



Working Papers Series
in
EU Border Conflicts Studies

Multilevel border conflicts on the island of Ireland

A study in practice, portrayal and persistence

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**No. 19
October
2005**

Abstract

This paper critically examines the contemporary impact of borders on the island of Ireland in three realms: everyday practice in the north-west, local newspapers in Londonderry/Derry and Donegal, and the education systems north and south since partition. In examining the north-west region of Ireland in particular, the multifarious meanings and implications of partition come to the fore. In the post-1998 Good Friday Agreement context, it appears that internal urban boundaries within the city of Derry/Londonderry and internal religious or political differences within Donegal are more significant indicators of division than the actual state border. The research presented in this paper concentrates on two particular dimensions of the representation of these borders: (a) the nature of the conflict regarding the delineation and maintenance of these borders, and (b) the perception of the EU's role and relevance in moves to cooperate across them. To this end, this paper uses primary evidence collected through the *EUBorderConf* project, including analysis of media coverage and school textbooks as well as data collected from interviews with politicians, policymakers and community workers. It concludes with consideration as to how the EU could address the particularities of borders in post-Agreement Ireland in future peace-building programmes.

Key words

Borders, conflict transformation, cross-border cooperation, European Union, Ireland, Northern Ireland

Note on the author

Dr. Katy Hayward is Research Fellow at the School of Politics and International Studies, Queen's University Belfast. This research was carried out within the remit of the EU Fifth Framework Programme's *EUBorderConf* project, the Northern Ireland/Ireland case study of which is directed by Professor Antje Wiener.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to express her gratitude to all those who kindly consented to be interviewed for the *EUBorderConf* research and to James Anderson of the Centre for International Borders Research and Dominic Bryan and Catherine O'Donnell of the Institute for Irish Studies for generously sharing primary data from their own research.

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Introduction

This paper consists of three distinct yet inter-related parts which, when put together, present a picture of change (for the better and for the worse) regarding conflict around borders on the island of Ireland. The first part of this study examines the multilevel nature of borders in the specific region of the north-west of the island. It includes analysis of non-elite local level discourse to gain an insight into the type of issues being raised in relation both to the border and to the EU. The second part looks at media presentation of the border and the European Union through three local newspapers in the north-west, each representing a different constituency or community. The third and final part examines the construction of borders and difference through educational means and, importantly, their means of transcendence. The assumption behind this research is that, if conflict is defined as ‘the articulation of the incompatibility of subject positions’, conflict transformation must be supported by communication between subject positions (Diez *et al.* 2004). The findings of this paper go some way towards highlighting areas in which relationships are built and others in which barriers are built between communities. The Derry-Donegal region is an exemplary case study for such research.

Few places contain so many clear-cut and multilevel borders of division as the north-west of Ireland. Fewer still exemplify the power waged through the representation of such borders in political activity and social identification. The history of the border region of Londonderry/Donegal embodies a process by which ‘fict’ territorial borders (i.e. those founded on human activity rather than physical barriers) have been imbued with political, social and emotional significance. The delineation of these borders have led, over the course of time, to differences within the north-west region being expressed as issue conflicts (of contrasting interests), identity conflicts ('them' versus 'us') and subordination conflicts (in which fear and violence are manifest) (see Diez *et al.* 2004). The peace process of the 1990s and developments associated with it – paramilitary ceasefires, the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, the new multilevel institutions – have substantially altered the political context in Northern Ireland and the border region. Nonetheless, the long-term readjustment of inter-communal relations across all levels of borders in the north-west depends (amongst other things) on change in local practice, media-influenced perception, and education. This study assesses the state of play in these areas and analyses the relevance of the EU therein.

Part I. Borders in practice

I. The Derry-Donegal region

The specific border region of the north-west, and the city of Londonderry/Derry within it, is an epitome both of the violence, segregation and deprivation associated with the Troubles and of notable change in relation to the peace process. Analysis of the impact of the border in the north-west highlights ways in which this case exemplifies common experience in Ireland's border regions, as well as interesting points of distinctiveness. This section of the study examines the impact of the state border, city boundaries and cross-border cooperation in everyday practice. To place this in context, the map below (Figure I.i) depicts the Derry-Donegal region under consideration in this section and shows the way in which the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland circles Derry city before following the line of the River Foyle.¹



Fig.I.i The northern Derry-Donegal region²

¹ For reasons of clarity, the city of Londonderry/Derry is referred to as Derry city in this paper (in line with the name of the council that governs the city) and the county in which the city is located is referred to as County Londonderry. Clarity is also the primary objective where other contested and over-simplified terms (such as north/south, Protestant/Catholic etc.) are used in this paper, and the author requests the reader's patient indulgence in this regard.

² Source: <http://www.derrycity.gov.uk/Map/> (06/10/05)

I.1 The Irish border

I.1.1 An inauspicious conception

When partition was introduced through the 1920 Government of Ireland Act, it was as a temporary solution to the problem of trying to give Home Rule to the majority on the island who wanted it whilst maintaining the Union with Great Britain wanted by a significant minority. For reasons of patterns of historical migration and of colonisation, this minority was mainly composed of Protestants and was physically concentrated in the north-eastern region of the island, although there was a substantial Protestant population in all the nine counties of the province of Ulster. Partition saw Northern Ireland composed of six of these counties in a situation to be reviewed by the Boundary Commission established as part of the 1920 Act. The position of the residents of Derry city was particularly tenuous during this time. At the time of the Home Rule Bill in May 1914, it was understood that further negotiations could well allow the city special dispensation to opt-in to Home Rule (as the majority of its population wanted) even if the county was included in Northern Ireland (Laffan 1983:48). The First World War put this Bill on hold in Westminster, but the topic came to the fore following the 1916 Easter Rising and the War of Independence in Ireland.³ Even at the post-war settlement, the Irish leaders had reason to believe that parts of County Londonderry would be seceded to the Irish state (Coogan 2003:128). However, the report of the Boundary Commission that was leaked to the press prior to its publication in 1925 proposed that not only would Londonderry stay within Northern Ireland (as would the other two counties with a Catholic majority, Fermanagh and Tyrone), the Irish Free State was to lose a substantial part of Donegal to the province. This was unacceptable to the Irish government, which reluctantly came to an agreement following direct negotiation with the British government and Northern Ireland administration that the boundary would remain unaltered.

So, Derry city became Northern Ireland's second largest city,⁴ and the border around the city became entrenched, not least through the keen establishment of customs posts by the Irish Free State in 1923 (Coakley and O'Dowd 2004:5). Nonetheless, the sense of

³ For more on the wider effects of the First World War on the course of partition and conflict in Ireland, see Dunn and Hennessey (1996:179).

⁴ The website of Derry City Council states the population of the area as just over 105,000 (39% of whom are under 25 years of age) and the size of the city's ' hinterland' including parts of Donegal in its 'travel-to-work' and 'travel-to-shop' area as 400,000 . For reasons elaborated in this section of the paper, it describes Derry as a 'regional city'.

(<http://www.derrycity.gov.uk/economicdevelopment/area.htm>) [06/10/05])

Derry being ‘the one that got away’ remained in certain echelons of the Irish government.⁵ Yet de Valera’s priority, and that of his successors as head of the Irish government, remained Irish sovereignty rather than Irish unity.⁶ Practice of everyday life in Ireland north and south was not directly affected by the existence of the border; even in the Derry-Donegal region, the border was seen for the most part as ‘a blurred situation’ (Interview 10). Somewhat ironically, it was the activity of those who wished to see the border gone altogether that instigated the first major moves to increase its visibility and decrease its permeability.

I.1.2 The border and the conflict

As the border became more fortified and securitised as a consequence of the IRA’s border campaign from 1956-1962 and of the ‘Troubles’, the task of crossing the border for citizens in the area became increasingly onerous. In a region in which familial,⁷ occupational and recreational ties had continued to be built between the counties of Londonderry and Donegal without reference to the border for the first two or so generations after its imposition, the militarization of the border had a particular impact.⁸ The frontier posts in the north-west became among the strongest in Northern Ireland. This was due in part to the proximity of the border to the city of Derry – it runs in a semi-circle less than four miles (ten kilometres) from the city centre. The centre of the city is located on the west bank of the River Foyle, the river itself becoming the line of the border a short distance from the city. The closeness of the border to this, a city with

⁵ For example, when the United States put a naval operations base by the River Foyle for its military operations in Europe during the Second World War, the Irish Taoiseach Éamon de Valera placed an official objection with the British government. Moreover, in secret correspondence with the German Ambassador to Ireland in 1941, the Secretary in the Department for External Affairs, Joseph Walshe, specifically requested that Derry city be spared from German bombs on the grounds that it was a strongly nationalist city and by implication, less sympathetic to the British war effort (Coogan 2003:257, 291).

⁶ As seen in his rejection of the offers by Prime Ministers Chamberlain and Churchill to renegotiate partition in the event of Ireland giving up its neutral status during the Second World War (Harkness 1996:71). For further elaboration of this analysis see Hayward (2002).

⁷ As one Catholic interviewee in the Inishowen put it, ‘Half of Derry are related to Donegal, and half of Donegal are related to Derry’ (Interview 10).

⁸ This was the case for organisations as well as individuals within the Protestant as well as Catholic community, as confirmed by *Diversity Challenges* Interviewee 2: ‘There would have been a legion of informal links, because of families and marriages and people having left the Irish state to go and live in Northern Ireland because of work or housing, better opportunities. So all those family links would have been in place, some people might have worked in Northern Ireland and lived in the Republic, those sorts of things. Churches of course don’t have a border, so the Church structures are all-Ireland... the Orange Order, the Masonic [Lodge] and all sorts of organisations.’

a Catholic majority, has meant that it has been particularly contested and disruptive since its inception.

The rise of violent conflict in Northern Ireland, including high profile incidents in Derry city (such as Bloody Sunday in January 1972) resulted in a deepening fear and reluctance to cross the border from the Donegal side.⁹ Those from either side who did continue to venture across faced growing practical difficulty in doing so, as customs checkpoints at the border were first accompanied by British army checkpoints and then by fortified military watchtowers. The practical inconveniences of road closures and army checkpoints combined with the fear caused by the violence to create what one Interviewee (17) describes as ‘the “Chill” factor associated with this region’. The Troubles thus reinforced the border as ‘not only psychological but physical...strongly maintained by the army’ (Interview 6). Even in Donegal, ‘where people can look across the river and see the North... people would have avoided going to Derry unless they had to during the conflict’ (Interview 6). The perception among residents in Donegal that ‘it was only in the North that the trouble was’ meant that ‘they didn’t see it involving them’ (Interview 6; Interview 8).¹⁰ Yet, they could not escape the effects of the conflict simply by not crossing the border; the proximity of Derry city meant that ‘people from outside’ associated the whole of the north-west with a ‘traditionally hostile territory’ and with ‘potential danger nearby’ (Interview 10). Thus the region suffered from a lack of investment as well as a sharp decline in the major market of tourism.

I.2 A border between and among Protestants in Derry-Donegal

I.2.1 A line of defence

The complex history of the north-west region falsifies the notion of the border as an ethnic divide between a Protestant north and a Catholic south, as the significant Catholic majority in Derry city and the significant Protestant minority across the border in east Donegal underlines. Nonetheless, the border has deeply affected relations between Protestant and Catholic ‘communities’ on both sides of the border. Ten years into the

⁹ This pattern was repeated along the length of the border, as testified to by the recollections of one Interviewee (25) of a discussion with a man from Dundalk, Co. Louth, who was in his mid-sixties when he first crossed the border into Armagh because he had been ‘totally afraid to come’.

¹⁰ When asked whether there is some sense among the Protestant community in Donegal that it is on the ‘wrong side of the border’, *Diversity Challenges* Interviewee 3 responded: ‘I think they’re probably very happy to be in Donegal, I speak to different people in the community and they’re quite happy to be here. I suppose with some of the news and some of the newspapers articles to do with the North, they’re quite happy maybe that they’re free from that’.

peace process, the fate of Protestants in the southern border counties has come to the fore as a subject for consideration. This is without doubt due in part to the incentive for community-level action among Protestants provided by the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation. One of the effects of this programme has been to illuminate differences between the Protestant community in southern border counties and both their Catholic neighbours and their northern counterparts. These differences are intrinsically connected to the impact of the border in the region, not least because southern Protestants would in general view the border differently to others. For a start, they would have far less ‘interest in discussing issues relating to the border as a barrier – be it physical, political, economic or cultural’ than northern Protestants (McCracken 2003:23). What is more, although Protestants on both sides of the border would view it in some sense as a line of ‘defence’, this would mean different things depending on their location, i.e. defence from the conflict for southern Protestants, defence from Republicanism for those in the north.¹¹

Various studies on this subject have repeatedly shown that Protestants in Donegal differentiate themselves from their co-religionists across the border, substantially because of the different experience of being a minority. The sense of being ‘sold out’ that many Catholics in the north felt after partition was mirrored by many Protestants in the twenty-six counties, most particularly in the border counties. When it comes to contemporary issues of identity among Protestants in the southern border counties, there is therefore a mixture of sentiments: identification with the nine counties of Ulster,¹² identification with their co-religionists in dioceses which cross the border, identification with the state in which they reside,¹³ and identification with the state which ‘defends’ their Protestant faith.¹⁴ Ultimately, perhaps the most southern Protestants share with

¹¹ ‘The Donegal Protestant would see the border as a line that has largely separated us from the physical hurt experienced by our Northern counterparts. The Northern Protestant sees the border as the escape route for terrorists to a safe haven in the Republic. It is also the barrier that prevents them from being absorbed into a united Ireland and enables them to maintain a British identity’ (McCracken 2003:23).

