcomes if it was not for the possibility of creating a practical experiment, from which insights, theories and suggested improvements would emerge. As the role of the Autoethnography has been highlighted as the necessary impulse for this work to happen, the ethnography and action research strategies provided me, as a researcher, a possibility to prove my hypothesis in a theoretical and practical manner. The opportunity of conducting two Conflict Transformation session matches the requirements of the longitudinal time horizon chosen for this work, hence providing me with consistent highlights when comparing the first and the second session.

In terms of analysing the results of the data collected, I would like to discuss some concepts that could have been clarified before the second meeting. From my perspective, the hesitation presented by the non-black community attending the meeting prevented the dialogue from better flowing, from both ways. To start with, I conclude that the concept of “locus of speech” has been widespread so that it seems the non-black individuals interested on the discussion are aware of the invisible etiquette related to the discussion of racism.

As seen on page 96, Locus of speech (Johnston, 2017) is a term related to the act of recognising that a non-black person does not feel the effects of racism and, hence, would not be allowed to speak about feelings they do not know. However, from my facilitator’s perspective, the non-black community is entitled to have feelings (about their position as “historical oppressors”) acknowledged in this dynamic. That can also be hurtful, and the non-black community needs to be aware that their needs (in regards to learning and expressing their feelings towards a problem they are part of, too) are legit in the space of Conflict Transformation. Where there is a fear of speaking up, as mentioned, about the “little” questions the individual is afraid to ask, there is also no room for learning – allowing, that way, the perpetuation of racism to prevail.

Regarding the issues raised by self-declared black people or people of colour in the meeting (highlighting that, for the context of this research, to identify ethnicity is vital for the discussion in the outcomes), I would like to mention that the self-identification occurred spontaneously, as part of the speech -- such as statements like “as a black woman, I feel...”.

In the first part of this work, I present some situations I have been through, which are mentioned as examples of what I call subtle racism in Brazil. Personally, it was not with surprise that I listened to some of the testimonials during the second Conflict Transformation session. In a specific excerpt of the meeting, one of the participants says: “I have another neighbour, and I don’t know how many

times she has asked me to clean her house. Nothing against the profession and I have done it before, I'm just annoyed by the assumptions". Manifestations of racism like that are not often verbalised, as there is still a misconception that aggressions and microaggressions will be manifested through violent speech. In fact, the concept of covert racism refers also to the unintended manifestations of discrimination – although the idea of covert racism does not mean they are supposed to be “less felt” for the victims (Czopp, 2017, p. 61). The similarity of the situations (firstly mentioned by me and then verbalized by one of the attendees), reinforces not only both the Representativeness Theory and the Conflict Theory, as well as the hypothesis that covert racism have similarities in Brazil and in Ireland. Confirming the studies made by Lentin & McVeigh, racism is a global phenomenon following a pattern of manifestations due to historical components.

I also would like to analyse the approach of non-black community present in the session in terms of the questions asked. It is visible that their questions are genuine, and are involved by some doubts in regards to underlying structures and aspects of blackness. One of these doubts is related to nomenclature. When questions such “is it ok to refer to a person as black” or “should you just talk to coloured (sic) people like they are caucasian and not make reference to their ethnic background?” emerges, it shows that the process of learning and teaching has to be started from the basics. I understand where these statements come from: due to the nature of racism, the word “black” has been seen as offensive, bad. Etymologically, the association with the term “dark”, which is an adjective in use to refer to tones of skin (among others associations) has been laid in the imaginary collective as not auspicious, dirty evil (on opposition to white as pure and clean) (Ramos, 2012)

The demonstrations of concerns with the nomenclature show non-black people in the sample are concerned with what could be considered offensive through verbalisation, in the first instance. The concern was expressed by a non-black participant: “I know terminology is not a simple solution, but people using nouns, like a white or a black. Obviously in some languages that's kind of the norm, but

for some reason that's kind of uncomfortable, because the entire person has been reduced to that description, as opposed to use as an adjective, like saying black person, you know what I mean? Its idiosyncratic but for some reason, that's weird".

It appears the sensitivity of the topic touches the non-black community more than does with the black community. Based on the feelings acknowledged, coming from the black individuals in the room, there is a more significant concern, among black individuals, about the structures, the precipitate judgements and assumption, more than there is a worry with the nomenclature. According to a participant, the fear of calling someone black prevents the discussion from going further "as if we are always stuck in this level e never move forward".

The culminating point, which matches the objectives of this work, comes from the realisation of racist manifestation not only as an aspect one should be ashamed of, but also as an opportunity to learn through expressions of vulnerability. I would like to analyse two excerpts of the meeting, integrally, as follow:

"In my experience, it was hurtful to find out racism was inside of me. I always try to share this with other people who also do not identify themselves as people of colour or black people, the fact that realisation hurt me. I know this pain is way more painful for my black brothers and sisters, and I feel I have to expose the lesson I learned, even if they make me feel ashamed -- because, to accept that I have learnt and that I am learning can encourage someone to be open to learning as well". The analysis of the speech demonstrates it was hard for the interlocutor to recognise herself as racist at some point, especially in a space where part of the participants is self-identified as black. Nevertheless, the admission led to a feeling of empathy from black individuals towards the interlocutor. The denial on the subject appears to escalate the conflict, whereas the admission leads to the opposite. (Green, 2019). Appreciation on the act of admitting any ethnic prejudice was demonstrated by the group,

through words and expression such as “thank you for sharing”, “it demands courage, but I appreciate you are brave enough to admit it and try to change”.

Another non-black participant expressed her concerns towards the issue: “I feel I would like to listen even more because I do not feel brave enough about asking. It is very hard to learn how to approach the subject, without hurting the others. That is why I believe this initiative is essential to create a safe space for people to feel more comfortable about asking and answering, even if it takes time”.

