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Diversity Equity Interdependence

Beyond Belfast

Contested Spaces in Urban, Rural and Cross Border Settings

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Beyond Belfast

Report Commissioned by
Community Relations Council and Rural Community Network

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Foreword

This publication is the culmination of a sustained and positive partnership approach between the Community Relations Council (CRC) and Rural Community Network (RCN). CRC has over many years been actively engaged in interface work within Belfast, acknowledging the complex features at interfaces and developing the Interface Working Group as an attempt to provide a co-ordinated and focused approach on all the issues that impact on communities in interface areas.
CRC was also concerned to identify how communities could be supported to explore interface issues and what might be needed to reduce/soften/remove barriers while ensuring safety.

Following the development of the 'Challenge of Change' report, CRC and OFMDFM identified the need to develop a strategic approach and process of engagement with interface communities throughout Belfast. During this same period, Rural Community Network was heavily engaged in advocating for the need for community relations issues to be explored and addressed in rural areas. RCN actively highlighted that while there are perhaps no physical walls in rural areas, there are psychological and emotional boundaries that impact on the daily way of life for rural communities. RCN had published a series of minority reports which explored the perspectives of those who were minorities in communities in North Antrim and the border. RCN had completed a range of research on community relations in rural areas and this was compiled in their Sharing over Separation: A Rural Perspective, which led to the successful development of the Rural Enablers Programme supported under Measure 2.1 of the European Union's PEACE III Programme. This Rural Enabler Programme will work with rural communities and key institutions across Northern Ireland and the Six Border Counties of Ireland.

On this basis and through a long standing relationship between both organisations, the Community Relations Council, with support from the IWG, expanded their remit beyond Belfast in partnership with Rural Community Network and other key organisations.

As part of this, CRC and RCN commissioned this research to explore the issue of contested spaces beyond Belfast. The development of a co-ordinated process to assist in the eventual creation of vibrant and sustainable communities across the region is vital in supporting peace-building through putting in place a plan of short, medium and long-term actions to address social, community, physical and economic issues in contested spaces.

This publication goes some way to conceptualising and exploring the dynamics of segregation, division and community tensions in cities, towns and villages beyond Belfast. The production of this report is only one strand of much wider and more sustained work that needs to be carried out if we are to build a shared and equal society for all across the region.

It is vital that we all find interactive, engaging and visionary ways of working within and across sectors and in communities, particularly during this difficult economic climate. The continued costs to our society of cyclical conflict because we can't or won't share cannot continue to be sustained if we are serious about creating vibrant urban and rural communities for all.

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Community Relations Council

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Executive Summary

The *Beyond Belfast* report was jointly commissioned by the Community Relations Council and Rural Community Network to explore the physical legacy of segregation and division in towns, villages, rural communities and the border areas beyond Belfast.
The report also set out to review how such segregation is maintained and extended through forms of behaviour that might range from simple acts of avoidance to serious acts of violence.

One of the objectives was also to consider the extent to which the notion of an 'interface', a term which is principally used to describe the boundaries of sectarian division within Belfast, is also applicable to areas beyond Belfast, and to consider whether we need different terms to describe segregated and contested spaces in more rural communities. The research noted that in most towns, villages and smaller settlements, there are no physical barriers dividing residential areas, and although some previous research has applied the terminology of 'interfaces' to rural areas, in reality this has largely described 'patterns of avoidance' rather than served to reflect the existence of tension and violence.

The report therefore uses the term 'contested space' to describe the situation where there is tension over access to public space in a largely segregated community but where no physical barriers have been constructed to reinforce those divisions. The term 'interface' is reserved to describe the small number of locations where divisions and contest over space have resulted in persistent and recurrent acts of violence and subsequently, in the construction of walls, fences and other visible barriers to divide and separate, protect and secure.

This research reviews the different forms that segregation and division take in the wide range of different types of communities that are found 'beyond Belfast'. At one extreme, the large urban centres, such as Derry/Londonderry, Lurgan and Portadown, have much in common with Belfast with heavily segregated social housing estates, marked by flags and murals and in place protected by security barriers.
At the other extreme are the numerous small villages and rural communities which display few of the visible trappings of sectarian division, but in which an individual's behaviour, movement and sense of safety may be dominated by knowledge of such things as ownership of land and patterns of residence.
Then there is the border area, which at one level divides north from south, but which also includes diverse pockets of minority communities. Such communities may be subjected to a dual form of segregation in relation to their local neighbours and to their historic hinterland.

The research nevertheless found that barriers do exist in many rural communities. These may not be physical or visible barriers, but they are barriers nonetheless, and they have real effects in constraining and shaping the behaviour and attitudes of both individuals and communities.

Our research suggests that a number of key factors are necessary for segregated spaces in small towns and rural areas to become contested spaces. These include:

- Demographic factors that impact upon a sense of control or dominance over space;
- The emergence of a degree of contest over space, resources and or services;
- The quality of relationships between members of the local Protestant unionist and Catholic nationalist communities, including the quality of political and community leadership;
- The presence of trigger events and activities;
- The existence of temporal triggers;
- The availability of target sites; and
- The experience of acts of sectarian violence.

These factors assume that contested space is not a fixed entity but is something that emerges as a result of the intersection of territoriality, demographic change and commemorative, ritual or cultural events that raise tensions between the two communities. Contested spaces will simply not appear anywhere; rather they require the emergence or development of a number of

demographic factors that impinge on the local geography:

1. **Concentrated Population:** In general there needs to be a concentration of population, which may be a town, village or other form of settlement. Contested space is less likely to exist among a scattered or widely dispersed rural population, although there may well be strongly identified patterns of land ownership and segregation in such areas, which are in turn marked by patterns of avoidance and concerns for personal safety.

2. **Proximity:** The members of the two communities must be within reasonable distance of one another. Two villages, one predominately Protestant and the other predominately Catholic, which are few miles apart, will not necessarily constitute a contested space given the geographic separation, although trigger events and activities may serve to consolidate social and physical segregation into more formalised contested space.

3. **Changing Demographic Balance:** An increase (or decrease) in the size or proportion of either the majority or the minority community may lead to a perception among the majority community that 'their' town or village is 'changing'. This may increase tensions as the longer established community may seek to assert or re-assert its political identity. Although contested spaces are generally viewed in terms of Protestant - Catholic relations, the presence of another ethnic or national minority community may also serve as the basis for hostile segregation.

4. **Residential Concentration:** Members of the minority community must live close enough together to enable them to claim parts of the local environment as 'their' areas. If the minority is scattered, or evenly distributed, throughout an area they are probably less likely to assert their presence in a public way.

5. **Critical Mass:** The minority community needs to achieve a 'critical mass' to be able to assert itself within the local area. If the minority community is too small in numbers it is less likely to assert itself, but rather will adopt a 'keep your heads down' approach to issues that might cause offence or fear.

6. **Minority Perceived as a Threat:** Complaints by a minority community against the activities of the majority or demands for space for its cultural activities may contribute to feelings of hostility among the majority and be perceived as further evidence of change for the worse.

7. **Presence of Trigger Opportunities:** These may be associated with annual events such as parades, cultural celebrations or sporting activities; less regular events such as elections; a reaction to a specific incident; or be the culmination of factors such with access to local services, resources or public space.

8. **Presence of Negative Elements:** Tensions may be actively encouraged or provoked by the presence of individuals or a small number of people who actively desire to increase fear and hostility between communities. he active presence of dissident republicans or loyalists was identified as a growing issue in some rural communities.

9. **Demographic Similarities:** In larger settlements the process of contested space may be more likely to develop where demographic changes are occurring among working class communities or between discrete working-class residential areas. It is less likely that contested space will develop between a working-class and a middle-class area.

10. **Demographic Dissimilarity:** Members of the two communities may share space with fewer problems if their demographic profiles are dissimilar and there is less contestation over resources or physical space, for example, where one community has a young demographic profile and the other, an elderly one.

11. **Site of Conflict:** Depending on the scale or nature of local geography the contest between the two communities may occur near residential areas, at the geographical centre or may be displaced outside to symbolic properties (churches, memorials, Orange Halls, GAA clubs) in the hinterland which are often isolated, vulnerable and 'easy' targets.

Contested spaces may emerge or be created in situations where members of different communities live segregated lives, have weak inter-community relationships, and where persistent or recurrent tensions result in the patterns of segregation being manifested in some physical form or in the ways that people behave. Contested spaces thus assume a pattern of segregation but are also more than just segregation. The research identified a variety of forms that a contested space may take in towns and villages across Northern Ireland:

- As a relationship between a population centre and its hinterland;
- Where tension or violence occurs in the central area of a town or village; and
- Where tension or violence occurs between residential areas.

Furthermore each form may display slightly different characteristics depending on the scale of the settlement, the nature of the interaction between communities and the transience or permanence of the division. From this we identified eight broad types of contested space:

1. **Centre – Hinterland:** A single identity small rural settlement, surrounded by a hinterland with a large percentage of the 'other' community.
2. **Neighbouring Villages:** The area between two highly segregated but physically close villages or small communities.
3. **Divided Village:** A small rural settlement where tensions are worked out in the centre rather than between residential areas.
4. **Contested Centre:** Similar to the above but in larger towns, which may have largely segregated central areas where tensions are played out on occasions.
5. **Thoroughfare:** A single identity community which members of the 'other' community pass through.
6. **Neighbouring Estates:** The boundary area between two single identity residential estates.
7. **Protected Territories:** Residential boundaries that are marked by a physical barrier as in the majority of Belfast interfaces.
8. **The Border:** The border is a particular type of contested space, with different characteristics in different areas.

The report identifies a range of events and activities that may serve as indicators of the levels of inter-community tension that are illustrative of communities living with contested space. These include incidents of sectarian violence, attacks on symbolic properties, disputes over parades, the use of bonfires and displays of flags. Good quality data is available for some of these indicators, but there is a need to gather more consistent data and to integrate the different elements to enable a more coherent picture to be developed.

Finally the report provides a brief review of a series of key policy and strategy documents (Good Relations Strategies, PEACE III Action Plans, Policing Plans) that might be expected to highlight responses to problems associated with contested space. A Shared Future did make a brief reference to sectarian problems in rural communities, but it is predominately focused on Belfast and urban centres and many of the Peace III Action Plans do make reference to the need to address issues associated with

contested space, but there is no overall coherent strategic framework that focuses on segregation and contested spaces in smaller towns and rural areas.

The research suggests that there has been a piecemeal approach to addressing the issue of segregation and division in rural communities and areas beyond Belfast, but the current consultation on the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration provides an opportunity to ensure that such issues are addressed within a strategic framework that encompasses each of the government departments and main statutory agencies.

This research has identified a number of areas where work will need to be undertaken to support any strategic approaches to sectarianism and segregation in rural communities and we make a number of recommendations to that end.

1. OFMDFM should ensure that the finalised Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration clearly reflects the context of sectarianism and division and the problems associated with contested spaces within rural communities and areas beyond Belfast.
2. OFMDFM should identify and monitor a range of relevant and appropriate key indicators that can be used to identify contested spaces and identify the key organisations to be responsible for gathering and disseminating such data.
3. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, in developing effective programmes and policies should ensure that where relevant these address sectarianism and conflict.
4. All Departments should ensure that relevant future rural orientated strategy or policy which impacts on rural areas acknowledges the problem of sectarianism and division in rural communities and includes clear aims and objectives to address such matters.
5. The Department for Justice should review the necessity for the continued presence of security barriers in Derry/Londonderry, Lurgan and Portadown.
6. The PSNI should continue to record all incidents of sectarian violence and hate incidents and make such data available to local councils in an agreed manner that allows for the identification of hot spots and contested space.
7. The PSNI should systematically record all attacks on an agreed list of symbolic properties and structures across Northern Ireland and make this publicly available in an appropriate format on an annual basis.
8. The NIHE should record all incidents of sectarian violence and harassment that occur in its properties and aggregate and publish such data on an annual basis in an appropriate format.
9. Each local council should include a clear strategy for addressing segregation and division in its Good Relations Plan; this strategy should be integrated with other strategic plans and programmes of work.
10. Each local council should map the variety of contested spaces within its area. These should be based on a mixture of the hard indicators identified in this report plus local knowledge. The status of such contested spaces should be monitored on an ongoing basis.

11. Each local council should take responsibility for gathering together data on key indicators in their area. This may include, in particular, sectarian violence and hate crimes, contested parades and public events, bonfires, displays of flags, graffiti and murals, and attacks on memorials and key symbolic structures.

12. Each local council should undertake a review of defensive architecture in their area.

13. CRC and RCN should take forward the work on contested spaces in rural areas through a similar structure to the Interface Working Group.

14. CRC and RCN should develop a strategy for promoting shared learning in responding to sectarian division, tension and violence in rural communities.

15. The persistence of segregation and division on either side of the border and the presence of the border as a contested space should be an issue that is considered and discussed on a cross-border level and on an initial basis by the North South Ministerial Council.

Organisational Background

Community Relations Council

The Community Relations Council (CRC) was formed in January 1990 with the purpose of supporting and promoting community relations work at all levels within the community, a role which it continues to carry out. It originated from a proposal of a research report commissioned by the NI Standing Advisory Committee on Human Rights, titled 'Improving Community Relations' (Frazer and Fitzduff, 1986). CRC is the regional body for community relations in Northern Ireland, established as an independent charity and acting as an arm's length body through sponsorship by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). Since its establishment in 1990 the CRC has supported practical initiatives underpinning progress towards a society whose principles are fairness and justice, the peaceful celebration of variety and difference, and the importance of sharing, trust and inclusion. By supporting partnerships, co-operation, dialogue, meeting and friendship, and by promoting better practice and policy, CRC is the leading independent voice championing change to achieve and maintain a shared and open society based on fairness, the celebration of diversity and variety, and genuine reconciliation and interdependence. CRC's vision is of a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair society founded on the achievement of reconciliation, equality, co-operation, respect, mutual trust and good relations, of an open society, free from intimidation and threat, where peace and tolerance are considered normal.

Rural Community Network

Rural Community Network is a regional voluntary organisation for rural communities and was established by community groups from rural areas in 1991 to articulate the voice of rural communities on issues relating to poverty, disadvantage and equality. RCN is a membership organisation which adopts a community development approach to its work which includes rural community development, action research, policy analysis, community planning, peace building, consultation, mediation, facilitation and technical support. Rural Community Network is committed to a rural community development and networking approach to the planning and development of rural communities in order to address poverty, social exclusion and equality and to support work towards 'A Shared Future'. RCN's vision is of vibrant, articulate, inclusive and sustainable rural communities across Northern Ireland contributing to a prosperous, equitable, peaceful and stable society. RCN seeks to provide an effective voice for and support to rural communities, particularly those who are most disadvantaged. Core to the organisation are the values of social justice, promoting fairness, equality and equity of opportunity and access, challenging discrimination (in all its forms) and valuing diversity.

1. Introduction

This report was commissioned by the Community Relations Council (CRC) and Rural Community Network (RCN) as a follow up to research which brought together information relating to interfaces in the Belfast urban area (CRC 2008). The aim of the *Beyond Belfast* research is to explore the ways in which the physical geography of cities, towns, villages, rural communities and border areas outside of Belfast are segregated, and how such segregation is maintained and extended through forms of behaviour that range from simple acts of avoidance to serious acts of violence. One of the objectives was also to consider the extent to which the notion of an 'interface', a term which is principally used to describe the boundaries of sectarian division within Belfast, is also applicable to areas beyond Belfast, or whether we need different terms to describe segregated and contested spaces in more rural communities.

The concept of an interface is necessarily predicated on some form of residential segregation, but segregation on its own does not necessarily result in interfaces. The interface areas in Belfast, which are most readily identifiable by a variety of walls, fences, gates, barriers, security cameras and areas of wasteland, are the most visible manifestations of social segregation and polarisation in Northern Irish society. But it is the physical nature of these barriers that is distinctive. However, there are few such physical barriers in towns or villages beyond Belfast, and it is questionable whether the term 'interface' is the most appropriate term to describe the patterns of physical segregation in which public space is marked in a way that suggests it 'belongs' to one community, or is translated as excluding the other.

In most towns, villages and smaller settlements, there are no physical barriers dividing residential areas. This raises a series of questions in relation to territorial division and boundary marking in rural communities? What are the specific means of delineating the boundaries between the two main communities? Are these markers as obvious as the display of flags, political/cultural murals and other symbolism, or are the boundaries simply less visible to the untrained eye? Some previous research on segregation in rural areas has drawn upon the terminology of a 'rural interface' (Murtagh 1999; Osborne 2009), however in reality this research has largely discussed 'patterns of avoidance' among members of the two main communities, and appears to have adopted the terminology of interfaces as a shorthand for high levels of segregation rather than as a reflection of the existence of tension and violence.