¹² ‘The Protestants again in the area would align themselves with Ulster, they would see themselves as being Ulster rather than Irish sometimes’. (*Diversity Challenges* Interview 9a)

¹³ ‘most people wouldn’t perceive themselves as at all British or as anything other than Irish.’ (*Diversity Challenges* Interview 4); ‘now some people go out of their way to say that they are Irish.’ (*Diversity Challenges* Interview 5)

¹⁴ ‘There is a section within the community who look to the UK and especially in the older generation I have heard stories of how they lived here before it was a republic and they would long for British citizenship.’ (*Diversity Challenges* Interview 8)

northern Protestants in terms of a political identity is a lingering suspicion of the Irish state.¹⁵

I.2.2 A marker of difference

They don't have the same tolerance that we would have at all. (*Diversity Challenges* Interview 7a)

It is interesting to glimpse at northern Protestants' assumptions of how southern Protestants perceive them, and vice versa. When faced with the task of reaching out to southern Protestants as head of the cross-border Ulster-Scots Agency, Lord Laird, the Ulster Unionist peer, admitted he was:

...somewhat embarrassed to think of having to deal with my own relations in Donegal after the 1920-21 settlement who thought we had sold them out... I'd never really interfaced with the brethren, our brothers and sisters, across the border and there's 25,000 Ulster Scots in the Irish Republic. (Interview 24)¹⁶

This same sense of defensiveness regarding co-religionists across the border is echoed in one interviewee's description of how he understands northern Protestants to view him and his fellow southern Protestants: 'You've allowed yourselves and your identity to be diluted' (Interview 8). It is interesting that the perception is that, in northern Protestants' minds, partition constituted the biggest division between them and their southern co-religionists. Yet in practice, the border has only really gained significance as an obstacle in north-south Protestant relations as a consequence of the conflict in Northern Ireland. Southern Protestants want to disassociate themselves from Paisleyism etc. to their fellow southerners and from Irish nationalism to their northern counterparts. Nonetheless, on matters of constitutional politics in the southern border regions, 'the majority of people will either come down one side or the other', and this is generally 'to do with their background or belief' (*Diversity Challenges* Interview 3). Where tensions between the two communities in Donegal are recognised, they are frequently blamed on events in Northern Ireland or, even more specifically, on people coming across the border from the north. This ranges from explicitly sectarian actions – such as the

¹⁵ As one clergyman admits, 'you would have some in the congregation, the Orange contingent who would be very weary of anything, very sceptical of anything, they would probably have negative feelings of the state and of the state's close Catholic ties' (*Diversity Challenges* Interview 4)

¹⁶ One *Diversity Challenges* interviewee (9b) refers to the strength of feeling that still exists regarding the events of that time, but this is in positive response to a question regarding negative feelings towards the Irish state rather than northern Protestants: 'I think it goes back to the time that they did make the 1921 partition, there was rows at that time because Donegal, Sligo and Leitrim, there was people there who did want border to cut the whole thing, to make it nine counties as opposed to six and there was very bad feeling, especially around border territories.'

burning of an Orange Hall in a village in Donegal on 12 July 2002, blamed by one interviewee on ‘individuals who had come from Derry’ – to the type of low-level violence not unfamiliar to most towns, but now with a sectarian theme:

there has been some sort of fighting between the Protestants and the Catholics in the bars and things over the last year or so and I think it’s largely young people coming from the North. There has been a large influx of people from the North coming into the clubs and stuff at the weekend and that seems to sort of stir everything up a wee bit.

(Diversity Challenges Interview 4)

This notion of a spill-over of inter-communal conflict as small groups cross from the north is tied in with a perception of the border acting as a defensive barrier to tides of intolerance in the north.¹⁷ The extent of division across the border in Derry city probably serves to exacerbate this notion for those in Donegal.

I.3 Borders between and among residents in Derry

I.3.1 A divided city

We are all familiar with the articulations of the division within this community – it is expressed in the very fabric of the urban space and represented in the surrounding landscape. (McGonagle 2004:8)

The division in the city of Londonderry was very much present in the physical and not as I had been led to believe “all in their minds”. (Crothers 2004:22)

The city of Derry has historically and symbolically been ‘of great significance for people from all sides of the cultural/political dispute’ (Deane 2004:107). The divided nature of the city is encapsulated in the very act of naming it, where one’s subject position is assumed to be articulated in the choice to use either ‘Derry’ or ‘Londonderry’ (‘Is this the only city in the world where you make a political statement

¹⁷ This finding is supported by survey data compiled by James Anderson under the *Mapping Frontiers, Plotting Pathways* project from the midlands border region (www.mappingfrontiers.ie [06/10/05]). It reveals that ninety one per cent of those surveyed in the southern counties view border checkpoints and road closures that occurred prior to the ceasefires as being ‘essential for security’, this compares to seventy-two per cent of those interviewed in the north. A breakdown of these figures reveals a clear difference between the answers given by members of the Protestant and Catholic communities in the north, with ninety three per cent of northern Protestants agreeing that the border closures were essential compared to just fifty per cent of northern Catholics. But in the south, however, ethnic differences appear irrelevant. Here ninety per cent of southern Catholics agree that border closures were necessary as do ninety two per cent of southern Protestants. Anderson (2005:23) speculates that whilst northern Protestants felt vulnerable to republican paramilitaries coming from the south, northern Catholics (who were in a majority in the border region) did not generally consider the border to pose a security risk. Meanwhile, in the southern border counties, Protestants and Catholics may have shared a fear of loyalist paramilitary incursions from the north (Anderson 2005:22).

by giving your address?’ [Doherty 1996]).¹⁸ In 1984, the city council was renamed Derry City Council, reflecting the wish of the nationalist majority among the councillors.¹⁹ In 2002, Sinn Féin councillors failed in their attempt to officially rename the city as ‘Derry’; instead, an SDLP amendment granting equal status to the names of ‘Londonderry’ and ‘Derry’ was passed. The difficulty in finding compromise within the city council on even the most fundamental of matters – the name of the city – reflects the challenge of democracy within a divided region.²⁰ In a relatively short space of time, the city council has moved from being formed through discriminatory voting qualifications and gerrymandered ward boundaries²¹ to one dominated by nationalist parties with a significant DUP minority.²² This diversity can come to a head in the case of a Sinn Féin and a DUP councillor occupying the positions of mayor and deputy mayor. On one such an occasion in June 2004, the DUP deputy mayor refused to have contact with the Sinn Féin mayor.²³ This division was not confined to the realm of politics; the front page headline in the *Londonderry Sentinel* (9 June) at the start of the Sinn Féin mayor’s term of office expresses the sentiment of many local Protestants: ‘We don’t want you’. The fact that all of the Derry City Councillors elected on the west side of the River Foyle are from nationalist parties illustrates the territorial dimension of this sharp political divide in the city. This is nothing new – the historic walls at the centre of the city exemplify the tradition of physical separation between Protestants and Catholics in the city (Fig.I.ii).

¹⁸ The intricate links between identity and politics that exist in the choice to use the term ‘Derry’ or ‘Londonderry’ are acknowledged to such a degree that media organisations within Northern Ireland that wish to be neutral is careful to use both terms in any one news item from the area.

¹⁹ According to one interviewee (Interviewee 5), the renaming of the city council was a key event in the evolution of Protestant thinking of Derry city council as ‘them’.

²⁰ According to the 2001 census, 79,183 people in the Derry district council area have a Catholic background and 24,373 have a Protestant or other Christian background (source: <http://www.nicenewsonline.gov.uk/nica/> [06/10/05]).

²¹ In 1961, the city had a population of 30,049 Catholics and 17,325 Protestants; the discriminatory electoral rules and the gerrymandering of electoral ward boundaries meant that twelve seats on the city council went to unionist councillors and eight to nationalist councillors (O’Mahoney 1997).

²² Elections to Derry City Council in May 2005 resulted in 14 SDLP members, 10 Sinn Féin members, 5 DUP members and 1 member from the Ulster Unionist Party. (Source: <http://www.derrycity.gov.uk/elected-members.htm>).

²³ ‘DUP deputy will have nothing to do with SF mayor’, *Londonderry Sentinel*, 2 June 2004.

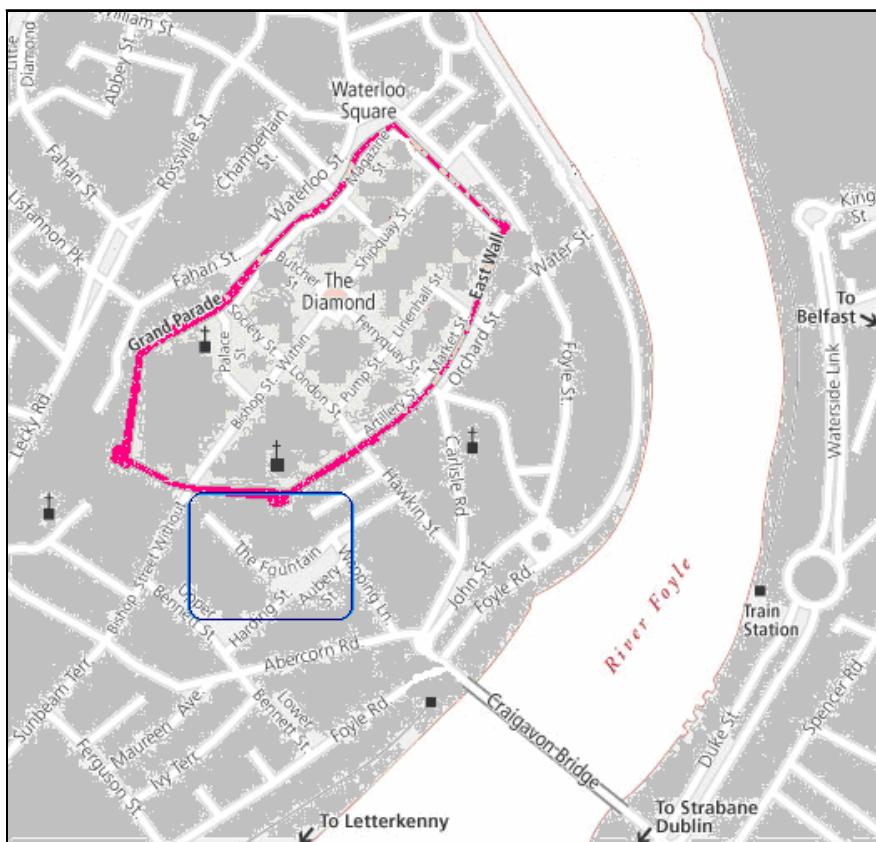


Figure I.ii Street map of the Derry's 'west bank' showing the city walls and the Fountain²⁴

The city walls, built in the early seventeenth century (at around the time the city was renamed 'Londonderry'), have contemporary significance as the location of the annual parade of the Apprentice Boys in commemoration of the Siege of Derry (1688-89), a major event in the conflict between the Protestant Williamite forces and the Catholic Jacobite forces. Although the recent compromises agreed between the Apprentice Boys and the Bogside Residents are upheld as examples for other contentious parades, the walls still hold more than symbolic importance for the residents of the Fountain area, a Protestant enclave edging the city walls. As is common in enclave areas, the Fountain suffers from acute social deprivation and social stigma, its population dropping by two-thirds from 1971 to 1991 (Murtagh 1996; Smyth 1996a, 1996b). Yet, for the community that remains, the theme of 'no surrender' has been transcribed from the Siege of Derry into their daily lives, as the security barriers around their residences grow and the 'no go areas' increase (Interviews 6, 1).²⁵

²⁴ Fountain area highlighted by author. Original image from http://www.frommers.com/images/destinations/maps/jpg/1346_derrycity.jpg (06/10/05)

²⁵ The C-STAR report (Anderson *et al.* 2001) on the socio-spatial causes and effects of violence in Belfast found that: 'Individuals see themselves as ethnically identifiable through their use of public space and visible behaviour within it... Local knowledge and appropriate use of space are crucial in minimising vulnerability'. This is borne out in comments made by one youth

In the period May-July 2004, there were three times as many public order incidents at the Fountain/Bishop Street interface as there had been the previous year, these included five petrol bombings and fourteen clashes between rival gangs. Coming during what was described as being ‘the most peaceful summer in more than 30 years’ in Derry, this was interpreted by one local SDLP councillor as being the work of ‘elements who were hell bent this year on stoking up tensions’.²⁶ Ironically, this increase came at the same time as community workers and councillors from the city’s three main interface areas Fountain Estate/Bishop Street, Irish Street/Top of the Hill (around the Catholic enclave of Gobsnascale on the Waterside) and Tullyally/Curryneirin (semi-rural estates on the east bank) convened to discuss shared initiatives to tackle problems in these socially deprived areas of the city.²⁷ They sought to find a solution alternative to increasing the number and height of peace walls. In 2002, following a growth in incidents of violent assaults on residents of the Fountain, the physical barrier around the Fountain was strengthened with a twenty-foot (6.5 metre) high security fence as part of a province-wide initiative to safeguard so-called flashpoint areas. The justification given for such a course of action gives a new spin to the phrase ‘confidence-building measures’:

No one wants to live in a polarised community, but the confidence to live in an integrated society does not exist in the Fountain, and measures like these help to rebuild their confidence.²⁸

These security fences or peace walls are noteworthy not only because they physically separate/prevent interaction but because they are increasingly in demand. The perceived ideological threat to community identity is translated as this level into a daily fear for one’s safety. The steady demilitarisation and opening-up of the Irish border since the 1998 Agreement has been accompanied by a gradual building of defences at a local level. The main targets for violence used to be the British army or else public spaces with indiscriminate victims. Now, the fear that may have been present in venturing into unfamiliar territory – such as across the border or outside one’s own town – has shrunk

worker: following a visit to a youth group in the Fountain, one member of a youth group from Donegal commented that his new acquaintances were lucky to live so close to the Foyle side shopping centre, ‘not realising that the Fountain kids would never go there. If they went as individuals, they’re afraid of getting recognised and being beaten up. So they may go in groups, and then aren’t let in to the shops at all’ (Interview 6).