That statement leads me to a self-reflection on my role as a facilitator. The attempt to encourage the non-black participants to speak up about their feelings towards racism and to ask questions to be answered (even if those questions may be indelicate) was, from my point of view, not satisfactory. At the beginning of the session, the ground rules were presented in an effort to make clear the space is safe, non-judgemental, respectful and open to learning.

When discussing my role as facilitator (mainly towards the non-black individuals attending the meeting), I recall Lloyd’s observation about the dynamics of power between the named “oppressor” and the named “oppressed”. As the researcher pointed, a trend to balance the power by favouring the non-black individuals in the room occurred in her analysis of a Alternative Dispute Resolution session in the workplace. In the study, the author noticed an attempt by the two mediators (facilitating the case) of balancing the power towards the person B (identified as non-black) (Lloyd, 2015).

Lloyd’s case implies that A, a black woman arguing she was being victim of structural racism, was more eloquent and appeared to be more confident about her arguments against B, an white woman and higher in the workplace hierarchy. According to the researcher, the fact that A is more able to recognize the structural racism, places her in a dominant space. So that, A argued she felt a trend from the mediators to balance the power between both parties, once B appeared to be “cornered”. However, the result was not satisfactory, as A felt depreciated during the process (Lloyd, 2015).

I am able to recognize that dynamic also occurred during both Conflict Transformation sessions presented in this work. As a black woman, I did want to prevent my feelings from emerging. I did intend to stay as neutral as possible, and, immediately, the first reaction was to restrain my emotions in an attempt to maintain the balance in the room.

Nevertheless, despite my role as a facilitator, I felt a particular feeling I will name as “betrayal”. I feared my attempt to maintain the balance could, personally, “damage my image” among my black peers. The acknowledgement of this feeling, in this discussion, is crucial as, again, we cannot change what is not named (Green, 2019). I am aware of this duality and find it essential to reflect on them so that I am aware the balance of power has to occur based on an outside view, not from a self-judgement or fear of being judged.

Said that I suggest some changes to keep the project useful. They are:

- to create a stage of pre-Conflict Transformation sessions, when the group will be split in two (black people and non-black people), and every participant will place her or himself in the group that one identifies to fit in;
- to do pre-sessions with both groups, not to talk about the issues of racism themselves. Instead, the objectives in those sessions would be to apply the principles of non-violent communication, safe space and non-judgemental zone, in a training session. It is essential to make clear both groups are allowed to express their feelings. However, they must keep in mind the sessions designed are not supposed to be a “blame game”. Free from blame and personal accusations, the main aim of the Conflict Transformation meetings is to discuss the issues and shape solutions to the conflicts, in practice;

- I conclude that the ones who not identify themselves as black or people of colour are not aware of the dynamic “recognition x denial”. As demonstrated in the present research, whereas the denial of racism can escalate the conflict, the recognition of the issue can de-escalate the conflict. More information towards the process itself beforehand can be useful in a sense participants would feel more comfortable to address the elements of racism itself -- if it is to be clear that the objective is not to blame, but to “name it” and to “heal it”;
- the role of the pre-session towards the group formed by individuals self-identified as black people would be to provide instruction about the dynamics of power in the room. As shown by Lloyd, when the issue is related to ethnic discrimination, the power tends to balance towards the side who is feeling “cornered”. Nevertheless, the party historically judged as “oppressor” immediately feels the instinct to deny the occurrence. Once denial is not favourable, it is fundamental to instruct the black community that the anger is legit and necessary. However, it cannot be positive for the bridges both sides intend to build. It is indispensable to create a non-judgemental zone where the non-black community will feel comfortable enough to expose their vulnerabilities, to achieve recognition of racism, instead of denial. The first step to learning is to admit there is something to be identified and corrected. In addition, as well placed by Max Klau, “when we allow the cruelty, hate, anger and dehumanization of the system to turn us into cruel, hateful, angry, dehumanized souls, then we begin calling forth through our way of being the very same problem we aspire to transform” (Klau, 2017).

CONCLUSION

Fighting racism and Afrophobia involves more than not being racist: it involves being anti-racist. That means one should be able to recognize not only the violent (verbal or physical) manifestations of Afrophobia, but also the covert racism studied in the present project. When, in the early stage of presenting the project for this dissertation, I was prompted to analyse the realistic presence of racist manifestations in Ireland. I conclude then even that first talk was valuable when it comes to contest my own views on ethnic conflicts and Afrophobia, in comparison to the view of non-black individuals in the academic environment.

In the first moment, I acknowledged the need of discussing in which extent ethnic conflicts related to Afrophobia are tangible in Ireland. My perception was clear, but when it comes to academic work, my perception would not be satisfactory to initiate the research. Even though the structures related to the issue were evident in my individuality, I was invited to reflect that every geographical context differs from another in sociological and historical aspects. If my experience as a black woman in Brazil had provided me arguments to fight the racist speech in my country of origin, I was encouraged to reflect and research if the manifestations of racism I was witnessing in Ireland could be a transference of my frustration from a geographical context to another. As a contrary outcome to my initial hypothesis could emerge, the course of the research would follow a more individual-based investigation.

However, the initial research based on secondary data showed the problem has been addresses, according to the literature review, since 2008 (at least). Insofar as Lentin and McVeigh, Michael and Hart (mainly) challenge the idea of Ireland as a “racism-free” country, the possibility of exploring the matter in a context of a problem-solving situation is reasonable.