Segregation and the perceived division of public space into 'our' spaces and 'their' spaces has the potential to create more evident forms of contest and division than the relatively private act of avoidance, and might ultimately lead to the imposition of physical barriers, similar to those in Belfast. This might occur if an area is heavily segregated and tensions are raised over demographic changes in the locality, through the growing use of visual displays, through the marking of space by memorials, graffiti, election posters and the like, through disputes around parades and other events, or through acts of violence on individuals or symbolic properties. All of which may lead to an increasing contest over territory. However, without such 'trigger events', the residents of segregated towns and villages may co-exist with their neighbours with little interaction or tension and with few or no incidents of violence. It is important therefore to make the distinction between patterns of segregation which result in relatively peaceful parallel lives and those which generate tensions and some form of hostile segregation over contested space.

This paper uses the term 'contested space' to describe the situation where there is tension over access to public space in a largely segregated community but where no physical barriers have been constructed to reinforce those divisions. We reserve the term 'interface' to describe those areas where divisions and contest over space have resulted in persistent and recurrent acts of violence and, subsequently, in the construction of walls,

fences and other visible barriers to divide and separate, protect and secure.

This research explores the different forms that segregation and division take in the wide range of different types of communities that are found 'beyond Belfast'. At one extreme the large urban centres, such as Derry/Londonderry, Lurgan and Portadown, have much in common with Belfast with heavily segregated social housing estates, marked by flags and murals and in places protected by security barriers. At the other extreme are the numerous small villages and rural communities which display few of the visible trappings of sectarian division, but in which an individual's behaviour, movement and sense of safety may be dominated by knowledge of such things as ownership of land and patterns of residence. Then there is the border area, which at one level divides north from south, but which also includes diverse pockets of minority communities. Such communities may be subjected to a dual form of segregation: in relation to their local neighbours and to their historic hinterland. The patterns of segregation and division, of tensions and contested spaces are considered in each of these different environments.

The research acknowledges that there are similarities in the ways that segregation and division are mapped into the practical lives of people and communities across Northern Ireland, but also that there are very real differences in the ways that such realities are experienced in different physical environments. In some urban areas, the intensity and scale of violence has resulted in the construction of physical barriers to divide and separate. Such barriers do not exist in most towns and no such physical barriers exist in rural communities (although much of the border existed as a fortified and protected barrier through the course of the Troubles). This must be considered as a very positive situation given the tension, fear and violence that have been experienced in many areas over many years. However, the research also found that barriers do exist in many rural communities. These may not be physical or visible barriers, but they are barriers nonetheless and they have real effects in constraining and shaping the behaviour and attitudes of both individuals and communities.

We begin this paper by reviewing research on interfaces as an urban form of extreme segregation (Chapter 2). We then continue by exploring how these distinctions have been analysed in research that focuses on other areas and rural communities (Chapter 3), before considering the specific history and characteristics of the border area, and particularly the southern border region, in a chapter drawn from a paper especially prepared by Brian Harvey for this project (Chapter 4).

Chapter 5 includes a discussion of a wide range of factors and issues that may impact upon the development and maintenance of contested spaces within a segregated environment, including a range of demographic and social triggers that increase tensions. Chapter 6 then outlines a variety of the forms that physical segregation takes in towns, villages and rural communities across Northern Ireland. Chapter 7 reviews some of the different policies and strategies that impact upon the issues under discussion and suggests a number of actions that might be promoted or supported to limit the potential for the creation of an increasingly segregated and contested rural environment. We end by making a number of recommendations for Government, local authorities and other bodies which will be necessary in developing a more strategic approach to contested spaces on rural areas.

Research Process

The initial work for this project took place between July and September 2009, during which time ICR undertook a review of the literature on segregation and division in rural areas of Northern Ireland and held interviews and conversations with a range of key informants who had experience of working on community relations issues in rural communities. A draft report was presented to the Beyond Belfast steering group and to a number of public consultation events in Banbridge, Ballymena, Derry/Londonderry and Omagh in October 2009, which were attended

by people from the community and voluntary sector as well as those working for a variety of statutory organisations.

After this first phase, CRC/RCN commissioned further work on segregation and division in and around the border areas. This was undertaken by Caroline Creamer (2010) of the International Centre for Local and Regional Development, and Brian Harvey (2010) and their papers were presented for discussion at two further consultation events in Cavan and Enniskillen during March 2010.

Finally, ICR was commissioned to draw on the findings of the various consultation events and on the papers prepared by Creamer and Harvey to prepare a revised and extended draft of the *Beyond Belfast* report for CRC and RCN.

Definitional Note

Throughout the report, our understanding of the term 'rural' is based upon the discussion and framework in the *Report of the Interdepartmental Urban-Rural Definition Group*[1] (NISRA 2005). This divides Northern Ireland into eight broad settlement bands ranging from the Belfast Metropolitan area to a small village, hamlet and open countryside as shown in the table below.

This research is largely focused on those areas beyond the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area, although some towns on the fringe of the BMUA are included in this study as they are distinct from the core 'urban' centre of the city.

Rural Community Network draws on the NISRA framework to define 'rural areas' as those settlements within bands F, G & H and with a population of 4,500 people or fewer. This also serves as the basis for any use of the term 'rural communities' in this report.

Band	Settlement Type	Population Size
A	Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area	c580,000
B	Derry Urban Area	c90,000
C	Large Town	18,000-75,000
D	Medium Town	10,000-18,000
E	Small Town	4,500-10,000
F	Intermediate Settlement	2,250-4,500
G	Village	1,000-2,250
H	Small Village and open countryside	up to 1,000

1 Available at http://www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk/mapxtreme_towns/Reports/ur_report.pdf

2.'Interface': Contested & Protected Urban Space

There is a high level of residential segregation across Northern Ireland. A Northern Ireland Housing Executive paper from 1999 indicated that 71% of its housing provision across Northern Ireland was located in segregated estates; these are estates where more than 90% of tenants were from one of the two main communities (NIHE 1999). Segregation can, in theory at least, result in a relatively peaceful form of parallel living based on mutual avoidance of the 'other'. But context is never static, populations may both increase and decline, social events celebrating one community or the other take place in public space and some types of activity cannot be carried out in complete separation from the 'other'.

In reality, segregated living involves living with tension, fear, suspicion and mistrust. It is based on claiming and exercising rights over public space through local demographic dominance and in denying, or limiting, those same rights to the 'other'. Segregation leads inevitably to contest over access to public space and social resources. This can be expressed through access to shops, bars, doctors, health centres, places of employment and leisure centres, as much as to the right to display or celebrate wider cultural identity. Contest over access to space and resources may impact on all aspects of communal life, or it may largely have particular resonance at specific times of the day or of week or at certain times of the year.

Segregation and the contest over space is most visible in Belfast, where the numerous interface barriers have served to divide the city's working class residential areas into a patchwork of 'Protestant' and 'Catholic' territories. But many, if not all, towns, villages and rural communities across Northern Ireland are also divided and fragmented to some extent, even if the divisions are not visibly marked as in Belfast.

Defining 'Interface'

Interfaces are most commonly associated with the numerous walls, fences, gates and barriers that have been erected to provide a degree of protection to already segregated working class communities across Belfast, and to a lesser extent with Derry Londonderry (Byrne 2007). Definitions of an interface have focused on the juxtaposition of two predominantly single identity territories 'against' one another. In line with this, O'Halloran et al. define an interface as:
a common boundary line between a predominantly Protestant/Unionist area and a predominantly Catholic/Nationalist area. An interface community is a community which lives alongside an interface (O'Halloran et al. 2004: 5).

When one thinks about an interface in Belfast, visual images of a steel or brick wall physically separating two communities immediately come to mind. In this sense, the presence of a physically built structure separating communities is an indicator that relationships between the two main ethno-political communities are not 'normal' and remain characterised by insecurity, threat and anxiety:

By creating clear physical indicators where one community 'begins' and another community 'ends', barriers have sometimes served as magnets for exploiting or expressing community tensions for political ends, or for youths and other people wanting to indulge in what has now become known as 'recreational rioting' (CRC 2008: 3).

While Barack Obama spoke in Berlin on 24 July 2008 suggesting that, '*Not only have walls come down in Berlin, but they have come down in Belfast, where Protestant and Catholic found a way to live together*',[2] in reality there are now more interface barriers presently than there were in the pre-ceasefire period. A report in 2006 noted that the NIO had authorised the building of at least nine new peace walls and the strengthening of a further 11 since 1994 in Belfast (Jarman 2006). More recently a CRC report (2008) documented 88 interface barriers and structures across Belfast; others have been built since this report was published. Although the NIO built barriers in other locations have not been subjected to the same level of interest,

2 http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/world-news/obama-northern-ireland-is-an-example-to-all-the-world-13920720.html Accessed September 8th 2009.

some additions have been made to the security structures in Derry/Londonderry and Portadown over the course of the peace process.

Although most interfaces generally manifest in the form of physically built structures such as a steel fence or a brick wall, even here the reality is at times more subtle, and an interface may be defined by a particular landmark or some element of urban geography. With more subtle forms of interface structures, there is the potential that interfaces may go unnoticed by outsiders and one may need a degree of local knowledge to even be aware of their existence (O'Halloran et al 2004). There are therefore a number of ways in which territory can be demarcated aside from the traditional steel fences or brick walls. These include:

- A 'turn in the road', local landmark or row of shops;
- Low level barriers used to close roads and entries;
- Redevelopment which distances residential areas by the construction of industrial or commercial zones;
- New road lay-outs or developments;
- Flags, murals, election posters and street names; and
- Grills and bars used to protect private properties (Jarman 2004: 6).

While early definitions of an interface as a boundary between a Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist and Catholic/Nationalist/Republican areas provided a useful initial framework, Jarman argued that the traditional definition of an interface was limited and that essentially there needed to be something more than two communities in close proximity with one another. To this end, Jarman broadens the definition of an interface as:

the conjunction or intersection of two or more territories or social spaces, which are dominated, contested or claimed by some or all members of the differing ethno-national groups (Jarman 2004: 7).

The two crucial components to this definition are firstly that there is a "*process of domination, contest or claim*" which indicates it is not enough to have two communities juxtaposed with one another physically, there needs to be some form of contestation over this physical 'space'. Secondly, this definition includes the fear, threat or actual use of violence as key indicators of a potential interface site:

and it is violence or the threat of violence that transforms otherwise peaceful locations and boundary areas into interfaces (Jarman 2004: 7).

An interface is therefore a product of a process of contest over domination of a social space and this contest contains the fear, threat or actual use of physical forms of violence (Jarman 2005).

Previous work suggests that interfaces are not fixed, clearly defined or static, and new interfaces or flashpoints may emerge which can spark tensions in already established interfaces. Indeed, interfaces and sectarian violence may occur in areas which do not fit the 'traditional' model of an interface as the intersection of segregated working-class residential zones (Jarman 2004). These locations include:

- The intersection of middle-class residential areas and working-class areas;
- The emergence of interface issues in suburban residential areas;
- Sectarian violence in parks and other open spaces;
- Segregation of shared spaces such as shopping centres and town centres; and
- Violence in relation to schools and sites where children can be defined by school uniforms (Jarman 2004: 6).

CRC (2008) documents that a defining feature of interface areas in Belfast is the recurring act of rioting, disorder, criminal damage and violent assault, while research on inter-communal tensions in Derry/Londonderry identified a similar range of factors, issues and problems (Byrne 2007, Hansson 2005, Roche 2005). Jarman (2006) identified a number of 'trigger'

events that often increased tension and the potential for violence in interface areas. These events include parades, football and GAA matches, bonfires, and Halloween. Jarman further suggests that activities related to disturbances around these issues include: use and abuse of alcohol; growth of the night-time economy; flying of flags; and use of fireworks.

As such, tensions and violence at interface areas in an urban setting are generally linked with a particular type of event, with a limited range of activities, or with a certain category of person (Jarman 2006: 7). In terms of category of people typically involved in disturbances, Jarman found this included young people attracted to interface areas to engage in 'recreational rioting' (which can have the potential to escalate into sectarian violence), anti-social elements who have little involvement in the local community and tend to cause trouble to antagonise the 'Other' side, and finally, people from outside the immediate area who participate for enjoyment and who subsequently do not have to live in the area in the aftermath of any trouble (Jarman 2006).

Violence associated with interface tensions may not necessarily occur at the interface itself, it may be 'displaced' elsewhere as interfaces become more policed and subject to surveillance through the use of CCTV (Jarman 2004: 18). Jarman contends that this violence may move to otherwise neutral or generally non-contested spaces which then become a site of conflict, particularly between groups of young people. Indeed, commercial spaces may become 'subtle' forms of interface, as was found during the course of this research, where a car park at a shopping centre in a town outside of Belfast was one example of a space that was contested between young people from the main communities. As such, unless space is maintained or managed to be shared and neutral, there is a danger that what was previously a shared social space can become 'abandoned' by one community (Jarman 2004: 19). It is also possible that town centres can over time (and dependent on a number of factors which may include demographic change) become divided or contested, such as has been the case in recent years in Glengormley and Lurgan. While these locations may not clearly be identifiable to the outsider as an interface, there can be effective barriers in accessing local resources (Jarman 2004: 21).

There has been a significant body of work relating to disadvantages which have come to be associated with living on either side of an interface, including high levels of socio-economic deprivation,[3] high levels of ongoing violence and intimidation and restricted access to facilities and services as being located within the 'Other' community (Murtagh 1994, Garvaghy Residents 1999). Indeed, Hargie et al. (2006) and Roche (2008) note the impact that a physical barrier has in restricting the movement and subsequently options available to young people in interface areas. Hargie et al refers to this as a '*Bubble Syndrome*' and Roche referring to a process of '*Bounded contentment*', in which the young people limit their life choices in part as a result of perceived, and indeed, real barriers they face and their 'fear' of entering into the domain of the 'other' community to access shops, services, schools and employment.

In terms of attempting to address difficulties at interfaces in an urban setting, Jarman (2006) highlights seven different approaches which Osborne (2009) suggests are also applicable to rural areas:

- **Communication** – within and between communities;
- **Relationships** – between individuals from both sides can reduce tension;
- **Networks** – with a variety of stakeholders that can engage in preventative work and intervention;
- **Inclusivity** – of all actors through discussion and the community's ability to choose its own representatives;

3 More than three-quarters of the physical interfaces in Belfast lie within the top ten most deprived wards in Northern Ireland (Shirlow and Murtagh 2006).

- **Young people** – as part of the solution rather than as part of the problem;
- **Trust** – to sustain relationships and networks;
- **Connections** – link to other forms of community activity including social and health issues

While our understanding of these issues is largely based on research which has been carried out in interface areas in Belfast, and to a lesser extent in Derry/Londonderry, these dynamics are also relevant in other urban areas where physical security barriers have been built by the NIO, such as Lurgan and Portadown. This includes the role of young people, and particularly young males in levels of inter-communal violence, primarily for the 'craic' and disputes in and around interfaces, which were viewed increasingly through an anti-social as opposed to a sectarian lens (Byrne 2007; Garvaghy Residents 1999; Hansson 2005; Roche 2005).

In Conclusion

This discussion of research on interfaces and issues associated with interfaces draws on the experiences of the segregated nature of working class residential communities in Belfast, but equally applies to parts of Derry/ Londonderry, Lurgan and Portadown. Each of these are locations that marked and divided by a variety of forms of physical barriers and security structures, and which have become the site of persistent and recurrent acts of violence. The key components of an interface are thus defined as the presence of not simply segregation, but also the physical barriers that both divide and act as visual reminders of such divisions.

In contrast, there has been a more limited amount of work relating to segregation, division and the nature of contested space beyond Belfast. The next chapter reviews research on segregation and contested spaces in smaller settlements and rural areas beyond the boundaries of Belfast and in so doing, questions the value and relevance of the term interface as a descriptor of the physical environment and relationships between the two main communities.

3. Segregation and Contested Space in a Rural Context

The concept of interfaces in a rural context is much less well considered and the limited consideration of the dynamics of spatial segregation and contestation in a rural setting perhaps underpins a feeling within some rural development organisations that there has consistently been a lack of a coherent strategy across government in developing and applying good relations policy to rural areas. Peter Osborne (2009), for example, noted that while *A Shared Future* made substantial reference to reducing tensions at interfaces, this was primarily based on an understanding that this was an urban phenomenon and thus it did not highlight the issue of how to address similar tensions and problems in rural areas. This chapter briefly reviews some of the research that addresses the issues of segregation, contested spaces and 'interfaces' in areas beyond Belfast.

Rural Segregation and Division

A number of anthropologically based studies have explored sectarianism, segregation and the dynamics of social interaction in small rural towns across Northern Ireland (Leyton 1975; Harris 1972; Darby 1986). One of the first studies of this kind was that by Rosemary Harris which was based on ethnographic fieldwork carried out in the 1950s and first published in 1972. Harris found that while basic levels of social interaction tended to be 'amiable enough' in the village of 'Ballybeg',[4] Protestants and Catholics within the village tended to have 'little contact' and completely distinct social spheres which related to division based on church attendance, endogamy, difference in political belief, educational division, and the patronage of local shops, whereby Protestants would tend to give custom to shops owned by their 'own', and the same was similar for local Catholics. Any interactions between the two communities tended to be limited to farmers lending one another equipment, and there was a general avoidance of discussing any topics which could be perceived to be 'contentious':

> *Often explicitly connected with one side or the other and that it was only with members of the same side that individuals could relax to talk freely to say what they thought* (Harris 1972: 147).