²⁶ ‘170% hike in violence at Derry interface’, *Derry Journal*, 24 September 2004.

²⁷ ‘Interface issues debated in Derry’, *Derry Journal*, 21 May 2004.

²⁸ Extract from an interview given to the *Londonderry Sentinel* (6 February 2002) by a community worker in the Fountain regarding the ‘improved’ (i.e. higher) security fence.

back to a much smaller target but with much greater effect for those who find themselves living in such areas. The threat may now come from paint bombs and stones thrown by gangs of youths instead of from explosive devices planted by paramilitaries – perhaps a case of the ‘hoody’²⁹ replacing the balaclava – but the very fact that this violence is commonplace and low-key makes its effects all the more intrusive. In this context, peace walls are not enough as the threat becomes increasingly localised: ‘The people living by the peace wall in the Fountain estate need more security on their homes, they need proper security doors and windows’.³⁰ A similar sense of defending one’s local community at street level is evident in the contention surrounding Orange marches through majority Catholic areas. These fears have intense political relevance not only because of the headlines they may generate at particularly tense moments but also because of the local threat posed by small groups is translated into a distrust of the ‘other’ community in general. Thus, Orangemen wanting to march down the Garvaghy Road in Portadown or the Lower Ormeau Road in Belfast are seen as representing the arrogant intransigence of unionists, and youths assaulting a boy in a Rangers shirt are seen as embodying the simmering aggression of republicans. In this case, political cooperation is stymied by suspicion fuelled by minimal interaction in specific interface areas.

I.3.2 A segregated city

We still socialise, in the main, with our co-religionists; we still choose to segregate our children’s education; we still live, for the most part on opposite sides of the river. Polite partition seems to be all we’ve achieved. (McKeone 2004:27)

²⁹ ‘My friend’s children were having their dinner when a chap with a black hooded Nike top smashed two paintbombs against the house, exactly the same paint thrown at [a local nationalist] memorial.’ ‘Catholic nurse flees Fountain ‘Terrorfest’’, *Derry Journal*, 16 July 2004.

³⁰ Extract from an interview by a member of the Protestants Interface Network. ‘Fountain support from North Belfast’, *Londonderry Sentinel*, 9 June 2004.

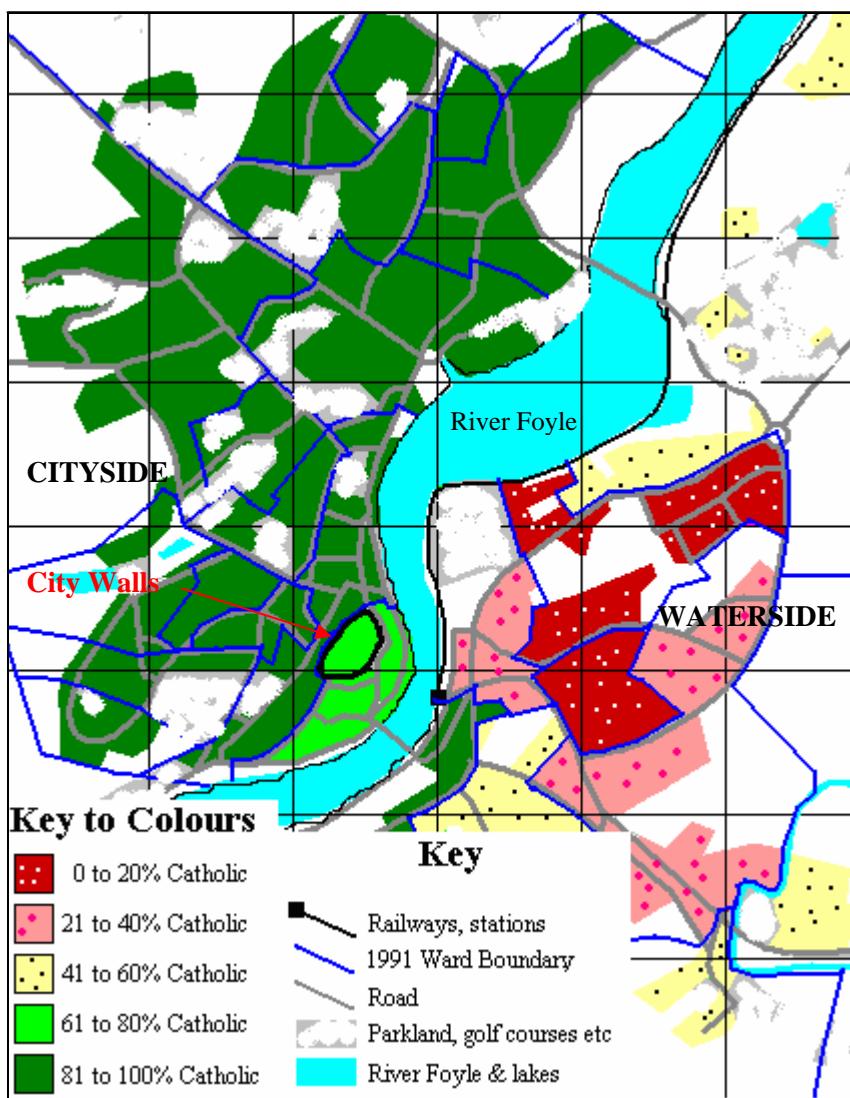


Figure I.iii Segregation in Derry city according to the 1991 census³¹

Segregation, along with a heightened awareness of the political/ideological association of certain territorial areas, is a feature of post-Agreement Derry/Londonderry. Comparing census data from 1971 and 1991 from the city of Derry/Londonderry, Smyth (1996b) shows that during the Troubles the Protestant population on the Cityside (west) decreased by 83% and increased by 27% on the Waterside (east).³² The migration of Protestants from the Cityside at the start of the Troubles was, it seems, ‘permanent’ (Interview 8). The decision to stay on the ‘westbank’/Cityside of the river Foyle (which divides the city into east and west) is a weighty one for a Protestant. Now the river Foyle is seen as ‘the most significant border for the Protestant community in Derry’; whilst it is not uncommon for Protestants in the Waterside to refer to ‘them over there’,

³¹ Source: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/images/maps/maps.htm> (06/10/05)

³² Overall, the city itself has become less mixed, having seen a 36% increase in the Catholic population and a 31% decrease in the Protestant population (Smyth 1996b).

others avoid crossing it altogether (Interview 5).³³ Segregation does not only have effects in terms of where individuals reside and where they work, it also affects where they shop, socialise, perform recreational activities etc. Thus, unlike the centre of Belfast, another highly segregated city, Derry city centre is not ‘neutral territory’ (Crothers 2004). Newspaper reports suggest that fear among Protestants on the Cityside arises not just from the self-consciousness of being in a minority but is grounded in a real threat.³⁴ However, it is notable that there is a general rise in a sense of vulnerability and threat – mainly from attack by gangs of youths – throughout the city as a whole.³⁵

There is little space – psychologically and physically – for dual identities to emerge.
(Hetherington 2004:82)

Segregation is not just a reaction to threat, it can be used as a strategy to increase a sense of safety among residents, allow a distancing from danger, and to facilitate ‘the reinforcement of community culture, links and solidarity’ (Smyth 1995).³⁶ The success of segregation in maintaining a community, however, lies in the fact that it ‘acts as a control of contact with the other community – both materially, by physical distance, and ideologically by the refusal to talk’ (Smyth 1996a). Thus, in allowing control of a territorial area by one community, physical segregation also facilitates control over the political climate within that area and the articulation of the interests of the community therein (Smyth 1996a). The city is not only divided between Protestant and Catholic communities, however. Factionalism within communities, particularly in loyalist areas, means that different housing estates in Derry/Londonderry are dominated by particular paramilitary groups, making movement between different parts of the city even more difficult.³⁷

³³ It is notable that, although army checkpoints have been dismantled along the state border, it is not yet unusual to be stopped at an army checkpoint on one of the two bridges that cross the River Foyle, particularly at around the ‘marching season’.

³⁴ For example, ‘Protestant youths attacked by gang in the city centre’ (*Londonderry Sentinel* 17 April 2002): ‘The incident apparently started after a crowd of youths wearing Celtic tops spotted a Rangers shirt being worn by a young shopper in the Foyle side centre.’

³⁵ Although it cannot be taken to be an accurate representation of public opinion, an online poll on the *Derry Journal* website recorded that 75-82 per cent of those who voted do not feel safe walking the streets of the city at night. (Poll taken September 2005, source: www.derryjournal.com [06/10/05]))

³⁶ Indeed, Murtagh (1996) has questioned the orthodox view that segregation is entirely problematic, arguing: ‘Territory’ is how communities work and how communities are maintained and protected... the positive aspects [of segregation] are that it maintains communities, maintaining identity and safety of communities [sic].’

³⁷ Interviewee 5, for example, notes that, of Protestant estates on the Waterside, Lincoln Courts is associated with the Ulster Defence Association, Irish Street with the Ulster Freedom Fighters, Nelson Drive with the Ulster Volunteer Force and the UDA. Thus, paramilitary groups have

I.4 Borders in practice: a synopsis

The Single European Market and the peace process and the subsequent removal of markers of the border (i.e. customs posts³⁸ and army checkpoints) means that for the most part there are few clear indicators of when one crosses from one side of the border into the other. Even petrol stations located on either side of the border display prices in euro and sterling and accept both currencies. The border has virtually become invisible. However, the legacy of the conflict means that many in Donegal and Londonderry (particularly Protestants) are wary of the ‘other side’ and the consequences of opening up the border. This distrust is greatly exacerbated by the nature of community relations within Derry city, whose internal boundaries can be far more difficult to traverse than the border. Interface areas in particular have become ‘hotspots’ of ‘naked sectarianism’ and enduring manifestations of inter-community violence.³⁹ This is where the challenge to cross-border and cross-community peace-building now lies: in politically-segregated and economically deprived estates bounded by peace walls.

dominance within certain territories defined to the nearest house, marked by wall murals and jealously guarded.

³⁸ The physical manifestation of the Irish border was, for the majority of the twentieth century, evident in the manned customs control posts. Prior to the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement of 1965, there was no road barrier, but all drivers crossing the border were required to have their passes rubber-stamped by the customs officer (McCracken 2003:22).

³⁹ Quotations from Pat Ramsey, SDLP MLA, cited in ‘Call for end to Fountain petrol bomb attacks’, *Derry Journal*, 1 June 2004.

Part II. The portrayal of borders

II. Local newspapers compared

The purpose of this section of the paper is to examine representations of the border in certain examples of written media, concentrating in particular on representations of borders between and within Derry and Donegal as points of difference, the border as a locus of cooperation and the EU's role in relation to the border. Due to constraints in the conduct of empirical research in this area as well as of space for this section, this section is intended to provide an overview of the type of representations and themes that occur in the written media on this subject, rather than to compare systematically between regions, newspapers and time periods. The three papers analysed in this study are the *Londonderry Sentinel* (average net circulation per issue of over 5,000) based in the Waterside; the *Derry Journal* (bi-weekly, with an average net circulation per issue of around 23,000), based on the Cityside,⁴⁰ and the *Donegal Democrat* (bi-weekly, with an average circulation per issue of around 15,000),⁴¹ which is part of the Derry Journal Group and the only newspaper to cover the whole county of Donegal.

II.1 Representations of the border

II.1.1 Cooperation and competition

The ‘border’ does not feature highly in any of the three newspapers analysed in this study. The different ways in which they address issues relating to it, however, reveals much about their assumptions regarding the interests of their target audience. The *Londonderry Sentinel*, for example, only mentions the ‘border’ when referring to the state beyond it. This usually occurs less on grand political matters but on issues that are seen to have a local relevance, as in a call by the Institute of Public Health to ‘bring smoking ban north of the border’ (7 April 2004). This call was supported a month later by two local Ulster Unionist councillors, whose comments reveal a matter-of-factness about crossing the border for leisure purposes.⁴² Indeed, references to Donegal in the *Sentinel* are made almost exclusively in the context of leisure activity or tourism. For example, a feature of suggestions on how to spend the Easter break recommended ‘unspoilt Donegal’ as ‘one of the most popular destinations for people from all over

⁴⁰ Source for circulation figures: <http://www.abc.org.uk> (06/10/05)

⁴¹ Source: http://www.medialive.ie/Press/Provincial/d_democrat.html (06/10/05)

⁴² ‘We attended two functions in Donegal in the last week, it was a pleasure to sit across a table from friends and be able to see them without a haze of smoke’ (*Londonderry Sentinel*, 5 May 2004).