In this sense, finding that racism and Afrophobia have been widely discussed, leads to the conclusion that the denying is a challenging factor when it comes to fighting racism and Afrophobia. The findings and the theoretical contribution demonstrates that the lack of awareness on the issue (also in the academic world, in a current context of a multicultural, multiethnic and globalized Ireland) is, not only but also, a result of a visible white, European dominance. However, this statement means a constation, not an accusation. Given the analysis about the process of immigration in the country, it is consensus among the authors the country became a destiny for immigrants recently (specifically from 1998). Hence, factors such as representation and maintenance of power are being confronted towards a population who is predominantly white. Nevertheless, it is of utmost importance to recognize that the absence of black people can no longer be used as an excuse to the racist behaviour – since the a global context in the Western world enables the society in its totality to be aware of ethnic diversity (or at least should to). On the other hand, the same globalized environment can indeed be linked to the consumption of cultural products that, mainly, have white figures as protagonists (and when not, portraits black people wrapped into stereotypes). Hence, the Theory of Representativity (besides the perpetuation of the lack of representation, or misrepresentation of black individuals) does reinforce the argument that the lack of awareness and information is one of the factors responsible for the perpetuation of racism.

Said that, it is assertive to affirm the investigation proposed in the objectives was successfully concluded, enabling me, as researcher, to argue that globalization, immigration and multi-culturalism play a significant role on the escalation of ethnic conflicts in Ireland. Not only the secondary data converges with that constation, as the primary research also reveals that, in terms of quantitative data, ethnic conflicts and Afrophobia effects mainly immigrants (considering that among 25 invitations for the second Conflict Transformation session sent, 16 were replied, and none of those responses was from an Irish black person or Irish person of colour).

Moreover, by assessing the models of Conflict Transformation processes set in the US (where the historic of segregation set precedents to the introduction of Conflict Transformation as an innovative method to resolve those conflicts), I had the realization the tool is already successfully being applied (as demonstrated mainly by Green and Rodman).

After holding the meeting, the clarifications of the findings matches the aim set. If the aim was to set a Conflict Transformation meeting to evaluate its efficiency when it comes to increase the level of awareness on the subject, it is also right to highlight the Conflict Transformation meeting planned could not have been satisfactory without the stage of also evaluating the impacts of ethnic conflicts in Irish society.

As confirmed through the analysis of the data, there is a real hesitation, in a sense both black and non-black individuals demonstrated some discomfort when approaching the issues. The most significant finding though comes from the strong evidence that the participants, in their totality, agreed there is misinformation on the issue, as the problem has also been treated as taboo (as first evidenced through the literature review). The fact that the hypothesis (set based on the literature review), were confirmed during the second Conflict Transformation meeting, is positive – insofar it confirms that the subject is treated with omission. However, the realization that, even during the Conflict Transformation session in April, the participants were not very comfortable to address the issues (mainly the non-black participants) indicates that there some points to be adjusted if the project is to continue (as demonstrated on the Discussion).

Overall, the fact that black and non-black community demonstrated interested in the initiative itself shows the issue is from Irish society's concern, and open up the possibility for an innovative, restorative and sensitive manner to approach racism and Afrophobia, free of judgements and focused on solutions.

REFLECTION

Since childhood, I remember feeling sad when seeing people begging on the streets, or when watching something bad that had happen on TV. By that time, I did not understand those things very well, but then I grew up to realize that world is not a fair place. However, I also had the realization that I could do something to change the order of things, at least around me. When I first graduated, I thought that being a journalist, trying to draw the attention for the uncouneted things that simply are not right in our society, could be somewhat effective. I am very grateful for my path, yet I felt what we all need is less of “Oh Dearism” (as sometimes we tend to find the things on the news awful, but do very little in a practical way to change those things), and more action. I want to be able to follow the “be the change you want to see” to the letter.

Being able to complete my studies in the Alternative Dispute Resolution field could not be more congruent with the plans I had some years ago. When I first started my studies in the area, I knew somehow I would shape my path towards social inequalities, and I also knew I was having the opportunity of connecting to people and subjects that would guide me throughout my journey. As demonstrated, the issue of racism and Afrophobia is intrinsic to my existence, and I could not live ignoring that was also my problem to be solved. Being able to propose an alternative process to transform ethnic conflicts, in a medium-long term, through a Conflict Transformation program, gave me a personal satisfaction, as I have been feeling passive for a long time ago. So to find out there is a method of discussing those issues, which matches my beliefs and objectives, made me visualise a near future where I will be the difference -- maybe to one, two, ten people. It is not about the amount of people I can affect, but about keeping my faith that there is a way to change the dynamics of power, to heal and to built a more peaceful relationship among people.

Surely, to conduct a research was not an easy process, especially in times of pandemic. In the beginning, I thought I could take the maximum of my time at home to be productive and efficient. However, anxiety, fear, thoughts on my family working in the frontline in Brazil were, somewhat, affecting my focus and mental health. It was challenging, to say the least, keeping my mind on the purpose, but reminding me that these times are not permanent gave me the focus I needed to work on something I truly believe, and to plant the seeds during these hard times to be ready for action when they are over.

In term of practicalities, it was indeed harder to work 100% from home, where distractions are so frequent, not seeing my dear classmates, my lecturers and not being able to give my supervisor a hug at the end of this present work. Nevertheless, the process of working from home taught me the importance of elaborating my own routine, looking after myself and sacrificing some fun moments in order to “get it done”. No regrets!

In terms of theoretical apparatus and research, I am very proud and satisfied with the work I have executed. The amount of information, knowledge and insights I have absorbed and reflected on makes me even more curious, as a researcher, to the possibilities that Conflict Transformation can bring – whether personally, in terms of my career or for the communities that could be impacted by it. Also, I cannot help mentioning the joy I felt every time an article, a paragraph, an author answered my questions and proved my thoughts right. Certainly, there are room for improvements as there were also frustrations and changes when the results expected did not come. Nevertheless, I see those frustrations as an opportunity to keep investigating and improving what I judge to be necessary.

And, at last, I would like, again, to highlight the healing power Conflict Transformation. I see this dissertation as an opportunity to reflect on my deepest fears, a necessary self-analysis and a deconstruction of my oldest beliefs. That is valuable. Being able to hear experiences like mine, seeing

the community discussing subjects I judge to be so important (and willing to make changes), taking the leadership, speaking and writing in another language, certainly makes me feel proud of what I have been achieving and make me feel that, like me, there are so many people in the world who have faith in equality and social justice. .