The contact between communities was limited and interpersonal relationships fragile, with people learning to co-exist without any depth of communication or partnership. In a later study, Crozier similarly found that the pattern of religious affiliation in 'Ballintully' resulted in most co-operation following kin and neighbourhood lines with 'co-religionists' (Curtin and Wilson 1989).

Other studies have focused on the importance of the demographic breakdown of a town or village influencing relations and levels of interaction between members of the two main communities. McFarlane (Curtin and Wilson 1989) in relation to 'Ballycuan' and Buckley and Kenney (1995) referring to 'Listymore' all noted the importance of local demography on relations and subsequently tensions in the locality. The research found cases in which some members of the majority community came to 'resent' the increasing minority population expanding into 'their' neighbourhood. According to McFarlane:

> *where, as in 'Ballycuan', the 'Other' is only a small minority, everyday life is likely to have a different character from life in settings where the population is more mixed* (Curtin and Wilson 1989: 42).

In addition:

> *The definition of such areas is, in large part, decided by the ethnic affinity of the majority living there. Sometimes a minority from the other side can be tolerated. In other cases, where the ethnic body of an area is in dispute, there can be consternation when somebody of the other side comes to live locally* (Buckley and Kenney 1995: 155).

4 In many anthropological studies towns/villages were given fictional names to protect the anonymity of the real locations across Northern Ireland in which the research was carried out.

This majority/minority dynamic in areas outside of Belfast was also highlighted by Buckley and Kenney (1995), who cited Poole's work in relation to the 'Double minority' and 'Double majority' theory, whereby both Catholics and Protestants are minorities in relation to two different territorial units (Poole 1983). Therefore:

In Northern Ireland, Catholics are a minority but they form a majority in Ireland as a whole. *Protestants, conversely, are in a majority in the north, but would form a minority in any future united Ireland*. *The territorial arrangement preferred by each side, therefore, is the one in which its own side would dominate* (Buckley and Kenney 1995: 3).

Adams' study (1995) of Cashel, County Fermanagh, focused on co-operation between members of the two main communities while at the same time documenting extensive segregation of schools, sports and social infrastructure, while Larsen's (1982a) study of 'Kilbroney' highlighted how Catholics and Protestants in the town attempted to live with the conflict by *'avoiding interaction with each other in a ritualised and systemic fashion'* (Larsen 1982a: 133). Segregation became an extreme way of avoiding forms of contact with the 'other', which in turn reinforced perceptions of hostility and otherness through a lack of contact or understanding of the 'other's' interests and concerns (Hamilton 2008: 23). Larsen (1982b) also described how Protestants and Catholics perceived the marching season differently, the former as a cultural and commemorative event expressing identity in a public fashion, while the latter viewed marches as demonstrations of power and territorial control.

In considering patterns of segregation and division, one must also consider what could loosely be conceptualised as the largest 'interface' on the island, and one of the principal drivers behind the political conflict in Ireland both historically and in more recent times, namely the Irish border.[5] In his study of border minority communities, Hastings Donnan describes the border as pockmarked by small hamlets and groupings of a few houses, which function as former or future flashpoints that serve as the rural equivalent of urban interfaces and that are to be driven around and avoided. Unmarked by barriers, these are boundaries that are invisible to the external observer. Particular pathways in the border region, which to the outsider might just be another winding country road, are ethnicised and emotionalised for local people with a knowledge of who lives there and what has happened in them. People are acutely aware of the precipitousness of the transition zones, where places imbued with a sense of national pride or heroic loss can quickly shift to places of fear and threat (Donnan 2006: 11). Indeed, Donnan found a general feeling of vulnerability among border Protestants in his research who feel themselves to be '*at the hard edge of an increasingly soft border*' (Donnan 2006: 2). Donnan further contends that in particular, border Protestants understand their identity in terms of the border:

As a material marker of difference from those whose loyalties lie beyond, and towards whom their own identity exists in oppositional terms (Donnan 2006: 3).

He refers to boundaries in a rural context as '*fuzzy frontiers*' which are blurred, particularly for the outsider (Donnan 2006), while local people also internalise and reproduce these boundaries subconsciously through their everyday routines in terms of working, shopping, using services and socialising. Accordingly:

Rural boundaries between ethno-political groups bear some resemblance to the residential interfaces already well-known from the literature on urban Northern Ireland, where they are characteristically zones of frequent violence, tension and mistrust between antagonistic neighbourhoods of Catholics and Protestants (Donnan 2006: 1).

5 For further discussion of the 'Irish boundary problem', see Joan Vincent's paper 'Local knowledge and Political Violence in County Fermanagh', in *Ireland from Below: Social Change and Local Communities*, edited by Chris Curtin and Thomas M. Wilson (1989). Galway: University Press.

Donnan, like Jarman (2004), thus highlights some comparison between urban and rural segregation and in particular focuses on the existence, or history, of tension and violence between communities over a physical space as key indicators of the nature of relationships with the physical environment.

In a review paper for CRC and RCN, Peter Osborne (2009) argues that the definition of an interface as a physical barrier keeping communities apart is inappropriate in a rural setting and he suggests that the separation of communities in rural areas may be understood as relating to four distinct categories:

- **Physical division** – which may manifest itself through townlands and a 'patchwork' quilt of communities, villages, farms or the use of separate buildings/services rather than an actual wall or fence;
- **Mindset division** – as affiliations differ and people feel a sense of belonging in communities;
- **Patterns of behaviour** – manifest in how those from differing backgrounds attend social, sporting, church or cultural organisations; and
- **Background** – as people from different ages, gender, racial background, sexual orientation or other categories interact differently with people from different religious/political background and have differing views and behaviour.

According to Osborne, rural 'interfaces' are primarily based on the nature of relationships between members of the two communities and understanding these requires consideration of:

how people from different religious, political and racial backgrounds interface with each other and within their own communities, on the basis of physical, mindset, behavioural and group patterns (Osborne 2009: 6).

In a similar vein, Murphy (2009a) contended that 'interfaces' in rural areas are *'geographic, social and cultural'*. However, it may be more pertinent to apply these definitions to relations between communities in terms of strategies of avoidance and segregation rather than an interface as such.

We suggest that the terminology of 'interface' should be reserved for those locations in which firstly, space or territory is contested and has a history of being contested; secondly, where that contest over the space involves fear, threat or actual use of violence; and, thirdly, where physical structures have been built to provide some level of security. To be defined as an 'interface' in a rural context requires something more concrete and tangible than the quality of relationship (or the lack thereof) and the presence of strategies of avoidance, it also requires the presence of physical structures that divide and separate, and which mark and define space, but which also aim to provide some degree of protection and reassurance.

Rural Interfaces

There are a number of other factors that impact upon rural areas and which make them distinct from urban locations. Murtagh's work (1999) highlights the issue of land in a rural setting and he notes how members of one community are generally reluctant to sell land to a member of the 'out-group', with 61.2% of Protestant respondents in 'Oldtown' stating that they generally did not sell their land or property to members of the opposite religion, while 38.8% of Catholics stated that they would not sell up to Protestants. Similarly Kirk's research in Glenravel found that of all sales of land between 1958 and 1987, only 12.8% occurred between Catholics and Protestants (Kirk 1993: 496). Kirk highlighted the importance of land ownership in rural areas at concluded that:

Group interests are best served by the existence of social closure with an absence of land transfer across the religious divide (Kirk 1993: 334).

In a sense the issue of land and territory and subsequent control of it are key drivers historically behind the conflict in Northern Ireland (Murtagh 1999: 45):

There is no question that in a rural context, issues of attachment to area, locality and in some cases the very land itself, are emotive (Murphy 2009a: 8).

This link to territory and a physical space is important when considering demographic changes that have taken place in many towns and villages across Northern Ireland over the years. Murtagh noted that there was a general 'greening' of rural areas in 20 towns between 1911 and 1981 and a general demographic trend for a younger Catholic and an ageing Protestant population (Murtagh 1999).

Murtagh's research focused on an area with just under 27,000 residents (59% Catholic, 28% Protestant), but centred on the two small villages of 'Whiteville', a predominantly Catholic village of 170 people, and 'Glendale', a mainly Protestant village with 140 residents. The two villages were one mile apart but there was little contact between residents of the two villages. Murtagh focuses on 'strategies of avoidance' as the key to ongoing segregation, with Protestant residents of 'Glendale' looking mainly to larger Protestant towns further north for shopping and services such as Markethill, while Catholics tend to look south to Newry and over the border for services. These factors do not necessarily indicate an interface as such but rather highlight practices of segregation and avoidance of the 'other' which are predicated upon community background. The lack of any recurrent violence or contestation over public space or resources suggests that he is describing rural segregation rather than an 'interface' as such.

Nevertheless, Murtagh's study is useful in that it brings to the fore some of the trends which may lead to an increase in tensions between members of the two main communities, and which might result in the creation of an interface. In particular, Murtagh's survey of 'Oldtown' found that the Protestant population were more likely to have lived in the town all their lives (63.3%) as opposed to 41.3% of their Catholic counterparts, and Murtagh states that the increasing Catholic population in the town has had a powerful impact upon the behaviour and attitudes of isolated communities.

Protestants were more likely to describe the town as 'Protestant' (75.5%) compared to 27.5% of their Catholic counterparts who believed the town was 'Protestant', and this may have important repercussions in terms of visibly displaying the perceived political affiliation of the town in terms of flags, parades and other political symbols. In terms of attitudes towards specific cultural events, 53.8% of Protestant respondents in rural areas believed that 'traditional' parades should be allowed to march unhindered while 18% of Catholic respondents believed this should be the case (Murtagh 1999). Similarly Dunn (1995) acknowledged the convergence between a distinct sense of identity and a desire to live separately and 'mark out' territory:

The determination to remain distinctive and separate leads to drawing of boundaries or building of walls, to marking out territories and to a physical and emotional distancing from others (Dunn 1995: 4).

However, Hughes and Murphy (nd) contend that the manifestations of such divisions in rural areas are often more subtle than those in urban communities:

with sectarian interfaces reflected less in physical demarcation of territorial boundaries than in shared 'mental maps' of 'no go' areas, and business and recreational behaviour patterns that serve to maintain and reinforce division (Hughes and Murphy nd: 4).

They suggest that a key issue in rural communities is the extent to which the minority community is permitted to display its culture and customs. Rural Community Network's *Lost in Translation* report (2006) highlighted the prevalence of social exclusion in rural areas which was *'either enforced by the majority or embraced by the minority'*, and concluded that minority communities, whether in areas dominated by Protestants or by Catholics, often chose a strategy of withdrawal and played a minor role in wider community life, which in turn creates *'communities within communities'* (Hughes and Murphy nd: 4; RCN 2006).

Earlier research has also found a lack of community infrastructure in rural areas, particularly in relation to some isolated Protestant communities who were often unaware of potential opportunities for community development or community relations work and suffered from less able political leadership in terms of community development and community relations policies (RCN 2003). It was believed that strong political leadership is required to prevent tensions which were linked to trigger events from creating 'seasonal interfaces', with examples given of areas with the potential to develop into an interface, but have not done so until now due as a result of strong political and community leadership.

Without leadership there may be no mechanism in place for managing disputes, which may subsequently escalate into serious inter-communal violence. This is important when one considers the influential role that key individuals have played at a number of interfaces in reducing tensions through the work of Mobile Phone Networks and for example in Derry Londonderry a forum was established in 2005 to bring statutory, community and voluntary organisations together to discuss inter-communal tensions (Byrne 2007). The relative lack of contacts between key individuals from the different communities in a number of areas outside of Belfast has hindered such developments and led to a more limited presence on the ground when tensions rise as a result of a 'trigger' event.

In recent years there have been several studies looking at the experiences of minority communities in rural areas. In her study of four Protestant communities in border areas, Crawley found that for the most part there was little interaction between the two communities, partly as a result of a perceived lack of 'neutral' space (Crawley 2002a: 13). The research found that being a member of a minority community in a certain location impacts upon individual's perceptions of how they will be treated and can lead to a withdrawal into one's own community (Crawley 2002a).

Crawley's research also found that individuals in a minority community in rural areas were reluctant to display political symbols which would identify their community background or political allegiance and a lack of numbers in the minority community will generally result in members 'keeping their heads down' rather than contesting the physical space. Indeed, RCN found that in one town outside of Belfast with a small Catholic minority community, the reason more sectarian incidents do not take place is because Catholics '*keep their heads down*' to minimise risk (RCN 2005: 22-23). The report found that:

the actual size of the Catholic community enabled people to express themselves as Irish without any great difficulty. *The other (issue) is that Catholics as a minority have a strong sense of that minority status, were scared to express their Irish identity* (RCN 2005: 27).

Crawley's work also found that as a minority, a number of Protestant respondents felt restricted to certain parts of the town/village which was linked to perceptions of safety, with a particular influence on these decisions being the night-time economy and divide in social venues and there was a '*clear distinction between day and night time activities*' (Crawley 2002a: 23-24). Her research also highlighted that protests against loyal order and band parades made many respondents feel unwelcome in small towns and villages and reduced their 'sense of belonging', as they believed they could not express their identity as a minority community. In this sense, disputes around parades were viewed as raising tensions with their Catholic neighbours and a fear of 'losing their identity'. This, in turn increased the possibility of their being less likely to concede to demands over displays of cultural/political expressions such as flags or parades (Crawley 2002a):

There is a genuine lack of understanding, hurt and bewilderment arising from the resistance to marches from Catholic neighbours. *People feel that it is the only time of the year they openly assert their identity within those areas and cannot understand why this expression is not*

acceptable to Catholic neighbours. Opposition to parades was generally equated with a rejection of Protestant expression of identity (Crawley 2002a: 61).

Indeed in one area, Crawley found that there was a sense of resentment that the majority population are content to have Protestant custom in the village for most of the year but they are not granted the right to march (Crawley 2002a). A similar study, carried out in four minority Catholic rural communities, found mixed responses towards parades. While some respondents stated an acceptance of the 'right' to parade through the towns, others found Loyal Order and/or band parades 'triumphalist' and that they *'should not walk where they are not wanted*' (Crawley 2002b: 35).

An RCN study also found parades and opposition to parades to be a source of tension in five communities in counties Antrim and Down with a Catholic minority. RCN found that in one community, the small number of Catholics living in the area impacts upon the ability of the community to organise activities which are attractive to members of their community, primarily due to fears around safety and identifying oneself as a Catholic. The report indicated there was a general fear in expressing their identity in one area where Catholics described themselves as a 'minority' and this subsequently impacted upon the sense of belonging of members of the minority community in such locations (RCN 2005). As a result, many Catholic members of the community 'withdrew' and did not involve themselves with community life. In another town in the study where the Catholic population was growing and the Protestant population declining:

in community E where the Catholic population is increasing (with a corresponding decrease in the Protestant population), participants spoke of Catholic antagonism towards Protestants on the Twelfth (RCN 2005: 20).

The Impact of the Troubles

Peter Shirlow (2003) has noted that one-third of all politically motivated murders in Belfast during the Troubles took place within 250 metres of an interface. However, a number of rural and border areas were also significantly impacted upon by the violence of the Troubles. To this extent, Morrow et al. (2000) commented that in the rural setting:

local historic memories stretch much further into the past, sometimes centering on memories of previous land ownership patterns or on atrocities whose implications remain alive today. Less mobile property relationships and the continuity of family and community memory in rural communities mean that injuries in rural communities have additional depth and length (Morrow et al. 2000: 14).

As touched upon earlier in the paper, Murtagh (1999) found that history of the conflict along with an associated perceived 'need' to sustain one's own community contributed to high levels of segregation and avoidance of one another in rural towns. Similarly, Vincent (Curtin and Wilson 1989) notes the impact of the high levels of paramilitary violence in the early years of the Troubles on community relations in Rosslea and the perception, particularly by members of the Protestant community in this border area, that the IRA killing of Protestant farmers were attempts to '*ethnically cleanse*' the area. Therefore, memory of events from during the Troubles, of 'who did what, and to whom', (which are likely to be particularly strong in small rural communities), combined with demographic changes may result in a minority community asserting its identity in a stronger fashion, as more recent research has found to be the case in Castlederg, County Tyrone (Hamilton et al. 2008).

In Conclusion

There are clear distinctions between segregation and an interface. While an interface implies a large degree of residential segregation, segregation by itself does not necessarily result in an interface. There are a number of examples across Northern Ireland of towns and villages that are dominated by the dynamics of sectarianism and segregation, but where residents employ 'avoidance' tactics and maintain their social networks within their 'own' community (Hamilton et al. 2008).

Some of the literature on segregation, sectarianism and divisions in rural areas has adopted the terminology of 'interfaces' to describe the physical demography of rural segregation and patterns of avoidance that help sustain and perpetuate inter-communal divisions. However, in the process of discussion and consultation with people living and working in rural communities, there was strong feeling that the concept of an 'interface' was also strongly associated with a specific form of segregation, which was both urban and marked by recurrent outbursts or violence, which in turn has necessitated the construction of various forms of physical barriers. It was the presence of barriers or 'peacewalls' that distinguished the interface areas of urban environments from the fragmented and divided geography of rural areas.