Ireland, including Londonderry'.⁴³ Donegal is presented in the main to readers of the *Sentinel* as an attractive tourist destination that is conveniently close; the *Sentinel* makes no assumptions that its readers have ever crossed the border or have even thought about doing so.

The *Donegal Democrat* also confines its news coverage to its county boundaries and refers only to the border in stories which show the border (or more specifically, the city beyond it) to directly affect the interests of Donegal residents. It is notable that references to cross-border activity frequently imply some kind of threat or competition from the other side. Regular examples of this occur in the field of trade, where Donegal businesses are ‘competing against slick multinationals… across the border [where they] can sell goods 25 per cent cheaper’,⁴⁴ and crime (e.g. east Donegal is reported to be ‘in the grip of a crime wave which has struck fear into the community… believed to be the work of Derry ‘hoods’’, although the ‘Derry crime gang’ is said to be operating out of a village in on the Donegal side of the border).⁴⁵ These same two themes – trade and crime – also feature highly in references to the border in the news coverage of the *Derry Journal*, although the two papers would present the same story quite differently. For example, whilst the *Donegal Democrat* would portray Donegal traders holding their own against Derry’s shopping centres (‘Brisk trade despite stiff cross border competition’),⁴⁶ the *Derry Journal* leaves readers in no doubt that the advantage in cross border trade lies in the city (‘Double blow for Letterkenny traders’, ‘Donegal traders suffer from Christmas exodus’).⁴⁷ The competition between Donegal and Derry extends to such a degree that even the smoking ban in workplaces in the Republic is reported in the *Journal* in terms of the rewards for pubs just across the border, to which smokers from Donegal were expected to retreat.⁴⁸ The ease of crossing the border has therefore put particular pressure on traders in Donegal, with the exception of the petrol stations, which benefit from ‘the thousands who cross the Border on a daily basis’ for the cheaper petrol.⁴⁹ The relaxing of security and the ‘opening of border back roads’ are

⁴³ ‘Unspoilt Donegal is a jewel’, *Londonderry Sentinel*, 20 March 2002.

⁴⁴ ‘Brisk trade despite stiff cross border competition’, *Donegal Democrat*, 23 December 2004.

⁴⁵ ‘Moves to combat recurring cross border crime menace’, *Donegal Democrat*, 25 August 2005.

⁴⁶ *Donegal Democrat*, 23 December 2004.

⁴⁷ *Derry Journal*, 9 December 2003 and 2 January 2004.

⁴⁸ ‘Trade ‘blooms’ for Derry’s Three Flowers’, *Derry Journal*, 6 January 2004.

⁴⁹ ‘Donegal most expensive for petrol – again’, *Derry Journal*, 6 January 2004.

The fact that petrol has been cheaper in the Republic since the mid-1990s means that crossing the border from Northern Ireland to buy it has become customary. Anderson’s (2005) study

blamed in part too for problems in Donegal that both the *Democrat* and the *Journal* agree to have originated in Derry, such as joyriding and criminal gang sprees.⁵⁰

The *Derry Journal* also reports on the ‘terror’ faced by residents of the Inishowen peninsula in east Donegal from the ‘Derry crime gang’, including the shooting of a man on the border during an armed robbery on the border.⁵¹ It gives a slightly different twist to the story to that given by the *Democrat* in its coverage, however – revealing the ways in which complex blends of political tension that exist in Dublin and Belfast are translated into practical issues on the ground in the border region. A public meeting convened in the Inishowen to discuss the crime wave was reported in advance by the *Donegal Democrat* (25 August 2005) but only the *Derry Journal* reported on the political row it provoked. A Sinn Féin Donegal County councillor chaired the meeting and afterwards ‘called for the setting up of a local committee to gather information and inform Gardaí [Irish police force] on criminal activity in the area with the help from colleagues in the North’.⁵² The response from other local politicians (who boycotted the meeting) reported in the *Derry Journal* article indicates a concern that Sinn Féin ‘hijacked’ the issue by setting itself up as an intermediary between locals and the Gardaí, bringing in a nebulous cross-border dimension, and having ‘heavy security’ present at the meeting.⁵³ The concoction of local activism, proxy law enforcement, cross-border links, and Do-It-Yourself defence present in this one small event is seen as a hallmark of Sinn Féin activity across the island. Regardless of whether they regard it as somewhat clandestine, other political parties believe it to be a strategy that has brought Sinn Féin great success in the voting booths.⁵⁴

II.2 Politics and partition

II.2.1 A matter of anti-partitionist credentials

revealed that buying petrol is the main reason for people in the border region to cross the border from Northern Ireland.

⁵⁰ ‘Joyriders racing Inishowen’s roads’, *Derry Journal*, 9 December 2003.

⁵¹ ‘‘Terror’ crime gang behind border shooting’, *Derry Journal*, 6 September 2005.

⁵² ‘Republicans accused of ‘hijacking’ crime issue’, *Derry Journal*, 25 September 2005.

⁵³ Responding to criticism about the heavy security and the lack of Garda presence, the Sinn Féin councillor who chaired the meeting replied, ‘I would appeal to people to understand that we are dealing with dangerous criminals here, some of them armed with guns... we [Sinn Féin] felt that, as we organised the meeting, it was our responsibility to provide our own security’. (*ibid.* 25 September 2005).

⁵⁴ Politicians also recognise that Sinn Féin’s electoral strength increases as the IRA makes what are seen as positive steps towards peace (‘Sinn Féin will be a force in next election – James McDaid, T.D.’, *Donegal Democrat*, 2 August 2005).

The growth of Sinn Féin as a political party north and south is reflected in reportage relating to the border in both the *Donegal Democrat* and the *Derry Journal*. It is clear from the *Donegal Democrat* that partition – and support for cross-border activity – is a politically live issue in the southern border counties. It is perhaps no coincidence that such articles tend to emanate from comments made by Sinn Féin representatives that question the anti-partitionist credentials of their political opponents. Such remarks usually either follow or precede statements made from other politicians that question Sinn Féin's commitment to democratic politics. For example, in response to a statement made by the Fine Gael leader that he was 'fundamentally opposed' to giving Sinn Féin politicians from Northern Ireland speaking rights in Dáil Éireann,⁵⁵ an article in the *Donegal Democrat* was devoted to a local Sinn Féin councillor's accusations that Fine Gael is 'partitionist in the extreme'.⁵⁶ The following week, a local Fine Gael councillor based his reply on the premise that Sinn Féin has not been able to distinguish 'the proper meaning of Irish unity and the partition of Ireland'.⁵⁷ After presenting a contrary interpretation of the history of north-south relations, he concludes with the argument that the EU has made partition unimportant in practice and that the responsibility of seeing it end altogether lies not with Britain but with Ireland's politicians:

The division of Ireland has now little meaning within the European Union and will totally disappear when together the Irish build an Ireland which all those who live on the island wish to be part of.

Efforts towards building such an Ireland through cross-border cooperation are also fraught with political sensitivity among Irish political parties. Thus, the absence of some Donegal County councillors from a meeting of the North West Region Cross Border Group (otherwise virtually unmentioned in the newspapers) was publicised by a Sinn Féin councillor in the *Donegal Democrat*: 'we have now seen how serious [six Donegal NWRCBG] members are in participating in cross-border development'.⁵⁸ Although this Sinn Féin councillor is not a member of the NWRCBG himself, he says it was drawn to his attention 'by fellow Sinn Féin councillors attending from north of the border'. One of the accused Donegal councillors retorted that Sinn Féin were 'simply trying to divert

⁵⁵ 'Kenny to ask if there were deals with SF', *Irish Times*, 8 August 2005.

⁵⁶ 'Fine Gael guilty of 'partitionist' comments say Sinn Féin', *Donegal Democrat*, 11 August 2005.

⁵⁷ 'Sinn Féin and partition – Cllr. Harte responds', *Donegal Democrat*, 18 August 2005.

⁵⁸ 'Councillors 'cross' after border meeting', *Donegal Democrat*, 17 March 2005.

attention from other things happening at the moment'.⁵⁹ This is a good indicator of how cross-border cooperation, even in a carefully structured and balanced political forum such as the NWRCBG, can become a political instrument in reaction to (depending on whom one listens to) Sinn Féin's growing electoral might or Sinn Féin's paramilitary shadow.

II.2.2 A matter of regional development

The *Derry Journal* embodies a different take on the link between politics and partition, originating in part from the emphasis laid by the two largest political parties in Derry on cross-border cooperation. Indeed, the SDLP is more likely to be found echoing than deflecting Sinn Féin's criticisms of southern political parties' lackadaisical approach to partition. For example, the SDLP will use the *Derry Journal* as one means by which to publicise its frustration at the lack of progress in 'Strand Two' (north-south cooperation) of the 1998 Agreement.⁶⁰ Undoubtedly another dimension of the accord between the SDLP and Sinn Féin in Derry regarding cross-border cooperation is the fact that, they see a particular need for cross-border cooperation if the north-west region is to be developed.⁶¹ Both parties are equally concerned for the various strands of the 1998 Agreement to be working effectively and to be bearing fruit in the form of sustainable progress. More particularly, both the SDLP and Sinn Féin also believe that the British and Irish governments have failed to adequately build on the potential for regional development offered through the European Union.⁶² The reason cross-border cooperation is a point of political unity between the SDLP and Sinn Féin in Derry city is substantially because of the relevance that the border – and cooperation across it – is seen as having to everyday practice and political progress in the city. This is illustrated in the amount of references made to the border (direct and indirect) in the *Derry Journal* in comparison to either the *Londonderry Sentinel* or the *Donegal Democrat*. The *Journal* frequently covers cross-border issues with a wide scope of relevance, including infrastructural development (e.g. 'Derry-Dublin rail link on the agenda'),⁶³ local

⁵⁹ Sinn Féin was at the time under huge political pressure from all quarters following the robbery of the Northern Bank and the murder of Robert McCartney by members of the IRA. Indeed, this St Patrick's Day was the first in over a decade that Sinn Féin's leading politicians had not been invited to the White House.

⁶⁰ 'SDLP in plea over cross-border cooperation', *Derry Journal*, 17 February 2004.

⁶¹ 'Direct rule a "total failure" for NW economy – Hume', *Derry Journal*, 30 November 2004.

⁶² 'NW ignored for far too long', *Derry Journal*, 7 December 2004; 'SDLP in plea over cross border cooperation', *Derry Journal*, 17 February 2004.

⁶³ *Derry Journal*, 30 April 2004.

councils (e.g. ‘waste becoming a border issue’),⁶⁴ those working and living on different sides of the border (e.g. ‘Taxman hits Inishowen bank accounts’),⁶⁵ and cross-border travellers (e.g. ‘Speed warning to Derry-Donegal drivers’).⁶⁶ This results in a situation in which politics in Donegal and politics in the Republic when directly related to northern concerns are regularly reported in the *Derry Journal*.⁶⁷

II.2.3 A matter of inter-state protocol

Whereas the *Derry Journal*’s contents are notably affected by the border, one may speculate that (with the exception of a regular advertisement for a furniture shop across the border!) the *Londonderry Sentinel* would be little different if it was based ten times further from Donegal. The only time when the *Sentinel* engages with politics in the south is when they are brought to the doorstep of unionism in Londonderry. This has been done more than once by the Irish President, Mary McAleese, in the form of her visits to community groups in Protestant estates in the city. These community groups were encouraged in their symbolically significant gesture by the *Sentinel*; its front page headline at the time of her first visit read: ‘McAleese welcome! Mayor and Development Group back visit of Republic’s President to Waterside’ (10 April 2002). Political reception to this first visit was mixed but generally one of cautious welcome of this move to greater mutual awareness. A local DUP politician involved in the development of the community centre hosting the event mused that:

A few years ago this visit would have caused a problem but I think that the people of this area are mature enough to realise that there is nothing political about this visit. The head of another country is coming to view this positive and worthwhile project and will hopefully take away what she has seen.⁶⁸

One issue of contention was raised by a DUP MP, Gregory Campbell, who said he would not oppose McAleese’s visit on the proviso that she came under the title of ‘President of the Republic of Ireland’, as opposed to her official title as ‘President of Ireland’ with its implicit 32-county reference.⁶⁹ This was apparently not adhered to to

⁶⁴ *Derry Journal*, 13 January 2004.

⁶⁵ *Derry Journal*, 28 May 2004.

⁶⁶ *Derry Journal*, 8 March 2005.

⁶⁷ For example, issues raised in local elections in Donegal (e.g. ‘TDs [Irish MPs] must speak up on NWHB [North Western Health Board] scrapping’, 23 April 2004) and a visit by the Taoiseach to east Donegal are reported (‘Bertie’s flying visit to Buncrana’, 5 March 2004), and an editorial criticises comments made by the Irish Minister for Justice on Sinn Féin (‘Free speech’, 18 January 2005).