APPENDIX

1.1 The first photo shows a Medicine Graduating Class in 2017, formed by white people in its totality, as the second photo shows a team of waste collectors, formed by black people in its totality (both in Rio de Janeiro, 2017) (Iconografia da História, 2017) .



2.1. “A Seat at the Table” Facebook event’s print screen (the pilot Conflict Transformation session in December, 2019) (Santos, 2019)



DEZ 3

A Seat at the Table: a frank talk about blackness and prejudice

Público · Organizado por Go Dance For Change e outras 2 pessoas

✓ Vou ▾

Terça-feira, 3 de dezembro de 2019 de 19:30 a 21:30
há cerca de 5 meses

Detalhes

“Why can’t I touch your hair?” “What about cultural appropriation?” “I don’t really feel there is racism in Ireland”.

People who do not consider themselves as people of colour bring these genuine questions to the table when it comes to blackness. What if we had the opportunity to talk openly and with real interest about our differences and how we could be able to respect them?

This is not a lecture. It is an invitation to an open-minded, respectful, non-judgemental dialogue among people in order to build bridges in a context where multiculturalism is a reality in Ireland.

Causas

1.3. Sequence of powerpoint slides presented to the participants during the pilot session "A Seat at the Table" in 2019

A frank talk about
blackness and
prejudice

A Seat at The Table

Speaking up

This is not a lecture. It is an invitation to an open-minded, respectful, non-judgemental dialogue among people in order to build bridges in a context where multiculturalism is a reality in Ireland.

Can't I touch
your hair?

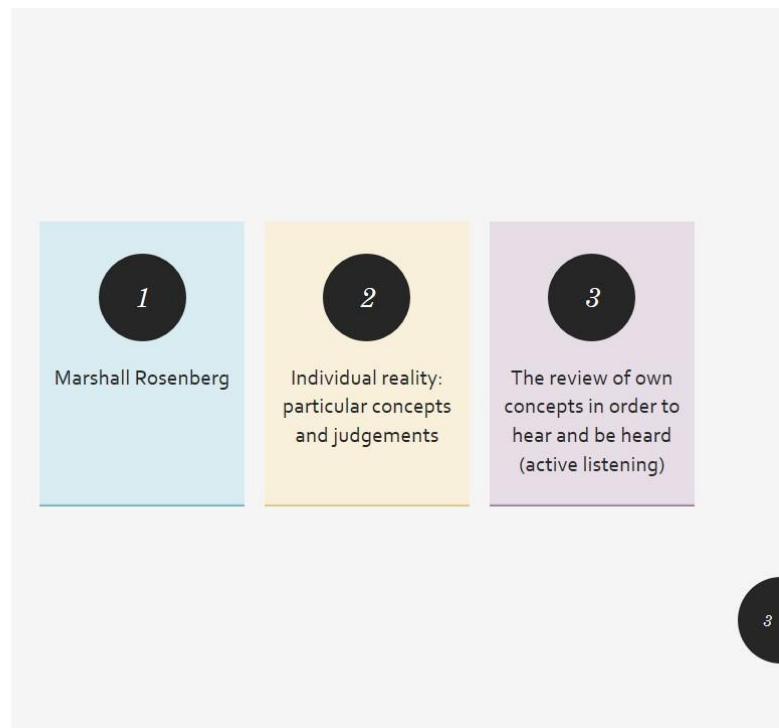
Cultural
appropriation? I
just don't get it...

I honestly don't
think there's
racism in Ireland

2

Non-violent communication

We need to talk in order to fight racism in the daily-basis.



Non-violent communication

We need to talk in order to fight racism in the daily-basis.

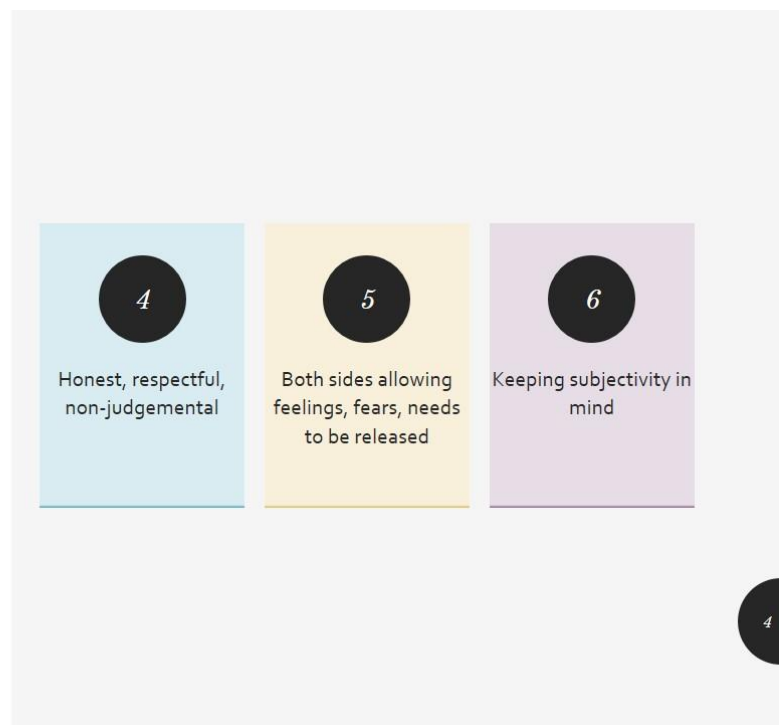


Photo used to illustrate the concept of representativeness. By that stage, I exemplified the theory through my experience of being a black child exposed only to blonde and white kids shows' presenters



Where does taboo come from?