It was acknowledged that the situation in some towns, villages and rural communities bore some resemblances to the situation in Belfast although they lacked the presence of barriers. At one end of a continuum, this included the existence of patterns of segregation across many aspects of social life, the existence of strategies of avoidance and limited forms of interaction and at the other end were areas marked by inter-communal tensions, competing assertions of control and ownership of public space and acts of violence against individuals and property. We argue that such 'contested spaces' stop short of being 'interfaces' as they lack the physical structures that both protect and deepen segregation.

Furthermore, the visible nature of the Belfast interfaces and the scale and persistence of violence associated with such environments has also ensured that practices have been developed and strategies put in place in an attempt to manage tension and conflict. In contrast, there has been little attempt to define or map those 'contested spaces' beyond Belfast and few discussions of the best ways to address the persistence of tensions that sustain and extend contested space.

4. Segregation in the Southern Border Counties[6]

Historical studies suggest that rural patterns of segregation and division are ultimately rooted in the plantations of the 17th century (Rankin 2005). Despite their deep historical roots in the plantation and the continued strong consciousness of the land in vernacular tradition, these patterns of segregation are still evolving. The Catholic population is expanding while the territorial boundaries of the older Protestant community are, on the whole, contracting, with its people moving inward into the hinterland of Northern Ireland. In such a context territorial divisions and inter-communal boundaries can be mobile and constantly changing; in some areas the boundaries may 'soften' while in others they 'harden'. New spaces of context may come into existence and old ones wither. There are parts of rural Northern Ireland where the 'other' community is not present, has died out or has moved on. Where a minority dwindles below a critical mass, it is no longer considered to be threatening and the segregated community become unviable and the territorial boundaries disappear or move (Newry is one such example).

The most prominent event that has an impact on such divisions and transformations is the period leading up to partition, and particularly the years immediately preceding the First World War. The situation of communal tension that surrounded the Third Home Rule Bill was documented in such a way as to give us the contours of what can be identified as segregated spaces. The period 1912-14 saw a large scale military mobilisation, first of Protestants, then of Nationalists, in the southern border counties, with well-armed UVF units formed in Monaghan, Cavan and Donegal; a large rally in Newbliss addressed by Edward Carson in 1913; and widespread disturbances breaking out in summer 1914. The Protestant parts of these counties were well identified in the RIC police reports and local press and are where the Protestant communities can still be found today. For example, in Monaghan along an axis that stretches from Clontibret to Castleblayney, Drum, Newbliss and Clones, with concentrations in other towns and villages such as Glaslough (O'Donnell 2005), their social life is still well connected to Protestant communities on the northern side of the border. No less so than in Northern Ireland, the Protestant community is unevenly spread. In Donegal, for example, there are concentrations in Raphoe, Ballintra, Donegal town, Dunkineely, Ardara and the Finn valley. In other border counties, the Protestant communities can be identified through the presence of a local church or minister, with sub-categories of Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Methodist and others. Many date back to individual local settlements from the 16th century onward.

Further live evidence of rural interfaces straddling the border may be found in the documentation of the Boundary Commission. This was set up, as part of the Treaty in 1921, to determine the border between the two parts of Ireland (this is not unusual: India had the Radcliffe Commission in 1947). It did not report until 1925 and the alterations of the border proposed, although minimal, so frightened the three governments of Dublin, Belfast and London that they agreed to suppress the report. Eventually, with an uncanny sense of timing, judging it safe to release in 1969, just in time for the Troubles. The Boundary Commission consulted extensively along the border and took in representations from interested parties. The principal determinant was the religious (and therefore political) identification or allegiance of each District Electoral Division (DED), as mapped in the 1911 census and this raw analysis formed the basis of the subsequent proposed re-allocation of territory. The Boundary Commission of course took in all the border counties, including Louth and Leitrim. If we want to identify the trajectory of segregation, we need look no further than these maps from 1925, for they give us its shapes and contours along the border. Indeed, the Unionist representative on the Commission, JR Fisher, spoke brutally but honestly on how the border should be constructed around religiously-identifiable DEDs to form, in his words, an 'ethnographic frontier'.

6 This chapter is edited from a longer paper commissioned from Brian Harvey (2010) to inform discussion as part of the consultation process.

The Commission's coloured maps showed how it struggled to redefine the border along these fractures, delineated by towns, rivers, uplands and lowlands, former fortresses, enclaves and corridors (Anderson & Bort 1999).

The Boundary Commission proposed a straightening of the border (and by implication a rationalisation of segregation and division), with the transfer of 32,000 people from the north to the south and 7,500 from the south to the north (Northern Ireland would have been smaller). Specifically, it proposed the transfer of a number of areas:

- The largely Catholic districts of south west Fermanagh, south and south west Armagh would go to the Free State;
- The Protestant enclaves of Drum (or Drumally), Mullyash, Church Hill and Carrickaslane, County Monaghan, would move to the north, as would the Protestant salient in east Donegal;
- The prosperous market town of Clones, County Monaghan, then dominated by Protestant traders, would have regained its hinterland in south-east Fermanagh, which would be transferred to the Free State.

Regardless of communal segregation, prior to 1925 the border had been an area of considerable mobility for education, trade, commerce, the professions and transport. And partition transformed the region from a trading, prosperous one into one of prolonged economic decay, which was accelerated by restrictions on trade (mainly by Dublin, not Stormont) and the road closures introduced from 1969. Even if day-to-day activity, trade, economic prosperity were brutally altered, there was no reason why the underlying topography or allegiances of 1925 should have been much changed by the border, nor are they in other countries visited by fresh borders (Todd 2005). Despite that, the rediscovery of contested spaces along and across the border seems to be a surprise. Paddy Logue's engaging *The Border* (1999) committed to writing many views about the border that people had hitherto been reluctant to commit to paper but, interestingly, only one contributor, English Quaker Janet Quilley, suggested that the interfaces of Belfast might be replicated, in a different form, along the border.

The balance of evidence suggests that segregation and communal territorialism along and across the border retain an underlying integrity, but have diminished in intensity. Southern Protestants knew that the political question had, for them at least, been finally settled, thereby removing some of the sharp edges of the antagonisms that had governed relationships with their neighbours over 1912-25. But some qualifications are necessary:

- Many southern border Protestants continued and still continue to have a 'northward' orientation, be that for trade, shopping, education and schooling, media, employment (e.g. police) or associations.
- Even if the political question was closed, displays of identity assertiveness by southern border Protestants were not welcome (and some still are not). A minority of southern border Protestants continued their association with the Orange Order, but intimidation forced the end of Orange marches in Monaghan in the 1930s. Southern Orangeism persisted with bands and music, but their members learned not to draw attention to themselves.
- Just as interfaces in the north had a seasonal, diurnal and intensity character, so too did tensions in the south. Tensions occasionally flared in the southern border counties, especially whenever there was exceptional violence in the north, leading to sporadic attacks on rural Orange halls, for example.
- The Protestant community declined in numbers, due largely to differential emigration, a long-term trend halted only recently.
- The *Emerald Curtain* and other research identified the persistence of issues concerning the Protestant community, such as lack of political recognition, funding for halls and support for community development. This is

confirmed by Walsh (2005) who reported problems in the area of schooling (bullying in mixed schools), employment, with some jobs having a discomfort level (e.g. local authorities, Gardai) and politics (a reluctance to engage). Intermarriage levels are low (6% of marriages), confirming in her view an evident level of religious segregation.

Walsh's research provides a modification to the softening theory, suggesting that it happens in some areas of life rather than others. For the Protestant community in the southern border counties, separate identity became less important in the areas of business, land, where to live, healthcare and work, but remain important for family, marriage (or intermarriage), the church (its associations and facilities) and schooling. There were positive indicators of the Protestant community becoming, in the last ten years, less isolated and more engaged with its neighbours and the political administrative system, with good participation rates in national, non-Church associated voluntary organisations. On the whole, indicators for the quality of community relations were more positive than on the northern side of the border.

All these had the effects of 'softening' the earlier hard edges of segregation of the southern border areas. Although population movements during the Troubles is often considered to be something that happened only within Northern Ireland, between 22,000 and as many as 60,000 people were displaced from the north, with most people resettling in the southern border counties (such resettlement is again entirely typical of the contested border region experience in post-reformation Europe). Many would have come from interface areas of the north and those displaced were quick to note both the more relaxed atmosphere of the south and the distrust extended to them not by southern border Protestants but by Catholics wary of republicans in their midst. Either way, they were relieved not to find the hard sectarian interfaces they had left behind.

Just as interfaces can both soften and harden, so too can their related borders. The Triskele study documents many ways in which the Irish border has both hardened and softened since 1925, sometimes with contradictory forces working simultaneously (Harvey et al 2005). There is a general assumption among contemporary border researchers that the European Union provides a framework and environment in which borders weaken or 'unfreeze', concepts of multi-level governance eclipse borders and benign regional identities and structures emerge (Bray undated; Todd 2005). Hastings Donnan (2006) blends an analysis of interfaces with the changing understanding of the nature of the border. Although borders to a greater degree and physical interfaces to a lesser degree are, by definition, static, he argues that both are, in practice, changing and dynamic. Just as rural interfaces contract and expand, so too does the border. Even if the political border is more fixed and more certain, it is paradoxically less visible. The 'real' border is a line behind which the Protestant community feels strong, but it is contracting all the time. Donnan quotes extensively from Protestants in Armagh, who refer to - and some despair of - 'holding their ground' on the borderland against a tide of advancing nationalism. Even if the coercive advances of the Troubles are over, they now take the form of challenges to parades on the narrowing periphery, all the time weakening the will of the Protestant community to carry on. As a result, the 'real' border gradually moves north all the time, a process he calls 're-bordering'.

Can one identify interfaces or contested spaces in the border areas now? Creamer et al (2008) published figures for religious affiliation along the border and refer to 'pockets' of Protestant populations but like most cross-border research focuses on the technical and administrative issues to be overcome around co-operation (which can have the effect of sanitising the issue of the rural interfaces). Her maps though provide a tantalising glimpse into the contemporary topography of segregation and division.

Contact Across the Border

The shelving of the report of the Boundary Commission in 1925 not only made the six county border permanent but was accompanied by a decision by the three governments to shelve the intergovernmental structures agreed under the Anglo-Irish treaty. Both cross-border co-operation and north-south intergovernmental co-operation rapidly declined to the inconsequential. Civil society co-operation though was relatively unaffected, with most existing 32-county bodies continuing to operate on an all island basis in fields such as the churches, sport, academia and voluntary organisations. Where *new* organisations were established in the north though, they tended to be either Northern Ireland only or the Northern Ireland branch of a UK body.

The O'Neill-Lemass rapprochement of 1965, which inspired ambitious plans for north-south and cross-border co-operation, quickly iced as the Troubles broke out in 1969. In the event, it was civil society co-operation which proved the most sustainable. What entered the lexicon as 'track 2 diplomacy' was the attempt to build up non-coercive co- operation around common interests that would promote peace, the economy and mutual understanding (e.g. the Joint Business Council), doubly important at a time when governmental relationships were poor. The University of Limerick tracked the evolution of this process, noting how the number of civil society bodies co-operating rose from 330 in 1995 to 500 by 1998, a trajectory accelerated both by the INTERREG cross-border programme from 1989 and the Peace programme from 1994. The Good Friday Agreement restored and amplified the north-south architecture of the Treaty, but it is interesting that one important part of the Agreement, the North South Civil Society Consultative Forum, has never been implemented, a poor reciprocation for the contribution of civil society to the process that made the agreement possible.

The reopening of the roads in the 1990s enabled a restoration of some of the cross-border activities ruptured earlier. The single European market had the effect of eliminating significant trading barriers and reduced, but did not entirely eliminate the cross-border activity that had prospered most in the intervening years, that of smuggling. InterTrade Ireland has catalogued a significant growth in north-south trade, while entrepreneurial local authority regions (eg ICBAN) have made major strides in co-operation in local government. Anderson (2006) has attempted to measure the nature of cross-border social and personal interaction, finding that the principal cross-border contacts revolve around visiting friends and relatives, followed by shopping (following the currency differentials), then work and associational activity. The prime determinants of involvement are not religion (in many areas, Protestants are more involved), but social class, being low for the most disadvantaged. Few showed much inclination, desire or need to move home to the other side of the border, conveying an impression of stable, settled, rural communities.

Crawley (2002, 2003) shed some interesting light on the northern Protestant community and the border. She confirms the widely acknowledged preparedness of northern Protestants to cross the border since the ceasefire and the reopening of the roads; support for practical cross-border co-operation matched by reluctance to embrace some forms of north-south co-operation. One of her (unidentified) four study areas was of particular interest, for here northern Protestants had always crossed the border into a Protestant community that extended 5km into the south.

Information is available on civil society co-operation from a number of sources (Anderson 2006; Acheson 2007; Harvey 2007). Taking them together, the following picture emerges:

- *Informal* cross-border co-operation is widespread, but still a minority activity, focused on sport and church-related activities;
- *Formal* cross-border co-operation by organised civil society is a majority activity. It has become routine to the point that it is no longer newsworthy. The proportion of community organisations participating in cross-

border activities is 85% (RoI) and 62% (NI). For north-south activities, the proportions are much lower, between 27% and 9% of voluntary organisations;

- Most formal co-operation is in 'soft' areas non-contentious to the national political agenda, the exception being ex-prisoner groups who are prepared to look at and work on the issues arising from the Troubles;
- Recent formal co-operation of community development groups dates to the 1980s, but did not receive meaningful funding until the 1990s. The dominant areas are groups working with young people, older people, unemployed people and integration to the labour market;
- More projects were initiated on the southern side than the northern side, the southern side pressing for the relationship to be more regular and more formal. Having said that, most of the traffic of ideas and new project fields has been in the other direction, from north to south, in such areas as the physical environment, mental health, conservation and community health;
- Individual leadership plays an important role in north-south co-operation, most projects owing much to an individual person of vision, energy and imagination and a strong belief in the desirability and benefits of such co-operation;
- The organisational models of cross-border co-operation take a variety of form: win pairs, joint twin pairs, trans-boundary projects, clusters and, the purest of them all, the single partnership;
- There is an identifiable strand of co-operation between organisations in Northern Ireland and those in the Republic far from the border (as far as Cork). Such co-operation is ambiguous, for on the one hand it permits a broader agenda including 'hard' issues, but does so from a safer distance.
- These studies did not pay attention to and did not examine the issue of contested spaces associated with rural segregation on the two sides of the border, but two observations are worth making. First, community development projects along the border are overwhelmingly clustered in two main concentrations, Derry and Newry, with three minor concentrations, Armagh, Enniskillen and Strabane. Even allowing for low population density, the number of groups in the ruralised areas (especially the border along the south-west of Northern Ireland) was small. Second, as already observed, the projects tended to focus on softer issues and, barring ex-prisoner associations, few projects appeared to address segregated or contested space (the Border Protestant group is a possibly the most forthright).

International Comparison

A significant weakness in the research has been the lack of international comparators. The Peace programme did fund useful international work on borders, especially the mammoth *Mapping Frontiers, Plotting Pathways* project. Although the research found some unique features of the Irish border, by and large it identified the fact that problem borders have been an enduring theme of European history. Irish history is less distinctive than we might imagine. Thanks to this research, and the broader work of the Centre for International Borders Research based in Queen's University, we now have a substantial new body of knowledge of borders, their origins, formation and impacts.

What does not appear to have featured strongly in border research generally is an examination of contested or defended spaces in rural areas. One country which strongly invites comparison is Bosnia Herzegovina, where there is abundant evidence of segregated living patterns - of Serb villages, Croat territories and dispersed rural communities and Muslim towns (Glenny 1999). The Balkan war was full of the language of contested spaces, of the Pale enclave, of besieged towns where one community abutted another (Sarajevo), while the map of the *Pax*

Americana with which it concluded could have been transposed over the maps of our own Boundary Commission of 1925. Indeed, the negotiations that led to the Dayton accords revolved around maps and prospective partitions, maps which attempt to set boundaries according to these rural divisions. The experience of that region provides examples of how a country attempted to address the problem of the rural segregation during the Yugoslavian period, unsuccessfully in the event, and invites comparison in its present attempt to reconstruct and build a new and more enduring political settlement. The European Union, in its Democracy programme in the Balkans, provides examples of projects that conceptually go far beyond the peace programme in trying to break barriers and build new relations in ethnographically divided societies.

There are several reasons why it is important to address the issue. First, just as the peace process was built on community support strongly promoted through the peace programme, there is always the danger that it can be undermined by the continued failure to address underlying tensions and issues. Second, segregated and contested spaces are not just socially but economically inefficient, distorting trade, employment and education. Border regions can be some of the most prosperous parts of the European Union (look at the Rhine triangle), but not if held back by substantial levels of community conflict or ill-ease and intractable concentrations of poverty. People in the border counties are aware that the Peace programmes are drawing to a close, but the issue of segregation and division provides an on-going challenge and unfinished business to resolve or at least ameliorate.