⁶⁸ William Hay, MLA, in ‘Mary McAleese to visit Tullyally’, *Londonderry Sentinel*, 3 April 2002.

⁶⁹ ‘Campbell’s cautious welcome for McAleese’, *Londonderry Sentinel*, 3 April 2002.

Campbell's satisfaction, and he afterwards called for more 'openness and transparency before any future visits by a Head of State from another country takes place':

It is a matter for the people of the Irish Republic to choose what the title should be but as they would not be impressed if the Queen were to be officially called the Queen of Britain and Ireland, so they must understand that we do not accept their President's title inferring that she is the Head of State here when she is not. *Those in the Republic of Ireland genuinely interested in having a more open approach to Northern Ireland will I hope have these matters raised and resolved in the immediate future.*⁷⁰

Opposition to the April 2002 visit – which led to community workers involved being warned they could be a 'target of terrorists'⁷¹ – centred on suspicion of the state McAleese represented and also drew comparison with the only head of state recognised by unionists:

She is not welcome here. She is the head of a state which has traditionally supported republicanism and which still has questions to answer about the level of that support, including supplying arms to the IRA... Her Majesty has not been able to go to the cityside, so the head of state from the Republic is not wanted here. Send her home.

Whilst McAleese did visit Protestant enclaves in the city – and has often welcomed community workers from such areas to Áras an Uachtarain – these visits were not the source of news coverage and political debate as the first. Nonetheless, the interest and issues raised among unionists by the event serve to illustrate just quite how 'foreign' the Irish state is even to unionists just across the border, and just quite how sensitive Irish politicians need to be if they are to build lasting good relationships (or even impressions) on the foundation of such courageous initiatives as the cross-border, cross-community Presidential visit to Derry.

II.3 Borders within Derry

The tight relationship between community and territory in Derry city is clearly reflected in the conceptual 'map' of the target audiences of the *Londonderry Sentinel* and the *Derry Journal*. The *Sentinel* is for the most part concerned with events on the Waterside, where the majority of unionists live in the city. This is embodied in the fact that the picture used to illustrate an advertisement for the *Sentinel* in a supplement on local newspapers in Northern Ireland is the silhouetted outline of the Waterside from the

⁷⁰ 'Campbell calls for answers after McAleese visit. MLA says there must be greater adherence to protocol', *Londonderry Sentinel*, 17 April 2002.

⁷¹ 'Development worker talks about threats over Mary McAleese visit', *Londonderry Sentinel*, 17 April 2002.

banks of the River Foyle.⁷² The exception to this focus on the Waterside is the inclusion of the Fountain; in fact, the amount of attention given to the Fountain is disproportionate in terms of its size but indicates the significance of this enclave on the Cityside to the unionist population in the city. It is notable that a vast amount of news articles on the Fountain in the *Sentinel* are concerned with issues of security, and more specifically with the sense of ever-present threat to what is described as ‘the beleaguered estate’.⁷³ Thus, although the Protestant population constitutes the majority on the Waterside, the sense of threat and ‘siege like mentality’ that they themselves refer to⁷⁴ is continually stoked by coverage given to the fate of the few hundred residents of the Fountain. This is exemplified in the *Sentinel*’s (5 May 2004) banner front page headline – ‘Cease this fear’ – over an article in which the local DUP Assembly member calls for an end to ‘tit-for-tat attacks’ between the Fountain and the parallel Bishop Street.

The *Derry Journal* also gives disproportionate coverage to the Fountain/Bishop Street area, although with an emphasis on the experience of residents on the Catholic-dominated side of this division. It is interesting to compare the coverage of incidents of interface violence by the two newspapers in the city. There are three points of significant commonality. First, the victims of these attacks are vulnerable. On the Fountain side, reports in the *Sentinel* tend to focus on young victims (‘Attack leaves child terrified’);⁷⁵ reports in the *Journal* highlight such victims as residents of a nursing home in Bishop Street (‘Elderly “terrified” because of stone-throwing attack’)⁷⁶ or a Catholic male nurse fleeing what is described as ‘Fountain “Terrorfest”’.⁷⁷ Second, these attacks are not seen to be random acts by bored teenagers, but there is often the suggestion that they are in some way coordinated by hidden political forces with sinister motives. For example, a spokesperson for Fountain residents refers to ‘the republicans who are orchestrating these attacks on them’⁷⁸ and a Sinn Féin councillor expresses his suspicion that an incidents was ‘the start of a campaign to raise tensions in the area leading up to the marching season’.⁷⁹ Finally, and no doubt connected to the previous

⁷² This image includes the outline of the British army watchtower at the Clooney barracks on the Waterside dismantled in March 2004.

⁷³ ‘Fountain attack after Old Firm final’, *Londonderry Sentinel*, 8 May 2002.

⁷⁴ For example, ‘Fountain support from North Belfast’, *Londonderry Sentinel*, 9 June 2004.

⁷⁵ *Londonderry Sentinel*, 5 May 2004.

⁷⁶ *Derry Journal*, 31 May 2005.

⁷⁷ ‘Catholic nurse flees Fountain ‘Terrorfest’’, *Derry Journal*, 16 July 2004.

⁷⁸ ‘Fountain support from North Belfast’, *Londonderry Sentinel*, 9 June 2004

⁷⁹ ‘Elderly “terrified” because of stone-throwing attack’, *Derry Journal*, 31 May 2005

point, many of the reports consist substantially of comments from local politicians speaking about these events.⁸⁰ In the *Sentinel*, the comments of local DUP Assembly member Willie Hay and DUP MP Gregory Campbell (who is from the area but not an MP for the city) are often given such priority as to form the basis of whole articles and even front page headlines. Although it cites Sinn Féin politicians most frequently, the *Journal* certainly contains a wider spread of political interviewees. For instance, it often contains statements from Willie Hay of the DUP and even from the Ulster Political Research Group, and covers attacks on the Fountain and other Protestant estates as well as from them – a concern of local residents on the Cityside being that the young people involved in interface violence are also responsible for intimidating vulnerable residents in their own area.⁸¹

II.4 The representation of the European Union

II.4.1 The Euro

In the *Donegal Democrat*, reference to the European Union is by and large confined to comment on EU funding, most particularly the PEACE programme, which draws together the border counties with Northern Ireland to address the need for reconciliation. Indeed, it is significant that virtually all the reference to cross-border activity that has a positive theme in the *Donegal Democrat* is in relation to EU programmes. This ranges from such diverse activities as a visit to the Irish President by community workers from the border counties on a course funded by PEACE II,⁸² a cross-border farmer's market funded by LEADER,⁸³ or plans for a natural gas pipeline between Derry and Letterkenny supported by INTERREG IIIA funds.⁸⁴ Yet, even whilst welcoming this funding, the assertion that the source of the problem lies across the border is articulated by the local MEP, Senator Jim Higgins: 'the hope is that the Programme will reverse the negative effects that 25 years of *Northern* troubles have had on the border areas'.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ For example, two headlines from the *Sentinel* on the subject: 'PUP concern at interface violence' (11 April 2002) and 'Campbell calls for an end to bus attacks' (8 May 2002).

⁸¹ 'It's a living nightmare' – says tormented resident', *Derry Journal*, 30 August 2005.

⁸² 'Border peace builders welcomed to Aras An Uachtarain', *Donegal Democrat*, 19 April 2005.

⁸³ 'New cross border farmers' market for Letterkenny', *Donegal Democrat*, 21 April 2005.

⁸⁴ 'Gas pipe for North West set to be shelved', *Donegal Democrat*, 2 June 2005.

⁸⁵ 'Donegal to benefit from new Peace funding', *Donegal Democrat*, 18 January 2005 (emphasis added).

It is notable that on the rare occasions that the European Union is mentioned in the *Londonderry Sentinel*, it is essentially either in relation to cross-border subjects or to European Parliament elections. The main instances of the former include announcements on PEACE funding⁸⁶ and a brief mention of the impact of the Euro changeover across the border. The *Sentinel* reported that the business community in the city saw the introduction of the Euro as an opportunity with the ‘potential to increase trade and business to the region’. Indeed, to ensure the city could ‘adapt and trade in Euro in order to gain more business from Donegal’, Euro information seminars were run in the city in the months leading up to the changeover.⁸⁷ This changeover was particularly complex for businesses in the city who chose to accept the Euro, just as many had accepted the punt, as they had to deal for some time in pound sterling, Euro and punt. It appears that ‘Euro friendly’ business is supported by politicians of all persuasions in Derry, as seen in the quotations from SDLP MP and MEP John Hume in the *Sentinel* and from DUP MLA Willie Hay in the *Journal*.⁸⁸ Where the Euro does become a divisive issue, however, is on the argument for a single currency across the island – an issue raised by Sinn Féin during the campaign to for the European Parliament elections, claiming that to continue with two separate currencies would ‘exacerbate economic differences’ between north and south.⁸⁹

II.4.2 The European Parliament

This leads to the second issue on which the European Union is discussed in local newspapers: elections to the European Parliament. As noted above, the *Londonderry Sentinel* does not shy from publishing articles based solely on the comments of DUP politicians. Yet, although the DUP’s Jim Allister certainly gained the most publicity, the *Sentinel*’s coverage of the European elections was notable for its inclusion of all other candidates, most particularly those with a local connection. Thus, the SDLP candidate Martin Morgan (who gained special attention as John Hume’s nominated heir), Independent John Gilliland (a farmer from County Londonderry), and even socialist

⁸⁶ For example, an announcement on the revised closing date of applications to the PEACE fund due to the ‘unprecedented interest in Measure 5.3 Developing Cross-Border Reconciliation and Understanding’ (March 27 2002).

⁸⁷ ‘City gets ready for Euro’, *Londonderry Sentinel*, 2 January 2002.

⁸⁸ Hume said he was confident that, ‘the Euro will become a familiar and welcome currency in the city’ (‘City gets ready for Euro’, *Londonderry Sentinel*, 2 January 2002). Hay is quoted as saying, ‘Over 25% of passengers using the airport are from Donegal or another Euro-currency zone, therefore it is important that their requirements are taken on board’ (‘Airport car park goes Euro’, *Derry Journal*, 3 February 2004).

⁸⁹ ‘All-Island currency would benefit border region’, *Derry Journal*, 25 May 2004.

Eamonn McCann were fairly frequently reported on in the *Sentinel* in the weeks leading up to the June elections. A key theme in the *Sentinel*'s coverage of the election campaigns was the DUP's ambition to stop Sinn Féin getting the most votes in the election. Indeed, of the three key issues of the DUP's campaign, only one was 'important European issues', the other two being 'facing the new Sinn Féin challenge to top the European poll' and 'giving extra leverage to Unionists to gain an advantage in the political talks'.⁹⁰ Second to this theme was the question of what the north-west had to gain from the election. The responses to a 'vox pop' conducted by the *Sentinel* with each of the candidates were revealing.⁹¹ Jim Allister's response was fairly predictable given the mantra of his campaign: 'The unionist community in the North West will do their bit to make sure Sinn Fein does not top this poll and the only party that can see Sinn Fein (sic) off is the DUP'. In seeking to avoid this polarised political debate, the aims of other candidates were non-parochial to the extreme. Stated objectives from election included, 'ending the illegal war in Iraq' (McCann, Socialist Environmental Alliance), 'to combat child pornography on the Internet and protect children and families' (Gilliland), and, from the SDLP, 'to put money in your pockets, food on your table, and provide for a better shape of life all round... in voting for Martin Morgan, you are voting for peace, both here in Northern Ireland and across the world'. The only thing seemingly absent from their list of what the EU could offer the north west was 'apple pie'. Those candidates who sought to make more specific about needs they thought the EU could meet in the area tended to emphasise the EU's economic capacity. Whilst the UUP's Nicholson, 'The North West needs more EU funding... that will encourage SMEs to mushroom and stimulate the local community', the Green party and Sinn Féin emphasised the potential of the EU to facilitate better cross-border links. Thus, the former sought 'the restoration of links between Sligo, Leitrim, Enniskillen, Derry and Letterkenny' and Bairbre de Brún promised to lobby for 'the enhancement of all Ireland development, with specific emphasis on the North West Region including Derry and Donegal'.

The *Derry Journal*'s coverage of the European Parliament elections concentrated mostly on the candidates from the SDLP and Sinn Féin. This resulted in a number of articles during the campaign featuring arguments for the EU's ability to improve cross-

⁹⁰ 'SF must not top European poll' – DUP candidate', *Londonderry Sentinel*, 5 May 2004.