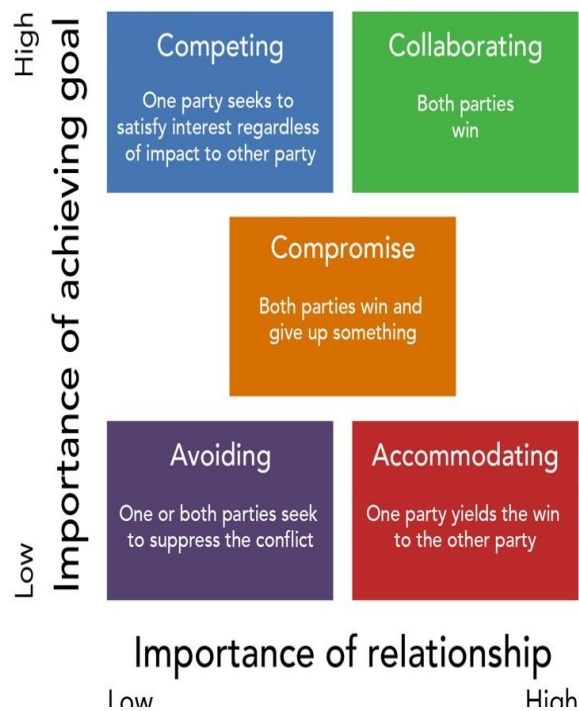
David Letterman invited Jay-Z to his show and both were chatting about the development of emotional intelligence after having kids...

Racism is
"unknown"

Racism can be
subtle

Racism is based
on fear

Conflict management - styles

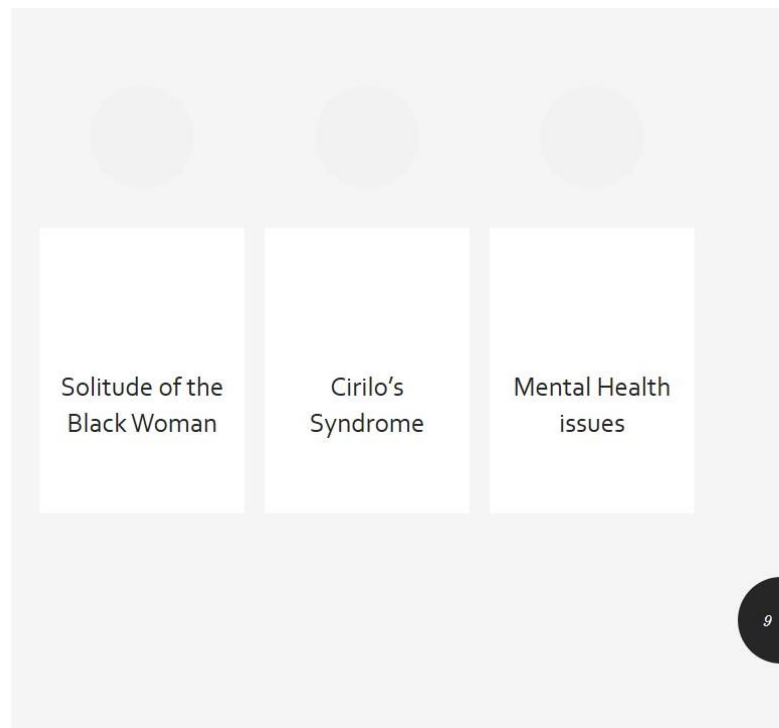


The next slide was presented to exemplify the different styles of Conflict Management, as Malcom X (on the left) was known for having a more aggressive approach, and Martin Luther King was considered to have a more peaceful approach (both regarding their activism in the Black Movement in the US)



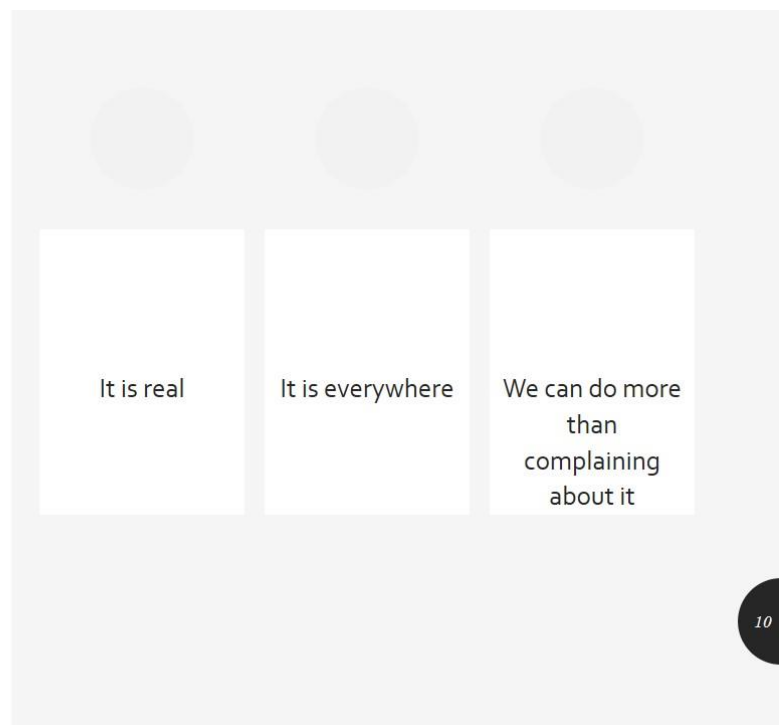
Forbidden weakness

- Hidden vulnerability
 - Lack of shared information and experiences
 - A way to represent strength and to stand up for myself
-