In Conclusion

The issue of the 'interface' is a recent one in an analysis of the Troubles that has evolved over the past forty years and continues to do so. It may have come to prominence because it is the most visible reminder of the conflict. 'The border ' is a relatively recent field of study related to the Troubles, which did not emerge until the late 1980s and owes much to fresh European thinking on borders.

Rural segregation, along and across what is now the border had similar historical roots to the patterns of division in Northern Ireland. Its topography is very evident in the militarisation of the border counties in 1912 and in the reports of the Boundary Commission in 1925. The pattern of settlement of the Protestant community in the southern border counties has similar features to segregated communities in the north. In effect, the past five years have seen the rediscovery of the rural segregation in the southern border counties, which has softened in some areas (e.g. business, location) but not others (church allegiance, schooling, intermarriage).

There is evidence from some researchers of an effective re-bordering of the border, with the perceived boundary in effect moving north. As the inter-governmental border becomes less visible, the border between the communities moves northward as the segregated, older Protestant communities retreat. The picture is complicated by the population movement of 60,000 displaced persons to the border counties, mainly northern nationalists from interface areas. Displaced northern nationalists found the southern border counties relaxed compared to their former homes, the main negative reactions coming from suspicious southern nationalists.

The border had a severe negative economic effect on the prosperity of the border counties and severed many trading links, with social connections cut by road closures. Despite this, civil society co-operation survived and indeed sustained dialogue between both parts of the island. Civil society co-operation accelerated

markedly in the 1990s and is now routine. There is a high level of cross-border co-operation between community organisations, focused on young people, old people, unemployed people and labour market integration. The number of community development groups in the most ruralised areas is quite small. Only a small number of projects, mainly involving ex-prisoners, deal with the 'hard' post-conflict issues, while hardly any appear to deal with issues of the rural segregation in the southern border region.

The border in Ireland, although it has some particular features, is not unique by European standards. Other border areas are characterised by similar partitions, segregation, rural interfaces and topographies, notably Bosnia Herzegovina, which offers us useful comparisons in how such issues may be addressed. Issues of segregation and division are not immutable and can be addressed through policies, programmes, projects and funding. Governments have already worked to desegregate workplaces and the Rural Community Network has outlined ways in which a community development approach offers the promise, step by step and over a long period of time, to address patterns of segregation and contest over space in rural areas.

The following sections of the report outline some of the factors that can impact upon the development and maintenance of contested spaces, and identifies some of the different types of contested spaces that can be found in towns, villages, rural areas and border regions beyond Belfast.

5. The Creation of Contested Space

Our working definition of contested space is of *'a largely segregated environment in which elements of the local geography are contested by members of the two main communities and involves current or recent acts of violence, threat of violence or fear of violence'*. Our research suggests that a number of key factors are necessary if segregated space is to become contested space. These include:

- Demographic factors that impact upon a sense of control or dominance over space;
- The emergence of a degree of contest over space, resources and or services;
- The quality of relationships between members of the Protestant unionist and Catholic nationalist communities, including the quality of political and community leadership;
- The presence of trigger events and activities;
- The existence of temporal triggers;
- The availability of target sites; and
- The experience of acts of sectarian violence.

These factors assume that contested space is not a fixed entity but is something that emerges as a result of the intersection of territoriality, demographic change and commemorative, ritual or cultural events that raise tensions between the two communities. The dynamics of contested space will differ from location to location and may be influenced by the location of key buildings and resources and by factors such as the time of day, time of year, the presence of 'trigger' events and the presence or absence of individuals who may aim to stir tension and provoke acts of violence.

As such contested space may be relatively fluid or 'temporary'. It may become more permanent if tensions are raised, but in smaller towns and rural areas may also be rather porous, and even ignored, for much of the time in a way that interfaces marked by physical barriers cannot be. This section briefly reviews some of the factors that may impact upon when and where contested space develops.

One should also note that the area 'beyond Belfast' includes a wide range of communities and environments which range from cities, such as Derry/ Londonderry, through towns of varying size to villages and more scattered settlements focused on townlands. It is difficult to conceptualise a framework that applies equally and comprehensively to such a range of settlements.

Geographic/Demographic Factors

Contested space requires the emergence or development of a number of demographic factors that impinge on the local geography.

1. **Concentrated Population:** In general, there needs to be a concentration of population which may be a town, village or other form of settlement. Contested space is less likely to exist among a scattered or widely dispersed rural population, although there may well be strongly identified patterns of land ownership and segregation in such areas which are in turn marked by patterns of avoidance and concerns for personal safety.

2. **Proximity:** The members of the two communities must be within reasonable distance of one another. Two villages, one predominately Protestant and the other predominately Catholic, which are few miles apart, will not necessarily constitute a contested space given the geographic separation although trigger events and activities may serve to consolidate social and physical segregation into more formalised contested space.

3. **Changing Demographic Balance:** An increase (or decrease) in the size or proportion of either the majority or the minority community may lead to a perception among the majority community that 'their' town or village is 'changing'. This may increase tensions as the longer established community may seek to assert or re-assert its political identity. Although contested spaces are generally viewed in terms of Protestant-Catholic relations, the presence of another ethnic or national minority community may also serve as the basis for hostile segregation.

4. **Residential Concentration:** Members of the minority community must live close enough together to enable them to claim parts of the local environment as 'their' areas. If the minority is scattered or evenly distributed throughout an area they are probably less likely to assert their presence in a public way.

5. **Critical Mass:** The minority community needs to achieve a 'critical mass' to be able to assert itself within the local area. If the minority community is too small in numbers it is less likely to assert itself, but rather will adopt a 'keep your heads down' approach to issues that might cause offence or fear.

6. **Minority Perceived as a Threat:** Complaints by a minority community against the activities of the majority or demands for space for its cultural activities may contribute to feelings of hostility among the majority and be perceived as further evidence of change for the worse.

7. **Presence of Trigger Opportunities:** These may be associated with annual events such as parades, cultural celebrations or sporting activities, less regular events such as elections, a reaction to a specific incident; or be the culmination of factors such as access to local services, resources or public space.

8. **Presence of Negative Elements:** Tensions may be actively encouraged or provoked by the presence of individuals or a small number of people who actively desire to increase fear and hostility between communities. The active presence of dissident republicans or loyalists was identified as a growing issue in some rural communities.

9. **Demographic Similarities:** In larger settlements, the process of contested space may be more likely to develop where demographic changes are occurring among working class communities or between discrete working class residential areas. It is less likely that contested space will develop between a working class and a middle class area.

10. **Demographic Dissimilarity:** Members of the two communities may share space with fewer problems if their demographic profiles are dissimilar and there is less contestation over resources or physical space, for example where one community has a young demographic profile and the other an elderly one.

11. **Site of Conflict:** Depending on the scale or nature of local geography, the contest between the two communities may occur near residential areas, at the geographical centre or may be displaced outside to symbolic properties (churches, memorials, Orange Halls, GAA clubs) in the hinterland which are often isolated, vulnerable and 'easy' targets.

The list of factors highlights that change in population demographics can result in the establishment of 'new' or shifting boundaries within local geographies. Demographic changes may result in an increase in tension which may manifest itself in disputes over the nature and routing of parades, sporting events, cultural commemorations and policing. A growing and confident minority population may desire to display their own identity and resist claims by the 'other' community to ownership of territory or public space, whereas a small number of individuals living in a dispersed pattern throughout a settlement may be more inclined to 'keep their heads down'.

Indicators of demographic change may include an increasing display of flags, street signs in the language/dialect of the 'other', protests or objections to 'traditional' activities and a perceived curtailment on 'traditional' cultural events and commemorations which all may indicate to some members of one community that the 'other' community has increased its influence in an area.

Age/Gender

There is an increased likelihood of contested space emerging if the two communities have a similar mix of a young age demographic. The consultation events highlighted the negative role that young people can play in raising and

sustaining tensions whether this was associated with cultural activities, anti-social behaviour or, more simply, the night time economy (Hamilton et al. 2008). In particular, young males play a prominent role as perpetrators of both interface and antisocial violence and 'defenders' of their community. In contrast research has found that females are less likely to be perceived as a threat when crossing perceived communal boundaries and may also perceive such boundaries as less of a barrier to movement and interaction (Lysaght and Basten 2003). However it must be noted that females do at times play their role in raising tensions and encouraging acts of aggression towards the 'other' community.

Older people may also view the nature of contested space differently than the younger members of the community. On one hand, they feel less threatened by the risk of attack or assault, on the other hand their routines and movements may be marked by the memories of activities and incidents that took place many years ago, or of how the geography of space and place, and the orderings of social hierarchy have changed for better or worse over time.

Relationships

There is more likelihood of tensions building between communities and of these developing into acts of violence if the relationships between members of the two communities are poor or if there are limited opportunities for interaction between them. Many researchers and commentators have noted the prevalence, even dominance, of various avoidance strategies in many rural areas as people keep to themselves and their 'own', use different services and resources and live together in parallel lives, while research on inter-communal conflict in South Asia has highlighted that such conflicts were more likely to occur in areas where there were limited cross community networks (Varshney 2002). In highly segregated environments, attitudes to members of the other community tend to be based on stereotyping, suspicion and mistrust which in turn helps to sustain and further extend practice based on avoidance and reduces lines of communication which could be mobilised to defuse tension.

It was suggested that a strong presence of single identity organisations such as the GAA or the Orange Order might be a further factor that inhibited opportunities for contact and interaction, particularly among younger people. Although it was also noted that such organisations can and do play important roles within single identity communities, they could perhaps explore ways in which they could do more to build links across the divide.

Politicians and other community and religious leaders were also highlighted as having a prominent role to play in either facilitating contacts or furthering segregation. But all too often, people felt that such figures abrogated their responsibilities to build bridges and further interaction in favour of building their status amongst a single section of the community by emphasising threats and risks and the need to defend partial interests.

Trigger Events

There are a variety of events and activities that take place in many communities that do not create tensions or problems in and of themselves, but when some degree of tension already exists then such events may 'trigger' a response or reaction that can lead to an increase in tension and even to attacks and violence.

Protests or opposition by members of one community to events and activities organised by members of the other community on a single identity basis may be viewed as a significant indication of a contestation over territory. The significance of many single identity social or cultural activities is in their implied 'claim' to the territory or a specified physical space:

Processions and bonfires have a similar territorial implication. One of the things that a procession or bonfire asserts is the right of the ethnic group to march or build a bonfire in a particular area. It is this aspect of such public demonstrations that makes them likely to become violent (Buckley and Kenney 1995: 155).

The demonstration by one community of what they believe to be a visible affirmation of their political and cultural identity and a display, particularly in rural areas significantly impacted upon by the Troubles, that they are 'still here' is generally viewed very differently by members of the 'other' community (Hamilton et al. 2008).[7] The main forms of trigger events that have been identified are parades, bonfires, sporting events, displays of flags and election posters.

Parades and Protests

Murtagh (1999) found that attitudes towards parades differed significantly between Protestants and Catholics (perhaps not surprisingly). In one rural town surveyed, 98% of Protestants felt that traditional parades should have the complete freedom to parade compared to just 33.5% of Catholics (Murtagh 1999).[8]

In recent years it has been well documented that the tension and violence associated with parades and opposition to parades have served to deepen the sense of difference between the two main communities (Hamilton et al. 2008: 28).

As Murtagh (2002: 31) points out, '*territory is vital to the expression of identity*' and according to Hamilton and McBride (forthcoming):

in rural areas, the lack of 'peacewalls' has led communicative acts, such as parades, attacks on symbolic buildings, and displays of identity to become the primary methods and tools to exert domination over social space and clearly demarcate territorial boundaries (Hamilton and McBride forthcoming: 6).

The cyclical nature of the marching season and protests against parades in some areas can result in tensions peaking and troughing throughout the year. Hypothetically speaking, a St Patrick's Day parade may cause tensions in March with tensions again increasing through the loyalist marching season in June and July and then again in August during nationalist commemorative events and, if a GAA team is doing well, public celebrations may extend into September. In such an environment, there is limited time and space for dialogue to be developed and reactions to events will be dealt with in more of an *ad hoc* manner.

A 2004 survey of sectarianism and community relations in the Limavady District Council area found that parades through Limavady town centre could impact upon interaction and relations between the two communities and that a growing nationalist community in Limavady may be a future source of conflict:

It was clear even though there had not been violent confrontations between the two major communities, the growing issue of parades combined with the changing demographics has the potential to escalate tensions within the borough (Byrne 2004b: 18).

It is also the case that the Parades Commission determinations may actually 'create' or demark a contested space by designating a location which a parade may not proceed past. In Pomeroy, for example, the Parades Commission issued a determination restricting a march to a point on Main Street which clearly demarcates the territory along Orange/Green lines, while in Dunloy, the Parades Commission determination specifies that loyal order parades may not proceed beyond the Orange Hall which again set a clear physical boundary. The presence of contentious parades in any location may therefore be a useful indicator of a contested space.

Bonfires

Bonfires are used to mark a variety of anniversaries by both communities, with the main events taking place on the Eleventh Night in July, the anniversary of internment in August, at Halloween in October, and Lundy burnings to mark the Closing of the Gates which marked the beginning of the siege of Derry in December.

Eleventh Night bonfires are closely associated with the Twelfth parades and have been subject to council led initiatives in many areas in recent

7 In her study of a small rural town in Northern Ireland, Cecil (1993) describes the pattern of settlement in the town 'Glengow' which is described as a predominantly Protestant rural town located near to a republican area, and Cecil argues that issues relating to identity and the 'telling' of one's religion and expression of identity occurs on ritual occasions for both communities, mainly during the marching season. For further information on the process of 'Telling' another's identity, see Burton (1978).

years in an attempt to reduce their negative impact on the environment and to limit sectarian displays. Internment fires have greatly reduced in number over recent years and in many areas, bonfires have been replaced by festivals or cultural activities but in contrast there is some evidence that Halloween bonfires have become more prominent and are associated with rising tensions in some communities. Young people have been at the forefront of inter-community violence in Annalong in recent years during the Halloween celebrations, which has highlighted the presence of a contested space in the harbour area of the town. Young people from both communities have been involved in launching fireworks at one another and independent monitors have been deployed in an attempt to prevent such incidents.

Arches

The erection of Orange arches (the nationalist tradition of erecting arches barely survived the nineteenth century) remains a feature of the marching season in many rural communities and as transient structures, they often have a dramatic impact on both the visual and the symbolic appearance of an area during the summer months. There have been a relatively small number of occasions in which the erection of an arch has been a source of contention, but demographic changes may make the erection of arches in some locations be seen as a provocative marking of public space.

Sporting Events

Certain sporting events and particularly Old Firm matches have proved to be a trigger event for violence (particularly amongst young males) over a number of years. Research has found that Celtic versus Rangers matches can be particularly problematic when the two main communities live in single identity estates in close proximity to one another (Jarman 2006). GAA matches have occasionally triggered incidents of sectarian violence, particularly when a club side or one of the six northern counties has been successful at a national level, but GAA has more readily been associated with sectarian violence when a GAA hall has been attacked or a prominent individual in the organisation has been targeted. More recently the success of various local counties has led to an increase in displays of GAA flags.

Flags/Symbols

For the purposes of this study we have suggested that the presence of flags representing the traditions of both main communities may indicate a contestation over territory. Bryson and McCartney highlighted the often divisive nature of specific flags and other national symbols in Northern Ireland which are:

associated with allegiance, loyalty, territory and authority (Bryson and McCartney 1994).

Deloitte (2008) found that if a particular area develops a reputation as being unsafe for one section of the community, people are less likely to cross community boundaries to use facilities or access services while Bryan et al. (2008) found that extensive displays of flags impacted upon members of the 'other' community and their decision to shop in such a location. This was supported by findings of the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey which showed that 38% of respondents would be 'less willing' to shop in an area with displays of loyalist flags, while 46% would be 'less willing' to shop in an area dominated by republican flags (ARK 2008). This may in part be linked to a widespread belief that paramilitary groups are responsible for putting up flags: 66% of respondents to the NILT in 2008 believed that loyalist paramilitaries put up flags in loyalist areas and 69% of respondents believed that republican paramilitaries were responsible for displaying flags in nationalist/republican areas (ARK 2008). RCN has highlighted work by Noelle Donnell which argues that the issue of flags and emblems in rural areas has not been addressed in the same way as in Belfast, citing the lack of uptake by community groups outside of urban areas in relation to funding under the Re-Imagining Communities programme (RCN 2008).

While the flying of flags often tends to be associated with the Protestant/unionist community, there are also notable displays of Irish nationalist emblems at Easter and again in August to commemorate internment and the hunger strikes. Additionally, if a particular Ulster GAA team is doing well in the All-Ireland competition, whether at a county or club level, there is often a dramatic increase in the flying of their flag to 'support the team'. However, from a unionist perspective, this is likely to be viewed as another means of demarcating 'nationalist/republican' territory.

Elections

The pre-election period was highlighted as a time when polarised identities could become prominent and raise tensions. Such times were occasions for speeches and events that highlighted the different interests of the two main communities, when politicians emphasised the needs and fears of highly polarised electorates and when posters are erected to highlight the different candidates, but which may also served to visibly demarcate sectarian divisions within the physical landscape.