⁹¹ 'Why should the people of the north west vote for you?', *Londonderry Sentinel*, 2 June 2004.

border relations in Ireland.⁹² The *Journal's* editorial prior to the election considered the question, ‘what does Europe mean to us?’. The answer put forward was expressly influenced by the message consistently advocated by John Hume as MEP for the region for twenty-five years: ‘European Union membership is not... simply about grants. It can and should be about seizing the opportunities offered by membership of a “great family of nations and peoples”’.⁹³ The potential of the EU to affect the context of daily experience in a border region was highlighted six months later in the *Journal's* reporting of comments by two politicians on either side of the border on the subject of mobile phone ‘roaming’ in the area. Fine Gael MEP for Ireland’s north-west, Senator Jim Higgins, welcomed the investigation by the European Commission into fees for ‘roaming’ with mobile phones, which can be prohibitive for individuals regularly travelling out of their home jurisdiction.⁹⁴ SDLP MLA Pat Ramsey also hailed this move by the EU, noting that people in border areas such as those on the outskirts of Derry ‘can find that they are subjected to huge roaming charges just by moving from one room to another in their own house’.⁹⁵ He called for the imposition of a single all-Ireland tariff and for the simultaneous ending of the ‘Welcome to Ireland’ messages sent by the phone company as individuals cross the border:

Like many others living in the north of Ireland whose identity is Irish, I resent being treated as a foreign visitor by multinational phone companies. For those of us who may cross the border several times in a day, this is a great irritant which is completely unnecessary. This gimmick shows little sensitivity towards many customers who live in the north of Ireland. We never left Ireland.

II.5 The portrayal of borders: a synopsis

This brief study of these three local newspapers highlights four important points for understanding the perception of partition in a border region. The first is the vast differences between the papers in the way they present the border and the ‘other side’ of it. It is startling how Northern Ireland is only seen as relevant to Donegal residents when issues cross the border (albeit in such various forms as political debate or crime waves etc.), how Ireland is presented very much as a foreign country to unionists in Derry city, and how nationalists in the same city only register the border as a significant divide in

⁹² ‘An Ireland of Equals in a Europe of Equals’, *Derry Journal*, 4 June 2004; ‘All-island currency would benefit border region’, *Derry Journal*, 25 May 2004.

⁹³ ‘What does Europe mean to us?’, *Derry Journal*, 8 June 2004.

⁹⁴ ‘EU probe in ‘Rip-off’ roaming phone charges’, *Derry Journal*, 17 December 2004.

⁹⁵ Quotations from ‘Stop “Welcome to Ireland” messages – Pat Ramsey’, *Derry Journal*, 17 December 2004.

terms of practical differences (speed limits, smoking bans etc). The second is that north-south bodies simply do not feature in any of the papers, and the local cross-border corridor group (the North West Region Cross Border Group) is only mentioned as part of an attempt by Sinn Féin to score political points. The third point is that the EU is given credit for increased cross-border funding, however this merely seems to increase the propensity for politicians to play fast and loose with promises of EU money and with people's ignorance of the actual capacity of the European Parliament. Finally, local territorial divides appear to be far more important for identification of community and difference than the state border.

Part III. The Persistence of Borders

III. Division in education

This section of the paper compares dimensions of education dealing with division in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland since partition of the island. The purpose of this study is to uncover aspects of education north and south that relate to the conflict and to its transformation. It traces differences and similarities between the two areas in the way that key topics relating to the conflict subject are taught. It also considers means by which divisions within Northern Ireland and between north and south are being addressed through education. Included in this is citizenship education – promoted by the Council of Europe and taken on by Northern Ireland and the Republic as a means of addressing controversial issues among young people.

III.1 Depicting the border in Irish history

III.1.1 Pre-independence Ireland

In conjunction with the slow but steady growth of formal education in Ireland, Irish nationalists at the turn of the twentieth century were realising the importance of this realm in their quest to incite popular interest in and support for home rule/independence. The clearest example of this was Patrick Pearse's establishment of a school, St. Enda's, through which boys could be taught a specifically 'Irish' outlook through the medium of the Irish language. Other active Irish nationalists invested time in groups focused on Irish history and culture, supported by others who wrote tracts, leaflets and books to provide young people with an alternative, Irish-focused rather than British-focused education. An example of the type of anglocentric history taught in Ireland in the late nineteenth century is *A history of Ireland for schools* by Collier, which recounts the history of Ireland according to periods determined by the reign of monarchs of England! Attempts to rectify the anglocentric nature of education (as well as most other forms of public-provision) in Ireland at the time included the publication of books intended to recount an Irish history for an Irish nation and, more than that, a nation able to stand its own on the international stage. Differences of opinion among Irish nationalists on the relationship between Ireland and Britain on this new stage were enflamed by the Irish civil war and reflected in the history books of the time. Even the map of Britain and Ireland was interpreted entirely differently by writers with varying degrees of nationalist sympathies. For example, writing in the early years after independence, McAllister (c1928:215) argued that, 'For strategic reasons it is inconceivable that England could

agree to sever the bonds completely; the two islands are too close together, geographically, for that'. A different voice was raised by the well-known staunch Irish nationalist Alice Stopford Green (1927:1) who wrote: 'From the map [of the British Isles] it is plain that Ireland and England have a very different outlook'. Whereas McAllister presented Ireland's independence as merely part of a wider European trend and claimed that its relationship with Britain would remain crucial, Green wanted her readers to see the history of Ireland as the road to independence for a nation only thwarted by the greed and interference of a bigger neighbour. The history the two wrote reflected their visions of the present time. The 1920s for Green was one for continuing the quest for full independence, whilst according to McAllister (c1928:216) it was a 'time of transition', one to concentrate on 'National revival' and 'not listen to the whines about the customs barriers between north and south'. Although republicans were to take power in Ireland by the 1930s, this 26-county focus on 'national revival' prevailed in state practice and became embedded in the teaching of Irish history.

III.1.2 'Two different cultural regions'⁹⁶

At its simplest level, there may be seen to be three major narratives on the relationship between north and south in Ireland in the teaching of Irish history. The first views the island of Ireland as an integral national unit, and all who live on this island are part of the Irish nation. The second view the island of Ireland as historically being divided into two 'traditions', the north being associated with a British or Protestant tradition, the south with an Irish Catholic tradition. The third view contests both former views on the grounds that they are based on simple majoritarianism – the Catholics being a majority on the island as a whole, the Protestants being a majority in Northern Ireland as a whole – and instead sees the island as the centre of innumerable passages of emigration and immigration, forming a complex of traditions and influences across the island as a whole. Of course, this third view does not fit well with any national discourse of the history of a people in a particular territory, unlike the first view, which may be seen as being in line with straightforward Irish nationalism. However, examination of Irish school text books shows that this 32-county nation history is not the norm in Irish education; most school pupils are taught Irish history which implicitly follows the 'two nations' interpretation of Ireland. A perfect example of this is Ashe and McCarthy (2004:232-233) – a text book on geography for Leaving Certificate students (aged 15-18) – which answers the question, 'How has it come about that the relatively small

⁹⁶ Ashe and McCarthy (2004:234)

island of Ireland is partitioned into two states?’ in the following way: ‘The answer lies in the fact that the island of Ireland has two distinct cultural or ethnic groups’. Interestingly, these two groups are primarily defined in terms of Catholic and Protestant, on the grounds that:

When members of the same religion live in the same geographic area, they may aspire to rule themselves and to establish a state boundary between themselves and a neighbouring community with a different religion.

The explanation for the existence of the culture of ‘Northern unionism’ in the ‘north-eastern counties of the island of Ireland’ is given as ‘the Plantation of Ulster of 1609’ in which ‘many settlers (or colonists) came to the north of Ireland from Scotland and parts of England [and] were given land that had belonged to the native Irish’. Generations on from this, ‘Unionists in the North had, and continue to have, a strong sense of identity and a very strong allegiance (or loyalty) to the British Crown’. Similarly, McCarthy (2003:128) explains that, ‘Unionist desire to remain in the United Kingdom derived from their ancestral and religious links with Britain’ whilst the *Living History* (Collins *et al.* 2004:183) textbook suggests that the Government of Ireland Act partitioned Ireland into one part of 26 counties ‘for nationalists’ and ‘the other part went to unionists’. Although nods are given to the traditional discourse of Irish nationalism in the form of such statements as, ‘In the island as a whole, Catholics greatly outnumber Protestants’, this ‘Protestant north’ and ‘Catholic south’ discourse appears dominant in textbooks on this matter in the Republic (Ashe and McCarthy 2004:344),

III.1.3 EU associated with prosperity and peace

The presentation of the European Union in Irish school textbooks has been consistently and overwhelmingly positive. Beginning from the assertion that the EEC arose from the ‘desire to place international competition with international co-operation’ (Collins 1993:387), the general tenor of discussions about the EU is that it has brought ‘prosperity and peace to Europe’ (Fogarty 1994:334).⁹⁷ The underlying assumption is that this is down to the economic interdependence it fosters: ‘Trade between European countries has created economic interdependence. This interdependence has cultivated peaceful relations between former enemies, such as France and Germany’ (Ashe and McCarthy 2004:348). To the limited extent that it is even discussed at this level, the

⁹⁷ Putting it only slightly differently, Callan *et al.* (2004) credit European integration with bringing, ‘peace and prosperity to the EU’.

EU's impact on north-south relations is seen as a good thing because it promotes economic interdependence between the two: 'Only after both the UK and the Republic joined the EEC in 1973 did trade between South and North blossom' (Ashe and McCarthy 2004:343). More obtusely, the EU is seen in one textbook as illustrating the ways in which the 'boundaries and extent of regions may change over time' (Ashe and McCarthy 2004:347).⁹⁸ If in practice, various links 'criss-cross Europe to facilitate trade', the implication is that interaction between 'North and South' will inevitably increase.

Whilst the European Union is presented very much in relation to economic development and peace in Europe, EU membership has also had an effect on the way in which Irish history is taught. This is in some part facilitated by the fact that accession to the EEC came at the same time as the Irish state was taking an increasingly interventionist approach to education (Kerr *et al.* 2002:187). The general theme that is now developed through the curriculum is of Irish identity and history in the European context. This begins at primary school level, with a curriculum that aims to 'develop a sense of personal, local, national, European and wider identities through studying the history and cultural inheritance of local and other communities'.⁹⁹ In terms of teaching, this means that subjects such as 'early peoples and ancient societies' are examined in relation to 'links they had with Ireland or Europe'.¹⁰⁰ At the other end of the school system, Leaving Certificate history examinations contain an equal number of topics from Irish history and from the history of 'Europe and the wider world'.¹⁰¹ Northern Ireland as a topic of study is not introduced until the fifth and sixth classes, meaning that pupils are expected to be familiar with the concept of 'Europe' before being taught about partition.

III.2 Depicting borders in Northern Ireland

III.2.1 Between Britain and Ireland

The educational curriculum in Northern Ireland has always been highly derived from England and Wales (Kerr *et al.* 2002:187). However, it is interesting to note the

⁹⁸ One factor complicating the status of the island as one of 'two different cultural regions' is the division of Ireland into eight economic regions in 1994 'for the purpose of reviewing EU programmes' (Ashe and McCarthy 2004:343, 228).

⁹⁹ Government of Ireland, 1999. 'Primary school curriculum. History: social, environmental and scientific education'. Dublin: Stationery Office, 13.

¹⁰⁰ Government of Ireland, 1999. 'Primary school curriculum. History: social, environmental and scientific education'. Dublin: Stationery Office, 42.

¹⁰¹ Department of Education, 2004. 'Leaving Certificate History: Guidelines for teachers'. Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 6.

exceptions to this rule as well as the similarities. The curricula of the first fifteen years or so of devolved Stormont rule contained a curious mix of Irish as well as British features. For example, a typical examination for the elementary school certificate in the 1920s and early 1930s would include a question on Geography, which, teachers were notified, could include either a question on the British Empire (countries, principal towns, ports, vegetable production etc.) or on Ireland ('with special attention to position and climate and their control over the distribution of population').¹⁰² It would be as common during this time for students to be required to fill in a blank map of Ireland as well as Great Britain in such a paper. This examination also always contained a section on the Irish language. However, from the mid-1930s, the focus shifted away from Ireland altogether. The syllabus for the 1936 examination dropped the question on Ireland, and the geography question from this point onwards concentrated on the British Isles and its 'more important regions', of which Northern Ireland was one. The blank map they were to fill out in this particular paper was that of Northern Ireland. Although the option on the Irish language remained until the 1950s, from this point until the last examination of its type was sat in 1964, the geography question was always on the British Isles, concentrating both on its regions and its 'commercial relations' with 'other parts of the world, especially the British Commonwealth'.

The centrality of Britain is reflected in other areas of education at this time, with the history syllabi at all levels teaching Irish history essentially in relation to English and British history. At the primary school level, although teachers were advised that 'stories should not be drawn exclusively from any particular time or country', the topics considered suitable for teaching history were distinctly anglocentric. For example, 'England and her neighbours in medieval times' and 'how Britain and Ireland came to have one parliament' were specified topics for primary school education in Northern Ireland in the mid-1950s.¹⁰³ Similarly, at the level of junior certificate, students being examined on the 'history of Great Britain and Ireland' could chose between topics on 'English history' or 'England and Ireland' (including questions on the relations of the

¹⁰² The elementary school certificate was an open exam that students could take instead of an entrance exam to grammar school. It was held every year in May for the following year's intake, and the syllabus for the exam was distributed in circulars from the Northern Ireland Ministry of Education each year.

Quotations here are taken from the syllabus for an elementary school certificate exam for 1933 (Government of Northern Ireland Ministry of Education. Belfast: HM Stationery Office, 1932).

¹⁰³ Department of Education Northern Ireland, Programme for Primary Schools. Belfast: HM Stationery Office, 1956: 177-8.