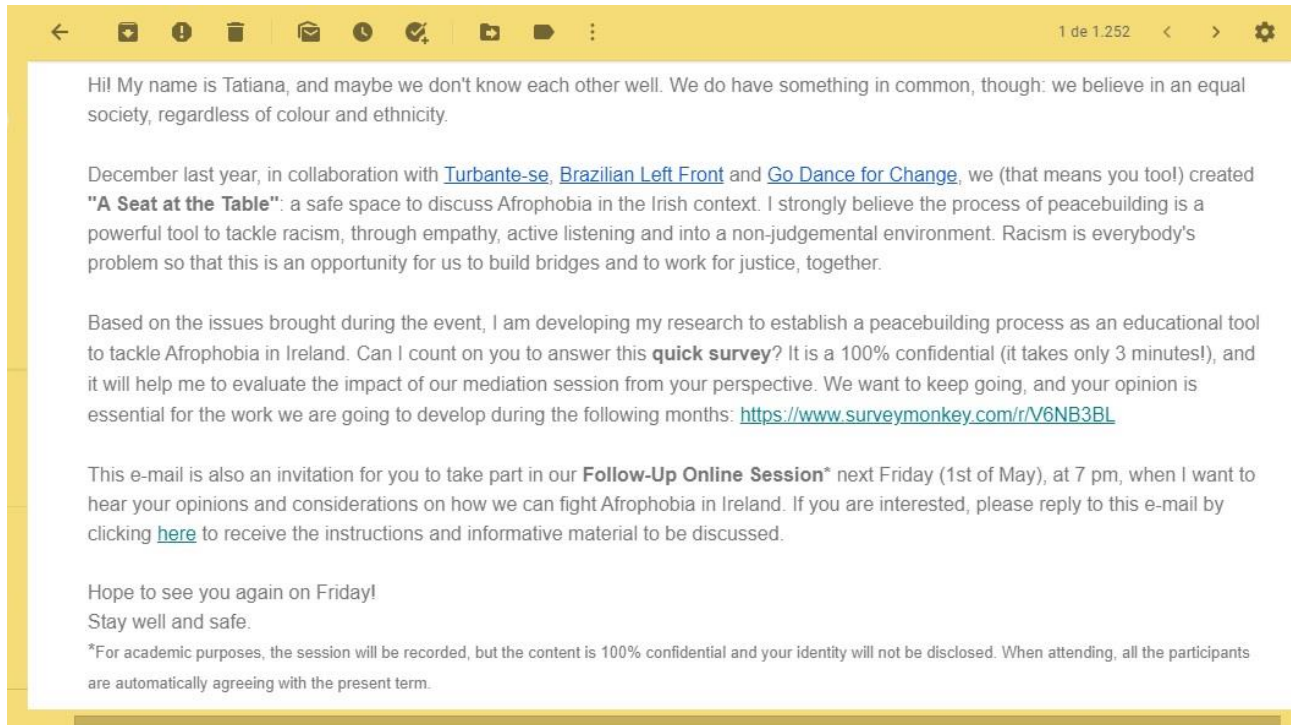


Sharing experiences

- Representation and validation
 - Taking criticism in a positive way
 - Healthier environment in a multicultural context
-



1.4. Invitation sent by email regarding the second Conflict Transformation session, in May 2020



1.4. Second Conflict Transformation session - transcription

(Greetings and chatting before the beginning of the session)

FACILITATOR: It is ten past now, so I'm gonna start and people who will be joining us I will allow them to join but we can start it. Hi everyone, I hope you are well. I know many of you from the first session in Wigwam, I think everybody knows me here. My name is Tatiana, I'm currently studying Conflict Resolution, my focus is on peacebuilding and mediation (SIC). This project is mainly to try to introduce Conflict Resolution as a method to talk about Afrophobia in Ireland. There is an author that I really like, his name is James Baldwin, he's an activist and he says nothing can be changed before it has a name. For me it's important to talk about these issues even if we feel uncomfortable somehow, to acknowledge the feelings and, the next step, to try to solve the problems.

I think the main goal here, It's not a blame game, we're going to talk a lot about them (problems), but the main objective is trying to find solutions because If you know how I feel, how everyone feels, we can work together to try to find a solution.

For those who were not in the first session, we had Thais and Jessika introducing some concepts regarding blackness, racism and we were talking about loneliness of the black woman, cultural appropriation and some of those topic. But today, I'm gonna propose something a bit different because many of you were in the first session and I feel I was stuck, I could not go forward because I didn't know how people feel about this.

I had my impression that day, but it's just my impression. I talked to close friends but I didn't have a consistent feedback

I pointed 3 things I'd like to talk about today. So nearly 90 percent of people who answered the survey don't feel comfortable about talking about racism. I had that impression and analysing the answers I realized it seems to be difficult for both sides. But average its atopic which is taboo. I'm

gonna explain about what I 've been doing so far, and I'm gonna give more time for us to raise our hands and acknowledge our questions.

We have a couple of rules (during the process): to be respectful, put ourselves on other peoples' shoes, being able to express the way we fell. We have the opportunity to hear and talk about this in a safe space, and it's being important for me, professionally and personally. So let's take this opportunity to ask questions that we know are difficult to be asked outside the safe space. I would like to highlight we are here to ask and answer, everybody can, and I'm here to facilitate the process of communication. So we'll go to the next part, is there any question so far?

C: Do you have any background material, in terms of experience of African people in Ireland?

Facilitator: I'm producing my dissertation and I have to try to condense a bit more, but in the last part I think we can all share our experiences, what you think?

(People nod and show thumbs up, are the microphones are off).

Facilitator: Actually, I'm gonna tell a story because I think it makes easier for everybody. The way I deal with racism is based on my experience, my history and my background. I was raised among a white community, I was the only the black children in school, college, my mom is white, my grandparents are white, I felt comfortable with white people and even in this context I could feel prejudice coming from people I love the most. After starting my dissertation I used a method of Autoethnography, you are allowed to bring your experience as a subject to be studied, I realize for me if there is an oppressor and oppressed, I was sharing life with my "oppressor". Ok, there is racism but how can they be racist if I'm here, in front of me? I realized the only way for me to solve this conflict was trying to talk to them, so I believe this is a toll to educate people.