Road Signs

The practice of scoring out parts of the names of towns or villages on road signs in some areas was also highlighted as an indicator of hostility or antagonism towards the 'other' community and which could serve as a chill factor in influencing people's behaviour.

Other Displays that 'Tell'

A small number of other factors were identified that might serve to act as indicators of how public space was being differently regarded by different sections of the two communities and which might be considered as being used to assert a collective claim over elements of the physical environment. These signs included the wearing of school uniforms, particularly when children gather at bus stops and the presence of people displaying religious or commemorative symbols such as on Ash Wednesday or the wearing of poppies close to Remembrance Sunday. Wearing of football or GAA shirts has long been recognised as behaviour that evokes a variety of positive and negative responses but so too was the presence of public taxis whose name suggested a sectarianised identity and also the presence of cars with southern number plates in some border areas.

Temporal Factors

Contested space may become more evident on different days of the week, at different times of the day or at different times of the year. An individual who may feel free to move around a location through the week may be more fearful of doing so on a Saturday evening, particularly in small rural towns where there may be a significant degree of residential segregation and a vibrant night-time economy including a number of bars, clubs, fast food outlets etc. Segregated spaces may become more prominent at night-time when the fear of being attacked because of one's community background is heightened.

Research by Hamilton et al (2008) found that there were tensions associated with the night time economy in a number of smaller towns. In Castlederg, Co Tyrone, segregation between the predominantly Protestant bottom of the town and the predominantly Catholic top of the town was more evident at weekends when the town centre became a more evidently contested space. The numerous bars were divided by community background and the presence of a vibrant local night-time economy heightened the sense of territorial demarcation. At night the centre became contested between some younger members of both communities and fast food outlets and taxi depots divided along community background. Thus the night time economy of a town or village may play an important role in defining when exactly space may be considered as contested.

The time of year may impact upon the dynamics of contested space as community tensions may increase in many areas during the summer marching season. Although this is largely associated with 'Orange' parades, band competitions and nationalist or republican commemorations including Easter commemorations, the anniversary of the hunger

strikes and of internment, may also impact on community relations in different communities. In fact, in some areas tensions may rise and fall in response to a variety of parades or sporting events over a period of months from Easter onwards. Although the situation may return to normal between key events, the repetition of events and activities may increase tensions to a crescendo over the summer period.

Presence of Negative Elements

The presence of a potential trigger event or temporal triggers may not automatically provoke a reaction, sometimes an individual or group of individuals was required to exploit its potential. Such 'negative elements' might be a group of youths, political opponents or supporters of a dissident position who were willing and able to exploit an opportunity by vocalising objections and mobilising people onto the streets. Similarly, events or activities that had previously taken place without any contention may become contentious as a result of the efforts of a relatively small number of people to use this as an opportunity to increase tensions in a locality.

A number of people highlighted the role of dissident republicans in increasing sectarian tensions in some rural areas. At one level, this occurred simply as a result of knowledge of dissident activity in the vicinity, but it might also occur in response to public mobilisations either for a protest or a commemoration or due to the resurgence of interest in cross-community issues that had previously been resolved or addressed.

This factor highlights the often fragile nature of inter community relationships, the ongoing potential of trigger events to raise tension, the underlying possibilities for segregated communities to be transformed into oppositional communities and for the need for active networks and political leadership to counter such uncertainties.

Targets of Sectarian Violence

The outcome of an increase in inter-communal tensions may be a violent attack on people or property belonging to the 'other' community. PSNI data on hate crime reveals a persistent annual figure of around 1,500 sectarian incidents each year. In Belfast, police data indicates a high level of sectarian violence in or near many interface areas and it may well be that mapping sectarian incidents could be a means of identifying contested spaces in other towns and villages.

Attacks on Symbolic Properties

Although residential property may be the most common target of sectarian violence, attacks on symbolic property may have more significance at a community level. By a symbolic property, we mean a building that can be readily identified with one of the two main communities such as Orange or AOH Halls, GAA clubs, churches, chapels, cemeteries and other religious buildings, memorials and other structures. An attack on such a property may be considered as a symbolic attack on that community and will also be indicative of tensions in an area. Lysaght and Basten (2003) found that even one act of sectarian violence can affect community wide perceptions of safety and danger and such attacks will impact upon an individual's spatial behaviour.

RCN (2003) found that the majority of participants in their study engaged in community activity which was overwhelmingly church related and which provided the main channel of communication for Protestants, particularly in rural areas, while a 2005 report by RCN highlighted the important community orientated role played by the GAA (RCN 2005). Osborne (2009: 5) points out that '*in rural areas there appears to be a greater utilisation of church-based services and of community support offered by organisations such as the GAA and Loyal Orders*', while Murphy notes that given the trend in rural areas for community activity to be based around these predominantly single identity organisations, it is worrying that attacks on symbolic properties increased from 30 attacks on churches and chapels in 2001 to 83 in 2005, while during the same period, attacks on Orange Halls increased from 16 to 35 (Murphy 2009b). Murtagh found that attacks on symbolic buildings were viewed as an attack '*not just on a building, but on a people*' (Murtagh 1999: 41).

Criminal damage to symbolic buildings is often highly emotive due to their communal and cultural significance and may serve to perpetuate revenge attacks. Attacks may take place on buildings in an isolated and vulnerable location as they are relatively easy to hit and then 'get out' without being identified. The socio-cultural importance of these social institutions means that such attacks are likely to have practical and emotive implications that will reverberate throughout the community fuelling mistrust and creating inter-communal tension.

Memorials

Formal and informal memorials to those who have died in wars, during the Troubles, or as a result of other incidents, are emotive reminders of the troubled past that many communities have lived through, but they may be a source of contention in local communities. What may to one community be designed to offer a point of reflection on the past may be considered as offensive to members of the other community.

Murtagh (2002: 111) suggests that memorials act '*as a mark of territorial ownership. Monuments are potent symbols of hurt, community defiance and security and are locked deeply into the social consciousness of both communities as well as the landscape*'. Disputes over memorials or commemorative events, like parades, may serve as an indicator of contestation over territory.

Isolated Individuals

The existence of segregation may be less evident in areas with a low population density or one dominated by isolated households. But the very fact of such low density and relative isolation may lead people to be or to feel vulnerable to attack, particularly if there have been acts of violence against other individuals or properties. This in turn may lead people to restrict their movements at certain times or in more extreme situations may lead them to abandon their homes and move to an area where they feel safer.

In Conclusion

This section has outlined some of the key demographic factors that are associated with the emergence and sustenance of contested space and has also discussed some key trigger events and activities that may serve to increase tensions and consolidate patterns of segregation into a more formalised physical divide. From this we can postulate that a contested space will require a particular demographic profile, with a sizeable minority community. This community will also need to be living in a concentrated area which is confident enough to begin to assert its public presence that the majority community begins to perceive them as a threat to previous relations and control over geography.

The latent tensions may be triggered into a more active conflict as a result of the impact of trigger events such as parades, bonfires or sporting events and subsequent sectarian violence may be directed against individuals, residential and symbolic properties, while such attacks may occur both at the contested space or it may be displaced to accessible targets in more isolated rural areas.

While this report has identified a series of indicators of segregation and division, there is limited data available at a level that can be used to map contested spaces at a local level (see Appendix for an overview list). For example, PSNI data on sectarian hate crimes is usually only available at DCU level, while the police do not gather data on attacks on symbolic properties in all areas; data on contested parades is available from the Parades Commission but only by individual parade; flag displays have only been mapped on the main thoroughfares; while councils have only a very rough idea of the numbers of bonfires in their areas. It is therefore very difficult to gather a coherent picture of the scale of violence or conflict at a local level and therefore impossible to map contested spaces or identify temporal trends in a clear manner. Systematic gathering of data on core indicators of sectarian tensions would therefore be a clear step forward.

6. Forms of Contested Spaces

Contested spaces will emerge or be created in situations where members of different communities live segregated lives and where persistent or recurrent tensions result in the patterns of segregation being manifested in some physical form or in the ways that people behave. Contested spaces thus assume a pattern of segregation but are more than just segregation. The research has identified a variety of forms that contested space may take in towns and villages across Northern Ireland. It may occur in three main forms:

- As a relationship between a population centre and its hinterland;
- Where tension or violence occurs in the central area of a town or village; and
- Where tension or violence occurs between residential areas.

Each form may display slightly different characteristics depending on the scale of the settlement, the nature of the interaction between communities and the transience or permanence of the division. From this we have identified eight broad types of contested space; these are broadly listed in an order which begins with those patterns that are more evident in rural areas and moves to those which are more evident in an urban environment. The exception is the border which is broadly rural but is also a diverse environment and is considered last:

1. **Centre – Hinterland:** A predominately single identity small rural settlement, surrounded by a hinterland with a large percentage of the 'other' community.
2. **Neighbouring Villages:** The area between two highly segregated but physically close villages or small communities.
3. **Divided Village:** A small rural settlement where tensions are worked out in the centre rather than between residential areas.
4. **Contested Centre:** Similar to the above but in larger towns which may have largely segregated central areas where tensions are played out on occasions.
5. **Thoroughfare:** A single identity community which members of the 'other' community pass through on a regular basis.
6. **Neighbouring Estates:** The boundary area between two single identity residential estates.
7. **Protected Territories:** Residential boundaries that are marked by a physical barrier, similar to those in Belfast.
8. **The Border:** The border has been identified as a specific type of contested space, but which has different characteristics in different areas.

It is also important to acknowledge that there are other forms of segregation or factors that influence segregation in rural areas of Northern Ireland. In particular these include elements of the physical landscape such as rivers, lakes, mountains and hills which provide barriers that may socially be perceived as 'natural' forms of segregation; or patterns of land ownership, particularly when land ownership is also associated with community background and which results in restrictions on willingness to sell land out of the community or to members of the 'other' community. Whilst it is acknowledged that an attachment to a particular area of land and intergenerational ownership and stewardship of land can be a positive factor in rural communities, such assertions of 'natural' control may also be factors that further consolidate segregation. We consider that without the existence of an element of contestation over space, such features or activities do not on their own meet our criteria for being classified as contested space.

The following section discusses some of the dynamics of the seven different types of contested space, set out above, in greater detail.

Centre-Hinterland

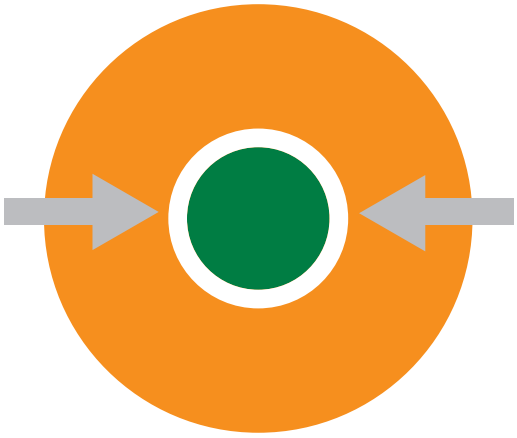
A number of villages display similar characteristics: a centre populated by one community and a surrounding hinterland with a large percentage of the 'other' community. Historically, and often until relatively recently, the centre may have been a more mixed environment which served both the residents and the population of the hinterland by providing shops, services and resources and may also house key symbolic properties. However, the Troubles, demographic changes and local tensions have led to subtle or overt reframing of local boundaries, such that the hinterland is considered separate from the centre and access to the resources of the centre are denied to residents of the 'other' community living beyond the boundaries of the settlement.

This centre-hinterland model of contested space exists in villages such as Dunloy, Pomeroy and Rosslea, which have become synonymous in the public eye in recent years as a result of disputes over parades. In such locations, symbolic buildings or sites such as churches, graveyards, memorials and Orange Halls are located in or on the edge of the village and have served as a key point of attachment for people living in the hinterland. Such sites serve as a point of attachment for the minority community but may be the target of attack by a small number of members of the majority community.

A number of centre-hinterland communities have experienced tension most readily through disputes over parades, which have generally arisen following a growth in the nationalist population and a proportionate decline in the unionist population.

The dynamics of the centre-hinterland contested space are different to an urban area. For much of the year, the contested space may be relatively porous and geographic boundaries largely ignored but at certain times, a trigger event may transform the centre into contested space. While the impact of certain trigger events on patterns of behaviour may reduce the more time passes from the event itself, indeed the day after an event/parade *'things may have returned to normal'*, the psychology of demarcating territory will remain in the minds of local residents.

In this sense, there is also the distinct possibility that a decision relating to a parade will have a differential impact upon the residents of a town or village. This may particularly be the case in towns with a nationalist majority in which contested space created by the parade dissipates after the event and the nationalist residents may *'go about their business as usual'*, while Protestant residents of the village and/or the hinterland may feel less of a sense of belonging to the town and turn to neighbouring towns (with a Protestant majority perhaps) to access shops and services and thus further entrenching rural segregation.

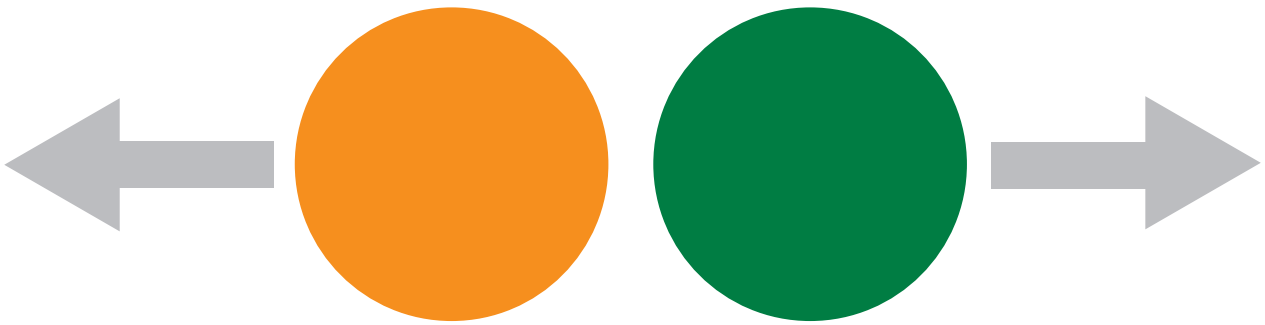


Neighbouring Villages

In some areas of Northern Ireland, the persistence of tensions over recent decades has resulted in a process of segregation that has resulted in villages and small settlements that were once mixed becoming almost completely segregated. This has led to situations where two neighbouring settlements may have an extremely contrasting demography and which has resulted in an extreme process of avoidance.

In such a situation there may be an invisible but locally well known zone between the two villages which was perhaps marked by natural features or by land ownership and in which patterns of routine behaviour may become tense and problematic at certain times of the year or in reaction to certain triggers. Ardboe and Coagh, and Aghalee and Aghagalen, were cited as examples of villages that might fit this pattern of contested space.

Furthermore, an increase in population and new housing developments may lead to a growth of one or both such villages. If such developments take place in the zone between the two single identity settlements, this may further lead to an increase in tensions and a clearer demarcation of contested space as one community is perceived to be encroaching on the other. Planning decisions relating to residential developments and the expansion of single identity communities may need to give consideration to the wider impact of proposals on inter-communal tensions.

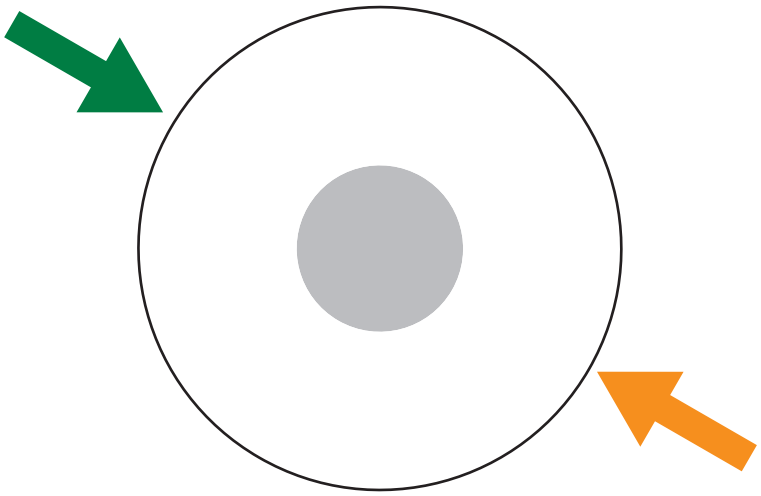


Divided Village

A third variety of contested space relates to small settlements which have a mixed population, but with members of the two communities being residentially segregated. The village may have a number of single identity areas or housing estates but with no common boundaries between the individual areas. In such communities, the contested space may be most evident in the town centre as members of the two different communities 'compete' over access to resources.

The influence of the night-time economy may be crucial to this type of contested space as segregation, fear and actual use of violence may increase at night and weekends and be particularly associated with bars, pubs and taxi depots. This type of contested space is rarely permanent, as most residents may have few problems negotiating the town centre during the day. However, tension may also be increased by the presence of 'trigger' events such as parades or through the use of symbolic displays such as flags, whereby one community effectively asserts dominance over the centre at key times.