English and Irish parliaments 1485-1801 or the plantations under Cromwell, James II and William II).¹⁰⁴ The senior certificate level progressed from historical study of ‘England’ to that of the ‘British Empire’; the history of Ireland came under this banner and that of international relations came in relation to it. For example, the senior certificate examination in 1949 had topics in the history section that included ‘the political, social and economic history of Great Britain and Ireland, including the growth of dependent Empire’. Alternative sections to those on the British Empire were on the history of Europe 1789-1925 and the United States of America 1763-1922.

Irish was included in these examinations as a ‘modern language’, along with French, Spanish and German.¹⁰⁵ There was a slight shift following the replacement of the junior and senior certificates with Ordinary and Advanced Level courses, the former looking at ‘British, Irish and Imperial history’ as well as European and American history. The Advanced Level did consider Irish history separate to British to some degree, but when one considers that the whole subject of ‘Ireland 1760-1801’ counts as the same worth as ‘the life and times of the Duke of Marlborough 1685-1744’, or indeed the ‘history of the British Empire 1865-1931’, it is clear that the emphasis is derived from that of an imperial state.¹⁰⁶

III.2.2 Responding to conflict

Education in Northern Ireland underwent major change in the early 1970s. Against a backdrop of the most violent years of the Troubles, there was burgeoning consideration of the role of young people in future community relations. A pamphlet, ‘There is another way’, issued in 1971 in the name of Bleakley, the newly appointed Minister of Community Relations in Northern Ireland, served to ‘proclaim’ the work funded by the Ministry at a community level, including cross-community youth work. Particular attention was paid to the history curriculum in Northern Ireland given the importance of historical symbols and myths in the region. Although the education institutions and curricula would take years to reform, guides issued to teachers around this time encouraged a certain degree of flexibility and sensitivity in relation to topics that dealt with cultural identity. For example, at primary school level,¹⁰⁷ teachers were encouraged

¹⁰⁴ Junior Certificate Grammar School examination, 1956.

¹⁰⁵ Grammar School Exams, Rules and Programmes. Belfast: HM Stationery Office, 1949.

¹⁰⁶ Grammar School Exams, Rules and Programmes. Belfast: HM Stationery Office, 1961.

¹⁰⁷ These examples are taken from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland’s ‘Primary Education: Teachers’ Guide’. Belfast: HM Stationery Office, 1974.

to draw on stories from ‘the rich treasury of Irish history and mythology’, including those of Cúchulainn, the Red Branch Knights, St. Patrick, St. Columba and Brian Ború, and they could choose topics in history from such themes as ‘early Celtic monasteries,...Norman castles and abbeys, the linen industry, famous Ulsterman, ...and the Famine’. However, it ought to be noted that, although the standardisation, quality and availability of history textbooks had markedly improved during the 1970s, by the end of the decade almost half of all classes at primary school level at this time were not studying any historical topic at all.¹⁰⁸

A significant factor in the widening of horizons beyond the British Isles in the teaching of history – and the use of cultural resources – in Northern Ireland in the 1970s was membership of the European Economy Community from 1973. This is exemplified in the reconsideration of the role of museums in the province that took place at this time.¹⁰⁹ The report of a working party appointed by the Department of Education in Northern Ireland on regional museums in 1978 hoped for a growth of exchange of cultural artefacts, ‘not only within the British Isles but perhaps even in the context of the European Economic Community’ (para.240). This was seen as a real possibility because ‘sharing cultural resources lies within the objectives of the Community’ and was expected to grow as EEC policy developed, although with EEC Regional Aid Schemes (para. 241). In turn, it was hoped that a ‘travelling contribution’ could be made from Northern Ireland around the ‘continental centres’ of the EEC. This is a small but interesting indicator of a belief that Northern Ireland could build a relationship with the European Community. At least a part of this extended from the post-war sentiment of association with the Continent, which saw Northern Ireland as ‘a European country alert, ready for the future, and strengthened by a tradition which you can see in its remarkable monuments and products of history and even pre-history’ (Evans 1951:2).

III.2.3 The wider context

Although segregation remains the norm in education in Northern Ireland, the curriculum has been reworked to reflect more accurately the interests and identities of pupils from all backgrounds. The Northern Ireland history curriculum in 1991 contains options for themes and issues at every level which include a British and an Irish topic. The

¹⁰⁸ Report of an Inspectorate Survey of Northern Ireland: Primary Education, 1979-80. Belfast: HM Stationery Office, 1980: 29, 31.

¹⁰⁹ As Anderson (1991) elaborates, museums, along with maps and censuses, are one of the three crucial forms of identity-building in modern nations.

curriculum seems designed to highlight at every point the history of Britain and Ireland as a shared one. For example, in Key Stage 1 (pupils aged 5-7), children are introduced to a repertoire of historical stories ‘from a variety of cultures and periods’, such as legends from Classical and Irish mythology. In Key Stage 2 (ages 7-11), they must study an aspect of history over a relatively short period of time, suggestions being Early Christian Ireland or Elizabethan times. Themes for deeper studies at this stage include the impact of the Vikings in the British Isles, including on English and Irish languages, experiences of rural poverty in the British Isles, including the Great Famine in Ireland or the Highland Clearances in Scotland. They should also be able to ‘place historical events in sequence on a timeline’; suggestions being given for this include ‘the advent of Neolithic farmers in Ireland, Viking raids in England, the Victorian period’. Also introduced at this stage is ‘the study of important historical issues over a long time-span, showing links between local, national, European and world history as appropriate’. These links, especially those between the British Isles and Europe, are brought out more clearly in the core themes of the following Key Stage 3. For example, topics include ‘Britain, Ireland and Europe from the late 16th to 18th centuries’, with its sub-section on ‘Spain, Britain and Ireland in the 16th century’ or ‘France and Ireland in the Age of Revolution’.

Notably, there is no specific mention of the history of Northern Ireland; any discussion of Northern Ireland presumably occurs only as a corollary of discussion of British and Irish history. For example, Key Stage 3 has as a core theme, ‘Causes and consequences of political religious conflicts within the British Isles, 1630-1655’, plus ‘the causes and consequence of the Williamite Wars’. Partition is first mentioned in Key Stage 3, with ‘broad reference to the European and American contexts’. In Key Stage 4, Northern Ireland is first mentioned in one of two history study units, the other being ‘conflict and co-operation in Europe since 1919’. The unit on ‘Northern Ireland and its neighbours since 1920’ examines partition, socio-economic development in UK context, the relationship between Northern Ireland and its neighbours in the context of world events, including entry into the EEC. The 1998 History Syllabus for GCSE examinations (for pupils aged sixteen) requires in-depth study of a) Germany, Russia or the USA and b) ‘Peace, War and Neutrality in Britain, Northern Ireland and Ireland’ or ‘Britain, Northern Ireland and Ireland 1965-1985’, which includes ‘unionist-nationalist relationships before the ‘60s, e.g. differing cultures and traditions, segregation of housing, education etc.’.

III.3 Education and segregation

Given that it is the case that only five per cent of pupils in Northern Ireland attend planned integrated schools, there have been a range of initiatives over the past thirty years aimed at ‘softening the edges of institutional segregation’ (NICCY 2004:154).¹¹⁰ A circular from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland (1982/21) during the formative years of community relations described the ‘common ethos’ of policy in this area being, the ‘responsibility of all in the education sector to help children understand and respect each other in preparation for living in harmony in adult life’. However, the *Schools Community Relations Programme* (1982), *Cross Community Contact Scheme* (1987) and *Education for Mutual Understanding and Cultural Heritage* (1989), to name three major initiatives developed to this end, have been criticised for having a limited impact as a result of a significant level of non-participation among schools and insufficient follow-up mechanisms (Smith and Robinson 1996; Leitch and Kilpatrick 1999; O’Connor et al. 2003; NICCY 2004:155). O’Connor et al.’s (2003) study on pupil perceptions of such an initiative revealed that the language of community relations remains unfamiliar even to those involved in such programmes – a weakness connected to the vague community relations focus of many of the projects affiliated with them. Two factors that can significantly influence the success of community relations according to this study is having a local link to school projects to facilitate sustainable action, and having a link to curricular objectives (O’Connor et al. 2003). Unfortunately, it appears from other research in this area that the first of these has become increasingly difficult since the Good Friday Agreement, as areas of overlap and interaction between communities steadily shrink and with them a foundation for positive community relations (Hughes and Donnelly 2001; Robinson 2003). The second factor of curricula topics is also difficult to grasp for the purpose of common community relations policy given that educational segregation is even worse than residential or occupational segregation in Northern Ireland.

¹¹⁰ Since the Education (Northern Ireland) Act of 1923, schools in Northern Ireland essentially fall into one of three categories: Controlled, Maintained or Voluntary. This Act has been amended since, but still today, the vast majority of schools in Northern Ireland are either Controlled (owned by the Education and Library Boards and essentially Protestant) or Catholic Maintained (owned by the Catholic church with recurrent costs being met by the Education and Library Boards). (Source: CAIN <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/educ/educ.htm> 06/10/05)

Education in Northern Ireland has failed to support the development of positive community relations through not only physical segregation of Protestant and Catholic children, nor even the differences in the subjects these children are taught, but also through the ‘hidden curriculum’ that these segregated schools have (Darby and Dunn 1987). For example, a comparative study of post-primary education in Northern Ireland by Magee (1970:19) confirms that pupils in Protestant schools at the start of the Troubles were taught Irish history only insofar as it impinged on British history. In contrast, pupils in Catholic schools were taught history using textbooks published in the south; therefore, not only was the emphasis ‘almost entirely on Irish military heroes’, Irish history was taught as ‘the story of heroism in maintaining national feeling under foreign rule’ (Barrit and Carter 1972). Even at a sixth-form level following the outbreak of the Troubles, discussions of religious controversy and comparisons of religion rarely addressed the issue of Protestant-Catholic relations in Northern Ireland (Greer 1972). The growing standardisation of curricula and textbooks in the 1980s still did not prevent Catholic schools spending most time on religious education and human/ethical subjects and Protestant schools dedicating the majority of the timetable to science and physical education (Sutherland and Gallagher 1987, see also Osborne 1985). Such differences as emphasis in curricular timetabling and the teaching of different sporting activities at a school level can feed directly into poor community relations in later life, as they affect choice of occupation and recreation in adulthood.

More recent studies in this field have drawn attention to the methods of the teaching (i.e. the role of the teacher and the student) rather than the teaching instruments (i.e. the curriculum and the textbook). Barton and McCully (2002) argue that students are able to use what they learn in school selectively in a way that supports their partisan communal identity; they therefore advise that the formal history curriculum is designed with the community-level informal attitudes in mind. In light of this trend, Hopken (2003) warns against the presumption that a well-constructed textbook can guard against biased teaching. Indeed, he contends that textbooks can only have the potential to be ‘agents of reconciliation’ in a secure post-conflict situation, in which society has adopted a ‘self-reflexive approach to the country’s past’ and is open to interventions from international actors. In a situation of continuing, if latent, violence, the ‘critical pedagogy’ that, according to Giroux and McLauran (1994), can break down structural barriers must relate directly to the lived experience of the students. Towards this end, Crooke (2001) suggests that museums in situations such as that in Northern Ireland should attempt to

deal with the conflict in a way that relates to the emotional dimension of history recalled daily in symbols, murals, slogans etc. The role of museums is recognised as being one of the most successful dimensions of community relations programmes in Northern Ireland, visits to cultural centres in Northern Ireland constituting an important and memorable part of such programmes for both Protestant and Catholic schools (Darby *et al.* 1989). A different dimension of this is supported by the work of Lomas (1998), who argues that issues of diversity are tackled much more frequently on an informal basis (such as in local youth clubs) than through formal education structures. Attempts to build upon this practical and informal education towards inter-communal understanding in a post-Agreement context are becoming detached from a set Northern Ireland ‘community relations’ programme and linked into the type of citizenship education programmes that are common throughout Europe.

III.4 New approaches to cooperation

III.4.1 Citizenship education

The OFMDFM policy document *A Shared Future* (2005:1.2.2) stated that the policy objective of ‘promot[ing] civic-mindedness via citizenship education’ would help realise the aim of creating in Northern Ireland a ‘shared society defined by a culture of tolerance’. This builds upon the findings of the first curriculum review (2001) in Northern Ireland after the Agreement supporting the incorporation of community relations issues in mainstream citizenship education. Thus, citizenship education has been presented as a means of addressing the type of social and political issues that were important to contemporary students and yet were not being addressed by straightforward community relations programmes (Kerr, McCarthy and Smith 2002:186-7). Such issues are as relevant in Northern Ireland as anywhere else. For example, the work of Connolly and Keenan (2000) in schools in Northern Ireland indicates that incidences of racial prejudice occur twice as frequently as those of sectarian prejudice; this is borne out in wider society in the increasing frequency and intensity of racial assaults throughout the province since the Agreement.¹¹¹ When this is placed alongside the small but growing minority of people in Northern Ireland who self-designate as neither Catholic nor Protestant (fourteen per cent in the 2001 Census), the need for civic education that goes beyond two-dimensional community relations

¹¹¹ Police statistics show that racial incidents in Northern Ireland increased from 226 in 2002/3 to 453 in 2003/4 and 813 in 2004/5 (of these 30% were woundings or assaults). Other hate crimes have also increased, homophobic incidents having risen from 35 in 2002/3 to 196 in 2004/5 (http://www.psni.police.uk/3_hate_incidents_and_crimes-2.pdf [06/10/05]).

becomes evident (McGlynn 2003:11). More generally, the time is ripe in post-Agreement Northern Ireland for participatory citizenship to be taught and advocated, not least because surveys suggest that young people remained interested in politics although alienated from political parties and politicians (Kerr, McCarthy and Smith 2002:187; Democratic Dialogue 1997).