The stories I want to tell is: who knows the Kardashians? Of course, everybody knows them. I remember I used to watch it and think: this is so futile, so much money, it's just not my style of life. And then the other day I saw some news and I said "I'm gonna watch this". Curious as I am, I realize there is a project in the US government of Trump, they try to socialize people when they get out of the jail, paying for their studies, trying to insert them in the workforce. And the person who had this idea, who made it was Kim Kardashian herself. So, when you are famous, how can you impact peoples' lives even in the way you can be criticised like "you are just doing this for popularity". But this is not the point. The point is there's no good and evil 100%. The main point about Conflict Resolution is to try to scape from this judgemental place and actually see from other perspective. Marshall says a lot about non-violent communication, because we are not obliged to agree to anyone but the only thing it's important is to respect the right of people to tell how they feel. It is important to let people know how you feel. As especially, as a black woman, sometimes we hear things that I want to kill a person, I'm not even gonna repeat, but what I'm exercising is to try to understand where that person is coming from and try to make a change through a healthy dialogue. Right, that's it. Before we start to talk about the practical point of this conversation, and I want to hear your questions as well, I would like to open a dialogue to talk about our feeling, not necessarily about the issues of a black person. We are going to have a moment to discuss how to approach a black person, how to discuss racism with a black person, but now I would like to hear from you about your feelings about speaking up about Afrophobia.

C: I was never aware that there was Afrophobia, I always had friends from all over the world, in my circle it's not a thing, maybe a live in a bubble. But I've notice in university that different kinds of ethnic groups primarily hang out together. So the African students hang out together, the Asian students hang out together, the Indian students hang out together. So on and so forth. And there would be outlets into society that, what you would called it, like entrepreneurship society,

international students society, different kinds of society that literally try to get people from different places together, that's what kinda give you a mixed of students from different countries, studying in DCU, but apart from those societies interactions, everybody would kinda stick to their own. And I'm curious, why is that?

Facilitator: Does anyone wants to comment on this? No? I have the perception that it is a protection. I think you feel protected when you are among your peers. Lets put it like that. I think immediately you look and you recognize and you assume that a person who has same colour of skin will know how you feel, would go through the same issues, you know? Even will understand like jokes when you do dome kind of jokes, so I think it is a mechanism of protection.

PA: And I think when you mention jokes you talking about communication among people who have same culture experience, not to mention the linguistic barriers,

Facilitator: Yeah, 100% I think the linguistic barriers, even the "don't touch my hair" thing, that so many people struggle to understand and if someone has a question related to that I will be happy to answer. So there is a world of particular language, as if it was a particular universe of sharing the same feelings. What else guys, how do you feel when talking about...

S: To your point about different ethnic groups congregating together, I'm sure it as functional thing, you move to a new country, you are trying to normalize, I think you go from the gap from feeling very alienated, and find people from your country who say "hey, that place has a lovely food, on that place you can get your hair done, this is where you go and get your visa to go to different country." The kind of conversation that you would have to explain the whole pretext and try to get information, you know?

K: I'd like to add something especially about the feeling like as protection, I know Tati, I'm her friend and I have a lot of great friends and some of them are black also. Sometimes they are like "I don't have to explain that to you again", because I'm white. But I'm so happy to have this space to be able to learn every day and be on the other person's skin. But I understand sometimes there's a tiredness of trying to explain and understand. And I'm in a Brazilian –Irish relationship, sometimes I want to explain things from him (husband), and , I'm like "ah, I'm not gonna waste time with this. One more time, not gonna get this again". So I kinda understand.

M: Hello, everyone. Just would like to share something about how I feel to talk about racism. I'm from Brazil. I came from multicultural country, where you can see indigenous mixed with Asian, or African-European. It is really hard to talk about racism, because sometimes a person who has indigenous-african background, they don't see themselves as an African descendent. It comes to that idea that they don't recognize themselves as a black, so they are racist. I have cousins who have indigenous faces, the hair, but they have a very dark skin, but they are like "I don't see myself as black, I see myself more like an indigenous", whatever. And then, I came to Ireland, a totally different country and we have actually African, Asian, is very difficult to talk about racism. My partner is from village and he has never seen someone from another country. So how do you talk about racism or about feeling ostracised when a person never has seen or never felt those situations. And here, in Ireland, I work in retails, so I see people from all around the world and I can see people being racist, towards immigrants, African, and I had this feeling like "oh, that costumer looked at me in a different way". But then I don't know, the customer was looking at me in a different way because of my accent, because I'm an immigrant, because I'm Latin-American, or because I'm an afro woman? So for me It's very controversial talking about racism, because I don't know, like I have Stamp 4, is because I'm an immigrant, or because I'm an afro?

C: I've been in Ireland for 14 years now, and I came with my ex-husband who's polish. I have seen he has be treated with discrimination, I don't if because he has a thicker accent than me, but I've never experienced that kind of discrimination. Even though I'm obviously not Irish, I don't sound Irish, but I think because I have the American accent, the view me as English-ish whatever I just do not have the experience of discrimination that he did. In the work place, people would say "go back to your country", and he's polish, he's a white man. Because he didn't sound like them. Although funny enough, I don't sound like them either, but it's just weird. It's very complicated, I think that is what my point is.