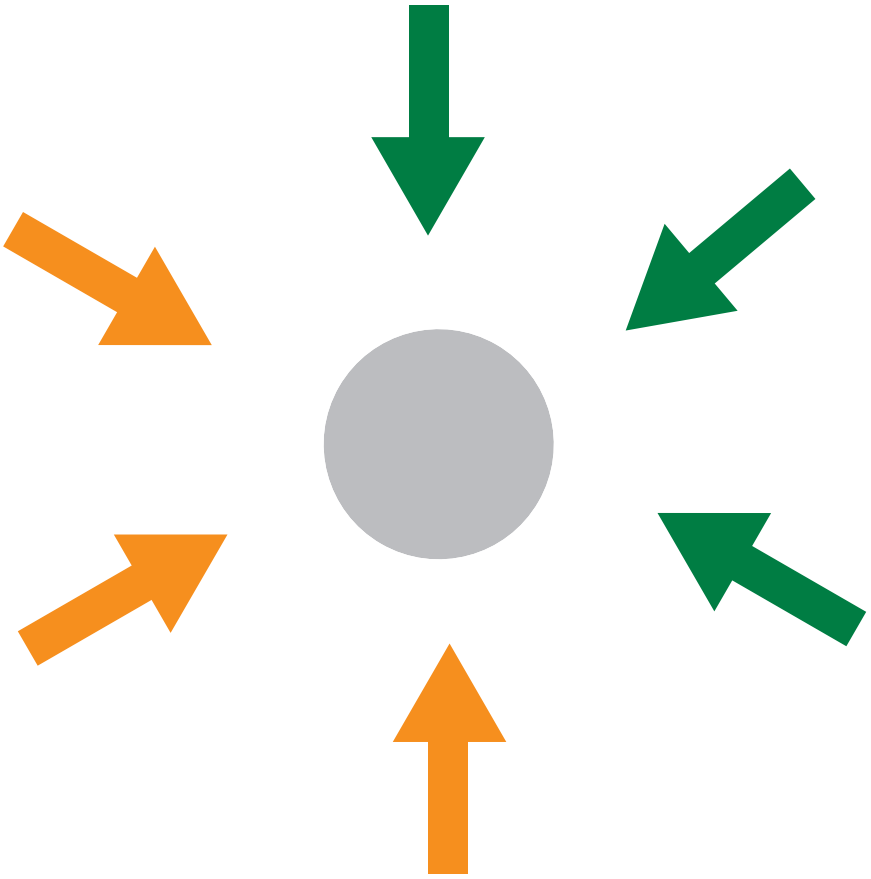
One example of this type of contested space is Castlederg, where young people in particular were very aware of divisions in the town centre between Protestant spaces and Catholic spaces. These were demarcated by the various pubs/clubs and fast food outlets which appeared to be segregated in terms of the community background of their clientele (Hamilton et al 2008), while parades at various times serve to reinforce tensions and highlight competing claims to territory within and on routes through the centre. Kilrea was another area with a history of parade related disputes which displayed a number of characteristics of contested space at particular times of the year. Disputes over parades had resulted in residential segregation 'hardening' into contested space. However, the boundaries of this space was considered as rather porous as it was not practical for residents to remain completely divided given that the town centre contained the shops and services that are used on a daily basis.



Contested Centre

More specific forms of contested space may occur within some towns where high levels of polarisation may lead to extreme patterns of division and territorialisation. This may result in shopping areas or shopping centres being associated specifically with one community, as for example was noted has occurred in Ballymena. Similarly bus stops, which were associated with usage by pupils from specific schools, were also identified as potential local flashpoints while bars, pubs and taxi companies and other physical locations associated with the night time economy were also identified as potential contested spaces.

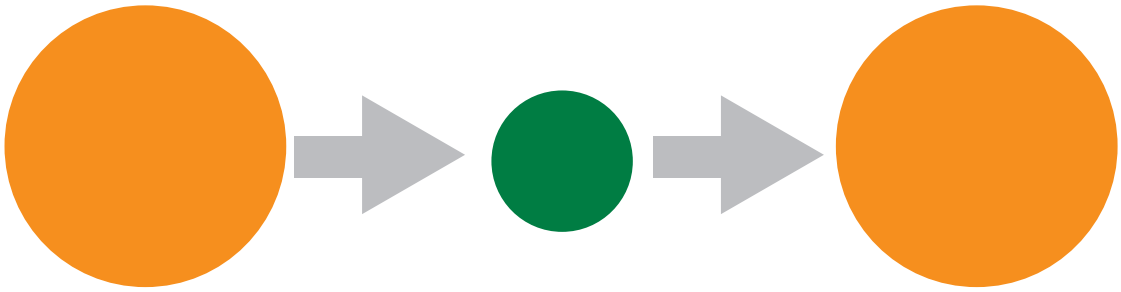
A variation on this model is Glengormley, where it has been recognised that a contested space has emerged in the central area in recent years. The Catholic population of the town has grown in recent years with the predominantly nationalist Elmfield estate close to the town centre. Tensions between the two main communities are played out in the commercial centre and particularly involve young people who are easily identifiable in terms of community background as a result of their school uniform or who seek to dominate key resource areas after dark.



Thoroughfare

In some locations, tensions may be experienced in a single identity community when members of the other community seek or need to use routes through the village or estate as an access to another location. The issue of access is largely associated with a 'trigger' event rather than as a result of routine daily activities but this may in turn have a negative impact on longer term relationships and hospitality to members of the non-resident community. Thus, although the contested space may be most readily experienced as a temporary or transient situation and as resentment of encroachment by the host community, residual tensions may remain after the trigger event and may also be experienced in other locations.

The Garvaghy Road in Portadown might be considered as an example of a contested thoroughfare, where the Orange Order seeks on an annual basis to walk along a road which is bordered on both sides by a predominately nationalist estate.

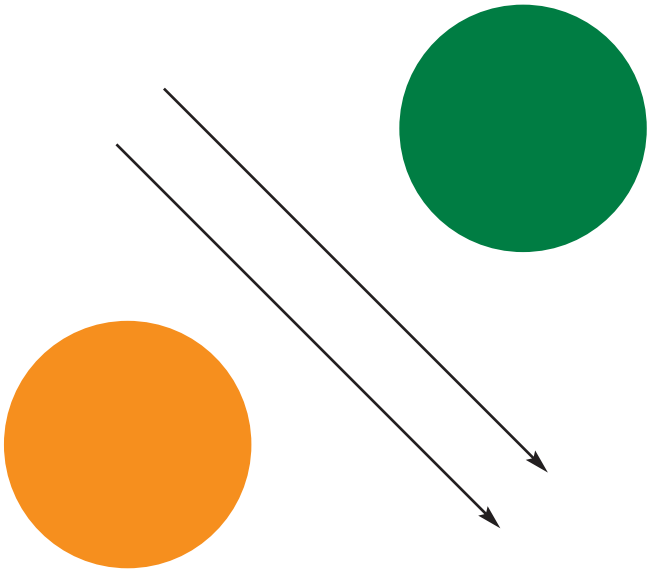


Neighbouring Estates

The location of two predominantly single identity estates in close proximity to one another is a strong indicator of a contested space and it may be that all that is required is a contentious 'trigger' event for incidents to occur. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive has produced statistics mapping residential segregation on their estates beyond Belfast (Shuttleworth and Lloyd 2001), which could be a useful tool in identifying potential contested spaces within their jurisdiction.

Neighbouring estates may contain a significant number of flags and other overt political symbols. In Coleraine, for example trigger events such as Rangers v Celtic football matches, parades or the erection of flags have increased tensions in the area in recent years to such an extent that the bridge over the River Bann in the town is now viewed as a contested space. In Antrim, there are perceptions of a contested space between the neighbouring Stiles and Rathenraw estates, while in Limavady there is a contested space at the Ballyquin Road between the Greystone (Catholic/nationalist) and Bovally (Protestant/unionist) estates, an area which is also heavily flagged. In Magherafelt, a contested space was identified between the neighbouring Leckagh (predominantly Protestant) and Kilowen (predominantly Catholic) estates.

In smaller towns such as Ballynahinch and Kilkee,l slightly different patterns emerge; here the town is a predominately unionist area but each has a distinct geographically contained nationalist estate. In both towns, parades serve to increase tensions but, in each case, the small nationalist community also marks out its space with flags or symbolic displays.



Protected Territories

A small number of locations beyond Belfast have physical barriers or 'peacelines' similar to those found across Belfast, which have been built by the NIO, with the aim of protecting the residents of the area behind the wall from violent attacks by members of the 'other' community. The NIO has identified four such barriers in Derry/Londonderry (Bishop Street; Bennett Street; Harding Street and Tullygally/Currynerin), one in Lurgan (Margretta Park) and five in Portadown (Bann Boulevard; Charles Street Railway Embankment; Craigwell Avenue/ Charles Street; Corcrain Road/Obins Avenue; Duffy's Field).

However, research carried out in Belfast (CRC 2008) has revealed that there are many more defensive barriers protecting houses, estates and commercial buildings, closing off roads and dividing parks across the city, which had been built by bodies other than the NIO, including the NIHE and city council. It is therefore quite possible that there may well be similar examples of defensive architecture that have been built in some of the other towns across Northern Ireland but which have not been documented or noted as such.

The Border

The border between Northern Ireland and the Republic can be considered as a distinctive form of contested space and which has different forms and characteristics in different areas. The border not only forms an international boundary, it also divides communities. It includes areas that have ended up on the 'wrong' side and have been separated from their natural and historical hinterland as a result of partition in 1921 and thus marginalises communities from their nearest and most accessible resources. The presence of the border may also serve as a reminder of recent and historical incidents, actions and acts of violence. The border includes areas where the physical geography serves as a 'natural' barrier, areas where the artificial nature of the divide is all too evident and areas where boundaries blur and people cross back and forth as part of social or daily routines.

The border is not only a physical presence in people's lives but also an emotional presence, particularly for those whose lives have been blighted by acts of violence, intimidation, threat and enforced movement. The border as a contested space is also distinctive in that it may exist as a consequence of actions and relationships that occurred on one side only as much as it is a consequence of actions and relationships that involved crossing the border.

The issue of segregation, exclusion and unwilling movement away from border areas is reasonably well documented, but consultations also highlighted the ongoing nature of segregation that exists on the southern side of the border and which particularly impacts on the small pockets of Protestant communities in various areas. The patterns of segregation had some distinctive impacts on some of these relatively isolated communities with only superficial levels of interaction with the majority community, but which may also involve an inability or unwillingness to engage in forms of collective identity in public, self-exclusion from communal activities, a public denial of communal identity, and the assimilation into the identity of the majority in order not to stand out or to avail of resources. Such behaviour might well be reinforced by patterns of residential segregation which might be considered more 'normal' across the border in the north.

Furthermore, the impact of the border as a contested space may extend much further than other such forms. Most types of contested space have the most impact on those living close to the boundary area, where people are aware of the nuances of geography and possession. This is particularly the case where the divide is invisible, or not marked by any form of physical structure or visual display, and thus may be non-existent to casual or occasional visitors to an area. The border, in contrast, is distinctly present in many (although not all) areas and is visibly evident on maps and signs and may be present in a more transient manner through vehicle number plates with their distinctive Irish and British characteristics. Moreover, although a narrow physical feature, the impact of the border may extend for some distance on either side as people choose to avoid an area that was associated with a previous cause of fear or act of violence, and which has increasingly become associated with the 'other', all the more so at times of a resurgence of threats or acts of violence.

Finally, for some people, the border may not be like any other type of contested space as it serves simply as an administrative boundary rather than something that restricts movement or relationships. The changes of the last fifteen years have transformed the border from a stark physical barrier of closed roads, military checkpoints and limited access (perhaps more akin to the Belfast peacelines) to a barely discernable point on a daily journey to work, shops, friends or relatives. The border may well be both the longest contested space and the most intangible on the island.

Small Minority Communities

There are a number of areas with tensions between members of the two communities which we have not designated as contested space under our typology. This includes areas with a large majority community and a dispersed minority, which it was considered did not have a population that was numerically strong enough or confident enough to assert its political identity in the village and thus the minority population has not reached, or has declined below, a 'tipping point' that may lead to the development of contested space.

Some geographical areas are dominated by tensions within one of the two main communities, for example by different political or paramilitary factions, and which might in turn lead to some people having their movements or behaviour constrained by members of their own erstwhile community. In such situations, forms of contested space and territorial divisions may become evident within a single identity community.

Disappearing Contested Spaces?

The research found that in some areas in which there have been disagreements over parades there has been a disappearance of contested space as the minority population has become so small that they are no longer perceived to be a threat. Newry was cited as one example of this where moves are apparently under way to encourage Protestant residents to 'come back in' to the town. This development may however be specific to this locality and be driven by external, economic factors.

In contrast there may be other locations where the dwindling of a minority community may be welcomed by the majority community and there are areas across Northern Ireland in which there have been targeted attacks on members of minority communities to 'force them out' of the area, such as those attacks on the Catholic community in Ahoghill and the Protestant community in the Dunclug estate in Ballymena. Taken to its conclusion, such activity would lead to the disappearance of a contested space as there was no one to contest the use by the majority.

In Conclusion

Some form of contested space is a feature of many different rural environments but unlike the more formalised divisions of the interface areas of Belfast and some of the larger town, contested space in smaller towns, rural areas and the border may be a more transient feature of life. Such tensions may become evident through displays of flags, bunting or arches, by parade routes and by the much less visible performance of daily routines – shops or bus stops chosen or avoided, the route taken on a walk or on a journey to work, or the memories of past events. These unmarked physical spaces may also be experienced differently on the daily, weekly or annual cycle and also by different types of people. Young men in particular may need to be more aware of the sectarianisation of space and may feel more at risk of attack than young women.

In general, younger people may feel more vulnerable than older people although in some contexts, such as when dealing with memories of events long past, this may be reversed. Changes may also occur as a result of subtle changes of population, a few of 'them' moving in and a few of 'us' moving out of a village can have a significant impact. Similarly, new housing developments may lead to a shift in population balance that impacts on communal activities or a new commercial development may lead to an influx of transient visitors.

All of these and other factors mean that the nature of the physical and demographic geography must be recognised as to some extent fluid and contingent and thus perceptions may rub against desires for certainty, for fixity and for places to remain 'the way they always have been'. Ultimately the presence of a contested geography, of divided and fragmented communities, of segregated spaces, and of acts of violence directed towards the 'other' is an outworking of an inability to share space, a mistrust in the 'other' and an expression of an inter-communal struggle for control and dominance in a world framed by the concept of a zero-sum game.

7. Strategic and Policy Initiatives

This research suggests that segregation and division are prominent elements of life in many areas beyond Belfast, across Northern Ireland and the border region although the true scale and nature of such segregation and the consequent location of contested spaces remains poorly documented. Current government policy on rural communities, including the Programme for Government, the Rural Development Programme, the Rural Development Strategy, Planning Reform and Transport Strategy are orientated more towards sustaining the economic basis of rural communities rather than addressing the realities of segregation and sectarian division that pervade many areas.

The research also reviewed a number of local policy and strategy documents with the aim of identifying knowledge about contested spaces and approaches that were being developed to address such issues among council, police and community safety bodies. We reviewed a selection of good relations plans, district policing plans, community safety plans and PEACE III action plans. The various documents use a variety of terms to describe the sites of tensions and violence. Some councils refer to segregated or divided communities, others focus on creating shared space, while a number discuss the presence of 'interfaces' in their areas. There is no particular consistency in the terminology used and our review reflects the specific terminology utilised in each document.

Good Relations Strategies

The various Good Relations Strategies tend to be framed around the issues that have been set out in the *A Shared Future* document, with general commitments to tackling the visible manifestations of sectarianism and racism and reclaiming shared space, as opposed to any specific identification of where actual or potential contested spaces are within any particular council area.

A limited number of councils did specify interface locations within their jurisdiction, for example, Derry/Londonderry[9] and Craigavon[10] (in relation to Northway and Lurgan town centre) although councils with less visible contested spaces tended not to identify the locations. However, Strabane District Council's audit of good relations conducted in 2007 (and referred to within the updated Good Relations Strategy) highlighted *'Castlederg as an effective interface'* and the document also identified other potential interface locations including Strabane town itself, Donemana, Magheramason, Newtownstewart and Ballymagorry. Aim 3 of Strabane District Council's existing Good Relations Plan states the council aims to:

Develop shared space, reduce tension at interface areas and tackle the visible manifestations of sectarianism and racism (SDC 2007).

Council documents tend to refer to manifestations of sectarianism or trigger events which may potentially cause problems at various times during the year, for example, parades, flags, territorial marking and memorials.[11] In relation to this, Carrickfergus Borough Council outlined its commitment to the '*promotion of shared space*' and is due to conduct an audit of the location of flags and emblems throughout the borough. Down District Council has developed a Flags Protocol which denotes examples of flags that the council deems to be 'reasonable' to fly and when it is appropriate to do so. The document notes examples in the council area of flags which are put up and taken down soon after an event, preferably as soon as possible after the event, as *'examples of good practice'*.