However, citizenship education in this divided society could not be ‘transmissional’, but rather inquiry-based, ‘exploring all issues from a range of perspectives, rather than prescribing civic facts’ (Kerr, McCarthy and Smith 2002:188). For citizenship education in Northern Ireland has particular complications, mainly due to the fact that the assumption fundamental to the policy in Britain – to instil a sense of duty towards the British state¹¹² – is highly problematic in a context of conflict over constitutional allegiance. As Smith (2003) argues, with the patriotic model of citizenship a non-runner in Northern Ireland, other principles of citizenship had to come to the fore, drawing on principles of equality, human rights etc. that were central to the Good Friday Agreement. This has meant in practice that citizenship education has begun to take the place of Northern Ireland-specific teaching on community relations. Citizenship education incorporates some of the same principles that used to be included under the ‘community relations’ auspices,¹¹³ and yet gives it a wider grounding in what might be termed ‘international’ principles of parity of esteem etc. This means that conflict in Northern Ireland is being addressed now not just in the ‘two community’ dimension, but also along lines that challenge all forms of discrimination, such as on the grounds of race, gender, sexual preference etc. In this way, Northern Ireland is being brought closer to both the British model and, interestingly, the Europe-wide model.¹¹⁴

III.4.2 Citizenship education in a European context

2005 was designated the European Year of Citizenship through Education, supported by the Council of Europe on the basis that:

¹¹² It is no coincidence that citizenship education in schools was introduced at the same time as citizenship classes for immigrants to Britain. The idea being, as argued by Parekh (2000) that knowledge of British history and statehood would encourage a deeper sense of belonging and responsibility towards it.

¹¹³ For example, BBC Northern Ireland citizenship resources covers topics such as sectarianism, Holy Cross (where protesters blocked the passage of children to a Catholic primary school through a Protestant area), and interface areas.

¹¹⁴ In a fascinating reversal of roles, certain issues of contention from Northern Ireland (such as the re-routing of parades and decommissioning of paramilitary weapons) are used as topics for discussion (regarding problems of diversity etc.) in citizenship programmes in England and Wales.

Low election turnouts among young people and their decreasing participation in public and political life lend urgency to the issue of education for democratic citizenship, which should be seen as a long-term investment to promote the democratic values of human rights, tolerance and cultural pluralism.¹¹⁵

Citizenship education is supported at a European level because it is seen as fundamental to ‘the idea of a modern Europe as an integrated and yet culturally diverse area of democratic stability’ (Duerr *et al.* 2000:74); at a national level within Europe, each citizenship programme is implemented with specific objectives, such as to encourage political participation in England (Kerr 2004) and to consolidate economic prosperity in Ireland (Kerr, McCarthy and Smith 2002). In Northern Ireland, the European framework for citizenship education has enabled the embedding of an ‘international dimension’ to discussions of pluralism and diversity long-recognised as valuable to the debate in Northern Ireland (Dunn and Morgan 1991). The international dimension of citizenship education is illustrated by the fact that each of the programmes within the new curriculum for Social, Civic and Political Education in Northern Ireland concentrates on at least one of the concepts key to the United Nations Charter on Human Rights (BBC Citizenship 2000).¹¹⁶ Indeed, throughout Europe, a core feature of citizenship education programmes are their multilevel nature; virtually every topic is dealt with from a local, national and ‘global’ perspective. For example, citizenship education in Northern Ireland at Key Stage 3 (11-14 years) is intended to inform students about local government, the diversity of identities in the United Kingdom, and ‘the role of the EU, UN and Commonwealth’. In Ireland, ‘active participatory citizenship in a changing Ireland, Europe and world’ is the rationale for ‘civic, social and political education’ (CSPE) (Hammond and Looney 2000). It therefore aims, ‘to develop active citizens who have a sense of belonging to the local, national, European and global communities’ and includes units on ‘the individual and citizenship, the community, the State, Ireland and the World’ (Kerr, McCarthy and Smith 2002:179). It is notable that Ireland’s pledge for the European Year of Citizenship incorporates the three strands of the 1998 Agreement:

The ‘Year’ has the potential to take a North/South and an East/West perspective through the values forwarded by the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ See <http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/Files/Themes/ECD/> (06/10/05)

¹¹⁶ See http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/schools/11_16/citizenship2000/index.shtml (06/10/05)

¹¹⁷ See <http://www.citizenship2005.ie/ireland.htm> (06/10/05)

There is little evidence that this has been built upon in north-south and British-Irish cooperation.

The formal integration of ‘education for citizenship’ into school syllabi (as for Ireland’s Junior Certificate, ages 12-15) represents opportunities for cooperation, coordination, internationalisation and standardisation in the teaching of contentious topics regarding social and political affairs in Britain and Ireland. Yet, again, it is important not to lose sight of the crucial role of informal education structures to these ends; Parekh (2000) contends that the ethos and atmosphere of a school contributes more to forging active citizenship than any set curriculum. Creating the context for informal education (sharing of school facilities, student exchanges, long-term joint activities and projects for teachers and students) between communities and regions (e.g. east/west) in Northern Ireland, across borders in Ireland (e.g. Derry/Donegal) and across environments in the United Kingdom (e.g. urban/rural) are ways in which the aims of widening horizons and encouraging participation can be met. One interviewee for *EUBorderConf* who is involved in one of the largest cross-border programmes for such interaction describes the education system as an ‘untapped resource’ for reconciliation, and points to the fact that, whilst the structures for cross-border cooperation already exist in this area, the funding and high-level long-term political support remains inadequate (Interview 20). This comment is supported by the findings of a study by Pollak (2005), which shows that the aims of sustainable cross-border contact are thwarted at almost every step by relatively small but significant problems faced by schools, community groups and, frequently, individual teachers attempting to build meaningful cooperation. Even those projects that have existed for a long time and are well-resourced (such as *Education for Reconciliation* or *North-South Student-Teacher Exchange project* [see Pollak 2005]) face an uncertain future in line with the funding sources they rely on, such as PEACE and the International Fund for Ireland.

III.5 The persistence of borders: a synopsis

Of the three parts of this study, this one on education provides the clearest evidence of the persistence of borders within Northern Ireland and between north and south, both in perception and practice. This is despite the fact that a large proportion of external funding, including PEACE, is dedicated to cross-border and cross-community work among young people and children. Of course, all efforts towards improving inter-communal understanding through extra-curricular activities and summer events etc. can

only truly bear fruit if supported by teaching and initiatives to this end within the mainstream schooling system. This is why citizenship education schemes hold such potential in Ireland north and south. However, the content of citizenship education programmes is perhaps not as important as the context in which they are taught. This not only involves establishing ideals of cultural tolerance and mutual respect in the classroom but addressing the specific ways in which students are taught to consider others through their learning of history etc. While no comparison can be made to the ignorance fostered in the past, the Irish state arguably has still to follow the example from the Northern Ireland curricula in terms of a fairer presentation of Northern Ireland – one that comes earlier and provides opportunities for students to hear the opinions of unionists and nationalists in their own words, not just sloppily summarised with clichés. It is surprising how far the teaching of partition and Northern Ireland in the Irish curriculum lags behind the principles of the 1998 Agreement in terms of moving beyond the ‘two nations’ thesis. Yet, whilst both the Ireland and Northern Ireland curricula at all levels arguably fail to provide students with an adequate knowledge of their neighbour across the border in a contemporary context, both notably introduce a European dimension at a young age. The present relevance of a Europe of ‘peace and prosperity’ (not least to Ireland), however, is for the most part left untested and unanalysed – a lost opportunity for exploring an historical ‘European’ problem in an historical European context.

Conclusions

In some ways, the most startling findings from this three-part study are the least surprising ones. For example, that the most deprived areas in a border city have become the indubitable ‘hotspots’ for inter-communal tension and violence. Or that nationalists in this border city are the ones most interested in events across the border and most keen for further cooperation. In this sense, they stand between unionists and ‘southerners’ (Catholic and Protestant alike) who, for the most part, are looking in opposite directions. Or that efforts towards evoking ‘mutual understanding’ between young people are hindered through daily experience of segregation. These non-elite level practices and perceptions are absolutely crucial for securing peace and stability in Northern Ireland, for, as the following comments from a resident in the Fountain enclave in Derry city reveal, individuals base their political analyses directly on their social experiences:

People here are living with a siege like mentality. Until that’s no longer the case, they can’t think about entering dialogue with the republicans who are orchestrating these attacks on them.¹¹⁸

If the 1998 Agreement represented the British and Irish governments’ attempt to hand democracy into the hands of politicians in Northern Ireland, the means to facilitating and fostering it lie at the level of local communities.

This study has also produced findings that challenge some enduring presumptions about the European Union’s effects on borders in Ireland north and south. For example, the opening of the state border through the peace process, Single Market and cross-border initiatives may be cautiously welcomed by most quarters, but in practice it has created new problems. In Donegal, for instance, local businesses are suffering in competition with the urban city. In Derry city, the unionist minority are feeling increasingly under threat. Moreover, each part of this study suggests that the decrease in paramilitary violence centred on a border conflict has been accompanied by a rise in relatively uncoordinated, sporadic incidents of violence, mainly perpetrated by young people against those seen as sitting targets, be they people from a different community living behind a peace wall or people from a different country or ethnic group living across the street. Although the injuries are minor compared with those from the Troubles, the damage to the peace process is unquantifiable, as fear is translated into deep distrust and

¹¹⁸ Extract from an interview by a member of the Protestants Interface Network. ‘Fountain support from North Belfast’, *Londonderry Sentinel*, 9 June 2004.

further political polarisation. These findings no doubt have relevance for other cases of border conflict within Europe.

This study has also revealed certain opportunities for the EU to address issues arising from the changing nature and impact of borders in post-Agreement Ireland as it considers a future for the PEACE programme and other initiatives for cross-border and cross-community work. First, there is room to concentrate on particular localities of deprivation that are also interface areas (such as the Fountain/Brandywell in Derry city).¹¹⁹ Taking a fundamental lesson from the cross-border work facilitated by the EU to date, such projects must be both ‘necessary’ and ‘practical’ (Interviews 22, 23). Secondly, one of the biggest opportunities for the EU in cross-border cooperation is the flipside of one of its biggest hindrances, i.e. its relative anonymity. In the midst of a clamour of variously incredible claims made in the European Parliament elections, all the parties agreed on two things: EU funding is worthwhile and the EU has further potential to benefit the region. However, it is quite clear from political, local and media discourse that the European Union is barely perceived to have an identity of its own and certainly not one that would affect the identity of citizens in ways that would impact on the conflict. This gives the EU an opportunity to facilitate significant changes through local agencies without coming into the foreground as a political actor itself. Finally, if a common theme to citizenship education programmes in Ireland and Northern Ireland is that of European identity and history, there is scope for a European dimension to be developed and supported by the EU (building on foundations laid by the Council of Europe). The provision of a ‘neutral’ space in Brussels, for instance, to enable older secondary school students from Ireland and Northern Ireland to visit such places as the Messines memorial park (for soldiers who died in the First World War from Ireland north and south) would perhaps be one way in which this could be done. This would enable the rhetoric of multiple identities etc. now common to all school curricula to be tested and developed by the students themselves – physically going beyond Ireland’s borders in order to reassess them. Returning to Diez *et al.*’s definition of conflict taken at the start, conflict transformation requires communication between subject positions. The European Union may have helped to open channels for communication across borders in Ireland but it has not been able to change the scripts.

¹¹⁹ This could expand upon Measure 2.11 within the PEACE II programme for Area-based Regeneration aimed at ‘marginalised and disadvantaged groups’ in the ‘regeneration of urban neutral spaces, community interface areas and neighbourhoods affected by the conflict’.

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Additional interview material:

(with kind permission of the *Diversity Challenges* project, Institute for Irish Studies Queen's University Belfast)

Diversity Challenges Interview 1. Church of Ireland minister, east Donegal. Interviewed by Catherine O'Donnell, 17 February 2004.

Diversity Challenges Interview 2. Church of Ireland minister, east Donegal. Interviewed by Catherine O'Donnell, 18 February 2004.

Diversity Challenges Interview 3. Protestant minister, east Donegal. Interviewed by Catherine O'Donnell, 18 February 2004.

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Diversity Challenges Interview 9. Two Protestant community workers, east Donegal.
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ISSN 17431840

EUBorderConf working papers are published within the context of the research project “The European Union and Border Conflicts: The Impact of Integration and Association” (EUBorderConf), funded by the European Union’s Fifth Framework Programme, with additional funds from the British Academy, and co-ordinated at the Department of Political Science and International Studies (POLSI), The University of Birmingham. The series may be of interest to anyone engaged with contemporary debates on the EU and border conflicts, including academics, PhD students and people working in the field. For more information please contact Dr Michelle Pace at m.pace@bham.ac.uk, or visit www.euborderconf.bham.ac.uk.