S: Just wanna add to that, It's interesting that you brought this prejudicial behaviour because I'm not from Ireland but my stepparents are both Irish, so if you talk to me on the phone, I'll be probably seem Irish, I get the colloquialisms. But then if I go like to an interview, and then in a scenario where people meet me face to face they are like "oh", "you got great English" or "you are so articulate, bla bla bla". I've noticed that when I was a teenager, I lived in the countryside and my sister come and says she was being bullied by a traveller girl, and another family friend of ours, they are Nigerian, really thick accent , very presently African, stood up for her, and then they backed down. This is such a funny power struggle. Here's my sister, she sound kinda Irish, and there this other African girl, who fights on the streets like "don't you dare", and there is the travellers. All of these are kinda of marginalised groups, so who fights where and who starts bullying who. For me it becomes more like, well, racism is linked to power, right? So my mum says things very offensive about Chinese people. And I'm like "mum, that's not fair. And she goes, "yeah but Chinese people are higher tier in the hierarchy of people that white people hate. So "im not being racist because they have more privilege, bla bla bla". So (the logic is) I'm anger but it is not racist, because it doesn't have impact on the Chinese person. But if that Chinese person is racist to me, so there is an impact, on my job, on something that really impacts my life. So because I'm

inoffensive, it's interesting to see people who do not expect to see me. It's interesting to see they "so what's your story?" So Afrophobia is probably in the bottom of the tier, because it's a global issue.

L: And there always people like are very surprised like "oh, you had a master?". I don't think they would be that surprised if it was a white person. Asking "where are you from" it's fine, but when you feel like they are asking not because they want to engage in a healthy conversation, but because they want to understand how come you are able to do what you're doing, that's when I get upset. I live in an area which is like a good area, let's put it like this, everybody around is Irish I think. "I was to move to my new house in Dublin, and I was with my friend, who is European, blonde, blue eyes. The neighbour looked at her and said "hi" to her, asked, "oh, nice, you are moving in (sic)?" Then I reply, saying I was the one moving in. I could see his expression changing for the worst. These woman asked me to clean her house three times. I just don't understand.

Facilitator: I'm glad because I have this feeling quite often, is this person treating me like that because of my colour. And you will never know...When it comes to the relation black-people/non black people, why do you feel embarrassed, when do you feel embarrassed? How can we have an honest conversation with people, for example "yeah, I'm black and you can call me black. No harm on it" ?

T: What I listened a lot is, a have a girl who works with me and she always says "you know that woman who is tanned?" I'm like, sorry baby, I'm not tanned. There is a big fear that people feel. You won't be rude if you refer to a person as black, a lot of people think they will be offensive by saying the truth!

K: Growing up among black people, even now, hanging out with you guys, I really feel like we have never talked about it: it so beautiful what you girls are doing. It feels like I'm so glad they are here. When I talk to you I always have this fear of saying something wrong because my mind was that in a way that growing up I should refer to someone as "morena" (meaning tanned). I'm glad you girls are doing this.

P: I know terminology is not a simple solution, but people using nouns, like a white or a black. Obviously in some languages that's kind of the norm, but for some reason that's kind of uncomfortable, because the entire person has been reduced to that description, as opposed to use as an adjective, like saying black person, you know what I mean? Its idiosyncratic bur for some reason, that's weird.

Facilitator:: I think we can thing refer to it like a physical feature, I don't see problem in the context, but maybe somebody has a different opinion. L. wants to comment but we can come back to this topic.

L. Just commenting what she said, I think we all have to learn. One day I told my dad, he didn't want to give me the money to go to the hairdresser. And then I told him. I told him: you have to give me the money because you are the reason I'mm like that. Or the first time I came back home w braids, my mum was like, "what's that, Lucille, you're looking like you're coming from Africa!". It's not like oh "white people have to be educated". We all have to talk about because we don't talk about! I didn't know where I am from I try to find out my ancestor and nobody knows anything. Probably my grand-grand mother was bought as slave. I don't think you should feel guilt or being afraid of ask. . I went on holidays one day and a friend said "my dad has bad hair". Then I asked

her: what is bad hair? So yeah, it awkward but it has to be said, because otherwise she e would keep saying that. So we r starting to get there. And I totally forgot what Tati wanted to say.

Facilitator : I was proposing a discussion on the myth on Irish society that the presence of black people is something new, that people are not used to it, and if somebody wants comment on that. And about the black adjective e related to physical features. And If you guys want to think about question in a practical way like: “what can I do in my small movement, or in my big moment, in my classroom... No comments? Ok, I’m gonna jump for the third part then about how to do changes in a practical way. PE, yeah.

PE: I absolutely agree with the points and the represents from XR now are people who are trying to bring those issues to our movement, it’s a very selfish question but I don’t know how to ask: and I think it’s a centre for us to get there: so what resources can we use to communicate these issues in our movement? People who attend these king of meetings, they get it. But how can we try to get people who don’t show up?

S: I thinks it’s a trick one because most of activists groups around living more sustainable tend to be kinda westernised, like so in some sense comes like a “white saviour”. It’s really hard to break the hostility around that. I think potentially if you could find the middle ground and find someone who’s is kind in the middle. Even engaging in this group here, we are all people that somehow has a privilege, so we have some level of privilege and understand a conversation like this, but there is an issue like most POC (people of colour), most people actually, are trying to get to the capitalism leader. Go to school, have education, buy all the fashion. So everybody wants to achieve the western dream. But it’s really hard to get people who are in the bottom of the leader.

Facilitator: Thank you, S. Who else has any other suggestion on some practical changes in this session?

L: Tati, about the bridges, what you doing here is definitely very helpful, on day to day situation, we have to say something even if it is uncomfortable. From my perspective, I believe black people have to speak up when something doesn't look or seem right. Even if they didn't meant it. Because sometime the person don't want to say something bad, but if you point it our they will understand.

N: And I think we have to also recognize that we are wrong. Sometimes you realize on your own, but sometimes requires confrontation. It takes time.

A: “ In my experience, it was hurtful to find out racism was inside of me. I always try to share this with other people who also do not identify themselves as people of colour or black people, the fact that realisation hurt me. I know this pain is way more painful for my black brothers and sisters, and I feel I have to expose the lesson I learned, even if they make me feel ashamed -- because, to accept that I have learnt and that I am learning can encourage someone to be open to learning as well.

Facilitator: Thank you! Thank you very much everyone, unfortunately I have to wrap up. We are gonna try to organize the meetings from now on (FINAL GREETINGS).

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