Coleraine Council's Good Relations plan highlights the role of 'spoilers' and refers to the negative impact that politicians and their comments can at times have on community relations and noted that *'harassment and intimidation in Coleraine'* can be *'fired up'* by some politicians. A number of councils (including Coleraine) also reported that a key issue within their jurisdiction related to

9 Derry City Council Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan 2008/2009 – 2010/2011 (2008).
10 The Craigavon Good Relation's Strategy contains a commitment from the council to "*identify local interface areas*" with a view to reducing tension at these localities.
11 Strabane Councill refers to reducing contention surrounding parades in the area.

Protestant alienation in small, isolated and rural communities in particular and one of their priorities was engagement with these small, isolated minority communities.

Since the re-establishment of the Assembly in May 2007, the devolved Government has been working on a replacement strategy for *A Shared Future*, with a consultation document entitled *Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration* published in July 2010. When a finalised draft is published, it is assumed that councils will also be required to draw up their new approaches to support a local implementation of the overall strategy.

Policing Plans

There appears to be even less information relating to contested space in policing documents relating to areas outside of Belfast. A brief review of Policing Plans between 2007 and 2010 and 2008 and 2011 and Policing Board and District Policing Partnership reports generally highlighted that the focus on policing operations, targets and objectives relates more to 'general crime' such as domestic burglaries rather than specifically anything relating to sectarian incidents or violence at interface locations (other than reducing hate crimes). In fact, the terms contested space and interface are conspicuous by their absence in all of these reports related to policing.

PEACE III Cluster Action Plans

A review of PEACE III Cluster Action Plans does highlight a number of areas within their jurisdiction which are impacted upon by sectarian incidents/crimes, legacy of the conflict and the need to create *'shared spaces'*. This section discusses the plans in alphabetical order, beginning with those plans drawn up by the CAN Peace III Partnership. We should note however that we have been unable to find such action plans for Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon or Newry and Mourne council areas.

CAN Cluster (Carrickfergus, Antrim, Newtownabbey): The Action Plan highlights that the cluster area has a Protestant majority with 72.5% of residents coming from a Protestant community background and 22.4% from a Catholic community background, with many wards in the cluster area predominantly single identity. The plan does note that demographic changes have taken places in areas such as Crumlin and Mayfield in which the Catholic population in these areas has increased, which has subsequently increased tensions within the areas. Sectarian division is exacerbated at night with an even greater reluctance of residents to travel into areas they perceive to be dominated by the 'other' community.

Newtownabbey is viewed as having a number of interfaces such as Whitewell/Longlands, Glengormley town centre and Valley Park at the Valley Leisure Centre. Disputes over parades in the centre of Glengormley coupled with changing demographics are believed to have raised tensions and 'hardened the boundaries' in the area. In Antrim, the Stiles (predominantly loyalist) and Rathenraw estates (predominantly nationalist) are viewed as being '*occasional interfaces'* particularly during the summer months. The report notes that there are '*no interfaces of note in Carrickfergus*', but that there are a number of '*invisible territory lines*' in towns and villages across the cluster such as Randalstown.

Objective 1.3 of the Action Plan refers to supporting communities in reducing the visible manifestations of sectarianism and to increase the number of areas which can be regarded as 'shared space'.

Lisburn and Castlereagh Cluster: This plan notes ongoing tension and conflict at some interface areas in west Belfast and Dunmurry highlighting *'an absence of leadership'* as one problem which does not help to reduce tension in these areas. It is indicated that demographic changes occurring within the cluster area have the potential to increase sectarian/racial tensions and there remains division relating to flags, bonfires and other manifestations of political identity.

Interface areas are regarded as key target areas for future work and the action plan includes a list of target areas the cluster partners aim to work in, although these target areas are not specifically referred to as interfaces. One named area, the Areema estate between Dunmurry and west Belfast, is identified as needing targeted work to maintain the area as a mixed environment given that recent research indicated that demographic trends suggested the area was in transition and could become a single identity estate in the future (Byrne et al. 2007).

North Down, Ards and Down Cluster: The action plan focuses on residential segregation between predominantly unionist and nationalist housing estates, particularly in the North Down and Ards council areas and identifies areas in which relations between Protestants and Catholics may deteriorate over the next five years including Ballyrainey, Kircubbin, Scrabo and Loughries. The night-time economy is viewed as increasing tensions and the potential for violent clashes in the centre of Ballynahinch at night. However, the plan also states that: *the councils within the cluster have no interfaces or peacewalls*.

North East Cluster (Ballymena, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Larne, Limavady, Moyle): Segregation is identified as an issue of pressing concern in the north-east region, with district council areas such as Limavady and Moyle identified as becoming increasingly Catholic/nationalist while towns such as Ballymoney and Coleraine have a relatively dominant Protestant majority. As such the plan identifies a general lack of shared space across the cluster area and highlights the issues relating to inter-community transfer of land as still being important today.

Strategic Objective Two refers to '*reducing physical segregation*' while the vision of the plan refers to addressing the physical manifestations of division such as parades, flags and emblems. The plan notes the cluster area's involvement in the cross-council 'Community Dialogue and Exchange Programme' which includes an interface programme, which aims to identify six interface locations across the cluster area. Similar to a number of the other action plans however, the document does not indicate which locations within the cluster area may be potential interfaces.

North West Cluster (Derry Londonderry, Strabane, Omagh): The only accessible North West Cluster Action Plan was the interim report whereas most other action plans have been finalised by the other cluster areas. The cluster area includes the council areas of Derry/Londonderry, Omagh and Strabane and aims to '*transform contested space and promote shared space*' and give residents the confidence to feel safe in using services and accessing all areas within the cluster area

With this in mind, one objective of the plan is to transform '*two contested spaces'* (six overall) into *'safe, shared space'*. One means of achieving this is through *'assisting Protestant participation, especially in disadvantaged urban and rural areas*'.

The plan highlights three specific interface locations in Derry Londonderry: Bishop Street / Fountain; Irish Street / Gobnascale; and Tullyally / Curryneirin. In Strabane the plan notes that there are interface issues in Castlederg and other locations where there may be '*interfaces without walls*' such as Donemana, Magheramason, Newtownstewart and Ballymagorry. The plan also identifies 'other' interfaces but does not specify where these interfaces are within the cluster area. It does however state that particular work will have to be done with *'sectarian interfaces'* and *'displaced persons'* who are those who have been involuntarily moved from areas of violence or interface areas.

Strategic Priority 1, '*Moving Towards Acceptance of Cultural Identity and Inclusive Celebration*' refers to: developing shared celebrations; development of protocols around flags and celebrations; and developing a shared space programme.

Strategic Priority 2 '*Influencing Young People's Attitudes at an Early Stage Through Appropriate Media*' stated that the cluster partnership aimed to create shared spaces and reduce interfaces where they exist. There is slightly more mention in this report of interface issues than some of the other cluster action plans given that the area contains Derry/Londonderry and therefore some of the most notable interface areas outside of Belfast. In particular the plan outlines ongoing problems in relation to interface areas involving young males between 12 and 20 years of age who are using social networking websites to organise disturbances at the interface and the plan notes that *interface violence is more prevalent at weekends and during 'commemorative' events.*

As such, one area of focus for the cluster will be to work with young people in terms of educational and cross-community work while also promoting the concept of shared space through regeneration of the Clondermott School at the Irish Street/Gobnascale interface as well as the fence between the Fountain and Brandywell.

South West Cluster (Magherafelt, Cookstown, Fermanagh, Dungannon): The South West Cluster Action Plan highlights high levels of segregation in the area, partly as a result of the legacy of the Troubles, and notes that there is '*little to no integration*' between the two communities. The plan further notes a number of ongoing attacks on symbolic properties within the area and highlights that Magherafelt has the second highest level of sectarian incidents (increasing 23% between 2007-2008 and 2008-2009) after North Belfast. In terms of interfaces in the cluster area, the plan cites RCN's 2006 '*Lost in Translation*' report as identifying *'invisible peace lines'* across the cluster area and notes:

there are invisible walls scattered across towns, villages and rural areas. People can still work, shop and socialise for most of their lives without really engaging with members of the opposite community.

In the statement of need, Theme 1 refers to the need to target those areas and individuals who are in most need of assistance regarding peace and reconciliation issues, such as disadvantaged housing areas and interface areas, while Theme 3 discusses the need to create 'shared space' across the cluster area. Under Priority II *'Contributing to a Shared Society'*, Measure 3 refers to exploring and addressing interface issues in rural and urban areas and breaking the *'cycle of fear'.* However, there is no reference as to how an interface area is to be defined, nor is there any indication of which areas in the cluster area may indeed be interface locations. The plan lists as one of its objectives:

To devise a specific programme aimed at promoting cross-council and cross-border dialogue at interface areas in urban and rural areas and aimed at addressing the cycle of fear and intimidation in local areas.

The plan states that the cluster will aim to work in *'at least six interface areas per council area, which should include rural and urban and estate based areas*'. As a result, the South West Peace III Cluster commissioned a research project earlier in 2009 to identify interface locations across the four council areas.

Shared Neighbourhood Programme

The Shared Neighbourhood programme was launched in August 2008 as a 3-year pilot programme aimed at supporting and encouraging 30 shared neighbourhoods across Northern Ireland. The central purpose is to develop 'shared housing neighbourhoods' where people choose to live with others regardless of their religion or race, in a neighbourhood which is safe and welcoming to all. The programme was developed as a response to the fact that social housing in Northern Ireland remains deeply segregated with over 90% of Housing Executive being single identity. In order to take steps to address this issue, the Housing Executive through its Good Relations Strategy secured funding from the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) to

promote a Shared Neighbourhood Programme. Areas were selected to participate in the programme based on the prevailing levels of integration within the neighbourhood and nominated on the basis of scoring indicators based on qualitative and quantitative information. Communities were invited to join the programme and it is only progressed if the community wishes to be part of the programme. To date all 30 neighbourhoods (which includes 23,000 households and 60,000 people) have agreed to participate in the pilot Programme.

In Conclusion

There are a variety of regional and local plans and strategies that might be expected to aim to impact on issues of segregation, division and relations between the two main communities. However, few of the available good relations strategies published by local councils or policing plans produced by the DPPs make any significant reference to issues relating to contested space.

In contrast many of the PEACE III action plans produced by local authority 'clusters' do make reference to forms of contested space, with a general commitment to undertaking work in such areas to counter tensions, reduce segregation and increase 'shared space'. Some councils have commissioned work to identify 'interface locations', with the aim of developing projects and activities to address the problems associated with such spaces, but in general there has been a limited engagement with this issue beyond the larger urban centres. This is not perhaps surprising given the limited amount of research that has focused on contested space and conflict in smaller towns and rural communities and the extent to which the issue has been subject to strategies of avoidance.

These various policy documents were drafted within a broader policy framework that was set by *A Shared Future*, but this document did not address the issue of rural sectarianism and divisions in a significant manner. The section on *'reclaiming shared space'* focused on *'developing and protecting towns and city centres as safe and welcoming'*, while the section on interface areas was largely orientated towards issues in Belfast, although the document does make reference to rural areas in paragraph 2.3.7, which states:

The triennial action plan will provide detail of such an integrated planning framework: *it will look at a range of interventions to address strategically the issues at interface areas, including specific action in other areas, including those in rural communities, potentially at risk of becoming 'interfaces'* (OFMDFM 2005).

However, in the absence of any clear or agreed understanding on the nature of segregation, division and 'interfaces' in rural communities, this aim necessarily had limited impact. The subsequent list of Good Relations indicators identifies issues such as flags, parades and sectarian hate crimes as key indicators of sectarianism and division, but there is limited evidence of systematic mapping of these data in rural areas and the baseline report presents the data on a Northern Ireland-wide basis and therefore offers little guidance on the different dynamics in different areas (OFMDFM 2007).

There are currently a number of government and other programmes that have the potential to impact on the quality of life and good relations issues in rural areas across Northern Ireland. These include the Rural Development Programme, the Rural White Paper and the Neighbourhood Renewal Scheme. However whilst these contain several quality of life measures, there is no specific measure to directly address good relations issues. It could therefore be argued that there is a lack of a coherent strategic approach across government departments in terms of good relations planning in rural areas when compared to the urban setting. The current consultation on the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration, however provides an opportunity to provide coherence and focus to addressing issues of sectarian division and segregation in rural communities.

8. Developing a Strategy for Contested Spaces

The research suggests that there has been a piecemeal approach to addressing the issue of segregation and division in rural communities and areas beyond Belfast, but the current consultation on the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration provides an opportunity to ensure that such issues are addressed within a strategic framework that encompasses each of the government departments and main statutory agencies.

This research has identified a number of areas where work will need to be undertaken to support any strategic approaches to sectarianism and segregation in rural communities and we make a number of recommendations to that end.

1. OFMDFM should ensure that the finalised Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration clearly reflects the context of sectarianism and division and the problems associated with contested spaces within rural communities and areas beyond Belfast.
2. OFMDFM should identify and monitor a range of relevant and appropriate key indicators that can be used to identify contested spaces,
and identify the key organisations to be responsible for gathering and disseminating such data.
3. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, in developing effective programmes and policies should ensure that where relevant these address sectarianism and conflict.
4. All Departments should ensure that relevant future rural orientated strategy or policy which impacts on rural areas acknowledges the problem of sectarianism and division in rural communities and includes clear aims and objectives to address such matters.
5. The Department for Justice should review the necessity for the continued presence of security barriers in Derry/Londonderry, Lurgan and Portadown.
6. The PSNI should continue to record all incidents of sectarian violence and hate incidents and make such data available to local councils in an agreed manner that allows for the identification of hot spots and contested space.
7. The PSNI should systematically record all attacks on an agreed list of symbolic properties and structures across Northern Ireland and make this publicly available in an appropriate format on an annual basis.
8. The NIHE should record all incidents of sectarian violence and harassment that occurs in its properties and aggregate and publish such data on an annual basis in an appropriate format.
9. Each local council should include a clear strategy for addressing segregation and division in its Good Relations Plan. This strategy should be integrated with other strategic plans and programmes of work.
10. Each local council should map the variety of contested spaces within its area. These should be based on a mixture of the hard indicators identified in this report plus local knowledge. The status of such contested spaces should be monitored on an ongoing basis.
11. Each local council should take responsibility for gathering together data on key indicators in their area. This may include in particular sectarian violence and hate crimes, contested parades and public events, bonfires, displays of flags, graffiti and murals and attacks on memorials and key symbolic structures.

12. Each local council should undertake a review of defensive architecture in their area.

13. CRC and RCN should take forward the work on contested spaces in rural areas through a similar structure to the Interface Working Group.

14. CRC and RCN should develop a strategy for promoting shared learning in responding to sectarian division, tension and violence in rural communities.

15. The persistence of segregation and division on either side of the border and the presence of the border as a contested space should be an issue that is considered and discussed on a cross-border level and on an initial basis by the North South Ministerial Council.

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Appendix: Indicators of Contested Space

The table lists gross available figures for each of the main indicators by council area.

Table 1: Council Area by Indicators

Council Area	Sectarian incidents 2005-2009	Attacks on symbolic properties 2008-2009	Contentious Parades 2005-2008	Bonfire Sites (Yearly average)[12]	Flags both of communities 2006-2007[13]
Antrim	206	n/a	-	14	-
Ards	60	n/a	-	27-28	-
Armagh	104	9	24	10	3
Ballymena	397	4	56	15	1
Ballymoney	139	7	55	19-21	-
Banbridge	64	1	-	3-4	-
Carrickfergus	33	n/a	-	10-12	-
Castlereagh	67	n/a	-	18-21	-
Coleraine	272	13	17	15	-
Cookstown	83	14	-	20-25	1
Craigavon	158	12	269[14]	15-19	-
Derry City	452	2	12	19-23	-
Down	78	n/a	18	36	1
Dungannon & South Tyrone	79	10	-	10	4
Fermanagh	222	6	25	8-9	5
Larne	101	3	-	10	-
Limavady	88	1	4	14	-
Lisburn	145	n/a	14	21	-
Magherafelt	194	1	67	10	2
Moyle	37	1	-	9	1
Newry & Mourne	91	3	40	25	1
Newtownabbey	284	n/a	5	19	-
North Down	38	n/a	-	12	-
Omagh	60	1	4	15	1
Strabane	70	1	85	8	-

12 These are approximate figures provided by local councils and include aggregated numbers for Eleventh of July, August and Halloween bonfires.
13 The figure relate to the number of locations in close proximity in each council area with flags of the two main communities, and not the number of flags on display.
14 The majority of these relate to requests to parade along Garvaghy Road in Portadown.

Beyond Belfast

The Beyond Belfast report was commissioned to explore the physical legacy of segregation and division in towns, villages, rural communities and the border areas beyond Belfast. The report also set out to review how such segregation is maintained and extended through forms of behaviour.

The research suggests that there has been a piecemeal approach to addressing the issue of segregation and division in rural communities and areas beyond Belfast. This report has identified a number of areas where work will need to be undertaken to support any strategic approaches to sectarianism and segregation in rural communities and makes a number of recommendations.

Beyond Belfast

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